

3-19-2015

English Language Learners: A Correlational Study of the Relationship Between A Proficiency Level Assessment and End of Course Test Scores at one Georgia High School

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DOI: 10.25148/etd.FI15032186

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A PROFICIENCY LEVEL ASSESSMENT AND END OF
COURSE TEST SCORES AT ONE GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

CURRICULIUM AND INSTRUCTION

by

Jacqueline Caroline Ellis

2015

To: Dean Delia C. Garcia
College of Education

This dissertation, written by Jacqueline Caroline Ellis, and entitled English Language Learners: A Correlational Study of the Relationship Between a Proficiency Level Assessment and End Of Course Test Scores at one Georgia High School, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Kyle Perkins

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Eric Dwyer, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 19, 2015

The dissertation of Jacqueline Caroline Ellis is approved.

Dean Delia C. Garcia
College of Education

Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2015

DEDICATION

We do all that we do for those we love and this dissertation is dedication to those that I love.

This body of work is dedicated to you, Roderick, for your continued encouragement, patience, understanding, and support throughout this process. You are the one who never gave up on me even in my darkest hours. I love you and offer my sincere thanks.

Clarke, my son, I love how you have been my inspiration and encouragement throughout this process. Most of all, my son, I love how you motivated me beyond words to be my best for you. You have understood beyond your years that due to the undertaking of this work, I had to shut myself away and suspend our usual mom and son special time in order to complete this milestone. I am forever appreciative of your kind act of generosity that allowed me to do what was needed so that the sharing will be so much greater now. I love you for always.

Additionally, this degree that comes with the writing of this dissertation is dedicated to Cynthia May Edwards, my mother. Your dream is finally realized for one of your children to be a part of the academy of doctors. The work that you have done for my siblings and I has not gone unnoticed as we look back on your humble beginnings in the countryside of Jamaica, West Indies. I love you so very much, and I will forever remember your teaching. You see, I did not give up.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people of have been instrumental in me completing this degree. I know I would have never completed this doctoral program without many special people in my life. It is with humility, gratitude and appreciation that I thank my committee chair, Dr. Eric Dwyer, who paved the way for me to begin and end this journey. He always made it possible for me to continue working when the road became especially bumpy. I am so grateful that he remained a constant beacon of light on my journey when I considered stopping. I also want to thank the other members of my committee for their never-ending guidance and support. Dr. Kyle Perkins for refocusing my statistical inquiry; Dr. Peter Cistone for helping me to refine my research questions and overall methodology; Dr, Joan Wynne for her words of inspiration and support from the moment we met.

I would like to thank two special people in the Office of Graduate Studies in the College of Education who helped me to complete the necessary steps for completion of the doctoral program. Caprila Almeida worked with me via email and telephone. She was so helpful in ensuring that I completed all the appropriate steps within the required timeframes. Dr. Linda Bliss' research and editorial advice helped me to produce a clearer and more coherent dissertation than I thought possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and my large extensive family. My colleagues at work created an environment of support where I was free to write without too much mental distraction. Dr. Carolyn Rogers for remaining an unwavering outstretched arm of support that kept me focused, encouraged and organized.

I am indebted to you all for helping me to finish this seemingly impossible task.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A PROFICIENCY LEVEL ASSESSMENT AND END OF COURSE TEST SCORES AT ONE GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL

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Florida International University, 2015

Miami, Florida

Professor Eric Dwyer, Major Professor

Understanding the language of one's cultural environment is important for effective communication and function. As such, students entering U.S. schools from foreign countries are given access to English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs and they are referred to as English Language Learner (ELL) students. This dissertation examined the correlation of ELL ACCESS Composite Performance Level (CPL) score to the End of Course tests (EOCTs) and the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGTs) in the four content courses (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). A premise of this study was that English language proficiency is critical in meeting or exceeding state and county assessment standards.

A quantitative descriptive research design was conducted using Cross-sectional archival data from a secondary source. There were 148 participants from school years 2011-2012 to 2013-2014 from Grades 9-12. A Pearson product moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between the ACCESS CPL (independent variable) and the EOCT scores and the GHSGT scores (dependent variables).

The findings showed that there was a positive correlation between ACCESS CPL scores and the EOCT scores where language arts showed a strong positive correlation and mathematics showed a positive weak correlation. Also, there was a positive correlation between ACCESS CPL scores and GHSGT scores where language arts showed a weak positive correlation.

The results of this study indicated that there is a relationship between the stated variables, ACCESS CPL, EOCT and GHSGT. Also, the results of this study showed that there were positive correlations at varying degrees for each grade levels. While the null hypothesis for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 were rejected, there was a slight relationship between the variables.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going.” –Rita Mae Brown’ (Voxy, 2011)

Understanding the language of your cultural environment is important for effective communication and function. As such, students entering U.S. schools from foreign countries are given access to English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs and they are referred to as English Language Learner (ELL) students. Teachers charged with teaching speakers of other languages are often placed in situations that prohibit them from fulfilling their responsibilities of increasing basic vocabulary, grammar and content in required subjects (Gjerde, 2014).

Focus of the Study

This study is an examination of ELL students’ content class test preparation to meet state performance targets for the ELL subgroups at one Gwinnett County Public School. The study is based on secondary analysis of data from the School Administrative Student Information (SASI) system for students in Grades 9-12. The SASI data files are a compilation of student scores on the various Georgia End of Course tests (ECOT), on the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT SCORES), and on the Access Comprehension and Communication in English State to State For English Language Learners (hereafter ACCESS) scores.

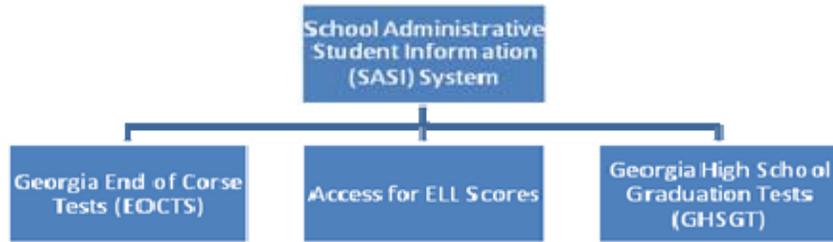


Figure 1. Compilation of ELL Student Test Scores.

To understand the testing system, knowing how ELL scores play into the overall accountability measures is important. When non-English speaking students enter a school district, they are given an assessment (ACCESS) to determine placement and proficiency level. The ACCESS scores are provided to the ELL teacher who is responsible for generating instruction accordingly. The ELL students are mainstreamed for core courses (mathematics, language arts, science, and history). Based on the instruction in the core classes, students are given EOCT and GHSGT tests. Scores generated from those assessments become a part of the SASI system. Figure 2 shows the domino effect of each component. Ultimately, the school administrator is the leader held accountable for student success.

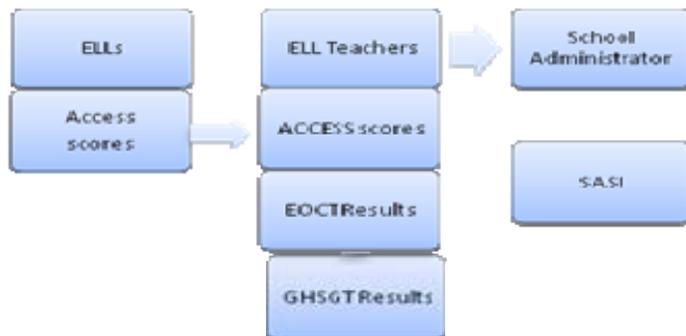


Figure 2. Domino Effect of ELL Student Placement.

This first chapter of the dissertation presents the background of the study, states the purpose and general problem, specifies its major research question and hypotheses, and provides an overview of research methods to be used in the investigation. The chapter concludes with a statement on delimitations, definition of key terms and a brief summary and overview of the remaining chapters in the dissertation.

Background of the Study

This study seeks to examine the effects of placement on ELL students as measured by required state assessments at Archer High School (AHS). AHS is a relatively new high school that opened in August 2009. It is situated in the southern part of Gwinnett County, Georgia where a limited number of ELL students reside, with only 2% or 27 ELL students in the inaugural 1320 student body population. In its inaugural year, there was one ESOL teacher who also served as the ESOL department chair, while teaching three non-ESOL language arts classes. Each position had separate and competing responsibilities that were assigned by the school administrators. Daily during the inaugural year of the ESOL program, the teacher taught 27 ELL students, instructed 100 college preparatory sophomore students, and chaired the ESL department.

After two months of the ESOL teacher struggling, the sophomore students in the college preparatory program were reassigned to another teacher. At the end of the school year, the teacher's contract was not renewed. Since the school leader was protected by Investing in Educational Excellence (IE²), a reason for the teacher's non-renewal was not required. However, it was rumored by some that the teacher's dismissal was attributed to her inability to handle the competing responsibilities to show academic growth required

by IE². According to Mary Smith¹, the placement scores from ACCESS and the instruction necessary to support growth for the ELL students were difficult to achieve within the instructional timeframe and with the limited planning time. However, others felt the scheduling of the ESL classes with mixed ability student throughout the day coupled with the responsibility of building the ESOL program were the primary challenges. The multiple preparations for the mixed ability students required four or more preps per class period, in addition to the need to provide differentiated instructions within each of the skills groups.

Potential Problem: Workload Overload

In 2009, the Archer High School (AHS) Curriculum and Instruction assistant principal designated five class sections for ESOL students as part of the master schedule. Because of the students' ACCESS Level scores, however, eight class sections needed to be set aside with two ESL certified or endorsed teachers on staff to teach these classes. In addition, all 19 Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) schools had the options to adopt different class models for its student population. If the ESL population is very large, as it is in the northern part of Gwinnett County, then a sheltered model² is used, allowing one teacher to provide both content and language assistance. Unfortunately, at Archer High School the ESL population was only 27 students; thus, a cluster model³ was used to schedule classes in the other three content areas (science, mathematics, and social

¹ Pseudonym

² Sheltered classes are composed solely of ELLs and are taught by a teacher with appropriate content area certification and the ESOL Endorsement for ESOL Certification (Georgia DOE, 2008).

³ Cluster classes are where ELLs are served within the regular classroom environment. The ESOL certified teacher plans differentiated instruction for ELLs based on language proficiency level (GCPS Language Assistance Program Planning Toolkit, 2012-2013).

studies). Both the sheltered and cluster models are best suited for ELL students at ACCESS/W-APT Levels 3-5 (Georgia DOE, 2008). The cluster model serves ELL students within the mainstream classroom environment, making this model easier to schedule than the sheltered model.

Application of the Cluster Model

The Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) ELL programs office provides local schools with a tool kit or a set of guidelines to use as they structure their individual ELL ones. The ELL programs office recommends that the cluster model is best suited for ELL students with ACCESS Level 3 or higher. Yet, ELL students with ACCESS Level 1 were placed in the cluster class settings with teachers who were not ESOL certified or ESOL endorsed. Students are usually placed in this class setting for at least two semesters. If the ELL fails to pass the class the first time, that ELL students would be expected to repeat the class until a passing grade is earned. These teachers expressed frustration at having ELLs in their classes with such limited English skills, because the teachers were ill equipped to meet the ELL students' needs. It was determined by the school principal that the ESL Department Chair was expected to provide support to these teachers throughout the school. At the end of the school year, a significant number of these students were academically unsuccessful. The students were required to attend summer school, repeat classes, sign-up for tutoring, obtain a mentor, and other activities that were necessary if there was any chance of them graduating on time. The administrators did not provide language or cultural training for these teachers who found themselves ill equipped to meet the ELL students' needs.

