NARRATIVES OF COMPASSION AND HEARTACHE:

TEACHERS' EVERYDAY PROFESSIONAL STRUGGLES

WITH AN ENGLISH-ONLY POLICY IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

IN A SOUTHWEST BORDER COMMUNITY

by

Satoko Yaeo Siegel

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prepared by Satoko Yaeo Siegel

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and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

_____ Date: 4/20/2012
Perry Gilmore, Ph.D.

_____ Date: 4/20/2012
Luis C. Moll, Ph.D.

_____ Date: 4/20/2012
Iliana Reyes, Ph.D.

_____ Date: 4/20/2012
Richard Ruiz, Ph.D.

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission on the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

_____ Date: 4/20/2012
Dissertation Director: Perry Gilmore, Ph.D.

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SIGNED: Satoko Yaeo Siegel

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving family—my husband/my best friend, Jason T.

Siegel and our beautiful twins, Shaw and Maya.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes an ethnographic case study of an elementary school in a border city in Southern Arizona. Its purpose is to explore teachers' professional lives at Cactus Elementary School (CES; pseudonym) through classroom observations, interviews and informal conversations. The majority of the fieldwork was conducted in the 2004-2005 school year.

Teachers in Arizona have severe challenges compared with teachers in other states: lower expenditures on students, lower salaries, higher teacher-student ratios, and more English language learning students. Teachers at CES are faced with even more concerns, such as students' high mobility rate, the students' low socioeconomic status, and the students' language development. Furthermore, educational policies, such as NCLB, AZ LEARNS and the English-only policy set strict rules regarding language usage in classrooms and testing environments in schools.

This study explores teachers' compassion and commitment to their profession. It also describes professional distress experienced by teachers as a result of national and state educational policies. In addition, it illustrates teachers' strategies for negotiating and developing everyday educational policies. This study questions whether school excellence and teacher quality can be measured solely by student test scores, and what "highly qualified teachers" means to students and the local community. At the same time, this dissertation emphasizes the power that local teachers and administrators have in negotiating and developing federal and state educational policies to meet their students' needs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation describes an ethnographic case study of an elementary school in a border city in Southern Arizona. Its purpose is to explore teachers' professional lives at Cactus Elementary School (CES; pseudonym) through classroom observations, interviews and informal conversations with teachers. There are three major themes explored by this study: 1) Teachers' compassion and commitment to their profession, 2) Professional distress experienced by teachers as a result of national and state educational policies, and 3) Teachers' strategies for negotiating and developing everyday educational policies.

In this chapter, the current educational situation in the state of Arizona will be discussed. Then, goals of the current study will be outlined. Finally, this chapter will provide brief descriptions of the chapters that follow.

Education in Arizona

To describe teachers' lives, educational policies which control pedagogy, curriculum, and teachers' professionalism, will be explored. The state of Arizona has been experiencing a unique situation due to federal and state educational policies. The three main policies implemented by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) are as follows: 1) Arizona Leading Education through the Accountability and Results Notification System (AZ LEARNS), 2) No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and 3) Proposition 203, the English-only policy (Wright, 2005a).

When federal educational policy NCLB was enacted in 2001, the notion of "highly qualified teachers" was introduced. NCLB was created with the aim of improving students' academic performance, with a special consideration of the cultural and economic achievement gaps among students (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). NCLB notes that highly qualified teachers would be needed to reach the desired goals of the policy (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). AZ LEARNS, another education policy, is a state-legislated accountability system. Same as NCLB, AZ LEARNS was enacted in 2001. Proposition 203, the third main education policy in the state, is Arizona's English-only policy. These policies are uniquely interwoven and create remarkable tension and frustration among teachers (Wright, 2005a). These policies will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

In recent years, the state of Arizona has experienced the second largest population growth in the U.S., with a 33.8% increase in population between 1997 and 2007 (National Education Association, 2009). Furthermore, more than half the population is non-White (ADE, 2000a). The percentage of English Language Learning (ELL) students has rapidly increased. This is especially true among Spanish-speaking, Hispanic-origin students (Wiley, Castro, & Klerk, 2005). During the 2002-2003 school year, Arizona had the second highest teacher-student ratio in the country with 20.9 students per teacher, while the national average was only 15.7 students per teacher (National Education Association, 2004a). In the following school year, this ratio increased to 21.2 in Arizona,

although the average teacher-student ratio was unchanged across the United States as a whole.

English language learning students are present at every school level in Arizona and there is a high likelihood that any given teacher will work with ELL students at some point in their teaching career (de Jong, Arias, & Sanchez, 2010). Moreover, Arizona ranks 43rd in the nation regarding fourth-grade reading level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). Nationwide, 30% of the fourth-grade students have a reading level of proficient or better. In Arizona, only 23% of the fourth graders are identified as proficient (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). Regarding expenditure per K-12 student, Arizona was the second-lowest spending state in the nation: in the 2003-2004 school year, $5,347 was spent per student--approximately $2,800 less than the national average (National Education Association, 2004b). Teachers' average salaries in Arizona ($41,843) were nearly $5,000 less than the U.S. average ($46,726; National Education Association, 2004b).

Under such incomparable circumstances, teachers of CES—located in a border city in Southern Arizona—have actively negotiated the educational law, and have devoted themselves to giving the best education to their students. Their teaching lives, their experiences in the classroom, and their personal narratives allow us to gain an understanding of what is occurring in classrooms of this border school.

Goal of this dissertation

The overarching goal for this ethnographic study is to describe what is occurring at CES from the teachers' perspective. The purpose of this qualitative study is twofold.

One is to explore teachers' perspectives and experiences through their narratives and experiences in CES. The other is to document and describe the effects of the English-only policy at CES. Cactus Elementary School faces a challenging situation: approximately 90% of the student population is Hispanic; more than 50% of the students are ELL students; more than 90% of the students receive free breakfast and lunch; and, students' mobility rate is almost 50%. This ethnographic fieldwork resulted in a case study of patterns and themes. Narratives and observations described in this dissertation have been chosen as the best representation of the themes.

This dissertation will not only focus on teachers' suffering, frustration, and fatigue; it will also highlight more positive aspects of the teachers' lives to show what public elementary school teachers can do, and will do, for their students despite the difficulties teachers face. Highlighting the compassion, heartache, and strategy that were observed frequently in my fieldwork, this dissertation describes teachers' everyday lives at a school in a border city in Southern Arizona.

Significance of this study

The significance of this study is twofold. First, describing teachers' experiences in an elementary school where the student population is mainly Hispanic will give insight into teachers' experiences with culturally diverse students under current educational policies. The National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2007a) reported the characteristics of full-time elementary school teachers in 2003-2004: female teachers made up the vast majority of the workforce (84%). As for teachers' ethnicity, 82% are White and 17% are an ethnic minority (8.5% African-American, 6.8%

Hispanic, and 2.8% other minorities). The percentage of elementary and secondary school minority students in 2003 was 41.3%, with 18.5% of the students being Hispanic and 17.2% being African-American (Protheroe & Barsdate, 1991; U.S. Department of Education, 2007b). These numbers show the ethnic discrepancy between students and teachers. Furthermore, the student population continues to diversify (U.S. Department of Education, 2007b). Considering CES's student population, this dissertation gives a possible picture of the future of education in the United States, especially in regard to what teachers will experience in their classrooms when most of their students are part of a cultural minority.

The second significant aspect of this study is that it has the potential to enhance understanding of teachers' positive aspects under the current educational climate. In the later chapters, this dissertation will show the teachers' commitment to their profession and their resistance to some educational policies. Against their professional ideologies, teachers need to comply with educational policies. They struggle to negotiate such policies in pursuit of their goal: giving students the best education possible.

Chapters

This dissertation has seven chapters. In Chapter 2, the research most relevant to this dissertation will be reviewed. The literature review includes: 1) Teachers' everyday life in schools, 2) Teachers in the accountability era, 3) Highly qualified teachers, 4) Teacher preparation programs, 5) Teacher attrition and retention, 6) Teachers and schools, and 7) Educational policies in Arizona.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology of this study. First, educational ethnography, which includes classroom observations, informal conversations, and interviews, will be introduced. Second, the rationale for choosing CES and specific teachers is discussed. This chapter also has a timeline of the current study, analysis, and the researcher's reflexivity. Then, descriptions of the city where CES is located, CES itself, and the teachers are provided.

The next three chapters (4, 5, and 6) describe the three themes that reoccurred most often in classroom observations and conversations with teachers. Chapter 4 focuses on CES teachers' compassion and commitment to their profession and describes the reasons teachers remain at such a challenging school.

Chapter 5 describes teachers' ideological and professional heartache resulting from educational policies. It explores teachers' experiences and insights about their instructional difficulties as well as their frustration as a result of not being allowed to use Spanish as a teaching tool. Examples presented in this chapter will show how educational policies ignore not only the teachers' experience and knowledge, but also the sociocultural background of the students.

Chapter 6 demonstrates CES teachers' resistance and professional strategy. It describes how teachers actively negotiate alternative approaches for educating their students while staying within the boundaries of educational policies. For example, although educational policies force public schools to relatively ignore languages other than English, CES has tried to keep dual language classrooms for students since they believe it better addresses the students' needs.

Finally, Chapter 7 concludes with a summary of the findings and implications of the study.

This study questions whether school excellence and teacher quality can be measured solely by student test scores, and what "highly qualified teachers" means to students and the local community. At the same time, this dissertation emphasizes the power of local teachers and administrators for negotiating federal and state educational policies. Teachers at CES choose to resist these policies to meet their students' needs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will begin with a review of prior research focusing on teachers. Next, I will review studies exploring the educational policies that were impacting CES at the time this study was conducted. The literature review will be broken into seven domains: 1) Teachers' everyday life in schools, 2) Teachers in the accountability era, 3) Highly qualified teachers, 4) Teacher preparation programs, 5) Teacher attrition and retention, 6) Teachers and schools, and 7) Educational policies in Arizona.

Teachers' everyday life in schools

Teachers' everyday life in schools has been well documented. The topics range from various challenges faced by teachers to their greatest overall concerns (Altenbaugh, 1992; Darling-Hammond, French & Garcia-Lopez, 2002; Eckes & McCarthy, 2008; Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2003; Perl & Wilson, 1986; Rose, 1995; Westheimer, 1998). Focusing on teachers and their classrooms, Rose (1995) interviewed more than 60 teachers in eight states: California, Maryland, Illinois, New York, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, and Arizona. Rose (1995) described the teachers he visited as follows:

> They provided example after different example of people doing public intellectual work in institutional settings, using the power of the institution to realize democratic goals for the children in their charge, and finessing, negotiating, subverting institutional power when it blocked the realization of those goals. At a time of profound disillusionment with public institutional lives, these people were,

in their distinct ways, creating the conditions for children to develop lives of possibility. (p. 413)

Other studies focus on teachers who effectively teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, as well as students from the working class (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2003). For example, through teachers' narratives and observation of those teachers' classrooms, Ladson-Billings (1994) offered successful pedagogical approaches for teaching African-American students. Utilizing teachers' insights and experiences, she introduced the notion of culturally relevant teaching, and explained the importance of this pedagogical approach for African-American students. Nieto (2003) also explored teachers, focusing on what motivates them to remain in their profession. From teachers' journals, letters, other writings, and conversations in meetings, Nieto (2003) found that teachers' professionalism was closely related to the following: their personal experiences, the relationships between teachers and students, the teachers' faith in education, resentment to injustice in education, intellectual work, commitment to social justice, and making a difference in students' lives. Nieto (2003) also reported that teachers' commitment was strongly related to their personal histories and beliefs.

Educational researchers have additionally found that some teachers felt lonely due to physical and emotional isolation (Knoblock & Goldstein, 1971). Teachers feel as though they are surviving day to day, focusing only on their students, and lacking the time and energy to see how their fellow teachers were doing (Knoblock & Goldstein, 1971). Due to not receiving constructive feedback and advice, or even having conversations with other adults, teachers were likely to possess anxieties regarding their

practices in their classrooms (Knoblock & Goldstein, 1971). In order to avoid feelings of isolation, building a sense of community among teachers is recommended (Knoblock & Goldstein, 1971; Nieto, 2003; Wertheimer, 1998), as it is important that teachers do not feel alone in their professional lives (Knoblock & Goldstein, 1971; Westheimer, 1998). Without such communities, there is a tendency for teachers to think they are bad people, take issues and problems they are facing as uncommon, and become disappointed with themselves (Knoblock & Goldstein, 1971; Raphael, 1985).

There are two general images of teachers (Raphael, 1985): 1) teachers as saints, who are always energetic and excited about teaching, and who show their respect and acceptance for their students; and, 2) teachers as tools or machines that solely produce good scores from the students. When teachers feel they do not fit these images, it results in reduced enthusiasm, lower self-esteem, and negatively impacts teaching (Raphael, 1985). Once people become teachers, they are not likely to be seen as individuals with their own private lives and personal histories, but as "doers of a task" (Knoblock & Goldstein, 1971, p. 12). Raphael (1985) emphasizes:

> Teachers are real people, not productive machines or saints. How strange that such an obvious message requires proof—but apparently it does, for the personal feelings, motivations, frustrations, needs and desires of teachers are poorly understood by the institutions which employ them and by the general public. (p. 14)

He warns that we need to pay more attention to "the dynamic interaction between teachers as feeling and fallible human beings, and the institutional settings in which he works" (Raphael, 1985, p. 14).

Previous studies revealed that teachers cited their personal history and strong feelings of caring as reasons for remaining in their profession (Nieto, 2003). They also stated that they struggled with stress and loneliness caused by the job (Knoblock & Goldstein, 1971). Considering these previous studies showing teachers' humanistic aspects, it is odd that such non-humanistic images—teachers as saints or as tools—are held by the public. Additionally, in this current accountability era it appears that teachers are seen as factory workers or machines, and not as professionals. This aspect of literature will be reviewed in the next section.

Teachers in the accountability era

The federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. It is the most recent educational accountability system in the United States. NCLB requires "all schools and school districts which receive Title-1 federal funding put into place a set of standards for improving student achievement, together with detailed plans charting how these standards will be monitored and met" (Smith, 2005, p. 508). NCLB aims for all students to reach a certain level of proficiency by 2014 (Menken, 2010; Smith, 2005).

This high-stakes accountability system has been critiqued (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2004; McCarty, 2009; Menken, 2010; Noddings, 2007; Spring, 2005; Valli & Chambliss, 2007). For example, Valli and Chambliss (2007) examined test-taking environments by

comparing three types of activities in two different classrooms: text choice, vocabulary and comprehension, and composition activities. They found meeting the demands of the NCLB led to less literacy activities but more test-preparation activities. Valli and Chambliss (2007) argue test-centered environments have replaced student-centered environments. Noddings (2007) maintains that NCLB "misconstrues the aims of education and indeed misunderstands the very nature of education—especially education in a liberal democracy" (p. 7). More specifically, NCLB relies on achievement outcome measures, regardless of students' sociocultural backgrounds. NCLB does not support efforts for bilingual and multicultural education; rather, it encourages public schools to become monolingual and monocultural (Spring, 2005). Since NCLB terminated the 1968 Bilingual Education Act, which had ensured language support services, ELL students need to take and pass the same high-stake assessment in English as taken by native English speakers (Menken, 2010). Menken (2010) states, "…the linguistic complexities of current tests cause a language barrier that make it impossible for these assessments to yield an accurate picture of what ELLs actually know" (p. 127).

Teachers feel the accountability system is a stressor (Lambert & McCarthy, 2006). Due to the accountability system, teachers are frustrated and struggling between outcome measures their students are expected to achieve and what they believe their students actually need to learn (Webb, 2006). Teachers feel mandated curriculum and test preparation are "excessive, stressful and harmful to students' learning and well-being" (Mathison & Freeman, 2006, p. 52). The high-stakes testing system forces teachers to abandon the usage of their culturally responsive view of teaching to meet accountability

demands (Sloan, 2007). Teachers have to leave their experiences and knowledge of pedagogical creativity behind (Alamillo & Viramontes, 2000; Mathison & Freeman, 2006), essentially becoming "semi-professionals…tightly regulated by the organization and controlled by administrative authority" (Addi-Raccah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008, p. 395). In other words, standardized testing puts teachers under de-skilling processes whereupon teachers are seen as technicians, not professionals (Apple, 2000). In addition, according to Mathison and Freeman (2006), teachers feel "threatened" (p. 51) due to not playing a fundamental role in their profession. In a sense, teachers are not professionals who can creatively adjust their curriculum based on their students' needs, but workers who operate machines.

Teachers are concerned that the curriculum has become too narrow and test-oriented (Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005). Concomitantly, teachers believe the NCLB motivates experienced teachers to leave their profession (Sunderman et al., 2005). Considering that teacher attrition, retention, and recruitment have been growing problems (Cochran-Smith, 2008; Good & Bennett, 2005), and that NCLB argues the necessity of teaching quality, it is ironic that experienced teachers leave schools because their professional ideology is at odds with NCLB.

Highly qualified teachers

School conditions in the United States have been "consistently, systematically, and disproportionately unequal and unfair" (Nieto, 2000, p. 180). Although NCLB's intention of closing the achievement gap between minority students and mainstream

students is a step in the right direction, there is debate between legislators and educational researchers over the definition of "highly qualified teacher."

According to NCLB, to become a highly qualified teacher, a teacher needs to have "at minimum a bachelor's degree, have full state certification and demonstrate subject matter mastery in each subject taught" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 3). In other words, "teachers are considered highly qualified if they have received the prescribed training required for a credential; thus, *highly qualified* is synonymous with *credential.*" (Noddings, 2006, p. 282). NCLB allows each state to define "highly qualified" based on its own unique needs, although NCLB emphasizes that teachers need to have content knowledge to be highly qualified. However, the definition of highly qualified teacher leaves out an important aspect of the teachers' skill set: the ability to provide equality for all students.

Although NCLB does emphasize teachers' content knowledge, educational researchers have questioned whether teachers' content knowledge is the biggest predictor of minimizing students' achievement gap. Smith (2008) found that whether or not schools function successfully was likely to be determined not by the teacher quality characteristics, but by students' background factors. In addition, educational researchers argue that NCLB's definition of "highly qualified teachers" should focus more on sociocultural knowledge such as multiculturalism, diversity, social justice, and democracy—all of which are vital for improving the academic performance of minority students (Cater, 2008; Causey, Thomas & Armento, 2000; Cochran-Smith, 2004; National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004).

Teacher preparation programs

In the field of educational research, teacher preparation is a growing issue (Cochran-Smith, 2008). Teacher preparation programs are critiqued for a lack of connection between theoretical, university-based knowledge, and real practices in K-12 classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Programs have also been critiqued for lacking teaching strategies that work for all students, not just "White, monolingual, middle-class children from homes with two parents" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 87). Teacher education programs are charged with paying too little attention to diversity in regards to students' race, social class, and language background (Nieto, 2000). In addition, minority students tend to be taught by underqualified and inexperienced teachers (Berry & Darling-Hammond, 2006).

In order for prospective teachers to be well-prepared for a diverse student population, teacher preparation programs need to offer and require coursework such as social foundations of education (Butin, 2005; Cater, 2008), social justice (Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow & Mitescu, 2008; Nieto, 2000), and transformative citizenship education (Banks, 2008). For example, Cater (2008) documented how a "Social Foundation of Education" course helped prospective teachers articulate their beliefs on diversity, the idea of what it means to be a teacher, and changing social inequality. He argued:

> …when provided the course-based opportunities, new and prospective teachers
> articulate that social foundations concepts inform their thinking about the work of
> teaching and their understandings of the context of teaching in schools, facilitate

decision making around issues of practice and, most important I argue, help them

place themselves within current debates about what defines a 'highly qualified

teacher.' (Carter, 2008, p. 227)

Enterline et al. (2008) stated that teacher education for social justice should be introduced

during the pre-service period. According to these researchers,

Teaching for social justice includes the pedagogical strategies and methods

teachers use, but also involves what they believe, how they think about their work

and its larger connections, the frameworks through which they interpret what is

going on in schools and classrooms, and how they identify and challenge

inequalities. This also involves how teachers regard the work of teaching, what

they consider to be reasonable expectations for various learners, how they

incorporate into the curriculum the knowledge, traditions, and experiences of

marginalized groups, and what they see as the purpose of teaching and schooling.

(p. 270)

In addition, Arias (2012) emphasizes that teacher preparation programs should provide

prospective teachers with a meta-awareness regarding languages used in classrooms: "the

ways in which language shapes the politics of language, that decisions on language

choice are never neutral, that learning a second language is a crucial part of identity and

community" (Arias, 2012, p. 10).

As a means of increasing academic achievement, the presence of culturally

relevant pedagogy has been explored. For example, by utilizing "funds of knowledge"—

students' home and community knowledge—in classrooms, Hispanic students' academic

performance was enhanced (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). In order to implement such pedagogical strategies in classrooms, teachers must thoroughly know themselves, including who they are, their beliefs, the prior experiences influencing their work, and their work goals (Banks et al., 2005). By learning through teacher preparation coursework focused on sociocultural issues, teachers can identify their positions as educators and advocates for social justice, as well as recognize their beliefs which can then influence their pedagogical strategies.

Consequently, it is fundamental that teachers know who their students are, what students' homes and community values are, and students' level of cultural knowledge (Banks et al., 2005). It has been suggested that it would be helpful for prospective teachers to experience a "cultural plunge," meaning an intense exposure to the social and cultural settings in the community in which they are going to teach (Houser, 2008). For example, based on her successful community-based program where prospective teachers conduct fieldwork in community settings, Ladson-Billings (2001) suggested that prospective teachers need to have the chance to learn about students in their community, and take "a close look at the assumptions, worldviews, and perspectives that prospective teachers come with" (p. 78). Interaction with children in non-school settings is the key, since these are the places where they are experiencing success (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Utilizing the funds of knowledge approach as an ethnographic methodology, in-service and prospective teachers can gain an understanding of students' cultural knowledge, values, and social capital by visiting students' homes and communities, and subsequently integrating such knowledge into classroom instruction (González et al., 2005). With the

recognition of who the students are, and who the teachers themselves are, and with increased sociocultural awareness and knowledge, teachers can develop a pedagogy that promotes students' academic performance.

As described previously, both teacher preparation programs and NCLB's definition of a highly qualified teacher have been critiqued by educational researchers for the same reason: both see content knowledge as the only thing needed for education. In order for highly qualified teachers to close the achievement gap among students, teachers cannot be technicians passing mere content knowledge to students, but must be professionals who are equipped with knowledge to deal with curriculum and pedagogy based on students' specific background and needs (Carter, 2008; Causey, Thomas & Armento, 2000; Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Teacher attrition and retention

Teacher attrition, retention, and recruitment have been ongoing problems (Cochran-Smith, 2008; Good & Bennett, 2005). Teacher shortages occur not only because of increased student enrollment and teacher retirement, but also because of teacher turnover and attrition (Ingersoll, 2002). Ingersoll (2002) reported that 11% of new teachers leave the profession after the first year of teaching; 39% leave the teaching occupation within five years. As pointed out in NCLB, the retention of highly qualified teachers is important key students' academic achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Previous literature notes that teacher attrition is high for new teachers as well as for experienced teachers who are close to retirement (Guarino, Santibanez & Daley,

2006). Minority teachers are likely to have lower attrition than Anglo teachers (Allen, Ingersoll & Krallik, 2005; Guarino et al., 2006); female teachers are more likely to leave than male teachers (Guarino et al., 2006). In addition, it has been revealed that student populations and school conditions affect teacher attrition. Urban schools characterized by minority students, low SES, and low academic performance have higher teacher attrition rates (Allen et al., 2005; Guarino et al., 2006; Loeb, Daling-Hammond & Luczak, 2005). Working conditions are another important cause of attrition. This includes low salaries, lack of support from school administration, and low community support, as well as school conditions such as large class sizes, poorly maintained facilities, and a lack of textbooks (Ingersoll, 2002; Loeb et al., 2005).

There are known means of increasing retention. Salary is one of the strongest predictors of teacher retention (Allen, et al., 2005; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2002). Mentoring and induction programs provided by schools are also helpful in lowering attrition rates, especially for new teachers (Guarino et al., 2006). More autonomy and administrative support also leads to increased retention (Guarino et al., 2006).

Recruitment is another essential issue when considering highly qualified teachers. As described in the introduction, the number of minority teachers is not in accord with the number of minority students. As a result, it is suggested that minority and culturally competent, teachers should be actively recruited (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004). Gandara and Hopkins (2010) suggest that "teachers from similar communities or who share similar backgrounds with [ELL] students may be the best suited to understand the needs of this population and the most likely to remain in the

profession" (p. 28). Because the teaching population is largely White and middle-class, recruiting teacher candidates from underrepresented communities is suggested as a way to combat this disparity (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010). Consequently, teacher preparation programs should give priority to candidates who can speak a language other than English, or who have professional experience with culturally diverse students (Nieto, 2000).

Teachers and schools

Educational researchers have documented teachers' experiences, students' experiences, and what is occurring in school settings. Students' reactions to hegemonic schooling are a common topic of inquiry (Fine, 1991; Fine & Rosenberg, 1983; MacLeod, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999; Willis, 1977). For example, based on a three-year ethnographic study conducted at a predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American high school in Houston, Valenzuela (1999) documented the notion of "caring" among students of Mexican descent. She found that these students felt uncared for by teachers because their cultural identities, including their background and language, were ignored in the school curriculums. Her study showed that these students, if they wanted to pursue educational success, were required to be assimilated into the mainstream culture by leaving their cultural capital behind.

Documenting dropouts from high schools, Fine (1991) argued that the United States' educational system has not been designed for low-income students or students of color. Her research revealed that students who remained in high school were more depressed and had fewer critical thoughts than dropouts (Fine & Rosenberg, 1983). Fine (1991) discovered that dropouts were more likely to be aware of social injustice in

society and schools than those who stayed in school. Dropouts were also more likely to

challenge teachers by criticizing such social structures. However, they were labeled as

troublemakers. Fine (1991) stated:

> For these students, the opportunity to a public education is hollow. It asks them to
>
> abandon family and community responsibilities; to sacrifice language, identity,
>
> and pride; to ignore the pain and suffering they witness around them and the
>
> culture and pleasure they take comfort in; and to deny fundamentally all that sits
>
> between their dreams and their circumstances, between the ideologies they so
>
> want to believe and the contradictions they so need to confront. (Fine, 1991, p.
>
> 182)

Cultural minority students have two choices: to be silenced like school

remainders, or to be labeled a troublemaker and eventually become a dropout. As Giroux

(1983) pointed out, students who challenge dominant ideologies in school end up leaving

school. By doing so, they also abandon the possibility of school and societal

transformation. Fine (1991) concluded:

> Schools exist as a site of struggle between and among interests of the state,
>
> capital, labor, educators, community representatives, advocates, students, and
>
> parents. Schools distribute skills and opportunities in ways textured by class, race,
>
> and gender asymmetries. (p. 199)

The belief that schools and educators do not do anything to prevent cultural and

social reproduction has been legitimized (Fernandes, 1988). It is assumed that teachers

and schools are always on the opposite side of minority students by promoting social

inequality. Concurrently, educational researchers have suggested pedagogical implementations and approaches to prevent such reproductive processes, avoid teachers' legitimate pedagogic culture from being insensitive to minoritized students' cultural background, and empower students (see Fine & Weis, 2003; Freire, 1970; Giroux 1983; McLaren & Scatamburlo-D'annibale, 2004).

However, under this reproductive process, where students in the cultural minority are disempowered and oppressed, it is crucial to know what is happening in schools from teachers' perspectives. Teachers' narratives are a powerful strategy for obtaining an understanding of school systems. These narratives not only provide an understanding of teachers' experiences, but also give insight into whether teachers really are on the opposite side of students.

Educational policies in Arizona

Public schools in Arizona have been impacted by three major educational policies: AZ LEARNS, NCLB, and the English-only policy (Wiley et al., 2005; Wright, 2005a). Every state has a different system and standard of NCLB compliance: Arizona has AZ LEARNS.

AZ LEARNS, or Arizona Leading Education through the Accountability and Results Notification System (Arizona Revised Statutes §15-241), was established in 2001 by ADE. It is a high-stakes testing school accountability system that follows the state legislative requirements (ADE, 2004a). In the same year, the federal government enacted NCLB (ADE, 2004a). Concomitantly, NCLB requires states to establish an accountability system to assess the performance of schools and school districts. As a

result, ADE has developed accountability programs, such as AIMS, MAP, and SAT-9, to fulfill requirements of both AZ LEARNS and NCLB. All test results from these programs are shared with public. Utilizing these results, ADE identifies schools that are failing to meet academic standards (ARS §15-241).

The AIMS test measures academic achievement in math, reading, and writing. The exam is based on state academic standards (Wright, 2005a). Students in Grades 3, 5, and 8 are required to take the AIMS test. Spanish language versions of the AIMS test were available prior to the formation of the English-only policy, but were abandoned upon implementation of AZ LEARNS (Wright, 2005a). The SAT-9 is used to assess second- to ninth-grade students' math, language, and reading achievement (Wright, 2005a). Prior to the English-only policy, ELL students had alternative options to taking the required SAT-9 assessment: students could be waived altogether, or a substitution of alternative tests was permitted. However, these options were also abandoned after the English-only policy was implemented (Wright, 2005a). MAP was developed to longitudinally assess individual students' academic growth, utilizing SAT-9 scores over time (Keegan, 2000). Based on the academic growth scores, MAP gives each school a rating: 1 (low) to 5 (excellent). However, MAP may be a less appropriate measure of growth for schools in Arizona due to the high student mobility rate (Wright, 2005a).

Utilizing results from AIMS, SAT-9, and MAP, AZ LEARNS labels each school based on its academic profile (ARS §15-241). There are five labels: 1) excelling, 2) highly performing, 3) performing, 4) underperforming, or 5) failing to meet academic standards (ARS §15-241). If a school remains underperforming for three consecutive

years, the school is labeled as failing to meet academic standards (ARS §15-241). If a school is labeled as failing to meet academic standards, the school must provide notification to residents in the school's neighborhood explaining the label and plans to improve performance (ARS §15-241). The school then works with a state-assigned "solutions team," which consists of master teachers, fiscal analysts, and curriculum assessment experts sent by ADE. School personnel who have experience with failing schools are also occasionally included (ADE, 2004b; ARS §15-241; Wright, 2005a).

According to federal law—specifically, NCLB—schools must submit an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report. Adequate Yearly Progress reports consist of the following: 1) progress in state standards, 2) percentage of students assessed, and 3) additional measures of school performance, including attendance and graduation rates (ADE, 2004b). To show students' progress regarding state standards, ADE uses AIMS scores for AYP reports. AZ LEARNS and NCLB are different in that AZ LEARNS is a state law while NCLB is a federal law. However, they are interwoven: both AZ LEARNS and NCLB use AIMS scores, and AZ LEARNS utilizes AYP reports, which were initially created for NCLB (ADE, 2004a).

A common critique of this high-stakes accountability system is that "it misconstrues the aims of education and indeed misunderstands the very nature of education—especially education in a liberal democracy" (Noddings, 2007, p. 7). More specifically, this system relies on an English standardized achievement outcome measure regardless of students' sociocultural background. McCarty (2009) notes the emphasis on testing and high achievement creates an environment where occurrences of artificial

manipulation of test scores, by removing low-performing students from the testing group take place, as well as artificial manipulation of drop-out rates. In several states that have an English-only policy, combining the impact of NCLB and the English-only policy creates a severely distressing situation for ELL students (Gandara & Orfield, 2010). Arizona's case is described below.

Arizona's educational situation is uniquely complicated due to an English-only policy in addition to NCLB and AZ LEARNS. Following California's Proposition 227, an English-only policy enacted in 1998, Arizona implemented its own English-only policy by way of Proposition 203 (ARS §15-752). The English-only policy in both states is named "English for Children." English for Children is also known as the Unz Initiative, an anti-bilingual movement named after Ron Unz. The English-only policy led to the requirement that all public school instruction, with only minimum exception, be conducted in English (ADE, 2000b, 2002). English-only policy supporters argue that students' native languages, unless their native language is English, should not be used in classroom settings (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010). Gandara and Orfield (2010) emphasize the biased nature of the English for the Children campaign:

> [The policy] popularized beliefs that bilingual education was not only ineffective but harmful for children's educational development, that learning English would happen rapidly and easily once these destructive programs were removed, and that there was a self-serving conspiracy of bilingual educators and researchers who were only concerned with preserving their own livelihood. (p. 244)

The English-only policy has negatively impacted language minority students (Valencia, 2002). Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Asato (2000) stated:

> In order to help ensure that these rich learning communities become the normative
> practice, we must first understand that the new language policies and practices are
> designed to homogenize an increasingly diverse state, and we must recognize that
> Proposition 227 is a proponent of exclusionary practice in which the students'
> home language becomes the basis of failure in California schools. (p. 104)

Arizona's program works by assessing students using a state language test. As of the 2004-2005 school year, Arizona utilizes the Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP) test. ADE used the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) until 2003 when ADE changed the assessment to SELP. The state language assessment test has been criticized for not effectively assessing students' language proficiency (Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra & Jimenez, 2005). If students are found to lack English fluency based on the assessment, they are placed in a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classroom for at least one year. In SEI classrooms, as with the mainstream classrooms, all academic instruction is in English. Teachers of SEI classrooms use more visual aids and different learning techniques for ELL students. The SEI classroom is expected to lead to accelerated learning of English.

Educational researchers have critiqued federal and state educational policies. Utilizing language educational policy as a framework, Wright (2005a) revealed that these federal and state educational policies have become "restricted oriented" for the following three reasons: 1) accommodations allowed by one policy are likely to be cancelled out by

the other policy; 2) accommodations developed by previous policy makers can be interpreted differently by the current policy makers; and, 3) new accommodations have been created for the sake of policy makers, not for the sake of ELL students. Specifically, as Wright (2005a) points out, while students were previously allowed to take AIMS and SAT-9 in Spanish, the English-only policy ensures that students now must take the assessment tests only in English. Similarly, although NCLB allows five-year native language testing, this option has been eliminated by the English-only policy (Wright, 2005a). Since ELL students are now required to take AIMS and SAT-9 in English, the state has created a new rule: certain ELL students' scores can be excluded when calculating school performance for both AZ LEARNS and NCLB (Wright, 2005a). Wright (2005b) believes this is a political act: without including these students' scores, the number of "excelling" schools can be increased as policy makers wish. Wright (2005b) argued it "has all the characteristics of political spectacle" (p. 690) within which policy actors play the game.

Furthermore, applying metaphor analysis to three public sources, Johnson (2005) revealed that English-only advocators imply that English is an essential skill for academic achievement, and teachers need to help linguistic minority students to succeed like English-speaking students do. Without any empirical support, English-only advocators believe bilingual education programs prevent ELL students from learning English (Johnson, 2005). Gandara, Losen, August, Uriarte, Gomez and Hopkins (2010) argue the following:

Minority languages are always culturally subordinated to the majority or

"official" language and thus so are their speakers. Such cultural subordination

always carries economic consequences. In sum, the stakes are very high for

language policies, as they shape the core identity of groups of people and

determine their social, educational, and economic opportunities. (p. 33)

Academic research does not support the efficacy of the English-only policy.

Based on previous research (Combs et al., 2005; Rolstad, Mahoney & Glass, 2005;

Wright, 2005a, 2005b) bilingual education appears more effective than SEI for ELL

students. Bilingual education promotes ELL students' academic and bi-literacy

achievement better than SEI programs (Gomez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005). Although

the English-only policy states that ELL students are required to be in SEI classrooms for

at least one year, statistical data shows that one year is not enough to develop English

proficiency and academic knowledge (Gandara et al., 2010; Mahoney, MacSwan, &

Thompson, 2005). According to Mahoney et al. (2005), 89% of the students across all

English proficiency levels failed to achieve "good" English proficiency within one year.