In the 2010 – 2011 school year, the student body increased to 1,684 students, but the ELL population dropped from 2% to 1% (16 students). A new ESL Department Chair was appointed whose only responsibility was to manage the administrative responsibilities of the ESL program and to teach the business education classes. It could be hypothesized that the workload of the new teacher was based on the inability of the departing teacher to perform the duties of a chair and teacher. The assumption can be made that the principal took into consideration the concerns of the departing teacher, because the incoming ESL chair did not have any ESL classes. Instead the students were assigned to a different teacher for their ESL Language Arts and ESL Language Development classes. No sheltered classes in the other core content areas were offered. As such, the students were assigned to teachers who were not prepared to teach, language arts, mathematics, social studies, or science. In addition, students in the upper level Language Arts (freshman, sophomore, junior and senior) classes were also assigned at random to teachers in language arts who were not ESL endorsed or certified to meet their needs. With this new arrangement, AHS was able to use its teacher allocation points for a part-time ESL teacher. Further, AHS was able to gain full-time equivalent (FTE) points for those ESOL students who were receiving their instruction from an ESL certified or endorsed teacher.

In the 2011–2012 school year, some additional changes happened to the ESL program at AHS. A new ESL Department Chair was assigned, the ESL population increased almost 50% to 33 students, but the language delivery model did not change. ESL students continued to receive instruction primarily via the innovative IE² cluster model.

Statement of the Problem

There is a gap in the literature regarding ELL assessment for instructional placement and the actual placement of these students when they arrive at the assigned schools. This problem is of great concern since all students deserve an equal education as mandated by the Elementary and Secondary Act. More specifically, the existing problem involves the manner in which ELL students' content preparation classes are assigned to the students at Archer High School. The placement of ELL students into programs where there are indications that ELL students may be inappropriately placed in such programs that do not address their inability to read, write, speak or understand English is a serious problem. The actual recommendations were not always followed due to the limited number of ESL certified or endorsed instructors and the numerous deficiencies noted by the students. However, many of these placements required inappropriate placements for ELL students. ELL students may not be segregated from their non-ELL peers except to the extent educationally justified to meet the recipient's stated goals for the alternative program (Smith, 2007). Further, this study was undertaken to examine the correlation placement may have on the ELL students as measured by the required state assessments

According to Katz et.al (2004), content standards and assessments were developed, for the most part, with English speaking, middle class students in mind. They have found that such standards do not address instructional issues such as how to best teach content material while students are still acquiring a second language. Most notably, they argue that these assessments fail to offer ELL the opportunity to demonstrate their content knowledge when tested in English. Thus, the ACCESS CPL test and any other content assessments can be characterized as a proficiency tests because ELL students

may not have the English language skills to demonstrate the content knowledge that they know.

Any findings between the ACCESS CPL and EOCT and GHSGT might indicate that a stronger correlation could be an indication of a parallel relation between the two variables. In other words, a weaker correlation might indicate that things are changing for at least some ELL students. A strong negative correlation might entail that things are getting bad for the strong students and really good for the weak students. It is possible that a show of correlation suggests that the students who entered Archer High School with a high ACCESS CPL score remained high and were able to earn a high score on the end of course assessments. On the other hand, a strong correlation would similarly indicate that students entering with a low ACCESS CPL score would also later show low scores on the end of course assessments.

Similarly, a correlation coefficient of zero or close to zero means that ACCESS CPL and the EOCT and GHSTs assessments do not have any correlational association of any kind. In other words, there is no strong correlation relationship in one direction or the other.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the influences of the ELLs' content preparation classes at Archer High School on their performance on county and Georgia state high-stakes tests. Specifically, their ACCESS scores as correlated to ECOT and GHSGT assessments performance. A second purpose is to examine the achievement levels of the ELL students based on the four content courses (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics) at Archer High School. Since a premise of this study is

that English language proficiency is critical in meeting or exceeding state and county standards, school administrators must consider the preparation of the language proficiency courses used for ELLs program students, including the ACCESS scores and International New Comer recommendations for class types.

Research Questions

This study was conducted to determine the possibility of predicting ELL students' ability to pass two state and county summative assessments and the four content classes based on ACCESS score domain and proficiency levels. The primary question was "Do placement ACCESS scores predict EOCT SCORES and GHSGT scores? Two critical research questions were investigated with this study:

Research Question 1

Is there a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT?

Research Question 2

Is there a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT in science, mathematics, language arts and social studies?

Social Significance of the Study

This study is significant for two reasons. First, it should be determined if the ACCESS, which is used as an evaluative instrument for placing and exiting students from the ELL program, is a criterion predictor for successful instruction for the four content area courses. Negative results could provide a basis for greater clarity of communication

for student progress and achievement to enhance ELL student academic performance and enhance ELL students' SASI results.

Secondly, if the decision of the school administrators to place students in clustered classes is a predictive criterion for success in the standard curriculum program, then the students who are part of the ELL program at Archer High School should be able to meet the standards set by the State of Georgia as determined by the EOCT and GHS GT scores. It is possible that the results of the standardized tests could potentially reflect the inadequate preparation of the ELL program.

Delimitations

The sample for this research was compiled from an urban Georgia high school where the ELL population is less than 2% of the entire student body. Of the 2102 students, 41 were classified as ELL. The sample represents less than the 41 students in Grades 9 to 12 over a 4-year period. The students were classified as *assessment only*, *direct served*, or *monitored*. Therefore, this study was delimited to ELL students who attended Archer High School between 2009 and 2013 and completed ACCESS, EOCT, and GHS GT assessments.

Operational Definitions

The following terms are operationally defined for the purposes of this study: *ACCESS for ELL*. Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs). Results for ACCESS for ELLs are reported in the four domains and proficiency in six levels. The six proficiency levels are: Entering (Level 1),

Beginning (Level 2), Developing (Level 3), Expanding (Level 4), Bridging (Level 5) and Reaching (Level 6). There are three distinctive, yet overlapping, tiers for each grade level clusters except for kindergarten. The assessment mandated language assessment for English proficiency in Georgia (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, 2014a).

Can Do Descriptors. Guidelines designed to support English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher's interactions and coaching of regular education teachers on instructional strategies to support student progress. Further, this program gives teachers a basic overview of the student's abilities proficiency level results (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, 2014b).

Clustered Model. Cluster classes are where ELLs are served within the regular classroom environment. The ESOL certified teacher plans differentiated instruction for ELLs based on their language proficiency level (GCPS Language Assistance Program Planning Toolkit, 2012-2013).

Composite Proficiency Level. This criterion is used to exit English language learners from English speakers of other languages services. The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has adopted a CPL level of 5.0 or greater on the ACCESS assessment, Tier C form as the ESOL exit criterion.

End of Course Tests. EOCT serve as a student's final exam in English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. These assessments were created with educator input and State Board approval. Students can earn the following scores:

- Excellent: A student demonstrates superior performance of the course content.

- Good: A student demonstrates mastery of course content and is well prepared for the next level of coursework in the subject.
- Fair: A student demonstrates only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of coursework in the subject.
- Needs Improvement: A student does not demonstrate the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of coursework in the subject. (GaDOE, 2014).

English Language Learner (ELL). ELL refers to any person who belongs to a language minority group who speaks a language other than English as the first, home, or dominant language (USDOE, 2014).

English to Speakers of other Languages (ESOL). ESOL is the instructional program that assists students learning English that follows the requirements outlined in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-5.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient Students (Georgia Department of Education, 2014b).

Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT). Students seeking a high school diploma in Georgia must pass assessments in four content areas as well as the Georgia High School Writing Test (Georgia Department of Education, 2014b).

High-stakes tests. One of the goals of the Georgia Department of Education is to improve student achievement on high stakes college entrance tests such as the SAT and the ACT by providing students more opportunities for rigorous coursework through Advanced Placement Courses (Georgia Department of Education, 2014b).

International Newcomer Center. The INC is the Gwinnett County Public School's first stop for new middle and high students whose first language is not English or who have attended high school in another country. The center assesses language and mathematics skills, recommends placement, creates a student profile, evaluates school

transcripts and advises students on course selection (Gwinnett County Public School, 2014).

Investing in Education Excellence Contracts (IE²). IE² partnerships were created by Georgia House Bill 1209. It allows local boards of education to enter into multi-year contracts with the State board of Education and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. Such contracts identify specific school-level achievement goals that are in addition to current federal accountability requirements (GaDOE, 2014).

Limited English Proficient (LEP). LEP students often fail to achieve academically. LEP students are students whose primary language is not English and although they may be able to speak, read and write English to some extent, these students are not proficient enough to receive instruction in an English-only setting (Macias, 2002).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110). A landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools. The NCLB law requires school districts to report yearly test date and graduation rate for all high school students.

Primary or Home Language Other Than English (PHOLTE). A student is considered PHLOTE if he/she speaks a language other than English or the adults in the child's home speak a language other than English. This information was obtained from the student Home Language Survey completes at the time of registration.

Sheltered Model. Sheltered classes are composed solely of ELLs and are taught by a teacher with appropriate content area certification and the ESOL Endorsement for ESOL Certification (Georgia DOE, 2008).

World-Class Instructional Design Assessment Consortium (WIDA). WIDA is a consortium of 27 states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English Language Learners (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, 2014b).

Chapter Summary and Overview of Remaining Chapters

The first chapter introduced the study, the problem, research questions, purpose, significance, and delimitations. The essential terms were also defined for better understanding of this investigation. This study focused on the use of ELLs ACCESS CPL scores as a guide for the scheduling of classes in the four content areas as the ELLs prepare to take the Georgia EOCTs. The remaining chapters of this dissertation are organized into various phases of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the relevant literature and discusses the theoretical underpinnings and introduces the study's conceptual framework. Chapter 3 describes the methodology, focusing on the data from SASI and the techniques employed in data preparation and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis and reports the findings. Lastly, Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the results and their implications for advancing theoretical understanding and educational policy.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter, through a review of the current literature, examines three factors that contribute to the academic success or failure of ELLs in Gwinnett County Public School System especially in terms of standardized testing (EOCT, GHSGT, ACCESS for ELL). The conceptual framework will provide the underlying model of ESL and ELL students as it investigates the literature associated with this topic. Additionally, this review of literature will provide a greater understanding of identifying and assessing English Language Learners.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical perspective related to ELL student engagement and school climate set the stage for the current study by providing a conceptual framework for the educational expectations of ELLs: Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (1973, 1986) and habitus (1998, p.80). Gaddis (2013) stated that Bourdieu's writing on capital, habitus, and field is actually an extended metaphor for life as a game. In this extended metaphor, capital whether social, cultural or economic, represents the resources, individuals have at their disposal that are valued in the game. It differs from habitus in that this is where an individual's disposition that stems from her standing in the game or her "feel for the game."

The final component or field represents the social world within which an individual plays a particular game. According to this theory, in the education field, students are one set of actors whose goal in the game is to meet the standards of teachers in order to move to the next level of the game. In order for students to achieve success,

they must use the capital they received from their families, communities or prior experiences. Social institutions such as schools may appear to be unbiased, neutral entities, but they are, in fact, governed by rules of exchange that place value on the cultural norms or cultural capital of upper class and middle class people (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital exists in three states: embodied, institutionalized, and objectified (Bourdieu, 1986; Olneck, 2000). First, the chapter provides an overview of the Georgia Department of Education policy for English Language Learners. Second, a discussion of Bourdieu's classification schema used to distinguish the different types of cultural capital and how it is used as a predictor for academic success. More specifically, the chapter discusses, cultural capital and its effects on educational outcomes. Third, the chapter looks at the success and failure of English Language Learners in Gwinnett County Public Schools with particular emphasis on the funding of the ELL program. Finally, the chapter ends with a presentation of the impact of the school climate as an alternate explanation for the academic success or failure of the English Language Learners particularly as it relates to the educational opportunities for immigrants of color.

Logically, as the researcher attempts to explore Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (1973, 1986) as it relates to Georgia's English Language Learners related phenomena, it will become evident of the connection to each research question. Table 1 shows how the literature review specifically and conceptually relates to the research.

Table 1.

Relationship of Bourdieu to Georgia ELL and Research Questions

Bourdieu Capital Concept	GA ELL related phenomena	Research Questions
<p>1. Students are one set of actors whose goal in the game is to meet the standards of teachers in order to move to the next level of the game.</p> <p>2. In order for students to achieve success, they must use the capital they received from their families, communities or prior experiences.</p>	<p>1. Guidelines that the local schools follow to ensure that the needs of the students are being met.</p> <p>2. Students are assessed for language proficiency using the state-adopted English proficiency instrument.</p> <p>3. Test scores and graduation rates indicate that English language learners (ELLs), across the nation are consistently underperforming on content based assessments and failing to complete high school.</p> <p>4. Language is the focus of every content area task, with all meaning and all demonstration of knowledge expressed through oral and written forms of language”</p>	<p><i>RQ1:</i> Is there a relationship between the ELL students’ ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT?</p>
<p>1. Cultural capital exists in institutional state.</p> <p>2. Social institutions are governed by rules.</p>	<p>1. Sociocultural interactions happen within a smaller classroom environment.</p> <p>2. Classroom built on understanding and appreciating language diversity can develop.</p>	<p><i>RQ2:</i> Is there a relationship between the ELL students’ ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT?</p>

1. Cultural capital exists in the state of embodiment	1. Classroom accommodations designed to help make instruction of content within the inclusive classroom more conducive to academic success for the ELLs.	RQ2: Is there a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT?
	2. Content of the ELL classroom is shaped by both language and disciplinary knowledge is important for understanding the phenomenon of the inclusive classroom.	
1. Individual's disposition that stems from her standing in the game or "feel for the game."	1. Acquiring both disciplinary knowledge and academic language is dependent on students being taught academic literacy	RQ1: Is there a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT?
2. The classroom is a social world within which an individual plays a particular game.	2. Perceptions and preparation of the teacher are vital for understanding the experiences of the English language learners within the classroom.	

Identifying English Language Learners

The ELL program in Georgia is a direct result of Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and under Georgia State Education rule 160-4-5.02 Language Assistance: Program for English Language Learners (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, 2014a). Across Georgia, school districts are required to implement a system to identify English

Language Learners (ELL), serve ELLs using appropriate delivery models of language instruction and assess ELLs annually for English language proficiency, implementing the ACCESS for ELLs.

In Gwinnett County, the process for identifying ELLs is standardized. Prospective Gwinnett County students are all administered a Home Language Survey (see Appendix) to determine if a language other than English is their native language, primary home language, or first language. Once these students are identified, they are then assessed for language proficiency using the state-adopted English proficiency instrument, the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). The W-APT is not administered at the individual school sites. Instead, these students visit the International Newcomers Center (INC) where their language and mathematics skills are assessed. A proficiency level score is available immediately at the end of the W-APT administration and indicates the student's English proficiency level on a scale of one to six. If a student's score indicates a proficiency level of less than five, the student is determined to be an English Language Learner (ELL). Afterwards, these ELL students become eligible for language assistance services and they can receive services through the English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL) program. A proficiency level score under five point zero indicates that everyday instruction in all subjects must be differentiated to accommodate the level of English proficiency of the student (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, 2014a).

The INC not only assesses language and mathematics skills, it is also recommends placement, creates a student profile, evaluates school transcripts, and advises students on course selection. The INC also provides information on graduation

requirements, available school programs, and community resources. The recommendations from the INC are then forwarded to the various GCPS schools and this information is used to by the registration clerks to create appropriate schedules for the prospective students.

In theory, the recommendations of the INC should be the guidelines that the local schools follow to ensure that the needs of the students are being met. Unfortunately, not all the recommendations for services being made by the INC are available at all the local schools. When this discrepancy happens, local schools try to provide alternate services and in some cases the alternate services being offered do not suit the needs of the prospective ELL students. Students may use adapted or simplified English materials.

Assessing English Language Learners

In addition to the initial assessment that takes place at the INC, Title III requires that ELL student get assessed annually to determine their growth in English language proficiency. Counselors and teachers find the information provided by these annual assessments critical in informing their decisions when deciding the on the appropriate instruction for the ELL students. Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is the assessment instrument used in Georgia. Additionally, the ACCESS for ELLs assessment provides districts with data to assist their evaluation of the effectiveness of their ESOL programs and the ways to enhance instruction and learning in programs for ELLs.

The ACCESS for ELLs assessment assigns ELLs an English Composite Proficiency (CPL) score from one to six:

Level 1: Entering. A student at this level is able to use words, phrases, or chunks of language in response to one step directions or commands. Content language usage is primarily limited to graphic representations of the language.

Level 2: Beginning. A student at this level is able to speak in phrases or short sentences, although errors will often impede meaning and may be able to use general language related to the content areas.

Level 3: Developing. A student at this level is able to use expanded sentences in oral interaction and write paragraphs. The student has a grasp of general content area language and begins to develop some specific content area language proficiency.

Level 4: Expanding. A student at this level is able to communicate in a variety of sentence lengths with varying linguistic complexity, orally and in a multiple paragraph format. The student has specific content area language and some degree of related technical language.

Level 5: Bridging. A student at this level is deemed to be approaching proficiency comparable with English proficient peers in grade level content area classes. The student is able to use extended oral and written discourse with variations of linguistic complexity and sentence lengths. Generally, a student who scores Level 5 on Tier C of the *ACCESS for ELLs* assessment is deemed ready to exit language services.

Level 6: Reaching. Like a student at Level 5, a student at this level is deemed to be approaching oral and written proficiency comparable with English proficient peers. Additionally, the student is able to use specialized or technical language reflective of content areas at grade level. Generally, a student who scores Level 6 on *ACCESS* for

ELLs is deemed proficient with his or her peers. Students who score at level 6 are ineligible for language assistance services.

In addition to the CPL, WIDA also designed CAN DO Descriptors. CAN DO Descriptors provide teachers with information on the language student are able to understand and produce in the classroom in the four domain areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. For example, the CAN DO Descriptors show that students may be able to “identify” at various levels of language proficiency. Students at various ACCESS CPLs, however; will use different linguistic complexity, vocabulary and language control to “identify.” Beginning English language learners may “identify” by pointing or using short words or phrases. While English language learners at the other end of the spectrum will begin to “identify” using complex themes and ideas describe in detailed academic language.

Serving English Language Learners

In Georgia, there are six approved delivery models for providing language assistance service to ELLs. The first approved delivery model is the Pull-out model outside the academic block. With this model, students are taken out of a non-academic class for the purpose of receiving small group language instruction from the ESOL teacher. In contrast is the Push-in model that takes place within reading, language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies classes. Here students remain in their core academic class where they receive content instruction from their content area teacher along with targeted language instruction from the ESOL teacher. School districts or school clusters with small ELL populations often utilize the cluster center model. Here students are transported for instruction from two or more schools to a center designed to

provide intensive language assistance. The resource center or laboratory model also provides English language assistance in a group setting. The primary difference with this model though is that students receive language assistance supplemented by multi-media materials.

Research indicates that strong teaching partnerships occur when teachers know each other's curriculum, share responsibilities, plan together, share strategies, and share teaching equally. When students break into groups, the ESOL teacher should work with ELLs, while the content teacher focuses on mainstream students. The ESOL Push-in delivery model allows the teachers to collaborate in order to facilitate meaningful language instruction within the content classroom and to appropriately plan differentiated instruction and tasks to meet the various proficiency levels of the ELL students.

The final model which is the one utilized at Archer High School is the Sheltered Model or a scheduled class period where students receive language assistance and /or content instruction in a class composed of only of ELLs. Most cluster middle and high schools in Gwinnett that have large ELL populations are able to offer more sheltered content area classes. Often times, the INC will recommend a content sheltered class for a prospective student but the local school does not offer that class. At Archer High school there are only thirty-four ELL students so there are only two Sheltered ELL classes in language arts. Despite the need for more sheltered content classes as evidenced by the ACCESS CPL of the Archer ELL population, students are placed in regular classes with little supports.

Yang and Jimenez (2011) state that one of the major challenges in the field of teaching and learning a second language is the remarkable variation across second

language learners in terms of their prior preparation for linguistic achievement (141). For this reason, the Georgia Department of Education also recommends that most ELLs will need instruction in study skills, time management and organization to enhance their academic performance. Unfortunately, the decision regarding which courses get offered is left up to the local school systems to evaluate all of the factors that may influence the academic performance of the ELLs in their schools. Subsequently, ELL programs across the state of Georgia and within school systems remain quite varied. It is not uncommon within GCPS to find a variety (sometimes even unequal) services being offered to the ELL population.

Georgia State Education Rules 160-4-2-.03, List of State funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses lists eleven ESOL Language Acquisition courses for Grades 9-12 (or high school). The primary purpose of these elective only courses is to allow ELLs the opportunity to gain proficiency in using the academic language needed for success in all academic disciplines. These courses may be taught by teachers who hold the appropriate grade level certification in any subject or content area and the ESOL Endorsement or who holds certification in ESOL. Even though it is not necessary to take these courses sequentially, the implied expectation is that the basic courses should precede more advanced ones. The problem arises when local schools fail to offer some (if any) of these courses. It then becomes impossible for students to take these courses in any reasonable prescribed order and so they fail to develop the sound academic language and terminology necessary to ensure academic success in the content courses.

The state of Georgia prescribes separate ELL developmental courses to support and enhance the reading and writing skills in the four content (mathematics, science,

social studies, and language arts) areas. Georgia students need class credit and passing test scores in all four areas to meet graduation requirements. This recommendation is a direct result of the information gleaned from a special report, “Predicting English Language Learner Success in High School English Literature Courses” produced by the Georgia Department of Education Assessment and Accountability Division.