In addition, 71% of the students had "zero or negative score changes in their second year

of language testing" (Mahoney et al., 2005, p. 317). This result is contradictory to the

rationale of the English-only policy, which assumes students are likely to achieve "good"

English proficiency within a year under the SEI program (Mahoney et al., 2005).

The legislation's ambiguity has been pointed out as well (Gandara et al., 2010). If

a parent requests a waiver, a student can be taught in their native language. However,

Arizona's waiver system is extremely strict (Gandara et al., 2010). Arizona's English-

only policy allows parents to request a waiver only if one of the three following circumstances is recognized:

Type 1: Children who already know English: the child already possesses good English language skills, as measured by oral evaluation or standardized tests of English vocabulary comprehension, reading and writing, in which the child scores approximately at or above the state average for his grade level or at or above the fifth-grade average, whichever is lower.

Type 2: Older children: the child is age 10 years or older, and it is the informed belief of the school principal and educational staff that an alternate course of educational study would be better suited to the child's overall educational progress and rapid acquisition of basic English language skills.

Type 3: Children with special individual needs: the child has already been placed for a period of not less than 30 calendar days during that school year in an English language classroom and it is subsequently the informed belief of the school principal and educational staff that the child has such special and individual physical or psychological needs, above and beyond the child's lack of English proficiency, that an alternate course of educational study would be better suited to the child's overall educational development and rapid acquisition of English. (ADE, 2000b; 2002)

To summarize, parents are able to start the waiver process only if: 1) their child already knows English, 2) the child is 10 years old or older, or 3) the child has special physical or psychological needs. Waiver requests need to be submitted annually. As for

the Type 1 waiver, students need to take SELP, the Arizona language assessment, and demonstrate their "good" English language skills. This definition of "good" language is ambiguous, since it is up to the superintendent's statutory authority, which created the guidelines for implementing the English-only policy in the first place (Hunnicutt & Castro, 2005). In other words, the authority can define and keep redefining what it means to have "good" English language skills, depending on what they feel is right.

As for the waiver system, even if documentation is provided for one of the three types of waivers, there is no guarantee that the student will be placed in a dual language (DL) classroom. The English-only policy allows teachers and local school districts to reject the parent's waiver request without any explanation (ADE, 2000b). Furthermore, DL classrooms can only be opened if a school has more than 20 students qualified to be in such classrooms (ADE 2000b).

Arizona's English-only policy gives certain students advantages in order to obtain a Type 1 waiver. Students who only speak English at home do not have to take the SELP test. ADE further explains how English learners are defined: "If the primary or home language of the student is other than English, according to the home language survey, the student's English proficiency *must* be assessed" (ADE, 2002).

For example, if a student speaks Spanish at home, but wants to be in a DL classroom, that student needs to obtain a higher score than the state average on SELP in English. Then, the student's parents can ask for the waiver. If a student who speaks only English at home wants to be in a DL classroom, that particular student does not have to be assessed by the state language assessment, according to the English-only policy.

English-only speaking students are assumed to possess higher than the state average for English proficiency and can therefore have a free pass to DL classrooms to become bi-literate. That is, whether a student scores better than average is only important if the student does not exclusively speak English at home. Moreover, SEI is supposed to be for ELL students to gain English proficiency. As Combs et al. (2005) argued, if ELL students have acquired enough English proficiency to pass the test, the student should not be required to obtain a waiver to get out of SEI classrooms.

Previous studies have documented the reactions of students, students' parents, and teachers toward the English-only policy. Interviewing 36 teachers, administrators, and staff, and 19 parents at an elementary school in Arizona, Combs et al. (2005) found that SEI classrooms traumatize the students. The students felt angry and irritated by the fact they were placed in an English-only classroom. Combs et al. (2005) also reported that teachers felt confused because they were assigned to teach in SEI classrooms without knowing what the "SEI" meant and without having appropriate training. Teachers were also frustrated with the fact that the AIMS test is now only conducted in English.

Gandara et al. (2010) pointed out that English-only policy implementation in both California and Arizona "was marked by a lack of specificity about what the law allowed and a lack of clear operational definitions of instructional approaches, leaving districts and schools to interpret the law and develop practice essentially on their own" (p. 41). As a result, depending on the attitudes and beliefs of schools and districts, the programs available for ELL students differ (Gandara et al., 2010). Based on their research, Gandara and Orfield (2010) put forth the following conclusions regarding the English-only policy:

1) No, the restrictive language policies imposed in the three states, Arizona,

California, and Massachusetts, have not delivered on their promise.

2) Yes, teachers have felt confused and disheartened by these policies.

3) There is an urgent need to study other outcomes of these policies, such as

whether they are increasing misplacement in special education and

encouraging students to drop out of school and whether they are affecting

teachers' preparation and skills as well as their likelihood of staying in the

field. (p. 247)

This current chapter reviewed previous studies regarding teachers' lives, teachers'

lives in an accountability era, highly qualified teachers, teacher preparation programs,

teacher attrition and retention, teachers and schools, and educational policies in Arizona.

As discussed above, educational researchers have investigated the negative impact of

such policies on students and teachers as well as the ambiguities and questionable

effectiveness of the educational policies. Researchers have documented the voices of

teachers, students, and parents in California and Arizona regarding the English-only

policy. However, structured interviews are not enough to understand what is occurring in

classrooms. Focusing on teachers' lives in schools, this current study uses an

ethnographic approach. The fieldwork was conducted by formal interviews and informal

conversations with teachers and by classroom participant observations to see what is

occurring in classrooms and to gain an understanding of teachers' lives in Arizona, which

has been uniquely impacted by three major educational policies: NCLB, AZ LEARNS,

and the English-only policy. Similar to Rose (1995), and other scholars (Ladson-Billings,

1994; Nieto, 2003), this study will explore teachers' everyday lives, focusing positive

aspects of teachers' professional ideologies, and how teachers are successfully struggling

with educational policies.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research methodology and analytic plan for the current study are discussed. First, educational ethnography, the methodology used in this study, is introduced. This includes classroom observations, informal conversations, and interviews. Second, the researcher's reflexivity, including the rationale for focusing on CES and the teachers of CES, is provided. Timelines and analysis will follow. Finally, the border city in Southern Arizona where CES is located, CES itself, and the teachers will be described.

Educational ethnography

The data for this study were obtained through an ethnographic approach. Ethnography is "a theory-building enterprise constructed through detailed systematic observing, recording, and analyzing of human behavior in specifiable spaces and interactions" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 29). The ethnographic approach explores what is happening in the field; that is, an exploration of the natural, non-lab setting (Heath & Street, 2008). The methodology involves participant observation, conversations, and interviews (Hymes, 1982). The seven characteristics of ethnography, provided by LeCompte and Schensul (2010), allow for a clear understanding of this approach:

1) It is carried out in a natural setting, not in a laboratory.

2) It involves intimate, face-to-face interaction with participants.

3) It presents an accurate reflection of participant perspectives and behaviors.

4) It uses inductive, interactive, and recursive data collection and analytic strategies to build local cultural theories.

5) It uses multiple data sources, including both quantitative and qualitative data.

6) It frames all human behavior and belief within a sociopolitical and historical context.

7) It uses the concept of culture as a lens through which to interpret results. (p. 12)

In other words, this approach focuses on learning from a group of people rather than studying them (Spradley, 1980). At the same time, ethnography has a responsibility "to represent ways of life with full attention to the ingenuity and complexity they demand" (Kuipers & McDermott, 2007, p. 3).

The ethnographic approach is frequently utilized in educational settings to understand school occurrences (Heath & Street, 2008). For example, educational ethnographers have documented the importance of cultural differences between school and home, as well as between teachers and students (e.g., Delpit, 1995; MacLeod, 1995; McDermott & Gospodinoff, 1979; Philips, 1983; Spindler, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). Gilmore and Smith (1982) emphasize: "what ethnography should bring to education is not answers, but a listening, learning posture that—based in respect for informants— leads to the explication of the important, unaddressed questions" (p. 5). Stritikus and Wiese (2006) also stressed that the ethnographic approach is well suited for understanding teachers' perspectives on the policy-to-practice connection: "building an appreciation for teachers' perspectives can provide valuable insight regarding how the

people most responsible for the day-to-day implementation of reforms negotiate, appropriate, or resist these changes" (p. 1111).

Agar (1980) stated that ethnographic research is most useful when observations and interviews are used together. To maximize the utility of this research, and considering that previous studies of teachers' narratives used structured interviews as a data collection methodology, this current study uses a dual-method ethnographic approach. Both participant observation and interviews are used to explore teachers' narratives and experiences. In addition, documents and artifacts about district and school contexts from published reports, website data, and news articles were collected.

Classroom observations

As mentioned, this current study used classroom observations as a means of data collection. Spradley (1980) notes that four types of participant observation exist: 1) passive participation, occurring when a participant observer is present, but is not actively participating in the environment—in other words, the researcher is a fly on the wall; 2) active participation, referring to situations where a researcher participates to learn culturally constructed rules for observed behavior; 3) moderate participation, when the researcher spends time as a passive participant and spends time as an active participant; and, 4) complete participation, where the researcher becomes an active participant in the environment being studied.

Spradely (1980) also described three types of observation: 1) descriptive observation, or situations where a researcher observes a socially occurring situation and takes notes as the situation unfolds; 2) focused observation, or situations where a

researcher, after conducting a descriptive observation and deciding on several themes, focuses on specific subject areas; and, 3) selective observation, where the researcher begins investigating and trying to understand what is being observed. In this study, all three types of observations were utilized. As will be discussed in the timeline section, different approaches were used at different time periods.

Throughout the classroom observations for this study, extensive field notes were taken. As suggested by Rossman and Rallis (1998), the field notes had two columns: the running record and observer comments. The running record was used to document classroom activities, interactions among students, and the physical environment. The observer comments column was used for reflections and reactions to classroom occurrences. The field notes were entered in a computer file typically on the same day of the observation, or otherwise were entered into the computer no later than 48 hours after the observation.

Informal conversations and interviews

Ethnographic interviews can be either formal or resemble friendly conversations (Spradley, 1979). For this study, informal conversations were conducted throughout the fieldwork. Since the teachers were extremely busy and their schedules were sometimes unexpectedly changed, interviews were conducted whenever feasible, including before, during, and after the classroom observations. These conversations were recorded and field notes were taken once the interview ended.

In addition to informal conversations, two formal interviews were conducted with each teacher. These interviews were scheduled at a time convenient for each teacher. The

interviews were recorded on audio-tape and spanned from 20 minutes to 50 minutes, depending on the teacher and the number of unexpected interruptions. Both formal interviews were semi-structured. In other words, there were pre-planned questions and follow-up questions asked as the teachers brought up related topics.

Selection of teachers and classrooms

I initially wanted to observe first- and fifth-grade classrooms. There were several reasons I chose grades that were several years apart. First, Philips (1984) was successful in conducting an ethnographic study involving a four-way comparison of Anglo and Native American first- and sixth-grade classrooms. By observing first- and fifth-graders I would be able to see differences between students new to the school and students who have been in the school for several years. As Philips (1984) researched two different types of classes, Anglo and Native American classrooms, I also decided to observe two different types of classrooms: Dual Language classrooms (DL) and Sheltered English Immersion classrooms (SEI). I originally planned to study first graders. However, the elementary school had five first-grade classes that were all SEI classrooms, but no first-grade DL classrooms. The second-grade had three SEI classrooms and two DL classrooms, and was therefore selected for examination. Replicating Philips' (1984) design, this study uses a four-way observation of DL and SEI second- and fifth-grade classrooms (see Table 1):

Table 1. 2nd and 5th grades classrooms and teachers

	SEI Classrooms	DL Classrooms
2nd grade	Ms. Smith Ms. Coffey Ms. Foster	Ms. Walker Ms. Lopez
5th grade	Ms. Jones Mr. Tyler Ms. Hoffman	Ms. Fernandez Ms. Brown

Researcher's reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the relationship between the researcher and those being researched (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Reflexivity is an important notion for the ethnographic approach (Rossman & Rallis, 1998), since the researcher is a crucial part of data collection of ethnographic studies (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). LeCompte and Schensul (2010) describe ethnographic researchers as a research tool:

The basic tools of ethnography use the researcher's eyes and ears as the primary modes for data collection. Much like naturalists, ethnographic researchers learn through systematic observation in the "field" by interviewing and carefully recording what they see, hear, and observe people doing while also learning the meanings that people attribute to what they do and the things they make. (p. 2)

In other words, ethnographic studies are presented to readers through researchers' experiences and perspectives. Therefore, is crucial "to locate ourselves in our studies honestly and openly, in an admission that observations are filtered through our own experience, rather than seeking to provide the detached voice of authority" (O'Reilly, 2009, p. 191). Consequently, O'Reilly (2009) emphasizes:

In any case, the reader should be offered as full a description as possible of where the ethnography was done and how, with what misgivings, what mistakes, what expectations and disappointments, what revelations and what pleasures, to enable the reader not only to enjoy but also to evaluate the written product. (p. 192)

In other words, subjective factors, such as who the researcher is, have been recognized as a crucial part of the research (Yon, 2003). As such, I will explain who I am and how my relationship with teachers at CES began.

I am a researcher with limited experience with the American educational system. I am a Japanese woman and lived in Japan for the first 23 years of my life. Therefore, my initial observations were conducted from an outsider's (etic) perspective, although my perspective shifted to more of an insider (emic) as time passed. I am neither Anglo nor Hispanic. As such, I was able to see aspects of the school culture which would otherwise be invisible to people who have decades of experience within the United States. educational system, whether as a student or a teacher. I stuck to my role as a learner throughout the fieldwork. In other words, in line with Agar's (1980) metaphor for ethnographers, I was like a child and a student to the teachers of CES. I asked a lot of questions, sometimes the same questions, until I understood the answers.

My three-year relationship with teachers at CES started when I was a teaching assistant (TA) for a graduate course, Field Experience in School and Community, during the fall semester of 2003. The course was taught off campus in the school library of CES. Most of the graduate students who took the course were teachers from CES. As I was born and raised in Japan, and as it was the first time I stepped into an American

elementary school, I was excited by this opportunity. My first impression of the school was "colorful." Walls of the library and hallways were covered with posters and students' work. Using a variety of fonts, sizes, materials, and languages, these vivid displays exhibited the students' work, and seemed to welcome me to the school. I imagined the delightful school life enjoyed by the teachers and students. I also noticed the cleanliness of the school. There was no trash in hallways. Desks, chairs, and library computers were neatly organized. There was another aspect that caught my eye: some posters, instructions, and students' work were in Spanish. Being accustomed to monolingual Japanese society, I admired the fact that elementary school students were bi-literate. Both English and Spanish works were randomly displayed under the same subject themes. For example, there were stories about students' families displayed on the walls. Some students wrote the stories in English; other stories were written in Spanish. Regardless of the student's language, their academic progress was proudly displayed. This gave me the impression that bi-literacy was embraced, and both languages were respected, at this school.

Throughout my tenure as a TA in fall 2003, I had many conversations with the graduate students who were also teachers at CES. I quickly learned my utopian impression was incorrect. Contrary to the happy, bi-literate-embracing atmosphere I perceived, I learned about many issues teachers were facing. These included: encouraging students to maintain their heritage language, effectively teaching in a SEI program under an English-only policy, effectively teaching English to students who recently moved from Mexico, and improving students' overall reading and writing skills. My interest peaked at the end of the fall semester when the teachers presented term

papers based on their teaching struggles. The teachers' projects were too provocative to ignore. Knowing most of the teachers would be taking another graduate course the following semester, I inquired about, and was granted, an extension to my teaching assistantship. As expected, almost all the same teachers from CES took the next course: Practicum in Bilingual Education, Dual Language, ESL, and SEI. I was continuously intrigued by what I learned. For example, even though more than 90% of their students were Hispanic, the teachers were required to comply with Arizona's English-only policy. As described earlier, this proposition dictates, with minimum exceptions, that if students cannot speak a certain level of English, the students cannot receive instruction in their native language. As a result, teachers are challenged to teach in a language their students do not understand. Teachers, who previously taught without any language restrictions, now had to adjust to teaching in SEI classrooms.

As the semester continued, I became closer to the teachers. The teachers started inviting me into their classrooms right before or after the graduate course. The teachers shared their students' work, classroom decorations, and their daily challenges. However, since the graduate course started after elementary students went home, I was unable to observe teacher-student interactions. As I became inspired by the teachers' narratives, I became increasingly interested in understanding the plight of these teachers, especially in relation to the new policies they felt were thrust upon them. At this point I decided my dissertation would involve gaining an understanding of the teachers' situation.

The school administrators and the teachers allowed me to observe their classrooms and interview the teachers. With permission from the school district, teachers

were told the purpose of the study. Consent forms were provided and confidentiality was assured. As such, teacher names and student names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms. Fieldwork began in August 2004 and was completed in May 2005. To share the findings of this study, teachers were occasionally visited in 2005-2006 school year.

During the fieldwork, my etic perspective shifted to an emic perspective. Becoming an emerging participant, my researcher/outsider role shifted to that of researcher/teacher. This shift will be explained in detail in the following timeline.

Timeline

This study was conducted in three phases, based on the ethnographic approach: Phase One (August to December 2004), Phase Two (January to May 2005), and Phase Three (August 2005 to May 2006). Each phase had different approaches in terms of ethnographic interviews and observations.

In the first phase, each classroom was observed for an entire week, resulting in approximately 35 hours of observation time. All classes had a specific schedule for each subject. On a weekly basis, each subject had at least two time slots. This allowed me to see sequences of weekly activities in each classroom. After I observed each classroom for one week, I returned to observe each class again for a second full week. During this entire phase, a passive participation approach was taken: I was present in each classroom, but did not participate in classroom activities. I sat in the back of the classroom and took notes. I had minimal interactions with teachers and students, limited to greetings and pleasantries. In addition, my observation type was descriptive: I was in a socially occurring situation and I took notes as situations unfolded.