Unfortunately, most ELLs in GCPS are not offered these developmental courses. Of the four courses, only the English Language Arts course was offered. Furthermore, these course offerings vary at the nineteen high schools within the district as these decisions are made at the discretion of the local school principals. Factors such as the ELL population, funding, and the number of available certified ELL teachers are used when local principals decide which ELL courses to make available. At Archer High School, ELLs are only offered developmental courses in language arts.

The special report, “Predicting English Language Learner Success in High School English Literature Courses” produced by the Georgia Department of Education Assessment and Accountability Division offers three guidelines to ensure ELLs success in their courses. This report shows that English Language Learners are likely to experience success on the End-of-Course-Tests for Ninth Grade Literature and Composition and American Literature and Composition (11th grade) if they have an ACCESS for ELLs Composite Proficiency Level of 4.3-4.8 combined with a strong Reading proficiency score. Although some ELLs could possibly be successful in these courses before reaching the ACCESS CPL of 4.3-4.8, it is probable they will have difficulty passing the EOCT for ELA courses. In addition, these classes should be taught in a sheltered class model where the class is composed solely of ELLs and must be taught

by a teacher who holds English Language Arts certification as well as either the ESOL Endorsement or ESOL certification.

Cultural Capital

Sociologist Annette Lareau (2000) finds that middle-class parents have cultural knowledge and societal networks that they can leverage to improve their child's educational experiences while working-class parents do not. Embodied cultural capital refers to behavioral styles, ways of speaking, cultural preferences, and understanding of valued cultural knowledge (Olnick, 2000). Unlike high school diplomas, university degrees, or titles, this form of cultural capital cannot be purchased and unlike property, it cannot be exchanged. Instead, it is learned or adopted by individuals.

Bourdieu (1986) argues that schools do not value all students' speaking and behavioral styles equally, but rather they place greater value on those of the upper and middle classes. However, unless low socio-economic status (SES) and minority students have opportunities to internalize dominant cultural norms, they may be disadvantaged by their schools with regard to school engagement and performance, college attendance, and employment opportunity. Indeed, researchers have shown that the lack of cultural capital among low-income and minority students can result in reduced access to school resources and academic and social supports from teachers (Lareau, 2002; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Lee & Bowen, 2006). For this reason, Delpit (1995) contends that schools should explicitly teach low-SES and minority students to acquire cultural norms, behavioral styles and codes of power that are necessary for them to succeed in U.S. society. Thus, there is more work for minorities to do. In the 1990s and more recently, several policy makers and researchers have argued that a common curriculum linked to high-stakes

testing could help low-income and minority students acquire the intellectual abilities and dispositions required in the 21st century societies.

Almedia (2007) states that because English language learners are as diverse as the students themselves, and the challenges extend beyond language acquisition, when a student performs poorly on an assessment, educators need to determine if the student is struggling with language issues, cultural issues, or learning issues. Educators need to consider which language is used (and how) in their homes and neighborhoods, their educational backgrounds, their families' socioeconomic levels, and the number of books in their homes. Beyond language skills and fluency many cultures do not value the open communication style that Americans have in their classrooms. As a result, ELLs may choose to be silent or take a passive role rather than risk making a mistake.

Almedia (2007) further argues because some ELLs come from varied cultures, they may have limited social and academic experiences. These students may never have been in a building with running water or used a pencil. So while learning in English, these students are also learning our educational environment. They are becoming exposed to concepts such as fire drills, lunch lines, and restroom passes. Also, many parents of ELLs are equally unaware of the expectations and routines of the American school system. Some of the parents who have limited education themselves often rely solely on the schools to educate their children. These parents work long hours at more than one job find it difficult to participate in school functions. They may also lack the confidence in their communication skills and feel uncomfortable pursuing a relationship with the school. As a result, students lose a critical support structure in their parents and

educators may mistakenly determine that they are not interested in their children's educations.

Carter (2007) states that it is important that educators not mistake a lack of student access to prior knowledge or a lack of opportunity to learn information for an inability to learn new information. Invariably, more instruction takes place in the classroom that is part of the expressed curriculum (Figure 4). Unfortunately, when teachers spend too much time in the instruction circle, then enough time may not get spent on the curriculum and so students may get assessed on information that they had not been taught.

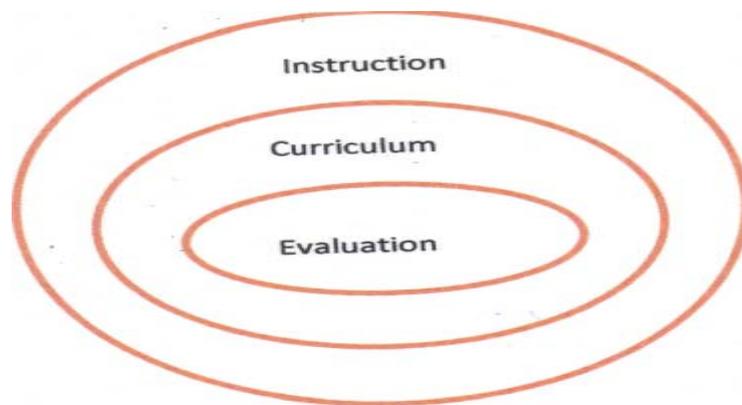


Figure 3: An Aligned Instructional Program.

Objectified cultural capital refers to artifacts and other expressions of embodied cultural capital including literature, music, art, and film as well as the sites where these are available to every student, a common curriculum and a common set of expectations would decrease inequity in education by improving the performance of students from low-income and minority families. In the mid-nineties, Ravitch (1995) and Hirsch (1996) stressed that standards-based reform would enable American schools to accomplish what they had never done before: educate all students well, regardless of social class and

racial backgrounds. More recently, advocates of high-stakes testing have contended that NCLB and similar state policies are necessary to ensure that teachers and schools maintain high standards for low-SES and minority students and help them achieve at high levels (e.g. Grissmer et al., 2000; Paige, 2001). Yet, Niell and Guisbond (2004) believed that schools with a high population of ELL students typically start behind in the "adequate yearly progress" (AYP). Further, these students tend to be more ethnically diverse.

As educators continue to consider options for teaching and learning, it is important to delve into prior research to understand previous and current best practices (Gee 1999). Gee further maintains that learning occurs primarily in the context of school, where origins of learning are shaped by the theories and methods through which learning is studied. From a sociocultural perspective, the perception of learning is centered on changes in relationships in an effort to acquire new knowledge and skill. Therefore, it is important for students to "learn how to learn" from those who teach (Gee, 1999).

Gee (2005) has done extensive research on utilizing games to support learning. He found multiple learning principles that good games incorporate, such as identity, interaction, risk taking, wee-ordered problems, challenges, consolations, systems thinking, and others. Gee believes that students have to make an extended commitment of self-identity in order for deep learning to occur. Further, he believes that learning has to have meaning and interaction in order for decision to be made. The texts and textbooks need to be put in contexts of interaction where the world and other people talk back. Further, Gee believes in taking risk. He thinks schools should be designed much

like a video game. When you fail in a video game, you simply try another strategy until you have mastered the challenge. Gee (2005) believes that “games encourage players to think about how each action taken might affect their future actions and the actions of the other players playing against them as they all move their civilizations through the ages. In our complex global society, such system thinking is crucial for everyone (p. 36). He believes that educators understanding this approach to teaching and learning would have greater gain on high-stakes testing.

At the same time, scholars and educators have raised concerns that high-stakes testing and accountability policies will lead teachers to narrow the curriculum and devote inordinate amounts of time to preparing students to take state standardized tests (Shepard, 2000; Thompson, 2001). Darling-Hammond argues that overemphasis on test scores will lead to “a narrower curriculum; to test-based instruction that ignores critical real world skills, especially for lower-income and lower performing students; and to less useful and engaging education” (2004a, p. 18). Also, there is a growing concern that NCLB interfered with teachers’ efforts to develop relevant curriculum for culturally and racially diverse students (Selwyn, 2007). If this is the case, the new accountability system based on test scores is not likely to help low-income and minority students to acquire embodied cultural capital that is valued by universities and employers.

A second concern has been that disparities in resources severely limit the capacity of schools and districts serving high percentages of low SES and racial minority students. Researchers have documented significant differences with regard to school facilities and teacher quality between districts and schools serving primarily middle-class

families and those mostly serving lower-income and minority students (Arsen & Davis, 2006; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2004). Under such conditions, teachers may not have the qualifications or resources to help students acquire embodied cultural capital in the form of analytical, higher-order thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Institutionalized cultural capital refers to degrees, credentials, grades, and test scores that serve as social markers to indicate that holders have specific levels or types of knowledge and skills (Olneck, 2000). As Labaree (1997) argues, a primary reason that individuals invest money, time, and effort in schooling is to acquire qualifications that will enable them to advance to higher levels of education and attain desirable employment and social positions. It is widely believed that schools are meritocratic with academic success being based solely on ability; according to this belief, schools provide each student with an equal chance to acquire academic credentials by using fair and objective methods such as grades and test scores. However, Bourdieu (1973) contends that the notion that schools are meritocratic is false and serves to legitimize the perpetuation of social hierarchies. From Bourdieu's perspective, students from the middle and upper classes are more likely to succeed in school because they already possess the types of embodied cultural capital that schools value. Consequently, such students are more likely to acquire higher academic credentials and professional or white-collar jobs.

In contrast, it is more difficult for low SES or minority students to succeed in schools. From the start, they have less of the embodied cultural capital that is necessary to thrive in schools. Even though some of these students may succeed academically

through extraordinary efforts, the majority of them are more likely to fail or underperform in schools. As a result, in contrast to the ideology of equal chances, Bourdieu argues that schools contribute to reproducing existing social hierarchies. Therefore, a key condition for high-stakes testing and accountability policies to succeed is whether they provide increased opportunities for low-income and minority students to acquire academic qualifications. This need for increased opportunities is critical given the substantial number of U.S. students who drop out of high school and the significant gap between white students and African American and Hispanic students with regard to dropout rates.

Mishel and Roy (2006) estimated that the overall high school graduation rate in the U.S. was between 80% and 83% in the 1990s and early 2000s. Further, they estimated that the graduation rate for African Americans ranged from 69 to 75% during this time while the graduation rate for Hispanics ranged from 61 to 74% (Mishel & Roy, 2006). To the extent that dropout rates among low-income and racial minority students remain the same or increase under high-stakes testing policies, it seems likely that such policies would not help these students acquire institutionalized cultural capital. On the other hand, even when high-stakes testing policies reduce the dropout rates among such groups, it would be important for low SES and minority students to also have opportunities to acquire embodied cultural capital to succeed in higher education and in their careers.

Background of Gwinnett County Public Schools

Educating students in Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS), an Atlanta suburb of northwest Georgia, cost more than \$7,000 per child. The cost of educating one child in Gwinnett County was \$7,391 per year, with 71.6% direct cost accounting for

instruction accounting. The cost was calculated to educate students in one or more of the 132 schools in the district. In 2011, the 132 schools included 77 elementary schools, 26 middle schools, 19 high schools, four charter schools and six special schools (Gwinnett County Public School, 2014a).

Similar to other school systems in Georgia, in 2012 GCPS was facing an \$89 million shortfall as described in Figure 5 (Gwinnett County Public Schools (2013). CEO/Superintendent J. Alvin Wilbanks says, “Not a single option (they) are considering to balance the next year’s budget is a good one” (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2012). Several factors have contributed to the budget shortfall that GCPS is facing. Most notably were the \$36 million lost due to the continued decline in local tax revenues and school districts such as Buford City Schools receiving a portion of the total tax revenue based on their enrollment leaving GCPS. Gwinnett County’s 2012 tax digest was expected to drop in value by 7.5% compared to 2011. In fact, Gwinnett County was a 24% tax digest shrinkage which cost the school system \$133 million in local revenue (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2012). Another significant contributor to the budget shortfall was the \$31 million it lost when the federal stimulus dollars that were used to balance the FY2012 budget ended. Other contributing factors to the budget shortfall were the increased cost for classified employees’ health insurance premiums (\$11 million), the mandatory increases in the school district’s contribution to the Teachers’ Retirement System (\$7 million) and the need to hire more teachers due to the growth in enrollment (\$4 million; Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2012).

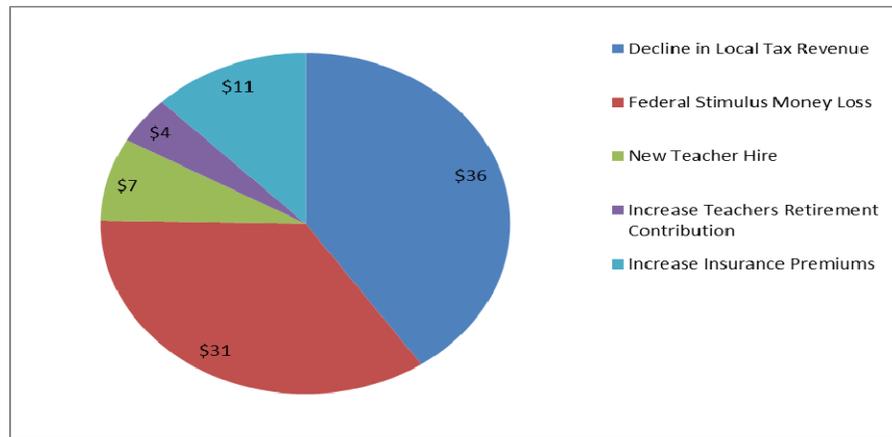


Figure 4. GCPS FY2012 \$89 Budget Shortfall Measures.

To address the FY2013 budget shortfall, GCPS had several strategies as noted in Figure 6. First, it planned to reduce the budget for central office departments by another 2.5% which would result in a \$1.6 million in savings for the fourth consecutive year. Those savings totaled a 20% saving or \$23 million annually. Second, it planned to eliminate 54 central office positions. By choosing to eliminate these positions, GCPS saved \$2.7 million annually. Other money saving initiatives included earning additional state revenue (\$21.6 million), ended payments to one external charter schools (\$2 million), and reduced the district’s contribution rate to the Gwinnett Retirement System (\$19 million). Some significant cost saving measures to raise the \$43 million in savings were (a) increase in class sizes by at least two students, (b) two furlough days for all employees, (c) release of employees hired after the beginning of the school year, and (d) release of retired employees who are working part-time (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2012).

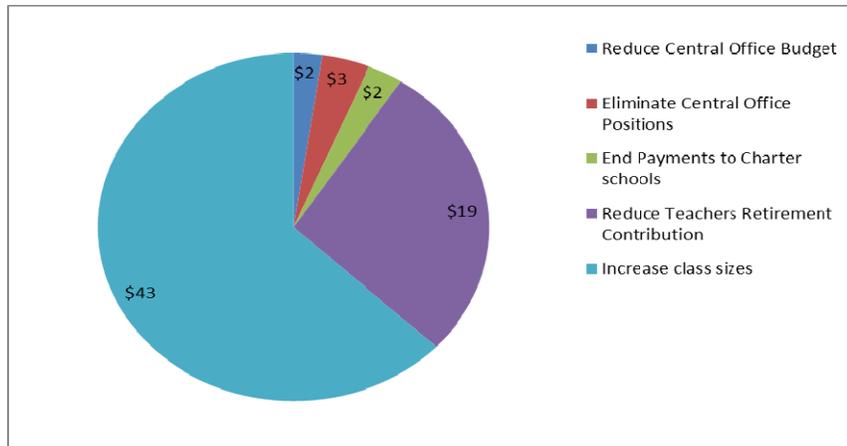


Figure 5. GCPS FY2012 \$89 Budget Shortfall Solutions.

The Georgia General Assembly made two important decisions that should have prevented the current budget crisis that faces GCPS and all other schools systems in Georgia. In 1996, after 15 years of deliberation, the General Assembly passed legislation for the 180 school systems in Georgia to bring a referendum to voters. The referendum asked citizens to vote for or against a penny sales tax on every dollar spent within the school district to be used by school systems for new construction, bond repayment and other capital expenditures. This initiative became known as the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax on Education, or *SPLOST*. It passed in Gwinnett County in 1997 and has allowed the school system to build new facilities and renovate older buildings. The result is that GCPS was able to keep pace with the unprecedented growth the county experienced since the *SPLOST* was first authorized. Subsequently, voters in Gwinnett County have approved four consecutive *SPLOST* initiatives since 1997, providing state of the art classrooms and physical facilities, as the student body increased from 84,500 in the 1996-97 to the 163,000 in the 2011-2012 school year.

In 2008, the Georgia General Assembly legislative session approved the Flexibility and Accountability legislation resulting from former Governor Sonny Perdue's Investing in Education Excellence (IE²) Partnership contract. IE² partnership contracts are intended to provide local school districts with greater governance flexibility as a means to increasing student achievement. As created by Georgia House Bill 1209 Local Boards of Education enter into multi-year contracts with the State Board of Education and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. The legislation allowed the 180 school systems in Georgia to enter into a 5-year contract with the state of Georgia to be reviewed, approved, and monitored by the Georgia Department of Education. The primary purpose of IE² is to raise student achievement (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2009).

A local school system may elect not to request increased flexibility in exchange for increased accountability and defined consequences based on House Bill 1209, and the subsequent State Board of Education rule as a guide, Gwinnett, Forsyth, and Rabun County Public School districts developed their contracts, which include District Strategic Plans and school plans for each school. The plans identify areas of flexibility, accountability, and consequences if they fail to meet their goals over a five-year period. Essentially, the partnership contract allows the districts and local schools to improve teaching and learning by providing the flexibility for them to determine how best to use available resources. Decisions on how to implement flexibility have been based on what is in the best interest for students at an individual school. IE² allows for flexibility from rules pertaining to such things as class size, teacher certification, teachers' pay and graduation requirements (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2009).

Georgia Department of Education and IE² Agreement

In 2008, GCPS entered into the IE² partnership contract to advance the district's pursuit of its vision and mission through the implementation of its strategic goals. First, Gwinnett County Public Schools (2014) vision or what it aspires to be is to "become a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful as they continue their education at the post-secondary level and/or enter the workforce." Second, its mission is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills (AKS) and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards. Third, through its strategic goals, GCPS hopes to be able to connect the vision and the mission to raise student achievement.

In an effort to fulfill the mission and vision of the district, Gwinnett County Public Schools pursued the IE² Partnership Contract with the state because of the flexibility it provided them to increase student achievement throughout the district. In the past GCPS has been able to try innovative instructional strategies on a small scale. Now, with the flexibility granted under IE², GCPS has the flexibility to implement those strategies on a larger scale. In addition, Local School Plans for Improvement (LSPI) processes that involves, teachers, parents, and community members now had the opportunity to be involved in the conversation about their schools' improvement.

The IE² Partnership Contract is a revenue neutral initiative, but there is still an opportunity for GCPS. IE² afforded local districts, the schools within those districts, and the administrators the flexibility to design their master teaching schedules to maximize the schools' full time equivalent (FTE) or teaching points (GCPS published FY 2009 adopted budget) (Figure 7). In the performance contract, if the academic targets are not

met, the school principal has the authority to do what is necessary to meet the target. IE² partnership contract provides the district with greater governance as a means to increasing student achievement (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2009).

Performance Contract
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IE² and Charter System contracts are performance contracts • Performance contracts have two main parts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academic and other targets to which the School District is committed ○ Waivers granted by the SBOE to the School District • Charter system contracts also include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A list of innovations that the School District will implement to enable it to meet its higher academic targets
Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School System may maximize school level governance by granting local schools authority to determine how to reach goals – but no change is required
Source: <i>Investing in educational excellence: A Q&A on Gwinnett County Public Schools' IE2 partnership contract.</i>

Figure 6. Performance Contracts and Governance.

IE² Complaint Summary

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is the largest school system in Georgia, serving pre-kindergarten through 12th grade with 159,482 students enrolled in 2010-2011. Approximately, 11% (917,603) of the Georgia student population qualified for special education during the 2010-2011 school year. The school district for the 2011-2012 was culturally diverse. It included 39,882 Hispanic students, 45,964 Black students, 16,399 Asian students and 50,428 White students. The number of students qualifying as English Language Learners (ELLs) has more than tripled since 2001 reaching 15% for the 2008-2009 school year.

In July 2011, Gwinnett School to Prison Pipeline (STOPP), a parent-led coalition, filed a discrimination complaint in the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of

Education against GCPS regarding its IE² contract. They contend the IE² contract is discriminatory against students with disabilities, ELLs, and students according to race and national origin. The complaint alleges that GCPS IE² violates section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964, Title 34-Education of the Code of Federal Regulation, the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The accountability and performance objectives featured in the IE² contract, which allows GCPS to bypass several existing state laws regarding education certification requirements for teachers, class size requirements, expenditures controls, and ELL program requirements, among others are dependent upon different aggregated performance benchmarks segregated by race.

The Gwinnett STOPP complaint contends that the methodology used to establish increased performance targets over a five-year period is discriminatory for each subgroup of students defined in the contract. Further, IE² used different methods for comparing groups of students. Students in regular education classes are in subgroups (race, gender, socio-economics status) that are compared against themselves, while students with disabilities and ELL students are held to separate flattened performance targets. Due to the terms of this contract, the issues were ongoing through the 2013-2014 school year with an auto-renewal clause for five additional years.

Summary

In summary, student engagement and a positive school climate is feasible for ELL students based on the literature and research presented conceptually. The literature associated with this topic provided a greater understanding of identifying and assessing

ELL students. Additionally, a deeper understanding was provided on cultural knowledge and societal networks that support the educational experiences of children. Further, it provided insights into the political climate in Gwinnett County Schools as well as in the state of Georgia.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 provides the method by which this study will be conducted. A discussion of the research design, population and sample selection, data collection procedures, measurement of variables, and data analysis will be conducted specific to the understanding of the ELL students at Archer High School.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study will determine the possibility of predicting ELL students' ability to pass two state summative assessments based on their composite proficiency levels achieved on the annual ACCESS test. Two critical research questions will be investigated in this study:

Research Question 1

Is there a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT?