The first round of formal interviews was also conducted during this phase. They were semi-structured interviews, meant to obtain teachers' autobiographical data. By learning each teacher's life history, it helped me start to understand and interpret my observations and interviews with the teachers (Agar, 1980). Some questions were pre-planned. I asked the teachers why they wanted to be a teacher, how long they have taught as a teacher in this school, and why they selected the elementary school and the school district where they currently work. Follow-up questions and related topics came up throughout the course of the interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded.

Informal conversations occurred whenever the teachers were available to speak with me. These were usually quick conversations that occurred in various contexts, such as when school buses were leaving, when the students were outside for recess, when students were finishing up their lunch in the cafeteria, or when the class was being taught by a specialist or another teacher. In the middle of Phase One, one teacher invited me to have lunch with a few of the teachers. After spending one lunch period with the teachers, I realized this would be an ideal time to talk with them. I ate lunch with the teachers every day thereafter. Based on the observations and conversations with teachers, thematic categories were identified at the end of this phase.

During the second phase, moderate and active participation approaches with focused and selective observations were taken. As time passed, I became very close with the second-grade SEI teachers. I knew these teachers from the graduate courses, so we became close quickly. Although I kept observing and talking to other teachers, I started to spend more time with the second-grade SEI teachers. Since their schedule and the

classroom type were the same, these three teachers had lunch together most of the time. Lunch was their time to share teaching materials, strategies, and ideas. Subsequently, my role as an ethnographer was redefined (Agar, 1980). I stopped taking constant field notes and started to help the teachers and students. I would usually walk around the classroom and help out in any way I could. For example, sometimes I sat down next to a student and we read a book together. It was not long before students started to talk to me during classroom activities. I was commonly asked, "Mrs. Satoko, can I read this with you?" After noticing how the students were responding to me, some teachers began asking me to help individual students. The more involved I became with daily classroom activities, the more I was able to understand the teachers and their feelings. In the middle of this phase, as I became more involved with the second-grade SEI classrooms, I was invited to join a school excursion. The teachers further asked if I would be willing to be more than an observer, and I was given a group of students to look after. Moreover, when CES had a celebration party for obtaining A+ recognition, one of the second-grade SEI teachers reserved tickets for my husband and me. At this point, my role as a participant observer became closer to the role of a teacher.

As thematic categories had emerged by this phase, focused and selected observation was conducted. There were eight narrowed themes at this time: 1) I cannot do everything, 2) I used to be a teacher, now I am a test-giver, 3) You know your parents are always welcome in our class, 4) What did she say?, 5) Because they (students) are worth it, 6) We are going to sing a Happy Birthday song in English first, then Spanish, then sign language, 7) It is heart-breaking, and 8) They need me. These themes dictated

where I focused my attention during classroom occurrences and conversations. To gain greater insight into the emerging themes, and to find differences within each theme, a second round of interviews was conducted with each teacher. Similar to the first round of interviews, the second round of interviews was scheduled at the teachers' convenience. At the second interview, a handout was provided as a guide (see Appendix A). The handout included a list of the eight themes. While going through the eight themes on the handout, teachers shared their insights with me. Like the first interviews, the questions were semi-structured and follow-up questions were asked as the interviews proceeded. The interviews were audio-recorded.

There were far more informal conversations during Phase Two than there were in Phase One. This is because lunchtime emerged as an ideal opportunity for obtaining insight. Some of the most insightful occasions occurred when I sat with the second-grade teachers as they talked among themselves, absent of students. During these occasions, the teachers were candid because their students were not around. Lunchtime was not the only time I had informal conversations with teachers. I continuously spoke with teachers throughout the day and inquired about classroom occurrences and their perceptions of classroom events. These informal conversations were also recorded as field notes once the observations for the day were completed.

As for Phase Three, in order to share my observation records and have follow-up conversations with the teachers, I visited CES several times between August 2005 and May 2006. In addition, with the goal of sharing what I learned from the teachers, and for gaining additional insight into my observations and the teachers' narratives, I conducted

an interview with the school principal. This interview was audio-taped and later transcribed. The interview lasted nearly one hour.

Table 2 provides a summary of the fieldwork of this study.

Table 2. Summary of the fieldwork

Phases	Observations	Interviews
Phase One (August to December 2004)	- Passive participation - Descriptive observation	- 1st set of formal interviews (semi-structured) for teachers' autobiographical information - Informal conversations
Phase Two (January to May 2005)	- Moderate/active participation - Focused/selected observation	- 2nd set of formal interviews (semi-structured) with eight emerged themes - Informal conversations
Phase Three (August 2005 to May 2006)	- No classroom observations	- Follow-up conversations - Interview with the school principal

Analysis

An ethnographic approach uses recursive ongoing analysis. Based on recurring incidents and conversation topics, I developed thematic categories. Eight themes were created based on Phase One findings. After these themes were determined, I gained further insight by re-interviewing the teachers and conducting focused observations during Phase Two. This process led me to focus on three central themes, as will be discussed in the next three chapters. The narratives and observations described in these chapters are the best representation of the themes.

The border city in Southern Arizona

The fieldwork for this dissertation was conducted in a metropolitan city in Arizona near the United States-Mexican border. According to Census 2000, the border city's total population is approximately 756,000. Almost one-third of the total population

is Hispanic. The median age of the population is 35.2 years old, and 24.5% of the

population is under 18 years old. Nearly 47% of the households in this city have children

under 18 years old (Anonymous, 2010a).

The city's physical size is approximately 2,000 square miles (Anonymous, 2010a).

Within this land area, different characteristics are revealed when the southern and

northern parts of the city are compared. For example, the northern part of the city is

predominately White: more than 85% of the population in the north is White, compared

to only 43% in the south (Anonymous, 2010a). Furthermore, there is a much larger

Hispanic population in the southern region than in the northern region. In the northern

areas of the city, only 20% of the households speak Spanish. In the southern region, 78%

of the households are Spanish-speaking (Anonymous, 2010b). The density of the

population differs by area as well. The southern part of the city has approximately 10

times more people per square mile on average than the northern area (Anonymous,

2010a).

Cactus Elementary School, where the fieldwork for this study was conducted, is

located in the southern region, where the linguistically and culturally diverse population

is notable.

Cactus Elementary School

Cactus Elementary School is a Title I public school, located in Southern Arizona.

It has more than 700 students and approximately 90% of the students are Hispanic. More

than half of the students are recognized as ELL students. Since the school is close to the

Mexican border, there are a lot of transient students. As such, the school's mobility rate is

high: approximately 50% of the students come and go every year. Free lunch and breakfast are provided to over 90% of the students and almost 9% of the students are homeless. Cactus Elementary School is one of only a few public elementary schools in the area that maintains a bilingual education program.

Teachers

Ten teachers participated in this study. They were selected based on the classes they were teaching. I knew some of the teachers from my TA experience. As mentioned earlier, the teachers' real names are not used.

Ms. Smith (second-grade SEI) has five years of teaching experience, all at CES. Ms. Smith was 15 years old when she came to the United States from Cuba. Her native language is Spanish. Ms. Smith explained that she had no English proficiency when she first entered the United States educational system. As such, she was placed in an English-only classroom where nobody could speak Spanish except for one other girl. Ms. Smith believes her experience as a student allows her to understand the plights of her current students. At the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, there were three students who did not speak any English in her class. Ms. Smith is also a graduate student.

Ms. Coffey (second-grade SEI), also a graduate student, has 22 years of teaching experience. Ms. Coffey started teaching at CES four years prior to the start of this research study. Ms. Coffey, who is from Chili, came to the United States when she was 17 years old. At the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, 14 of the 25 students in her class spoke no English.

Ms. Foster (second-grade SEI) is an Anglo teacher originally from California. Ms. Foster has 17 years of teaching experience. She has taught at CES for five years. At the beginning of the school year, Ms. Foster had three students in her class who were native English speakers. The remaining students spoke some English, but they did not pass the SELP exam and were placed in the SEI classroom. Ms. Foster can understand some Spanish conversation and vocabulary, but is not fluent. She was a graduate student in the class for which I served as a teaching assistant, but decided not to continue her graduate work since she was very busy with her profession.

Ms. Walker (second-grade DL) is an Anglo teacher who has spent her entire 11-year teaching career at CES. Ms. Walker moved to the city where CES is located when she was a child and she describes this city as her home. English is Ms. Walker's first language and she considers Spanish her second language. Ms. Walker learned Spanish as a foreign language in high school and college. She has also learned Spanish from her students. Evidenced by the fact that Ms. Walker teaches in DL classrooms, she is quite fluent in Spanish.

Ms. Lopez (second-grade DL) has three years of teaching experience. Ms. Lopez has taught at CES throughout her teaching career. Ms. Lopez moved from El Salvador to Los Angeles in 1988. She attended junior high in America and took classes to help her learn English as a second language. When Ms. Lopez was learning English, her teachers used her native language, Spanish, as an instructional tool. After moving from Los Angeles to Arizona, Ms. Lopez graduated from high school in the city where CES is located. She chose CES because it is one of the few bilingual elementary schools in

Arizona. Ms. Lopez wanted to teach in bilingual classrooms because that is how she learned English and she wants her students to maintain their first language.

Ms. Walker and Ms. Lopez team-taught the two second-grade DL classrooms. There were approximately 45 students categorized into two groups: Group A and Group B. Although all of the students were in DL classrooms, and therefore passed the state language assessment test in the past, half of the students did not pass the state language assessment test for the 2004-2005 school year. Therefore, Group A consisted of students who passed the test and were therefore allowed to have instruction in both English and Spanish. Group B consisted of students who did not pass the test, and thereby were instructed only in English. Since Group A and Group B students had been in DL classes together for the past couple of years, the school decided to keep the students together. Group A and Group B started and ended the day together, but their classrooms were separated for instruction. Although Group B students did not pass the test, their scores were close to passing.

Ms. Jones (fifth-grade SEI) is an Anglo teacher. Ms. Jones started her teaching career in 1976 and has been teaching at CES since 1987. Ms. Jones believes teaching is in her blood, as some of her family members are also teachers. Ms. Jones does not speak Spanish, but she knows some Spanish words and phrases. She had 26 students at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year. Ms. Jones taught 19 of these students when they were in fourth grade. One of the seven new students had just moved from Mexico and could not speak any English. Ms. Jones is also a graduate student.

Ms. Hoffman (fifth-grade SEI) has 15 years of experience teaching preschool and elementary school. Ms. Hoffman has taught at CES for five years. Ms. Hoffman has lived in the city where CES is located her entire life. While her first language is English, she can speak Spanish. Her family and relatives speak Spanish, but because of her parent's decision, Ms. Hoffman spoke only English at home. As a result, although she had heard Spanish all her life, she was not able to speak it. However, Ms. Hoffman picked up Spanish from her students and is now fluent. Ms. Hoffman had 24 students. Among her 24 students, seven students had limited English proficiency and six students were also special education program students.

Mr. Taylor (fifth-grade SEI) is a relatively new teacher at the elementary school. When fieldwork for this study began, Mr. Taylor was starting his second year of teaching. He taught the same students when they were in fourth grade. He is from the city where CES is located, and he attended school in the same district that CES is located. Similar to Ms. Hoffman, Mr. Taylor's family speaks Spanish, and he can understand what they say, but he is not as fluent as he would like to be. He defines English as his first language. Out of his 26 students, four had the option of being in a DL classroom, but the students' parents decided to have the students remain in the SEI classroom.

Ms. Brown (fifth-grade DL) has spent her entire eight-year teaching career at CES. Ms. Brown was born and raised in the city where CES is located. Ms. Brown is an Anglo teacher who speaks Spanish as a second language. When Ms. Brown was young, her family moved to a Mexican neighborhood. Growing up in this neighborhood led her to acquire Spanish proficiency. For the past seven years, Ms. Brown has been teaching in

DL classrooms. She had 28 students in her DL class. Unlike Ms. Jones and Mr. Taylor, this is her first year teaching her current group of students.

Ms. Fernandez (fifth-grade DL) has four years of teaching experience. Her first year of teaching coincided with the first year of the English-only program. She taught in a SEI classroom her first year and has taught in DL classrooms every year since. Ms. Fernandez is a fourth-generation teacher. She grew up in Mexico and moved to the United States when she was 16 years old. Spanish is her first language. Ms. Fernandez chose to work in this school district because she wanted to work with "her people"— people who represent her own culture and community. She had 28 students and has taught this group of students since they were in third grade. She is also a graduate student.

CHAPTER 4

"I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LIVES."

TEACHERS' COMPASSION AND COMMITMENT

In this chapter, teachers' humanistic features—their compassion and commitment—are explored. First, this chapter focuses on why CES teachers chose to become, and choose to remain teachers, especially at a challenging school and in a challenging school district: CES is a border school, where 90% of the students are Hispanic, 90% of the students receive free lunch and breakfast, 9% of the students are homeless, and 50% of students move in and out every year. In addition, this chapter explores CES teachers' professional life.

There are prior studies that document why teachers continue to be teachers. Described as "3 Ls"—lovers and dreamers, learners, and leaders—Cochran-Smith (2006) identified three characteristics of teachers who are likely to keep teaching and be successful in schools. First, teachers who develop "loving and caring relationships with students as human beings" (p. 12) and deeply commit "to ensuring that all students have rich opportunities to learn academically challenging material" (p. 12) are likely to remain teachers. She identifies such teachers as lovers and dreamers. The second L is learners. Through collaboration with other teachers, teachers can keep inquiring "to raise new questions about students, subject matter, assessments, equity and access, and to generate local knowledge through collaborative analysis and interpretation" (p. 17). The last L is leaders. When teachers become an advocate for social justice in education, they remain

teachers and act as leaders (Cochran-Smith, 2006). In addition to teaching students, such teachers engage in efforts to make their school and society equitable for all students.

Nieto (2003) made similar observations when she met with a group of public high school teachers over the course of a year to converse about overall concerns and to ask questions about their teaching lives. This included inquiries as to why the teachers remained teachers. Nieto (2003) reported that teaching is a profession based on love, which has two aspects: "Respecting and affirming students' identities, and demonstrating care and respect for students" (p. 39).

Nieto (2005) further investigated why teachers decide to become teachers even though working conditions are not attractive: teachers spend 50 hours a week on average for teaching duties, their average lunch time is 32 minutes, and they spend almost $500 a year for teaching supplies from their own pocket money. Although her research shows that teachers become teachers for a variety of reasons, Nieto (2005) broadly categorizes the reasons into four major ideas: 1) "Not all teachers are 'born to be teachers' or get to teaching through a direct route," 2) "Teaching helps them make sense of the world," 3) "Helping students claim their place in the world is a key reason for teaching," and 4) "Teaching helps them become more fully human" (p. x-xi).

These previous studies show that teachers' passion for their profession lies within their strong compassion and commitment. This chapter will ask questions similar to those discussed above. First, the reasons why CES teachers decided to be teachers at CES are explored. Then, this chapter provides examples of what teachers do in their classrooms on a daily basis.

To increase ease of reference, Table 1 is provided below.

Table 1: 2nd and 5th grades classrooms and teachers

	SEI Classrooms	DL Classrooms
2nd grade	Ms. Smith Ms. Coffey Ms. Foster	Ms. Walker Ms. Lopez
5th grade	Ms. Jones Mr. Tyler Ms. Hoffman	Ms. Fernandez Ms. Brown

"They need me."

This section focuses on why teachers remain teachers even though they face a barrage of barriers. When I interviewed the teachers, they explained why they decided to teach, and continue to teach, at CES. One of the most commonly stated reasons was that the teachers believe they can make a difference in their students' lives.

Field notes from Tuesday, November 16, 2004

Ms. Foster: *I enjoy children. I think that is the thing that keeps me going…it is the children. Then watching them learn and…in that you make a difference and that you care about kids enough that you can make…even if you make a difference in just one child's life, um…you know…I think that is the key.*

Field notes from Thursday, November 18, 2004

Ms. Smith: *What makes me keep going as a teacher…I think it is the kids. They need me. They need me…it is not the standard mandate by state; it is not the mandate from the district. It is the kids. I can make a difference in their lives. That's it.*

Ms. Smith moved from Cuba when she was 17 years old. This experience allowed her to understand what linguistically and culturally diverse students are going through as ELL students. As long as Ms. Smith can make a contribution to students' lives, she remains committed to her job at CES.

Ms. Lopez, a second-grade DL classroom teacher, chose to teach at CES due to her cultural background.

Field notes from Monday, November 22, 2004

Ms. Lopez: *I thought this was the side of the town could need me the most, because what I really wanted to do, which is teaching Spanish. And this is the side of the town, which has the most of the Hispanic kids. And some of the kids really come from low socio-economic families. That is what I wanted to do—help— especially those kids. The ones have less of a chance to make it, you know, to the university, to actually have them inspired to do it, to actually have them believe they can, to actually give them opportunities to learn in Spanish, learn English, and learn science, social studies, then they are able to make it. That is what I want to do…the other reason is because this is the only bilingual elementary school [in this town]. And I wanted to teach bilingual classrooms…because it's how I learned, you know, having my ESL teacher speak Spanish to me. The other reason is that I did not want kids from Mexico, or any other Hispanic background, to lose their language. I kept mine, because my parents spoke Spanish at home, and I wanted to give it back to kids, you know, have an opportunity to also learn and keep the language.*

For Ms. Lopez, her experiences influenced her decision to teach at CES. Coming from El Salvador to the United States as a teenager, she had a great ESL teacher in high school. The teacher used Spanish as a teaching tool in the ESL classroom. This class led to her being bilingual. That experience led her to want to teach DL classrooms in the future. Since CES is one of a few schools in Arizona that kept DL classrooms after the implementation of the English-only policy, her choice of schools was limited.

The idea of "students need me" seemed to be agreed upon by most of the teachers. Referring to Ms. Smith's quote, "they need me," during my interviews with other teachers, Ms. Fernandez shared the following insights.