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between the ELL students ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT tests in biology, mathematics, language arts, and US history.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is not a significant relationship between the ELL students ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT tests in science, mathematics, language arts, and social studies.

Research Question 2

Is there a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT in science, mathematics, language arts and social studies?

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between the ELL students ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT tests in science, mathematics, language arts, and social studies.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is not a significant relationship between the ELL students ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT in biology, mathematics, language arts, and social studies.

Research Design

For this study, a Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to gain information in this research. This research was conducted to understand the relationship for what exists, and then sought to uncover new facts and meaning regarding what is currently taking place (Polit, Beck, & Hungler, 2001). Data was gathered from the predetermined variables and correlational statistical techniques were applied to the data. Correlation calculation was applied to measure the relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient measured the degree of change in one variable based on the change in the other variable (Gall, et al, 2007). The independent or X variable was ACCESS CPL scores. The dependent or Y variables were GHSST and EOCT scores.

After the variables were identified, the relationships were investigated through the correlational process.

Cross-sectional data was used from secondary sources. The secondary data was obtained from Schools Administrative Student Information (SASI) and the Accessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) scores for students in Grades 9-12. The data were used to explore relationships between the variables selected for this study. In essence, this approach reduced the data into numbers, such as the number of ELL students who were successful in each content course. The researcher knew in advance what was being sought and all aspects of the study were carefully designed before the data were collected. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to phenomena (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007); thus, specific to this study, hypotheses were aligned to each research question.

Population and Sample Selection

According to Creswell (2009), the target population is the group that the researcher is interested in studying in order to draw some conclusions. For the purpose of this study, a convenience sampling was used. A convenience sample is simply one in which the researcher uses any subjects that are available to participate in the research study (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2007). The convenience sample selected for this study was ninth, 10th, 11th and 12th grade ELL students' scores who were served in the English as a Second Language (ESOL) program in one of four categories: assessment only, consultative, direct, or monitored. These students qualified and received ELL direct services when the ACCESS for ELL scores are below 5.0.

The target population for this study consisted of all the ELL students at Archer High School from 2010-2011 to the 2013-2014 school years. Each student was classified as assessment only, consultative, direct served, or monitored. The study included all ELL students in Grades 9-12. In order to qualify for this study, the students participated in the ESOL program at Archer High School, having taken the ACCESS for ELL test to enter the program, and eventually taking the ACCESS for ELL test to exit the program. Students earning a score of 4.9 or higher would exit from the ESOL/Language Assistance services, but their academic progress in the mainstream class setting would be monitored for two years. The student count varied from year to year (See Table 2). Nevertheless, the time period between the ELL students' ACCESS datum and the subsequent EOCT and GHSGT scores occurred within the same school year. This study was conducted utilizing archival data specific to ESOL students at Archer High School, a large urban high school in central Georgia. The ESOL student population since the school opened in 2010 has ranged from 35 to 41 ELL students annually.

Table 2. *ELL Student Sample from 2010 – 2013*

Years	Archer ELL Student Population	ELL students Scored \leq 4.8	ELL students Scored \geq 4.9
2010/2011	35	21	14
2011/2012	39	25	14
2012/2013	37	29	8
2013/2014	41	26	15

The ELL students participating in the study were bilingual (Table 3). The Primary Home Language Other than English (PHLOTEs) was composed of 11 languages. The

ACCESS scores ranged from 2.2 to 6.0. The ELL types are Georgia Assessment Only (GAO), Georgia Consultative (GCON), and Georgia Direct Served (GDIR).

Table 3.

ELL Students Assessment Data from 2010/2011

ELL Type	Student Count	Description	Grade Levels - # students	PHLOTE	ACCESS Score Range
GAO	5	Assessment Only ELL Students	9 th - 1	French	2.9-5.2
			10 th - 3	Spanish	
			11 th - 0	Romanian	
GCON	1	Consultative ELL Students	12 th - 1	Spanish	5.3
			9 th - 1		
			10 th - 0		
			11 th - 0		
GDIR	9	Direct Served ELL Students	12 th - 0	Arabic	2.2-6.0
			9 th - 8	French	
			10 th - 8	Korean	
			11 th - 1	Vietnamese	
			12 th - 2	Creole-French	
GM	16	Monitored ELL Students	Chinese-Mandarin	4.8 – 6.0	
			Russian		
			Bengali		
			9 th - 4		Arabic
			10 th - 6		Vietnamese
			11 th - 2		French
12 th - 4	Hmong	4.8 – 6.0			
	Spanish				
	Creole-French				
				Spanish	

The school had a multicultural mix of more than five types ELL of students. The ELL student composition from the 2010-2011 to 2013-2014 school years consisted of four racial/ethnic groups (Table 4): Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. In the 2011 school year, there were 35 ELL students (seven Whites, 10 Blacks, 16 Hispanics, and two Asians). In the 2012 school year, there were 39 ELL students (one White, 11 Black, 12

Hispanic, and 15 Asian). In the 2013 school year, there were 37 ELL students (four White, 19 Black, five Hispanic, and nine Asian).

Table 4.

ELL Student Race/Ethnicity from 2010 – 2013

Years	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
2010/2011	7	10	16	2
2011/2012	7	10	16	2
2012/2013	1	11	12	15
2013/2014	7	14	11	9

The sample size was comprised of 150 ELL students in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades over four years (Table 4). Students were required to earn passing scores on the all four parts (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) of the Georgia High School Graduation Tests. In addition, all students were administered the End of Course assessments in mathematics, social studies, science and language arts (Figure 7). The EOCT score was calculated as 20% of the student class grade.

Assessments	
End of Course Test	Georgia High School Graduation Test
Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate Algebra ● Analytic Geometry ● Mathematics II (geometry, algebra II, statistics) ● GPS geometry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Language Arts ● Mathematics ● Science ● Social Studies <i>(Passing score required 2010/12)</i>
Social Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● United States History ● Economics\Business\Free Enterprise 	
Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Biology ● Physical Science 	

English Language Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9th Grade Literature and Composition ● 11th Grade American Literature and Composition 	
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Figure 7. 2013-2014 Georgia and Gwinnett County Public Schools Student Assessments.

Instrumentation

The assessment instruments in this study were the EOCTs, the GHSGT and the ACCESS for ELL test scores. Furthermore, the criteria used by the LEP committee for the decision affecting the subjects of this study are provided herein. For the purpose of this study, the results of ACCESS, GHSGT, and EOCTs were gathered from school, district and state records. The data used in this study came from the 2010-2011 to 2013-2014 school years for Grades 9-12 ELL students.

ACCESS for ELLs

ACCESS for ELLs is administered, annually, to all English Language learners in Georgia. ACCESS for ELLs is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English learners’ social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains. ACCESS for ELLs meets the federal requirements that mandate states to evaluate ELL students in grades K through 12 on their progress in learning to speak English.

ACCESS for ELLs is used to determine the English language proficiency levels and progress of ELL students in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. ACCESS for ELLs serves five main purposes. These include the following:

1. determining the English language proficiency levels of students; providing districts with information that will help them evaluate the effectiveness of their ESOL programs;
2. providing information that enhances instruction and learning in programs for English language learners;
3. assessing annual English language proficiency gains using a standards-based assessment instrument; and
4. providing data for meeting federal and state requirements with respect to student assessment.

The ACCESS for ELL series spans five grade level clusters and six proficiency levels. The grade clusters include Kindergarten, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12. Results for ACCESS for ELLs are reported in four domains and proficiency in six levels. The six proficiency levels are Entering (Level 1), Beginning (Level 2), Developing (Level 3), Expanding (Level 4), Bridging (Level 5) and Reaching (level 6). There are three distinctive yet overlapping tiers for each grade level cluster except kindergarten.

There are three measures for scoring: the scale score, proficiency level score, and composite score (ACCESS Interpretive Guide, 2014). The scale scores allow raw scores across tiers to be compared on a vertical scale across grade levels with separate scale for each domain. Scaling makes it possible to see the difficulty for students within a grade level. Interestingly, the proficiency level (PL) scores for each of the four composite scores are derived from a combination of the scale scores and not the proficiency level scores. The PL score of each domain is determined when multiplied by their percent of weighting, and then the scores are added together. For example, Comprehension scale score is determined from 70% Reading plus 30% Listening scores.

Type of Composite Score	Proficiency level scores
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Language • Literacy • Comprehension • Overall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency level scores for each of the four composite scores are derived from a combination of the scale scores, not the proficiency level scores (see section below for more information on composite scores). • To figure the PL for a composite score, the scale scores of the relevant domains are multiplied by their percent of weighting, and then the scores are added together. • To determine the PL for Comprehension (70% Reading plus 30% Listening), you would use the following equation to find the Comprehension scale score. It is from this score that the Comprehension PL is determined.
$(\text{Reading scale score} \times .7) + (\text{Listening scale score} \times .3) = \text{Comprehension scale score}$	

Figure 8. The WIDA ACCESS Composite Scores and the Proficiency Level Scores.

The composite score is determined from the combination of weighted scores in the language domains. Table 5 represents the types of composite scores to the four language domains.

Table 5.

Contribution of Language Domains to ACCESS for ELLs Composite Scores

Type of Composite Score	Contribution of Language Domains (by Percent)			
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Oral Language	50%	50%		
Literacy			50%	50%
Comprehension	30%		70%	
Overall	15%	15%	35%	35%

(Source: GCPS website, 2014)

Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT)

One of the graduation requirements for ELL students who entered a Georgia high school prior to July 2011 is a passing score for the four content areas on the GHSGT. This group of students may receive appropriate standard accommodations based on their EL Testing Participation Committee Plan. ELL students take the graduation tests for the first time in the 11th grade. If they are unsuccessful on their first attempt they have multiple opportunities to receive additional instruction, retest and qualify for graduation before the spring of their 12th grade school year (GADOE, 2014). Students who do not pass all the required tests but have met all other graduation requirements may be eligible for a Certificate of Performance until they pass the test. Retakes are provided based on grade levels (Figure 9).

Assessment Opportunities	Retakes
Grade 11 Fall (September/October)	
Grade 11 Spring (February/March)	First
Grade 11/12 (July)	Retest
Grade 12 Fall (September/October)	Retest
Grade 12 Winter (November)	Retest
Grade 12 Spring (February/March)	Retest
Grade 12 Summer (July)	Senior Retest

Figure 9. Assessment Opportunities and Retakes. (Source: GADOE, 2014)

Reliability. According to the GADOE’s Student Learning Objectives Manual (2013), reliability refers to the consistency of a measure or if the same results are obtained in a predictable manner over time and/or multiple administrations. Because reliability is rarely perfectly reliable, the goal is to design assessments that are increasingly reliable

over time. One important concept that influences reliability is error in assessment.

GADOE used Grant and Gareis (2008) three steps to improve an assessment's reliability:

1. GADOE's non-performance tasks include three or more test questions or items for each core objective/standard to reduce the unintended effects of error on the assessments results.
2. GADOE reviewed and proofread individual test questions, prompts, and directions for systemic error, including grammatical or mechanical mistakes, cultural bias, or lack of clarity.
3. GADOE clarified and verified grading criteria for the test, including rubrics. It ensured intra-rater and inter-rater reliability for establishing scoring protocols and training (p. 46).

As part of meeting federal requirements for state standards and assessments systems, the GHS GT was peer reviewed by a team of external experts in the fields of standards and assessments. This team was convened by the U.S. Department of Education and considered evidence in the following areas: content and academic achievement standards; technical quality; alignment; inclusion; and scoring and reporting. The GHS GT was found to meet nationally recognized professional and technical standards for assessment programs.

Validity. One of the most important considerations in assessment design and evaluation of the assessments is validity. Wolf et al (2008) suggest that validating assessments for ELL students is a complex and challenging task, given the heterogeneous characteristics of ELL students. In their research they found school systems were using one ELL assessment for multiple purposes without the proper accommodations. They state that appropriate accommodations are necessary to enable ELL students to show what they know and can do on content tests administered in English. Providing the

appropriate accommodations serve to reduce the interference of the English language demands of the test.

Abedi et al (2004) also suggest proper assessment adaptations or accommodations are necessary for assessments administered to ELL students to remain valid. They also found that without the proper accommodation it is unlikely to obtain accurate and relevant information regarding ELL students' content knowledge by administering a science test in a language that the student does not understand.

In order for an assessment to be considered valid, it must measure what it is intended to measure and offer a level of confidence and trust in the judgments that educators can make about student learning as a result of the assessment. For these reasons, validity is not an absolute characteristic; instead it is a matter of degree. The GADOE purports that as their assessment team gains proficiency in assessment design and evaluation, they will continue to recommend ways to increase the degree of validity of the developed assessments. One tool being used by the team of educators for increasing and judging the validity of Georgia's assessments is Student Learning Objectives (SLO) Table of Specifications (TOS) and the SLO Assessment Criteria Tables. The TOS includes a rubric that has criteria necessary for assessments to be of high-quality. The table examines the test-item construction for multiple types of assessments, test validity and reliability, test administration procedures, reporting, and post-administration. An additional validity tool is the use of the rubric. The rubric includes descriptions of high quality assessments in several categories and provides a ranking score and a final matrix score for each test item.

End of Course Test

The A+ Educational Reform Act of 2000, O.C.G.A. §20-2-281, mandates that the State Board of Education adopt end-of-course assessments for core courses to be determined by the Board. The EOCTs serve as a student's final exam in the prescribed course (Table 6). With educator input, and State Board approval, the End-of-Course Assessment program is therefore comprised of mathematics, social studies, science, and English/Language Arts (Georgia Department of Education, 2014).

Table 6.

End of Course Tests (EOCT) Administered in Georgia

Course Assessments	School Year Taken				Class for Graduation
Mathematics	Freshman Coordinate Algebra	Sophomore Analytic Geometry (Beginning Winter 2013 Administration)	Junior Mathematics II: Geometry/Algebra II/ Statistics	Senior GPS Geometry	√
Social Studies	United States History		Economics/Business/ Free Enterprise		√
Science	Biology		Physical Science		√
English Language Arts	Ninth Grade Literature and Composition				√

(Source: Georgia Department of Education Website)

The EOCT is designed to offer both students and administrators useful diagnostic information. Because it is aligned with Georgia's state mandated content standards and includes assessment of specific content knowledge and skills, it identifies strengths and

areas of need in learning. Once these specific areas of strengths and weaknesses are identified, students have the diagnostic information to help them improve in all their high school courses. In addition, the EOCT provides data to evaluate the effectiveness of classroom instruction at the school, system and state levels.

The EOCT is administered to any student in Georgia receiving high school credit and is administered upon completion of one of the above courses. A student's final grade in the course was calculated using the EOCT as follows:

1. for students enrolled in grade nine for the first time before July 1, 2011, the EOCT counts as 15% of the final grade; and
2. for students enrolled in grade nine for the first time on July 1, 2011 or after, the EOCT counts as 20% of the final grade (State Board Rule 160-4-2-.13).

There are three main administrations of the EOCT: Winter, Spring and Summer. In addition, on-line Mid-Month administrations are offered in August, September, October, November, January, February and March. Retest administration windows are also provided in conjunction with the existing Online Mid-month and summer administration windows. Retests are intended to provide students who do not meet the standard on an EOCT with one additional opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency. The EOCT can be administered via paper-and-pencil assessments or in an on-line format. Paper-and-pencil assessments are only available during the main administrations. Online assessments are available for all administrations. Each test is administered in two 60-minute sections. One- or two-day administration schedules may be selected by systems (Georgia Department of Education, 2014b). The data included in this study reflects the highest scores the students earned if the tests were taken multiple times.

The scale score ranges for the EOCT vary depended upon the subject areas (Table 7). The scale score ranges include the lowest and highest attainable score on each test (reading, writing, mathematics and science). The cut scores between Levels 1 and 2, 2 and 3, and 3 and 4 were set by the A+ Commission for Reading and Writing at Grade 10; and by the State Board of Education for EOCT, and for Science in Grades 5, 8 or EOCT. The Mathematics scale scores above for EOCT began with the spring 2011 End-of-Course exams. The Biology scale scores for EOCT began with the 2012 End-of-Course exams.

Table 7.

Scale Score Ranges for Subjects and Levels

Subject	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
HS – Reading	225-374	375-399	400-426	427-525
HS – Writing	0-12	13-16	17-20	21-24
Algebra/Integrated 1	200-374	375-399	400-442	443-675
Geometry/Integrated 2	200-374	375-399	400-435	436-600
Biology	275-374	375-399	400-422	423-525

(Source: Georgia Department of Education Website)

Data Collection

This study used Microsoft Excel software to analyze scores from the three assessments (ACCESS, GHSGT, EOCT) of ELL students. These three tests were given to all students within the state of Georgia to determine appropriate placement in to ESOL programs and mastery of the curriculum in schools. The results of these tests decide whether or not students will be promoted, retained, graduate, and their competency levels. These three scores were used to describe if one group of students performs better than the others.

Consent to access the data of the three aforementioned tests was obtained through the GCPS school district proper procedures and under Florida International University Institutional Review Board (IRB). GCPS board policy allows for GCPS employees to conduct research at their assigned school location without needing to complete an IRB application. Instead the GCPS employee completes a Local School Research Form that is approved by the employee's principal. A photocopy of the signed document is sent to the GCPS Department of Research and Evaluation for filing.

A printout of the records of all ELL students who received ESOL services at Archer High School from August 2010 to May 2014 was obtained for the investigator to review. The records of the students who sat the EOCT and the GHSGT tests were extracted from the list and categorized on the basis of the students' grade level. A data base containing information about these current and former students was created on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that included the following information: (a) an identifying number, (b) current grade level, (c) ACCESS CPL scores, (d) score earned on the tests of the EOCT, and (e) scores earned on the GHSGT. Confidentiality was maintained by keeping participants' names and identification numbers in a locked file cabinet in a private office accessible only to the researcher and using student identification number for tabulation and input purposes. All data input were reviewed for entry errors and completeness.

Data Analysis

The focus of the methodology employed in this study was to predict ELL students' ability to pass state and county assessments based on ACCESS scores and academic achievement. The data collected were accessed through the school's district

database provided by information housed in the Schools Administrative Student Information (SASI) system. The data consisted of test results from the ACCESS for ELLs test, the GHST and the EOCTs for the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014 school years and student records contained at the school site.

Research Question 1 (Is there a relationship between the ELL students' Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT?) was addressed by using linear regression tests. Analyses for Research Question 1 addressed the relationship between the ACCESS scores and the EOCT scores. Research Question 2 (Is there a relationship between the ELL students' Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT in science, mathematics, language arts and social studies?) was also addressed by linear regression tests. The analyses conducted the relationship between ACCESS CPL scores and the four GHST scores.

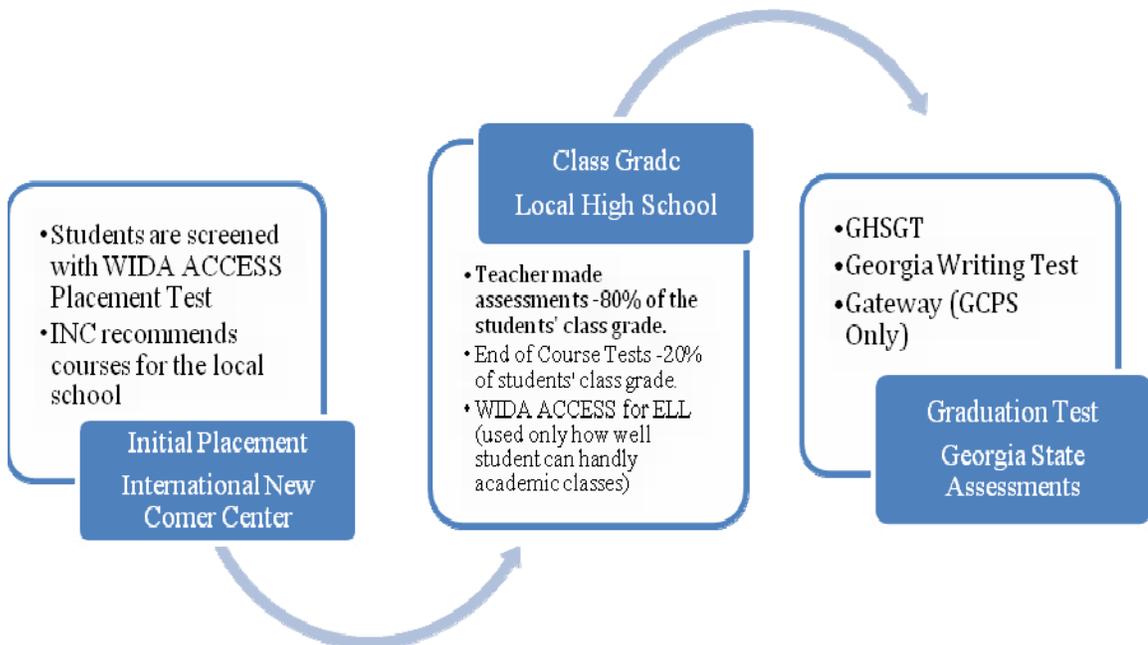


Figure 10. Georgia English Language Learner Assessment Process.
(Source: GCPS website, 2014)

Summary

This chapter provided the method by which this study was conducted. A discussion of the research design, population and sample selection, data collection procedures, measurement of variables, and data analysis were conducted specific to the understanding of the ELL students at Archer High School. Using SASI, the data was obtained from the records of ELL students for 2010-2011 to 2013- 2014 school years who received ESOL services in Grades 9-12. The study focused on the number of students who sat for the EOCT or the GHSGT tests while they were part of the ESOL program at Archer High School. Their scores, comprised of multiple records, were compared to the results of the ACCESS scores they had when they entered the program or attained while in the program. These factors were addressed by linear regression, Shapiro-Wilk's tests for normality and the Pearson tests for correlations.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section of the chapter provides a detailed description of the data analysis procedures that were used to test the research hypotheses. The data were analyzed to determine if there was a correlation between the ACCESS CPL level of the ELL students' placement and the EOCT for 9th through 11th grade students and the GHSGT for ELL students in 12th grade. Students in 9th grade were assessed in language arts, mathematics and biology. ELL students in 10th grades were assessed in mathematics only. In 11th grade, the EOCT was administered in language arts and social studies or United States history. ELL students in 12th grade were administered the GHSGT for the four content course for language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Research Question 1 (Is there a relationship between the ELL students' Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT?) was designed to determine if there was a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS CPL and their performance on the EOCT. Six linear regression analyses were utilized to answer this question since the independent variable (ACCESS scores) and the dependent variable (the six types of the EOCT tests) were categorical.