Field notes from Wednesday, March 9, 2005

Ms. Fernandez: *You know what? I would change the "they need me" to "I need them." Because I do not think I would be happy working at a private school or*

*working on the north side. I like this. This is my people. So I do not see myself
working anywhere else. I need them. I need this environment, I need to know that
I am helping, you know, giving something back. And that I am helping them,
because once I came to this country, somebody helped me, so I would like to
return the favor and help someone else. So it's not that "they need me" it's that
"I need them."*

Ms. Fernandez came to the United States from Mexico when she was 16 years old.
As an immigrant, she received a great deal of help when she did not know English. She
would like to do the same thing for students who immigrated to this country.

The following observation also shows why CES teachers remain teachers.

Field notes from Friday, May 19, 2006

I was having lunch with Ms. Foster, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Coffey in Ms. Foster's
classroom. Two fifth-graders came in. They were Ms. Smith's previous students.
They wanted to say "Hi" to Ms. Smith. These two fifth-graders and Ms. Smith
hugged and had a small chat. Then the fifth-graders left.

Ms. Foster: *This is one of the things. To see they are making it. We know what we
are doing is right.*

The teachers' belief that they are making a difference in their students' lives was a
fundamental motivation for continuing as teachers. As shown above, teachers' identities
and cultural backgrounds have vast influence on their decisions. Some teachers
understand what their students are going through as ELL students since they are also
Hispanic immigrants to the United States. It is clear that the students' demographic and
cultural background is a prominent factor in the teachers' commitment to teach
specifically at CES. The relationship between teachers and students at CES is based on
mutually needing each other.

"Because they (students) are worth it."

This section focuses on the extent to which CES teachers care for their students. This leads teachers to go over and above their job requirements.

One example of this theme occurred on October 15, 2005. I was observing Ms. Fernandez's fifth-grade DL classroom. On the previous Wednesday night, teachers had parent-teacher conferences. During the morning announcement, the school principal said, "Teachers, because you worked on Wednesday evening, you can leave at 1:30 today." Ms. Fernandez told me how she would spend this Friday afternoon.

> Field notes from Friday, October 15, 2004
>
> Ms. Fernandez: *Actually, I am going to take four kids to the movies this afternoon.*
>
> According to Ms. Fernandez, she told her students that if they behaved well and earned good grades, they might be able to go to see a movie with her.
>
> Ms. Fernandez has 28 students. She keeps each student's nametag in a basket. When a student is identified as having "good behavior" and "good grades," she places the student's nametag into certain bags [there is a bag for boys and a bag for girls.] For example, when Maria got good grades on her math test, Ms. Fernandez placed Maria's nametag into the girls' bag. There were 20 students out of 28 selected as "good behavior" and "good grades" students. So, there were 20 nametags placed in the bags. She randomly selected two students from the boys' bag and two from the girls' bag. Today she is going to see a movie with these four students. When I asked her if the school would pay, she said, "No, it is from me." She does this movie activity four times a year: October, November, February and March. She believes it motivates students to work harder.
>
> Ms. Fernandez: *The day after the movie, these four students mention to their friends how enjoyable the movie was. That motivates other students to do better so that they can be selected for the movie next time.*

Here is another example of how Ms. Fernandez gives her time and her money to improve student outcomes.

Field notes from Thursday, December 16, 2004 (the last day of classes in 2004)

When I stepped in Ms. Fernandez's classroom, I noticed that there were a lot of gifts on the back shelf. Each gift had a sticker on it. Ms. Fernandez told me they were Christmas gifts purchased by her for all of her 28 students. Ms. Fernandez also mentioned that she brought some snacks to be provided while the entire class watched a movie today (two tamales for each student with beans and salsa).

Satoko Siegel (SS): *Can I ask how much you spent for it?*

Ms. Fernandez: *Um, I guess around $100. I do not care how much I spent. They [students] are worth it. And I know some of my students have never got Christmas gifts. I wanted them to experience it.*

Before lunch time, students received Christmas gifts from Ms. Fenandez. The students looked so happy. Since most of the gifts were toys, they played with the gifts until lunch.

After coming back from lunch, Ms. Fernandez started the movie, "Home Alone." Ms. Fernandez and I put Ms. Fernandez's homemade tamales, beans, and salsa on plates and gave them to each student. When we were done, Ms. Fernandez told me:

(Field notes continued)

Ms. Fernandez: *You know, some kids do not have anything to eat when they go home. I feel so bad for those kids. That's why I wanted to feed them as much as I can today. I know they just had lunch and they might be full. But, they can bring one of the tamales home.*

Ms. Fernandez spent her own money to give holiday gifts and food to her students. She spent time after school to purchase the gifts and make the Mexican food. As Ms. Fernandez mentioned, she gives holiday gifts to students since some of them have never received any gifts before. She brings her homemade Mexican food for students because she worries about students who will not have anything to eat for two weeks during winter holidays. Ms. Fernandez knows her homemade Mexican food will not last

for two weeks, but she wanted to make sure her students do not go home hungry—at least

not on the last day of the school for the calendar year.

Here is another example of teachers' caring about their students' nourishment

during the holidays. When I went to Ms. Hoffman's fifth-grade SEI classroom, I noticed

that there were a lot of canned foods, such as soups, corns, beans, etc. They were

collected in a big box. Ms. Hoffman explained:

Field notes from Monday, December 6, 2004

Ms. Hoffman: *These are for the students who cannot afford Christmas dinner. A lot of students in this school eat breakfast and lunch at school and do not eat dinner at home. During the two weeks of holiday, they might not have anything to eat at home.*

A few days later, when I was observing Ms. Hoffman's class, she told me they

had collected 100 cans in her class. She also told me that she promised if students

donated 10 food cans, she would donate 10 food cans as well. This means that 50 cans

were from students, and the other 50 were from Ms. Hoffman.

Cactus Elementary School makes other efforts to relieve stress from students'

family life. "School operation program" is conducted every month. Two students from

each class take school busses and go to an organization in town that donates clothes,

school bags, shoes, and so on. Although these students likely miss the whole morning of

school that day, this is a program to help students and their families. When I was with

Ms. Brown on Thursday, December 9, 2004, it was the school operation program day. At

noon, two of Ms. Brown's students came back with big bags filled with clothes. Right

after they dropped them off in the classroom, the students went outside for recess. Ms.

Brown explained:

<u>Field notes from Thursday, December 9, 2004</u>

Ms. Brown: *They went to school operation. Marco, the boy, went there last month. So I did not want him go this time, you know. But this morning, he cried and asked me if he could go. He said he does not have enough clothes. I looked at him and he was wearing pants that have holes. So I allowed him to go. He is a pretty new student. He came here one month ago. When he showed up for the first time, he had bruises all over his face. We called police right away. He was crying and he did not tell us what happened right away. Finally, he told us that he is living with a neighbor. All his family has is one mattress and a chain. His brother had beaten him up with the chain.*

I noticed that there were a lot of clothes, shoes, and backpacks for boys and girls in a huge plastic bag carried by Marco. I assumed he got those items not only for himself, but also for his brothers and sisters. This school is functioning not only as a school, but also as an organization to help students' family situations.

The fifth-grade school trip to San Diego represents another example of teachers caring for students. The San Diego trip was a frequent topic among fifth-grade teachers from the beginning of the school year. According to the teachers, they needed to raise at least $10,000 for the trip. The money includes funds for renting buses, hiring bus drivers, Sea World admission, and meals. To raise money, fifth-grade teachers and students began working on it at the very beginning of the school year.

To raise money for the San Diego trip, the fifth-grade teachers worked on several activities and events. Almost every day, some fifth-grade students and their parents sold snacks to students of all grades during lunchtime. At the end of 2004, fifth-grade students and teachers put together a car wash. The weather was not ideal, but they made $200. They also hosted a school carnival on a Saturday in October 2004. The carnival lasted from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and took place at the school playground. I purchased tickets

and attended. Booths on the playground included a big slide, food booths, a face-painting

clown, and other fun activities. Fifth-grade students, their families, and fifth-grade

teachers were working at the booths.

One Friday in December, the fifth-grade teachers hosted a "locked-in" event at

school. In this event, students were "locked in" the school from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

and enjoyed several activities. The planned activities were movies, fingernail painting,

cartoon drawings, making airplanes, putting on makeup, games, art drawing, bowling,

tattoo/thumb prints, relay races, and making crafts. Students who wanted to join this party

paid $5.00.

Toward the end of 2004, the fifth-grade teachers and students were having

difficulty raising the necessary funds. However, they kept hosting events and activities.

In May 2005, as a result of strong cooperation and high commitment among teachers,

students, and parents, the fifth-grade students were able to go to San Diego.

Teaching as caring

This chapter revealed teachers' compassion and commitment at CES. The

narratives in "they need me" focused on the reasons teachers remain at the elementary

school. The influence of teachers' cultural background on their decision to work at a

specific school, and their belief in "making a difference in children's lives" were also

seen in Nieto's (2005) research. This current study also showed that teachers' reasons for

continuing to teach at this school included commitment to the profession based on who

the students are ("they need me") and who the teachers are ("I need them"). This finding

is similar to "teaching helps [teachers] become fully human," which is one of the reasons

that Nieto (2005) gave for teachers remaining in the profession.

Just as Cochran-Smith (2006) described teachers as 3 Ls—lovers and dreamers,

learners, and leaders—this study found that teachers at CES were also lovers and

dreamers. Teachers keep teaching CES because they love children and have a strong

desire to make a difference in their students' lives. This study also found teachers at this

school are learners as well. The last feature of the 3 Ls, teachers as leaders, will be

discussed in Chapter 6.

This chapter also shows that teachers of CES constantly go over and above their

required teaching jobs. Teachers do everything they can do for their students, hoping they

can contribute to students' lives. Considering the disadvantages that their students have

due to low family socio-economic status, teachers try to relieve students' financial

difficulties individually and collectively as a school. Even though these contributions

require the teachers' own money or take up their personal time, teachers choose to do so

because they believe "their students are worth it." The examples put forth in this chapter

illustrate the importance of the teacher-student relationship at CES. The teacher-student

relationship is built on the teachers' commitment, caring, professional beliefs, and

support—all qualities not included in the standard of definition of "highly qualified

teachers."

Cochran-Smith (2006) emphasizes:

Good teaching is (at least partly) about developing loving and caring relationships

with students as human begins, and at the same time, being deeply committed to

ensuring that all students have rich opportunities to learn academically

challenging material and that will maximize their life changes. (p. 12)

CHAPTER 5

"I DO NOT THINK WE ARE VALUED VERY MUCH."

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL HEARTACHE

I started to get to know the teachers of CES in the fall of 2003. As mentioned previously, I was the teaching assistant for a graduate course being taken by some CES teachers. The teachers expressed concerns regarding the newly legislated educational policies in Arizona, such as NCLB, AZ LEARNS, and the English-only policy. The teachers discussed the requirements and how their teaching style, curriculum, schedule, and language usage had to be changed to fit within the new policies. The teachers sounded confused and frustrated. When I started observing their classrooms in the fall of 2004, I witnessed what the teachers were telling me: teachers trying different methods of giving English instructions to Spanish-speaking students, teachers repeatedly giving the same English instructions to students who do not understand any English, and students who could only go to the bathroom when their bilingual friends were available to ask permission for them.

In addition to NCLB, the new legislation of AZ LEARNS and the English-only policy were implemented in Arizona. All of these educational policies have been criticized because of the policies' negative impact on education, and especially on minority students (Apple, 2004; Combs et al., 2005; Goodman, Shannon, Goodman, & Rapoport, 2004; Wright, 2005a). For example, while NCLB assures that "reasonable" accommodations should be provided to minority students, such assurances are largely ignored, since "reasonable" is a vague expression and such accommodations are not

mandated by the state (Wright, 2005a). Also, the English-only policy eliminated an

accommodation where NCLB and AZ LEARNS previously allowed culturally diverse

students to take federal and state mandated tests in their native language (Wright, 2005a).

As a result, the English-only policy led to traumatic experiences for teachers and students

(Combs et al., 2005).

High-stakes testing, like that of NCLB and AZ LEARNS, also negatively impacts

minority students' academic success (Wright, 2005a). NCLB has been critiqued for the

negative effect the policies have had on curriculum (Cawelti, 2006; McNeil, 2000;

Noddings, 2007), pedagogy (McNeil, 2000; Valli & Chambliss, 2007), and educational

equality (Noddings, 2007). Minority students are often considered the victims of these

policies (Fine, Jaffe-Walker, Pedraza, Futch & Stoudt, 2007; Sloan, 2007); however,

teachers have been harmfully impacted as well (Combs et al., 2005; Sloan, 2007), as

mentioned in Chapter 2.

In this chapter, I will describe CES teachers' experiences, researched through

interviews and observations, resulting in the uncovering of the theme of teachers in

ideological and professional heartache. This heartache is caused by Arizona's educational

policies, especially the English-only policy. Teachers' frustration caused by such policies

is well documented. For example, utilizing structured interviews, Alamillo and

Viramontes (2000) documented teachers' opinions during the second year after

implementation of California's Proposition 227. They revealed that teachers perceived

the English-only policy as top-down mandate reform that squashes teachers' pedagogical

creativity in their classrooms (Alamillo & Viramontes, 2000). Although Alamillo and

Viramontes (2000) suggested that it would be too early to know whether the changes from Proposition 227 were successful, they concluded "teachers have witnessed an overall negative effect on second language learners' cultural and linguistic identity and educational future" (p. 12).

Similarly, utilizing semi-structured interviews, Stritikus and Garcia (2000) identified several types of teacher reactions toward English-only policies. Some teachers, who believe in the effectiveness of bilingual education on linguistically diverse students, mentioned they are not afraid of going to jail for following such professional ideology rather than the law (Stritikus & Garcia, 2000). Teachers and school administrators felt frustration, anxiety, confusion, and even anger toward English-only policies (Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Palmer & Garcia, 2000; Stritikus & Garcia, 2000).

The current study also found that the educational reforms of high-stakes testing and the English-only policy have negatively impacted teachers professionally and personally. Two types of heartache have been observed in this school. The first one is categorized as "Do you understand?" which focuses on teachers' instructional difficulties due to educational policies. The other is best represented by the following quote: "It is heart-breaking." This theme introduces the conflict between the teachers' professional ideology and the implementation of educational policies.

Again, here is the table of teachers' names and classrooms as a reminder for the following descriptive sections.

Table 1: 2nd and 5th grades classrooms and teachers

	SEI Classrooms	DL Classrooms
2nd grade	Ms. Smith Ms. Coffey Ms. Foster	Ms. Walker Ms. Lopez
5th grade	Ms. Jones Mr. Tyler Ms. Hoffman	Ms. Fernandez Ms. Brown

Professional heartache: "Do you understand?"

This section focuses on the negative impact of Arizona's educational policies on classroom instruction. The English-only policy prohibits use of any language other than English for classroom instruction. Prior to the proposition, if CES teachers did not speak Spanish, they could ask a Spanish-speaking teaching assistant to come to their classrooms for any translation needs. The law now prevents such instructional help. The following observation is indicative of the situations I observed:

At the end of October 2004, Ms. Foster, a second-grade SEI teacher, welcomed Maria to her class. Maria just arrived from Mexico. On November 1, when I observed Ms. Foster's class, Maria was sitting next to a boy and across from a girl, both of whom speak Spanish at home. Later, Ms. Foster told me that she placed Maria between them purposefully so that Maria's bilingual classmates would translate for her. In the morning, I observed "guided reading" time. This is an activity where second- and third-graders are grouped depending on their reading levels. These guided reading groups have approximately 10 students in each group. Second- and third-grade teachers, teaching assistants, and sometimes school administrators teach the guided reading groups. Usually one classroom has two guided groups.

When students, including Maria's bilingual friends, left the classroom to go to their assigned guided reading group, Maria was watching everyone, but remained in her seat. It appeared that Ms. Foster was not sure which guided group Maria had been assigned by Pamela, one of the school administrators. Since all Ms. Foster's guided group students came in, she started her guided reading lessons. After 10 minutes passed, Ms. Foster quickly left the classroom to ask Pamela about Maria. Ms. Foster came back and gave Maria some English books so that Maria could work on something until Pamela could take Maria to her assigned guided reading group.

Field notes from Monday, November 1, 2004

Ms. Foster started talking me.

Ms. Foster: *Pamela cannot do it [find a place for Maria] right now. She is doing something else. It is a disadvantage not to speak the language!*

SS: *Disadvantage to you or Maria?*

Ms. Foster: *Both. I teach in English, but if I can speak Spanish, I can tell her what is going on.*

As mentioned before, classroom teachers who are not fluent in Spanish used to be able to have a translator to assist. This was prior to the English-only policy. Since translators are no longer allowed in classrooms, non-Spanish speaking teachers and their students are at a disadvantage.

Ms. Foster gave an instruction to Maria.

Field notes continued:

Ms. Foster: *Ok, Maria. This is what I need you to do.*

Ms. Foster starts to read an animal book for her.

Ms. Foster: [Reading the book] *"A bear. A tiger." OK? Maria?*

Ms. Foster writes a sentence on the paper: "I see a bear." Then, she draws a picture of a bear under the sentence. She also writes a sentence, "I see a lion." Then, she draws a picture of a lion.

Ms. Foster:*"I see a monkey." And a picture, OK?*

Maria said something in Spanish.

Ms. Foster: *Si. Uno for each animal, OK?*

Ms. Foster goes back to her guided reading group table. Maria starts to work on writing a sentence and drawing a picture of an animal. When I saw the sentences and pictures, I noticed that she copied the sentence "I see a bear" from what Ms. Foster wrote and drew a picture of a monkey.

Then, Pamela, the administrator who coordinates guided reading groups, came into the classroom to take Maria to her group. Pamela does not speak Spanish fluently.

Field notes continued:

Pamela: *Ok, Maria. I am taking you to your guided reading class. Come on.*

Although Pamela stands up from the chair, Maria is not moving. Ms. Foster is watching the interaction.

Ms. Foster: *She does not understand. Bob! Bob!*

Bob belongs to another guided group in the same classroom. Bob stops his work and approaches Maria.

Pamela: *Bob, could you tell her that I am going to take her to her guided reading group?*

Bob translates the sentence into Spanish for Maria. Pamela and Maria leave the classroom together.

As shown above, teachers and students are frequently caught between two languages. Most of the time when this situation occurs, classroom activities and lessons are likely to stop. Ms. Foster had her guided reading group to teach, but at the same time

she needed to take care of Maria. Maria did not understand what was happening. Ms. Foster's guided reading group needed to work by themselves while Ms. Foster took care of Maria. Furthermore, a bilingual student, Bob, was pulled from his guided reading group to assist in helping Maria. If Ms. Foster could have had a Spanish-speaking translator, the situation would be different: Ms. Foster would not have had to interrupt her guided reading group, Maria would have understood the instructions provided to her, and Bob could have continued working uninterrupted. However, as mentioned, the law does not permit Spanish-speaking translators. In this instance, the law was responsible for interrupting instruction.

After the guided reading group, Maria's guided reading teacher came into the class. Ms. Foster told her, "She does not understand any English. She has no idea what I say. You've got to tell her that I am sorry for what I have to do."

As for Maria, she left CES in February. Until Maria left, I witnessed Ms. Foster do everything she could to facilitate Maria's learning. Ms. Foster became worried when Maria's English had not improved. Ms. Foster asked a school administrator to test Maria in Spanish to assess the level of Maria's Spanish academic knowledge. Test results indicated that Maria only had a kindergarten level of academic knowledge in Spanish. According to Ms. Foster, Maria suddenly stopped coming to school. Ms. Foster and the school believe Maria and her family went back to Mexico. Considering that Maria's mother was heavily pregnant when Maria came to school for the first time, Ms. Foster assumed that they wanted to have United States citizenship for the baby.

Another instance of heartache faced by teachers involved the need to frequently repeat instruction. For example, I saw Ms. Coffey, a second-grade SEI teacher, give five Spanish-speaking students extra explanation for a writing activity. It was given after all other students went back to their desks and started to work.

Field notes from Friday, September 3, 2004

Ms. Coffey needs to repeatedly give English instruction. She spent extra time giving these five students instructions by explaining slowly, and by drawing on the whiteboard. It takes so much time. English speaking students already started to work on writing. When English speaking students have questions, they quietly raise their hands and wait until Ms. Coffey finishes her instruction to these five students.

For Spanish-only speaking students, they need to listen to the English instructions again, again, and again, even though they seem not to understand it. After they go back to their desks, they start to draw pictures.

After the five Spanish-only speaking students went back to their desks, Ms. Coffey asked a question to two of these students.

Ms. Coffey: *Do you understand?*

Two students nodded "Yes."

Ms. Coffey asked something in Spanish. The students nodded "No," with smile.

It looks as if Ms. Coffey asked "Do you understand?" in Spanish. Although Ms. Coffey spent so much time and effort using various visual aids, these five students still seemed not to understand.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I was getting closer to the students as weeks passed. Students in SEI classrooms knew that their teachers were not supposed to use Spanish for classroom instruction. Once students started to know me, some of Ms. Coffey's students asked me questions in Spanish when they could not understand Ms. Coffey's English instruction. Since I do not speak Spanish, I could not understand their questions. I saw the

students' sadness when they realized I could not help them. It is easy to imagine how Ms.

Coffey and other Spanish-speaking teachers felt when they saw their students'

disappointment.

As described in Maria's case, the disallowing of Spanish instruction resulted in

a less productive education experience: Spanish-only speaking students could not follow

English instructions, meaning teachers spent extra time on visual aid preparation and

giving extra instructions to students, although the teacher's efforts were often

unsuccessful. The other students were unable to ask the teacher questions for several

minutes while the teacher provided English instructions to non-English speakers. It was a

problematic situation for everyone in the classroom.

Ideological heartache: "It is heart-breaking."

Educational laws have also impacted teachers' professional ideology. This

section shows that teachers are ideologically conflicted between educational policies and

practices. Teachers at CES expressed frustration due to the lack of opportunities for

creativity in regard to classroom activities.

Field notes from Friday, January 21, 2005

Ms. Foster: *I think the most frustrating part of our job…is that you no longer have any control. You are not empowered any more to make decisions. It's constantly mandated for you what you are going to teach. We have no choice…and it's like all creativity has been taken out of it. And all of the joy…It's like rhetoric. You just, you have to do it this way. When I taught years ago, I think kids learned just as much, or more.*

Ms. Smith: *Better.*

Ms. Foster: *It's like a mechanical use so that mechanical people are just sucked in it. And we just snap, snap, snap, and go on, because there is no room for you to*

stop and let them grasp what they have got. Because you have to go on to the next thing. I feel like little robots we are.

Ms. Smith: *Basically it is what it is.*

Ms. Foster: *I do not think we are valued very much.*

Ms. Smith: *No. The kids' critical thinking, problem solving, that's not there. What we have to get when we get older.*

Similar to previous studies that illuminated the need for teachers to leave their experience and pedagogical knowledge behind due to the law (Alamillo & Viramontes, 2000; Sloan, 2007), Ms. Foster and Ms. Smith argued that the state-mandated curriculum does not allow them to have freedom in terms of their teaching schedule, creativity, or sensitivity to students' learning. Most importantly, as Ms. Jones mentioned previously, teachers are concerned that students cannot learn what they need to learn for their futures. As Apple (2000) emphasized, the high-stakes testing system sees teachers as technicians. Teachers at CES feel like robots performing what is mandated by the state. They feel they are not valued as teachers.

Occasionally, teachers expressed their frustration toward policymakers.

Field notes from Tuesday, November 16, 2004

Ms. Foster: *I think people who are making legislative decisions really have no idea what happens in classrooms. And I think that's unfortunate. And I think that they should have to come sit down in classroom where a foreign language is spoken. And then make a decision whether they think they can learn the language in a year and pass a test, and be proficient and be judged on the same standards as somebody in north side district, who has every advantage possible…I mean it's not realistic for people. We work really hard…I mean I have very high expectations for these kids, but they do not have the advantages that some other children have…in English. I had four students that came in February, and they took the AIMS test in English [in April]. You know, it's crazy.*

Ms. Foster noted that it is unfortunate that policymakers passed a law without knowing the students. In addition, being located near the border creates an environment where students constantly come in and out of the school throughout the year. Even though some students started CES before the AIMS test was administered, they still had to take the test in English, without any exceptions. Even though policymakers, according to the teachers, never visited CES, I observed one occasion that it almost happened.

Cactus Elementary School was supposed to have inspectors from the ADE in December. On December 7, 2004, I interviewed Ms. Hoffman, who is a fifth-grade SEI teacher. Before the interview started, Ms. Hoffman started to tell me that the school expected to have inspectors the next day.

> Field notes from Tuesday, December 7, 2004
>
> Ms. Hoffman: *We are expecting the state's superintendent's police tomorrow though…They are going to come in and inspect everything of all our documents, everything, the classes, make sure that all the kids in dual language class have waivers.*

Ms. Hoffman used the term "state superintendent police" in her statement. On July 22, 2003, The ADE published a public newsletter. The title was "Superintendent…vindicated on Bilingual Guidelines: 45 Monitors to Police Bilingual" (ADE, 2003). In the newsletter, the state superintendent stated the following:

> "We are now proceeding to cross-train 45 monitors to make sure that the schools follow the guidelines, eliminate abuses of waivers, and provide English immersion to students not yet proficient in English. That will give those students the opportunity to excel academically as individuals, once they are proficient in English."

When I talked to Ms Hoffman, it was the day before these monitors were supposed to arrive.

(Field notes continued)

Ms. Hoffman: *I think I can have an English/Spanish dictionary. But I cannot have any Spanish books in my library…I cannot have anything Spanish around at all. Nothing Spanish. Everything has to be in English. And I cannot have my books, none of the textbooks could be in Spanish…and how much easier it would be if…we had a book that was in Spanish for them to look at, while I was reading in English.*

As a SEI teacher, Ms. Hoffman expressed frustration with the fact that she could not even have Spanish versions of textbooks—textbooks that she believes help monolingual Spanish-speaking students. Although the inspectors were not likely to come into the SEI classrooms due to being focused on student paperwork, she mentioned she needed to make sure she would not have any Spanish books in her classroom the next day. This example shows teachers' hyper-correctness to the educational policy. English-only policy vaguely mentions the extent to which teachers can use languages other than English in SEI classrooms, utilizing the expression of "minimum exception." Teachers seem to be unclear about what counts as "minimum." Ms. Hoffman was also frustrated that tax dollars were being spent to police bilingual education.

(Field notes continued)

Ms. Hoffman: *[They] could be spending billions of dollars on them [the bilingual police] to go around to different schools in the state, police his [the state superintendent's] law. How horrible. Money can be better spent for someone else…But he hired a whole team of people to patrol.*

As mentioned in the introduction, every state in the country, with one exception, spends more money per K-12 student than Arizona. Per student, Arizona spends $2,800 less than the average of all other states.

On December 9, 2004, I went to Ms. Brown's fifth-grade DL classroom. Since I did not see any monitors in CES the day before, I asked her if they came. Ms. Brown told me that they did not show up.

Field notes from Friday, December 9, 2004

Ms. Brown: *It is not surprising. They threaten us because we have bilingual education. Our school principal has received a lot of emails from Arizona Department of Education. He [the state superintendent] just does not get it. This is the third time they did not show up. It happened last year, and two years ago. They just did not show up, no apology. I have never seen inspectors in school, but I saw them at the district meeting…they are the ones who control bilingual education in Arizona. He [the state superintendent] acts like he knows everything because he has kids who go to school. I would like to put students who speak only Spanish in front of him. Then, I would say, "Teach them. Come on. Go ahead. Teach them."*

Also, Ms. Brown told me that ADE requested that CES reduce the number of students they serve. School personnel assume that the state does not like bilingual schools. Reducing the number of students may also mean reducing the number of teachers. According to Ms. Brown, this is one of the ways CES is implicitly threatened.

Teachers argue that policymakers have to learn what the students really need in order to be properly educated. To make this happen, teachers believe policymakers should come to school and observe what is going on in classrooms, and even have experience with teaching Spanish-only speaking students. However, when policymakers come to the school, their mission is to make sure the school follows the law, not to see if the law is working.

Teachers also express concern for students who are forced to study only in English as a result of the educational policy and practices. When the 2004-2005 school

year started, I was told that there were two DL classrooms in the second-grade. But once

I started observing the DL classrooms, Ms. Walker told me it was not exactly true.

Ms. Walker and Ms. Lopez are team-teaching approximately 46 students in their

DL classroom. Students in the DL classroom are divided into Group A and Group B.

Group A is a dual language group, and Group B is an English-only group, or a SEI group.

Ms. Walker explained that the Group A and Group B students have been in the same DL

classroom since kindergarten and first grade, taught by Ms. Walker and Ms. Lopez. Both

groups passed the state English language proficiency test in the past two years. However,

this year, just half of their students passed the test. Since they have been in the same

classroom for the past two years, the school decided to keep the students together as a

class. However, due to the educational policy, it became necessary to divide these

students into two groups: Group A, those who passed the test, and Group B, those who

did not. Group B is taught only in English.

Group A and B get together at the beginning of the day, the end of the day, and at

intervals between group works. The difference between groups is that Group A has a

Spanish day and an English day alternatively. Group B does not have any Spanish days.

Although it looks like there are two DL classrooms in second-grade, technically there is

just one DL classroom. Ms. Walker explained her feelings regarding this situation:

> Field notes from Tuesday, September 14, 2004
>
> Ms. Walker: *It is breaking my heart. All of the kids passed last year's language assessment test. But from this year, politics changed the test. Then, these kids [Group B] could not pass. They almost passed. They needed to score 75 –they scored around 67 or 68. It is horrible. That is breaking my heart. Some kids ask me, "When is the Spanish day?" But we cannot really say, "You cannot get Spanish class anymore."*

Ms. Walker mentioned this issue on a different day.

Field notes from Thursday, September 23, 2004

Ms. Walker: *It is heart breaking. To me, if they passed the test once, they should be able to be in the bilingual education without having the test again. We can do opening and closing [of the class] in Spanish with them, but other than that, they have to be taught in English.*

Ms. Walker feels sorry for her Group B students. Even though these students were taught in English and Spanish until they became second-graders, these Group B students were no longer allowed to have instruction in Spanish. Ms. Walker argued that the score needed to pass the test is too high. According to her, ADE increases the difficulty of the test to control the number of students in bilingual classes. The score required to pass the test is raised every year. As mentioned in previous chapters, it is up to the state superintendent's statutory authority to define, and keep redefining, the score that students need in order to get in the DL classrooms. Ms. Walker and Ms. Lopez hope that they can switch the Group B into a DL group as soon as Group B students pass the language assessment test.

Although teachers of CES hope that they could open more DL classrooms, SEI classroom teachers seem to have mixed feelings in that they were possibly losing their students to DL classrooms. Before the language proficiency test was given, I asked Ms. Coffey, a second-grade SEI teacher, if she thought some of the students would pass the test and go to DL classrooms the following year.

Filed notes from Wednesday, February 9, 2005

SS: *Do you think some of your students will pass the test so they can go to DL classrooms in the next year?*

Ms. Coffey: *Some. I think so. But…this is a good class. You know, I do not know what is right at this point. I know heritage language maintenance is very important. I want to keep them [her students in her classroom]. Also, if they go to a dual language classroom now, they are going to be behind in Spanish, because they have not learned in Spanish. It is good thing that students who are in the DL classroom keep being in the DL classroom, so that they can learn in both languages. But kids who have been in SEI classrooms to learn English started behind. And they go to dual language classrooms and again begin behind. If they are here, at least, they can learn English on track.*

Ms. Coffey is in a dilemma. She knows bilingual education is important for students who speak Spanish at home. At the same time, she is afraid that students who pass the language assessment test and join a DL classroom in the third grade will be academically behind in Spanish. At CES, there is a "loop" system, in which the same teacher has the same students for at least two years. Ms. Coffey knows she will be teaching her second-grade students when they go to the third grade next year. Ms. Coffey shared more of her insights with me after she learned six of her students passed the language proficiency test.

Field notes from Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Ms. Coffey: *I like this class as it is. These six students are my best kids. I saw they are growing up in this class. I do not want to let them go [to a DL classroom].*

SS: *So are you in a dilemma?*

Ms. Coffey: *What would you do if you were a teacher? They came here with no English proficiency and they grow up in my classroom. That is why our principal wants to have a loop. We go up with the same kids to the next year to see they're growing…I think Ms. Foster has eight and Ms. Smith has seven [students] who can go to the dual language classrooms…it is good that they can learn both languages, but they need to start over again in Spanish. They do not know synonyms, antonyms, homophones in Spanish. They can speak Spanish, but they do not know…you know? We need to do the same thing we did this year in Spanish. Kids get behind and get confused. I do not know what is right anymore. Whatever we do, kids lose. It is policy, you know!*

As a native Spanish speaker, Ms. Coffey wants to encourage students to learn their native language. From books assigned in her university courses, such as *Tunnel Kids* (Taylor & Hickey, 2001) and *The Brothers and Sisters Learn to Write* (Dyson, 2003), Ms. Coffey had gained knowledge of how important it is for students to maintain their first language. However, as a SEI teacher, Ms. Coffey worries about the students who would be behind in a DL classroom since they have missed several years of academic Spanish. Teachers know students are left with just two choices: either live without knowing academic Spanish, or remain behind.

To follow up on Ms. Coffey's situation, I visited her the next school year, August 2005. Ms. Coffey was now a third-grade SEI teacher. Her third-grade class was supposed to have the same students as her second-grade class. Fifteen out of 24 students remained in her classroom from her second-grade SEI class. Two of her students left for DL classrooms. Others moved out of the school district or went back to Mexico. Ms. Coffey received nine new students, seven of whom do not speak any English.

I visited her again in April 2006. Ms. Coffey was still teaching the same third-grade SEI classroom. However, it was not the same class anymore. Of the 24 students who started third grade with Ms. Coffey, only eight remained. Sixteen of the students in her class had arrived after the start of the school year. Moreover, most of the 16 students did not speak any English. Working at the border school, it is inevitable that students move in and out, but teachers are in a further predicament where they are required to give English instructions to non-English speaking students. The teachers are responsible for

preparing students to take state and federal tests in English, no matter how long the student was part of the teacher's class.

In order to meet accountability demands, teachers were forced to not only follow state-mandated curriculum, but also assess students every day. When I started to observe classrooms at CES, I was surprised by the amount of tests the students needed to take. As mentioned earlier, students need to take state and federal mandated assessments, such as SELP, AIMS, TerraNova, and Stanford 9. To make sure students were adequately prepared for these assessments, weekly tests, developed by teachers or the school, on topics such as spelling and math were provided.

On one occasion, I was in Ms. Jones' fifth-grade SEI classroom. Ms. Jones was teaching her guided reading group. Right after Ms. Jones' group came in, she gave the students a test.

Field notes from Wednesday, December 1, 2004

Ms. Jones: *I used to teach what they need to know in their life. Now I am teaching them how to take a test. I used to be a teacher. Now I am a tester.*

When I interviewed Ms. Jones in April, she detailed her feelings towards the frequency of student testing.

Field notes from Friday, April 8, 2005

Ms. Jones: *Tester. Because that is what I am. I am a tester. Well, we just got done with checking multiplication and division, and spelling test, and preparing for AIMS test…and then, every week, we have to give them a Friday test in math, to see if they learn what we are teaching in math all week long. Reading group: We have to test them all the time to see what reading levels they are in, and report all these test results back to our central office, so that they can figure out what reading group to put them in…Oh. And then, we need to test to see what they are learning, like I am teaching a body [system in science…and you know, just whatever. Just always test, test, test, test, test, test, test.*

I noticed students were taking tests almost daily; sometimes, even multiple tests a day. Teachers expressed they did not believe they were teaching students what they need to know for their lives. Instead, the teachers become testers who force limited-English students to take English-language exams.

Teachers are aware that they must continue to prepare students for standardized tests or else their job could be at stake. As explained in Chapter 2, AZ LEARNS utilizes the accountability system by labeling each school based on its academic profile (ARS §15-241). There are five labels: 1) excelling, 2) highly performing, 3) performing, 4) underperforming, or 5) failing to meet academic standards (ARS §15-241). Once the school is recognized as failing to meet academic standards, the school needs to work with a "solution team" which is sent by ADE. The solutions team, however, has been criticized because the team does not spend enough time at the school they are assigned to facilitate, and because they are not likely to have experience with ELL students (Wright, 2005a). Teachers who have experience with ELL students are fired, and the solutions team, which consists of business-focused members, is sent to schools as specialists.

Ms. Jones shared a story about a neighborhood school that was labeled as a failing school due to unsuccessful AIMS test results. According to Ms. Jones, the school principal and his leadership team were all fired and replaced with people sent by ADE.

Field notes from Friday, April 8, 2005

Ms. Jones: *And the three teachers were being replaced with other ones that the state is putting in and paying them humongous amounts of money, and all of those teachers will be monitored daily to make sure that they are working hard enough to pass the AIMS test…if you are labeled as a failing school, it does not matter what the reason is, those students must perform…and it is teachers' fault if they*

don't…if they go in and they are looking at you as a teacher, and they think that you are the teacher whose students are not performing, they can fire you on the spot. They do not care how long you have been teaching. They do not care what else is going on in your life. They will fire you and replace you with whoever they think is better fit.

A school has three years to get out of an underperforming status before being recognized as failing to meet the standards. Due to a high mobility rate, and welcoming Spanish-only speaking students all year long, it is difficult for CES to avoid underperforming status.

In sum, the teachers' professional ideology has been negatively impacted by the newly implemented educational policies. The teachers emphasized that the new policies do not meet students' needs. Teachers are eager to have policy makers visit their school to see what the teachers and their students experience on a daily basis. However, the purpose of ADE sending "the state superintendent police" to the school seems to solely be to ensure the teachers comply with the laws, and not to make sure students are learning under the system they created. Teachers feel pressure and frustration regarding high-stakes testing and standard-based instruction. If their students do not do well on the state and federal tests, teachers might be fired. As the students' mobility rate at CES is more than 50%, this school is constantly welcoming new students from Mexico, even right before such tests are performed.

Teachers' professional and ideological heartache

This chapter illustrated the difficulties faced by teachers as a result of new educational policies. Teachers and students at CES are negatively impacted by the educational policies: teachers are told how, when, and what to teach their students,

regardless of teachers' experience and knowledge or students' cultural and social background; and still, teachers are assessed by their students' performance on high-stakes tests. Wright and Sung (2012), who conducted their research focusing on Arizona's teachers after the English-only policy was implemented, state "it is unfortunate state education leaders do not take into consideration the views and experiences of teachers who are much more attuned to the strengths and needs of ELL students" (p. 103). Regarding the fact that teachers' quality is measured exclusively by students' test scores, Cocharan-Smith (2008) states, "It does not tell us anything about what effective teachers do, know or believe, nor does it tell us anything about how high-performing pupils learn or what resources they bring to school. Further, other school outcomes—such as students' social and emotional development or their preparedness for civic participation in a democratic society—are ignored" (p. 273).

Although this chapter focused on SEI classroom teachers, it does not mean DL classroom teachers were satisfied with the educational policies. Ms. Lopez, a second-grade DL classroom teacher, shared two concerns with me that I had not heard from SEI classroom teachers. One concern is that DL teachers receive students from SEI classrooms once they pass the state language assessment. When that happens, DL teachers need to raise these students' Spanish proficiency as soon as possible so that they will not fall behind. I saw several students from DL classrooms stay in class instead of participating in outside recess in order to catch up. The other concern was that DL classrooms have more students with special needs than other classrooms. According to the English-only policy, students who need special physical and psychological care are

exempt from being in SEI classrooms, meaning that DL classrooms invariably have many more students with special needs than SEI classrooms.

Teachers are oppressed with the fear of being fired if their students' improvement is not shown on state and federal outcome measures. "Victim-blaming rhetoric" (Fine & Weis, 2003), used to describe minority students under the reproductive process in education, can also be applied to these teachers. Teachers are blamed for their students' unsuccessful outcomes, no matter how hard they work, no matter how long their students are in the United States, and no matter how poorly the law accommodates culturally and linguistically diverse students.

This victim-blaming rhetoric is a political structure, which is similar to Foucault's (1977) notion of the Panopticon. Panopticon is a mechanism of discipline used to exercise homogenous powers on individuals and to sustain the power (Foucault, 1977). Foucault describes the system as follows:

> The Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms. In this central tower, the director may spy on all the employees that he has under his orders: nurses, doctors, foremen, teachers, warders; he will be able to judge them continuously, alter their behavior, impose upon them the methods he thinks best; and it will even be possible to observe the director himself. An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the center of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning. And, in any case, enclosed as he is in the middle of this architectural mechanism, is not the director's own fate entirely

bound up with it? The incompetent physician who has allowed contagion to spread, the incompetent prison governor or workshop manager will be the first victims of an epidemic or a revolt. (p. 204)

I observed this Panopticon structure at CES. The state insists that schools and teachers use the educational methods, curriculums, and language which the state believes to be the best, exercising its political power with the English-only policy, AZ LEARNS and NCLB. It also encourages teachers to have hyper-correct fear toward the policies. Also, if students do not do well on the outcome measures, which are established by the state, teachers are the ones who will be fired, not policy makers.

As an ethnographer, I witnessed fatigued, disappointed, and confused teachers struggle to give the best education to their students while dealing with restrictions and limitations. They were often forced to follow educational policies in spite of what they perceived was best for their students.

CHAPTER 6

"ALL THE CLASSROOMS SHOULD BE DUAL LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS."

TEACHERS' RESISTANCE AND PROFESSIONAL STRATEGY

This chapter will present teachers' narratives and my classroom observations regarding policies and teachers' strategy at CES. There are three bilingual schools in the school district of this border city. CES is one of them. As a result of the educational policies, teachers are forced to actively negotiate alternative approaches for educating their students.

Teachers' resistance to political power has been documented (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Carlson, 1987; Gitlin & Margonis, 1995). When teachers' resistances come from their professional ideologies, which focus on improving students' learning outcomes, it is described as "good sense" (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Achinstein and Ogawa's two case studies (2006) show how educational systems interfere with teachers' professional ideologies. Two teachers interviewed by Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) challenged district mandates. The teachers' resistance against the mandates was based on their commitment to their profession and the belief that the mandated policy was not well-suited for their students. The study also showed the limits of individual resistance: the two teachers quit their jobs. Because individual resistance can cause teachers' stress, it has been suggested that collective effort of resistance is necessary to support individual teacher's "good sense" (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Carlson, 1987; Nieto, 2000).

Teachers' and administrators' professional ideologies can influence their interpretation and implementation of educational policies, and, as a result, it influences

teacher classroom policies (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Ramanathan, 2005; Skilyton-

Sylvester, 2003). For example, Skilyton-Sylvester (2003) and Ramanathan (2005) argued

that classroom teachers have language policy power: they chose whether to use students'

first language as a resource in their pedagogy. Teachers "are seen as active constructors

of language policies, as they transform practices within their own classrooms" (Arias,

2012, p. 9). Also, Hornberger and Johnson (2007) described two administrators in the

School District of Philadelphia who work for bilingual programs at the same office. They

highlighted how the administrators' different ideologies toward language education

influenced policy implementation. Under Title III of NCLB, which is the federal

language policy, one administrator, who believed in the value of bilingualism, bi-literacy,

and additive bilingual education, interpreted the policy as being flexible enough to

accommodate developmental bilingual education for students' language maintenance. On

the other hand, the other administrator, who thought bilingual education was for ELL

students' transition to mainstream classrooms, understood the policy as transitional

bilingual education. Hornberger and Johnson (2007) emphasize:

> Teachers' choices are constrained by language policies which tend to set
>
> boundaries on what is allowed and/or what is considered normal…Negotiation at
>
> each institutional level creates the opportunity for reinterpretation and policy
>
> manipulation. (p. 527)

Teachers and administrators of CES made the students the top priority. This

ideology eventually led to a fight against educational policies. In this chapter, teachers'

narratives and my observations demonstrate that local teachers and administrators

negotiate the English-only policy. This chapter highlights CES' attempts to maintain DL classrooms. The individual teachers' professional beliefs toward keeping DL classrooms match the beliefs of the school principal, and they, as a collective effort, target the same goal: keeping bilingual education available for students.

Before starting the description of this theme, here, once again, is the table of teachers' names and classrooms.

Table 1: 2nd and 5th grades classrooms and teachers

	SEI Classrooms	DL Classrooms
2nd grade	Ms. Smith Ms. Coffey Ms. Foster	Ms. Walker Ms. Lopez
5th grade	Ms. Jones Mr. Tyler Ms. Hoffman	Ms. Fernandez Ms. Brown

"They do not feel like they cannot speak their mind."

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the English-only policy has impacted bilingual education in public schools. This section focuses on narratives and observations regarding the CES teachers' professional beliefs and their resistance to language issues.

When I visited Ms. Fernandez's fifth-grade DL classroom on October 15, 2004, she expressed her views of bilingual education.

Field notes from Thursday, October 15, 2004

Ms. Fernandez: *You know, dual language classrooms are better for these students. When students learn both in Spanish and English, their behavior is much better, and it's good for academic outcomes, and students' self-esteem becomes high…these students are comfortable using either English or Spanish to teachers. All the classrooms should be dual language classrooms.*

This topic came up again when I interviewed Ms. Fernandez in December 2004. Having experiences teaching both SEI and DL classrooms, Ms. Fernandez expressed her opinions about the two different types of classrooms.

Field notes from Wednesday, December 14, 2004

Ms. Fernandez: *Well, you can see the differences in every area and in every aspect, because even just in the environment in the classroom, you walk in to the dual classrooms, kids feel free, they enjoy what they are doing, and they do not feel threatened, they do not feel like they cannot speak their mind. In the SEI classrooms, you walk in, and you feel—you can sense that kids are not comfortable. They feel they cannot, you know, communicate with their own language.*

Behavior-wise, big, big difference too. SEI classrooms have a lot more behavioral problems than dual classrooms, too…I think that's because of language. If you do not understand what is going on, if you are just sitting there, you know…teacher is explaining but you are not understanding what teacher is saying…you are going to misbehave. You are going to do something that is not allowed, maybe because you do not understand, maybe because you are tired of just listening and not understanding.

Self-esteem is a big, big issue with the SEI students because they do not speak English, and English is the language being used in the classroom and the language around them, they feel like, you know, like…their own language is not worth, you know, as much as English. They do not feel…they don't have the same…I do not know…the same esteem for the language and for themselves.

When I interviewed the school principal, a similar sentiment was put forth.

Field notes from Wednesday, December 14, 2005

SS: *Do you think keeping the dual language classrooms matches the students' needs?*

Principal: *Yes. We have worked—that is almost the daily fight [laughs]. It's…you know, since law has changed, that has been incredibly difficult to manage. And because the grant that I have for, we can hold the position that helps me manage paperwork, you know, the testing, the waivers, what's current in the law, all these pieces. But for us, the kids who have come to dual do extremely well. I get emails back from the middle school saying, "Wow, that group of kids is just doing really well." We struggle now, just because we cannot get the second language*

instruction, or flip language instruction till second-grade. Most of them are not qualified. But there are still some. There is benefit to it. We've just got to tweak it and do it in a different way. So that what we have to put into it is well worth it. It has been a high-level commitment. And not even for dual language teachers, SEI teachers as well. Because we know, because we live and travel with the kids, sometimes kids are finally qualified and teachers have to give the child up from their room to go to the loop, or kids who do not qualify have to come out. So even the success of dual language is because of whole staff, not just dual…but it has been a huge commitment.

The school principal's narrative is similar to the teachers' dilemma described in the previous chapter: SEI teachers might lose their students to DL classrooms from their two- or three-year loop, although they have devoted themselves to these students. On the other hand, DL classroom teachers receive students who have learned only in English and now need to develop Spanish literacy so that it is equal to the students' English proficiency. Despite all these challenges, and the tension between political oppression and teachers' tasks, teachers and school administrators of CES do not give up their quest to provide bilingual education. They actively negotiate—or, to use the school principal's word, "tweak"—the policy, developing their own school policy to maintain bilingual education. They work endlessly to meet students' needs, because they believe it is worth it for the students' lives.

In addition to battling at the political level to keep bilingual education alive, the teachers also seek opportunities to use Spanish in such a way that it does not violate the English-only policy. I sometimes heard Spanish songs in the school cafeteria when free breakfast was provided before the start of school. Teachers spoke to students in Spanish during recess, since those conversations were not instructional. Most of the school letters

are written in Spanish and English. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited in both English and Spanish.

Utilizing the fact that the educational law does not prohibit students to use Spanish language in SEI classrooms, SEI classroom teachers are likely to have Spanish-only speaking students sitting with bilingual students. On January 10, 2005, I was in Ms. Foster's classroom. Maria, discussed in the previous chapter, was getting language support from her bilingual classmates. This is an observation from a different day than previously discussed.

Field note from Monday, January 10, 2005

Ms. Foster gave students instructions to write a "Thank you" letter to Santa Claus, who came to the school in December. St. Nick arrived at the schoolyard by helicopter on that day to give students Christmas gifts. After students started to work on the letter, Ms. Foster came to Maria, who speaks only Spanish. Maria is sitting with her bilingual classmates, Dave, Raymond, and Dana. Ms. Foster asked these three bilingual students to translate for Maria what they were supposed to do.

Dana: *But she might have not been there [at the schoolyard when St. Nick came].*

Ms. Foster: *Yes, that is what I am going to ask.*

To Maria: *Do you remember the day of the helicopter and St. Nick?*

Dana translates it to Maria. Maria nods yes.

Ms. Foster: *Oh, so she was here. Draw a picture of what she saw on that day.*

Dana translates it to Maria.

Ms. Foster: *First, draw with lines and with a pencil, OK?*

Dana translates it to Maria.

Ms. Foster: *Then, inside. I will give you a paper to put, OK?*

Dana translates it to Maria. Ms. Foster sits down next to Maria and writes sentences for her.

Ms. Foster: *Maria. This is the sentence you put inside, OK?*

Dana translates it to Maria. Maria nods yes.

As shown, SEI teachers found a way to use Spanish for Spanish-only speaking students in order to have the students understand. They used bilingual students as peer support for Spanish-only speaking students. It is not against the law for students to use their home language in the classroom. I observed the same strategy in Ms. Smith's second-grade SEI classroom as well. Luis, who came from Mexico, was purposefully placed in a seat next to a bilingual classmate.

Spanish language is also used to communicate with the parents. The following examples illustrate how CES utilized Spanish language as a communication tool with the goal of increasing parental and community involvement.

I saw parents every time I went inside CES. Parents were walking in the hallways, doing volunteer work in the school cafeteria, and talking to other parents in the parents' room. When I was an elementary school student growing up in Japan, parents only came to school during a specified open-house day. I soon learned that parental involvement was one of goals at CES. Usually, wherever parents convened, I heard Spanish language. I did not interview any parents as part of this current fieldwork; nevertheless, I had several opportunities to observe.

Cactus Elementary School hosted a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting at the school library on first Tuesday of every month from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. On January 11, 2005, I observed the PTO meeting.

Field notes from Tuesday, January 11, 2005

I went home after school and came back for the PTO meeting at 6:00 p.m. Upon entering the school, I noticed that a few teachers and some young children were in the art classroom, which was open as a childcare room.

When the meeting was started in the school library, there were around 30 parents. As time went by, 30 more parents showed up to the library. I recognized six school personnel at the meeting: the principal, a bilingual assistant of the principal, a librarian, two teachers, and a school staff member. Coffee and cookies were provided to attendants.

The meeting started with the school principal's opening remarks. The PTO had several topics on the agenda. The principal introduced each topic in English, and then her bilingual assistant translated it into Spanish.

The PTO meeting appeared to have a comfortable and fun atmosphere for both parents and school personnel. They were having coffee and cookies, they sometimes laughed loudly, and parents actively participated in discussions by raising hands and by expressing their ideas and suggestions in both Spanish and English. In addition, it became apparent that CES tried to involve parents as much as possible by responding to parents' needs. For example, the school opened an English reading class for parents. These classes are vital for the parents, since most of them are immigrants from Mexico and do not speak English fluently. When parents and school staff discussed the date of an upcoming "Garden Party," the principal and the bilingual assistant asked what day would be best for most parents, hoping to accommodate the highest number of people. To answer parents' needs, conversing with them in Spanish is necessary. Since it is not against policy to talk to the parents in a language other than English, teachers and school administrators used Spanish to increase understanding.

Cactus Elementary School had several occasions where parents were invited to school. In addition to the PTO meeting described above, "Student of the Month" is

another example. Student of the Month is a program where each teacher has an

opportunity to present the "best" student from the class each month. The meeting is

usually held before school starts.

<u>Field notes from Friday, December 10, 2004</u>

The library was crowded with a lot of teachers, the school principal, students, and their parents. Doughnuts and coffee were provided. Each student sat down with her/his parents.

When a teacher introduced her/his best student of the month, the teacher mentioned the student's name and the reason why the student was selected. Parents and teachers applauded every time a student was introduced.

Similar to the PTO meeting, the Student of the Month meeting also had a warm

atmosphere: a nice coffee aroma welcomed attendants and both Spanish and English were

utilized so that all of the attendants could understand the meeting. Everyone looked proud

of the students of the month.

In sum, CES has developed its own strategy without breaking educational laws.

Teachers and administrators use Spanish language as much as allowed. By keeping a

bilingual environment, teachers and administrators at CES meet students' needs. They

support and encourage Spanish language utilization among students, as well as among

parents and teachers.

Successful struggle

This chapter has described the teachers' and the school's resistance and

negotiation toward language policy. This study found that teachers and administrators at

CES have the same professional ideology about bilingual education: keep bilingual

education for students. Similarly, Wright and Sung (2012) found that a lot of ELL

teachers in Arizona believe in bilingualism and bilingual education. Moreover, CES fights against English-only policies as a collective effort, not an individual one. Cactus Elementary School resists, challenges, and negotiates the law. As a result, teachers have developed their own classroom policies: SEI classroom teachers use bilingual students as translators for monolingual Spanish students, since the English-only policy does not prohibit students to use their home language in the classroom. Although SEI teachers cannot use Spanish as an instructional tool, teachers can still encourage students to use Spanish language.

Cactus Elementary School uses Spanish language as much as the law allows. As Hornberger and Johnson (2007) emphasize, "Local educators are not helplessly caught in the ebb and flow of shifting ideologies in language policies—they help develop, maintain, and change that flow" (p. 527). Teachers and administrators of this school actively look for alternatives. Against tough odds, they have become leaders for social justice in education, one of Cochran-Smith's (2006) "3 Ls." Teachers and administrators at CES never give up and are successfully struggling to provide the best education for their students while following the law.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This study has described teachers' everyday lives at an elementary school in a border city in Southern Arizona. Teachers in Arizona have severe challenges compared with teachers in other states: lower expenditures on students, lower salaries, higher teacher-student ratios, and more ELL students. Teachers at CES are faced with even more concerns, such as students' high mobility rate, the students' low SES, and the students' language development. Furthermore, educational policies, such as NCLB, AZ LEARNS and the English-only policy set strict rules regarding language usage in classrooms and testing environments in schools. Under such circumstances, this dissertation explored CES from the teachers' perspectives through an ethnographic approach. Themes and patterns which most frequently occurred in classrooms and teachers' narratives were described in the previous three chapters.

First, this study explored teachers' compassion and commitment to their profession. Describing why teachers choose to teach at CES, and what teachers do in their classrooms, this dissertation showed CES teachers' dedication to their students' learning. This study indicates that teachers' commitment is strongly based on who the students are and who the teachers are, as shown by the quotes "They need me" and "I need them." In addition, this study discovered that teachers went over and above their mandated job in order to pursue their dream of making a difference in students' lives. Teachers hoped to achieve this by providing the students rich learning opportunities.

Second, this dissertation described CES teachers' professional and ideological heartache due to the federal and state educational policies. On an instructional level, teachers, especially SEI teachers, had difficulties because they could no longer use Spanish as a teaching tool for monolingual Spanish-speaking students. In addition, teachers' professional ideologies have been negatively impacted. Teachers expressed frustration and anger toward the educational policies. The power relationship among policy makers, school administration, teachers, and students was clearly displayed in the school: policies forced the school administration to meet standards in order to gain an acceptable school label, as well as forced the schools to comply with the English-only policy. Teachers were then forced to teach only in English, and raise their students' academic outcomes in English. Otherwise, they would be fired by the political enforcement. The dilemma that teachers face is the forced need to teach their students how to pass the tests, instead of teaching them how to use knowledge in their lives.

This dissertation also showed teachers at CES did not helplessly follow the law. Teachers and administrators at CES decided to keep bilingual education by negotiating the educational policies and looking for alternatives to answer students' needs. Teachers use Spanish language as much as they can to encourage students to keep using their first language. SEI teachers do not use Spanish language for instructions, but they ask bilingual students to translate for monolingual Spanish-speaking classmates.

Teachers are not just saints or machines, as the general population imagines and as educational policies treat them. Teachers are human beings, whose emotions are explicitly expressed in every aspect of their teaching lives: they get happy when they

have made the right decisions for their students, they get angry with policy makers, and they are frustrated with federal and state educational policies. Moreover, their professional ideologies are closely related to who they are as people. Their personal histories, as an immigrant from Mexico, as an ELL student, and as a local community member, are reflected in their teaching beliefs. As shown in the previous chapter, CES teachers do not just follow the educational laws blindly. They actively negotiate and develop their own rules within these educational policies in order to fit the needs of the students and the local community.

Results of this study, as also emphasized by educational scholars, indicate that teachers cannot successfully educate ELL students with content knowledge alone. If prospective teachers only have content knowledge, those teachers might not be ready for teaching culturally diverse student populations. It would be beneficial for prospective teachers to explore their future teaching community as course work. It will give new teachers a chance to gain knowledge and experience regarding what current teachers are facing and experiencing, and to develop their teaching ideology with local sociocultural awareness. This type of program might help in terms of teacher retention, attrition, and recruiting, as this dissertation indicates that matching school policy and teachers' ideology is a significant factor.

This study also showed that the perspective that teachers and schools are always on the opposite side of minority students is not applicable to the teachers at CES. Teachers at CES actively negotiate and develop policies to meet their students' needs, keeping bilingual education alive. This study provides those who are likely to label

teachers as an enemy that prevents minority students from educational equality a reason for reconsideration.

Additionally, this study emphasizes that it is crucial to bridge the three areas of local community, politics, and academia. It is important to have a relationship between the local community, such as the school district and schools, and academia to investigate what works practically as well as theoretically. It is also necessary for the policy makers to know what is actually going on in schools. It would be ideal if researchers and policy makers can observe schools and classrooms together, have a discussion with teachers, and make conclusions based on these observations and the related academic findings regarding what is the best for students.

This dissertation will contribute to the fields of anthropology and education in several ways. First, this ethnographic study was conducted by myself, a Japanese woman. I lived in Japan for the first 23 years of my life. I speak Japanese as a first language and speak English as a second language. Although I was both a student and a teacher at the college level in America, I had never been in an elementary school in America before I stepped into CES. I had a perspective from both a non-Hispanic and non-Anglo point of view. Furthermore, I was neither an elementary school teacher nor a parent of the students. Starting as an outsider, I could see the situation with fresh eyes. At the same time, I became an emergent participant as time passed. In other words, I became closer to teachers and their students, and eventually had a role more like that of a teacher. So, the fieldwork of this study shifted from an etic perspective to an emic perspective.

Second, this research was conducted at a Hispanic-dominant elementary school. This is especially important when considering the increasing national Hispanic population. The Hispanic population will be a majority in the United States by 2100 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2000). Although this study is not generalizable, the experiences at CES may very well be a picture of U.S. education in the future. Test scores can inform us of the impact of high-stakes testing and other current educational policies, but test scores do not provide the complete story of the policy's impact. Only by listening to the teachers' voices and observing teachers' day-to-day classroom interactions can the true impact of these policies be learned. The results of this study could contribute to the development of more appropriate educational policies.

Before concluding, it is noteworthy that the school won the A+ award from the Arizona Educational Foundation while I was conducting the fieldwork at CES. Cactus Elementary School was recognized as one of only a few schools in Arizona for its "superior ability to meet the needs of their student populations" (Arizona Educational Foundation, n.d.). When teachers received the news, they expressed satisfaction from receiving the award. At the same time, they articulated their feelings toward ADE, which forces public schools in Arizona to prohibit bilingual education. Ms. Brown shared her feelings about the A+ award and ADE. She told me that ADE inspectors would be at school when CES celebrates receiving the A+ award.

Field Notes from Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Ms. Brown: *Last I heard, they [ADE inspectors] are supposed to come to see when we have an A+ celebration. [laugh] How ironic, huh? One group is here to slay us, the other is here to praise us. [laugh]*

In May, the school had a big party to celebrate the A+ award. Teachers, students, and their families were invited and enjoyed food and entertainment. A mariachi group that consisted of CES graduates played music. Spanish/English translation was available for the most of the party program. The school district superintendent, local TV crews, and a lot of special guests were there to celebrate it. I did not notice any inspectors from ADE.

This dissertation presented a unique situation occurring at an elementary school in Arizona. Teachers and administrators at CES are threatened by educational policies in terms of their professional ideology, their pedagogy, and their teaching life itself. As Valdez (2004) emphasizes, with such educational policies, schools' and educators' tasks have become challenging on account of the need to address culturally diverse students' needs while meeting academic standards required by the state. Despite political oppressive power, teachers make the students' and the community's needs a priority. No matter how much they need to fight political authority and how much commitment they need to make, teachers make efforts to provide bilingual education for their students. For CES teachers and administrators, school excellence is not measured by standardized testing, but success in meeting their students' needs—that's their definition of "highly qualified teachers." They were so proud of receiving the award, and I was honored to be there when it happened.

Finally, this study questions whether it is socially just that these teachers, who act and care for their students, are threatened to be fired for low test scores. It is questionable whether school excellence and teacher quality could be measured solely by a student's outcome measure in English. At the same time, this dissertation emphasizes the power of

local teachers and administrators to negotiate federal and state educational policies. These teachers did not helplessly comply with the law. They chose to fight against it and develop it to meet their students' needs.

One of the principles of ethnographic research that Smith (2002) suggests is, "Change takes place when we hear another 'story,' it resonates with our own experience, and we feel free to take from it for our particular uses" (p. 174). In other words, ethnography as a research approach is able to "give researchers the ability to speak for people who have not had a public voice" (Anderson-Levitt, 2006, p. 283). Teachers of CES show their activist aspects by answering students' needs. Considering that the number of ELL students is increasing in U.S. public schools, it is crucial to develop supportive educational environments and opportunities for ELL students and teachers (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010). McDermott (1988) suggests "we have best bring our tongues with us" (p. 63) when we are against a certain condition, in order to avoid inarticulateness. Amplifying the teachers' voices by sharing their narratives and experiences, and presenting a caution to stereotyping teachers—as opponents of minority students—are some of the significant aspects of this study and are important steps in pursuing social justice for teachers.

EPILOGUE

The fieldwork for this dissertation was mainly conducted during the 2004-2005 school year. I now provide an update of events in Arizona and at CES occurring since 2005.

Arizona's educational and language policies have been changed. Beginning in September 2006, ADE increased the severity of the English-only policy regulations (Gandara et al., 2010). The Arizona ELL task force requires a minimum of four hours per day of English Language Development (ELD) for the first year after a student is defined as an ELL student (ARS §15-756.01). English language development in SEI is separated from content area instruction, since the development focuses on the English language itself (Arizona Task Force, 2007). Specifically, English language development focuses on phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and semantics instead of subject matter such as math, science, or social sciences (Arizona Task Force, 2007; Combs, 2012; Faltis & Arias, 2012).

It has been pointed out that this four-hour block ELD program has some crucial problems (Gandara et al., 2010; Lillie, Markos, Estrella, Nguyen, Trifiro, Arias, Wiley, Peer & Pérez, 2010; Long & Adamson, 2012; Rios-Aguilar, González-Canche & Moll, 2010a). Gandara et al. (2010) critiqued this program: "ELL students in Arizona are segregated into classrooms with no exposure to English-dominant peers for 80% of the school day (four hours), and the instruction they receive focuses on learning English over learning subject matter" (p. 39). Long and Adamson (2012) emphasize that "this new program, with its use of a synthetic linguistic syllabus, its lack of instruction in content

areas, and the lack of opportunity it provides for students to acquire the specialized

varieties of English they need for study in academic contexts, conflicts sharply with what

we know about how school-age ELL students learn second language and academics

subject matter" (p. 39-40). Due to the lack of time for academic content studies, ELL

students' likelihood for academic success and graduation is reduced (Rios-Aguilar, et al.,

2010a). Surveying 880 teachers in 33 schools in Arizona, Rios-Aguilar, González-

Canche and Moll (2010b) revealed that teachers in Arizona think the four-hour ELD

block does not help ELL students in terms of their academic learning. Concomitantly,

teachers believe the segregation from English speaking peers is damaging to ELL

students' learning and self-esteem (Rios-Aguilar, et al., 2012b). Most importantly,

reviewing the AIMS test, Garcia, Lawton and Diniz de Figueiredo (2010) made it clear

that achievement gap between ELL students and non-ELL students in Arizona remained

stable through two crucial periods of times: 1) between 2005 to 2009, which was after

English-only policy was implemented, and 2) between 2008 to 2009, which was the first

year of four-hour ELD block. Emphasizing that Arizona's achievement gap is greater

than other states without restrictive language policies, Garcia et al. (2010) argues that

such policies are harmful to ELL students' academic success.

Arizona's English-only policy has negatively affected teacher preparation in the

state as well (Arias, 2012). Prior to 2006, teachers whose specialty is English as a second

language (ESL) or bilingual education (BLE) were required to gain an ESL or BLE

endorsement (de Jong et al., 2010). This endorsement is 27 credits (405 hours) of

undergraduate level courses and 24 credits (360 hours) of graduate level courses (de Jong

et al., 2010). After 2006, when English language development legislation was newly

enacted, a new six-credit (90 hours) SEI endorsement was mandated for teaching forces,

including all teacher candidates (de Jong et al., 2010). Under the current teacher

preparation program, all teacher candidates must gain an SEI endorsement in order to

obtain a teacher certificate and to become a highly qualified teacher in Arizona (de Jong

et al., 2010).

Obtaining an ESL/BLE endorsement is still an option for teacher candidates, but

obtainment of the ESL/BLE endorsement is unlikely to be attempted due to the high

number of credits and hours in comparison to that of the SEI endorsement (Arias, 2012),

especially when both endorsements lead teachers to be equally qualified to teach ELL

students (de Jong et al., 2010). As a matter of fact, Arias (2012) pointed out that the

number of teachers who received ESL/BLE endorsement has declined since 2006.

Consequently, the number of teachers who received SEI endorsement is almost double of

the number of teachers who obtained ESL/BLE endorsement in 2009 (Arias, 2012). De

Jong et al. (2010) critique, "As teachers and schools have to meet the needs of increasing

numbers of students, they have fewer and fewer resources to address these challenges"

(p. 144). In addition, SEI endorsement focuses on an English-only philosophy, method,

and strategy, not on knowledge and sociocultural aspects of second-language learning,

which has been considered vital for ESL/BLE endorsement (de Jong et al., 2010). In

other words, "The SEI endorsement is limited in both the quantity (time) and quality

(content) that it allocates to teacher preparation for ELLs" (Arias, 2012, p. 16). Arias

(2012) continues: "…there is not sufficient time allowed for teachers in preparation to

explore contact with non-English speakers, develop awareness of the sociopolitical dimension of language use, affirm linguistic diversity and develop knowledge of the connection between language, culture and identity" (p. 16).

Moreover, SEI endorsement training does not instruct teachers how to successfully carry out a four-hour ELD block for ELL students. Thus, even if Arizona teachers with an SEI endorsement are highly qualified to teach ELL students, the teachers are not prepared to work with ELL students as part of a four-hour block structure (de Jong et al., 2010). De Jong et al. (2010) warn:

> The absence of issues of bilingual development, an understanding of the role of primary language in effective instruction for ELLs, and its role in the communication with parents and the community may prevent future teachers from knowing how to incorporate and build on students' prior knowledge. (p. 152-153)

Cactus Elementary School has been changed since 2005 as well. Cactus Elementary School no longer has DL classrooms. According to Ms. Smith, who is still working at CES, CES currently has two different types of classrooms: 1) English proficient classrooms, which are SEI classrooms, and 2) ELD classrooms, which conducts four-hour ELD block. Cactus Elementary School has had these classrooms since the 2009-2010 school year. Currently at CES, students who are identified as ELLs are placed in ELD classrooms. At the end of the school year, these ELL students' English proficiency is assessed by State language test (AZELLA) to see if they are to be reclassified and moved to an English proficient classroom the following school year. Ms. Smith shared with me parents' reactions when they got to know there would no longer be

DL at CES. Ms. Smith states, "Yes, parents were upset, but they don't have a voice. Parents were afraid to talk and defend their views…probably immigration issues. They were afraid to be deported" (personal communication, May 18, 2012).

Foucault's (1977) notion of Panopticon, which was addressed in chapter 6, is present in Arizona's education system. Arizona's policy makers exercise their homogeneous powers on students, their parents, and teachers, and impose what they think the education should be. They sustain their power by making sure schools follow the order. As the notion of Panopticon posits, bilingual education has been successfully eliminated from CES with political power against teachers' and parents' wishes. Another example of political oppression in Arizona is the fact that Mexican-American studies were banned from public schools in 2012. According to John Huppenthal, the Arizona school superintendent, ethnic-studies programs "are 'brainwashing' children into thinking that Latinos have been victims of white oppression" ("Rejected in Tucson," 2012, para.1). Educational policies threaten school districts to lose 14 million of state funding, if schools try to keep the program ("Rejected in Tucson," 2012). Reflecting on the educationally oppressive events in Arizona education (e.g., the language policies that impacted CES curriculum and pedagogy, the banning of the Mexican American Studies program in the high school), I recall the poignant words Ms. Smith shared with me in a recent conversation, "this state does not care about kids and education" (personal communication, May 18, 2012). Her words echo across these disappointing events and these pages. However, hopefully her words will encourage us all to work harder to find

ways to advocate for and actively pursue a more socially just education for all of our

children.

APPENDIX A

HANDOUT

HANDOUT
Learning Together from Teachers' Voices
Satoko Yaeo Siegel

Voices/stories I have heard:

1. **"I cannot do everything."**
   What do you think of the balance between teaching life and personal life?
   Related topics (?)
     - District study groups/University of Arizona
     - Preparation for lessons during weekends

2. **"I used to be a teacher. Now I am a test giver."**
   Have you ever felt like this way?

3. **"You know your parents are always welcomed to our class."**
   What do you think of the partnership between school and community?
   Do you have the same policy in your classroom?
   Related topics (?)
     - PTO meeting (SPN translation, child care etc.)
     - Student of the month (invitation to parents)
     - English class (for the local community) on Sunday

4. **"What did she say?"**
   Have you feel being caught between two languages (English and Spanish)?

5. **"Because they (students) are worth it."**
   When is the time you feel you are going over and above your job?
   Related topics (?)
     - Spending your own time and money for your students
     - Making money for the San Diego trip

6. **"We are going to sing a Happy birthday song in English first, then Spanish, then sign."**
   When is the time you feel you (your school) are (is) embracing a multicultural environment?

7. **"It is heart-breaking."**
   Have you felt personal and/or professional struggles in your teaching life?
     Related topics (?)
     - Impact of English only policy
     - Monitors from Arizona Department of Education

8. **"They need me."**
   Why do you choose to work in this challenging environment?

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