Research Question 2 (Is there a relationship between the ELL students' Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT in science, mathematics, language arts and social studies?) was designed to determine if there was a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS CPL scores and their performance on the GHSGT in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. A Pearson's

product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and each GHSGT test. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with one variable normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers which means this study is not as robust.

Demographics Descriptive Data

In this quantitative study, a population of ELL students, full-time 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students enrolled at Archer High School from 2010-2014. Initially, there were 155 ELL students included in the study, but only 148 met the criteria for the study. The criteria required the student to attend Archer High School, be an ELL student, have a CPL ACCESS level, and take the EOCT and/or GHSGT during the 2010-2014 school years. The total population (N) is 148. Table 8 represents the grade levels, number of students included in the sample, the number of students with a primary or home language other than English (PHOLTEs), and the number and list of ethnicities.

Data from each grade was examined from students of more than 15 PHOLTEs and four racial groups. The most data were collected from the 58 ELL students in 9th grade; 36 ELL students in 10th grade; 29 ELL students in 11th grade; and 25 ELL students in 12th grade. The number of students decreased as the samples reached 12th grade. Only one student elected not to identify an ethnic group, which is now optional in schools. The largest ethnic group is a total of 54 Hispanics, followed by 44 Blacks, 30 Whites, 18 Asians, and two not identified.

Table 8

Demographics Data for School Years 2010 – 2014

Grades	N = X	# PHOLTES	# & List Ethnicities	
9 th	N = 58	PHOLTE = 15	White – 8 Hispanic – 24 N/I – 1	Black – 15 Asian – 10
10 th	N = 36	PHOLTE = 12	White – 8 Hispanic – 13 N/I – 1	Black – 8 Asian – 6
11 th	N = 29	PHOLTE = 8	White – 8 Hispanic – 10	Black – 10 Asian – 1
12 th	N = 25	PHOLTE = 7	White – 6 Hispanic – 7	Black – 11 Asian – 1

The 9th grade group of ELL students was selected from 58 students from school years 2010 to 2014. There were 8 White, 15 Black, 24 Hispanic, and one student not identified ethnic group. Table 9 represents the 9th grade students. The largest population of 9th graders was 22 students in 2012-2013, with the smallest number of 12 in 2010-2011.

Table 9

9th Grade Demographics

School Year	N	PHLOTE	Ethnicity
2010/2011	12	African - 2 French -1 Romanian – 1 Russian – 1 Spanish – 6 Vietnamese -1	White – 2 Black – 3 Hispanic – 6 Asian – 1
2011/2012	10	Bengali – 1 French – 1 Russian – 1	White – 2 Black – 0 Hispanic – 7

		Spanish – 7	Asian – 1
2012/2013	22	African – 2 Akan – 1 Arabic – 4 Bengali – 1 Chinese – 1 Haitian – 2 Hmong – 2 Romanian – 1 Spanish – 7 Vietnamese – 1	White – 3 Black – 6 Hispanic – 8 Asian – 4 N/I – 1
2013/2014	14	African – 1 Akan – 1 Arabic – 1 Cameroon – 1 Chinese – 1 Creole – 1 French – 1 Haitian – 1 Hmong – 1 Korean – 1 Spanish – 3 Vietnamese – 1	White – 1 Black – 6 Hispanic – 3 Asian – 4

N/I – Not Identified

The 10th grade group of ELL students was selected from 36 students from 2010-2011 school year to 2013-2014 school year. During the 2010-2014 school years, there were 8 Whites, 8 Blacks, 13 Hispanics, one Asian, and one student not identified ethnic group. Table 10 represents the 10th grade students. The largest number of 10th graders was 17 ELL students in 2013-2014, with the smallest number of 12 in 2012-2013.

Table 10

10 th Grade Demographics			
School Year	N	PHLOTE	Ethnicity
2010/2011	7	African – 1 Creole - 1 Romanian – 1 Russian – 2	White – 3 Black – 2 Hispanic – 2 Asian - 0

		Spanish – 2	
2011/2012	8	African – 1 Haitian – 1 Romanian – 1 Spanish – 4 Vietnamese – 1	White – 1 Black – 2 Hispanic – 4 Asian – 1
2012/2013	4	Arabic – 1 Russian – 1 Spanish – 2	White – 2 Black – 0 Hispanic – 1 Asian – 0 N/I – 1
2013/2014	17	African – 1 Bengali – 1 Chinese – 1 French – 3 Hmong – 2 Romanian – 1 Russian – 1 Spanish – 6 Vietnamese – 1	White – 2 Black – 4 Hispanic – 6 Asian – 5

N/I – Not Identified

The 11th grade group of ELL students was selected from 29 students from 2010 to 2014. During the 2010-2014 school years, there were 8 Whites, 10 Blacks, 10 Hispanics, and 1 Asian identified ethnic group. Table 11 represents the 11th grade students. The number of 11th grade ELL students in this study ranged from 9 students in the 2010-2013 to the 3 in 2013-2014. There were 8 student samples in 2011-2012 and 9 each year in 2010/2011 and 2012/2013. There were 8 PHLOTES with the largest groups Africans and Hispanics.

Table 11

11 th Grade Demographics			
School Year	<i>N</i>	PHLOTE	Ethnic
2010/2011	9	African – 1 Creole – 1 French - 1 Romanian – 1 Spanish – 5	White – 1 Black – 3 Hispanic – 5 Asian - 0
2011/2012	8	Creole – 1 French – 2 Romanian – 1 Russian – 1 Spanish – 2 Yourba – 1	White – 3 Black – 3 Hispanic – 2 Asian – 0
2012/2013	9	Arabic – 1 African – 3 Romanian – 2 Spanish – 2 Vietnamese – 1	White – 3 Black – 3 Hispanic – 2 Asian – 1
2013/2014	3	Arabic – 1 African – 1 Spanish – 1	White – 1 Black – 1 Hispanic – 1 Asian – 0
Four years	<i>N</i> = 29	PHLOTE = 8	White – 8 Black – 10 Hispanic – 10 Asian – 1

N/I – Not Identified

The 12th grade group of ELL students was selected from 25 student data samples from 2010 to 2014. During the 2010-2014 school years, there were 6 White, 11 Black, 7 Hispanic, and one Asian identified ethnic group. Table 12 represents the 12th grade students. The number of 12th grade ELL students in this study ranged from 3 to 8. There

were 8 student samples in 2010/2011 and 7 each year in 2011/2012 and 2013/2014. There were 7 PHLOTES with the largest groups Romanian.

Table 12.

12 th Grade Demographics			
School Year	<i>N</i>	PHLOTE	Ethnic
2010/2011	8	African – 1 French - 1 Romanian – 3 Spanish – 3	White – 3 Black – 3 Hispanic – 2 Asian - 0
2011/2012	7	African – 2 Creole – 1 French – 1 Romanian – 1 Spanish – 2	White – 1 Black – 4 Hispanic – 2 Asian – 0
2012/2013	3	French – 1 Spanish – 1 Yourba – 1	White – 0 Black – 2 Hispanic – 1 Asian – 0
2013/2014	7	Arabic – 1 Spanish – 1 Vietnamese – 1	White – 2 Black – 2 Hispanic – 2 Asian – 1

N/I – Not Identified

The demographic information presented was collected based on the criteria for this study. It should be noted that students were not used in this study, but data from test scores and assessment levels of these identified students.

Data Analysis

This section of the chapter provides a detailed description of the data analysis procedures that were used to test the research hypotheses. The data were analyzed to determine if there was a correlation between the ACCESS level of the ELL students' placement and the EOCT for 9th through 11th grade students and the GHSGT for ELL

students in 12th grade. Students in 9th grade were assessed in language arts, mathematics and biology. ELL students in 10th grades were assessed in mathematics only. In 11th grade, the EOCT was administered in language arts and social studies. ELL students in 12th grade were administered the GHSGT for the four content course for language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Table 13 describes the descriptive statistics process for collection of information. The descriptive statistics summarizes assessments; measures of central tendency include the mean, median and mode, while measures of variability include the standard deviation (or variance). The assessments varied from grade to grade. Ninth grade ELL students were assessed in language arts, mathematics, and biology; tenth grade ELL students were assessed in mathematics; 11th grade ELL students were assessed in language arts and US History; and 12th grade ELL students were assessed in the four course courses – language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. There were a total of 148 students who had a ACCESS CPL level assessments.

Table 13.
Descriptive Statistics

Assessments	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
ACCESS CPL	148	1.5	6.0	4.445	1.1196
9 th EOCT Language Arts	55	45	92	70.35	10.448
9 th EOCT Mathematics	57	41	86	62.75	8.549
9 th EOCT Biology	56	43	90	66.25	11.488
10 th EOCT Mathematics	33	45	92	68.00	9.206
11 th EOCT Language Arts	21	56	90	72.05	9.362

11 th EOCT Social Studies	29	52	95	71.76	13.788
12 th GHSGT Language Arts	25	145	290	213.76	36.856
12 th GHSGT Mathematics	25	155	511	242.84	82.703
12 th GHSGT Science	25	169	333	221.88	42.136
12 th GHSGT Social Studies	25	164	289	217.04	34.262
Valid N (listwise)	0				

Research Question 1 was designed to determine if there was a relationship between the ELL students' composite proficiency level and their performance on the EOCT. Four linear regression analyses were utilized to answer this question since the independent variable (ACCESS scores) and the dependent variable (the four types of the EOCT tests) were categorical. A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and EOCT for 9TH through 11th grades.

Research Question 2 was designed to determine if there was a relationship between the ELL students' ACCESS CPL scores and their performance on the GHSGT in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with one variable normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers.

Results

The summary of results of this quantitative correlational research study focused on the relationship between ACCESS CPL scores (independent variable) and the EOCT and GHSGT scores (dependent variables). The measurements used were EOCTs in

language arts, mathematics, science and social studies; and GHSGT in the same core content courses. The results are presented according to the primary research question with supporting hypotheses.

Research Question 1

The EOCT was the measurement used because each EOCT is directly aligned with the standards in the state-adopted curriculum as mandated by law (Georgia Department of Education, 2014b). Archer High School administered the EOCT three times annually to accommodate students completing the course work in the winter, spring, and summer. To determine if the needs of the ELL students in 9th through 11th grades are met, the EOCT was administered in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. It is assumed that the ELLs' teachers have met the learning needs of the students in all content areas. While the ACCESS CPL levels determine placement for instruction, it is the responsibility of the mainstream and ELL teachers to instruct ELL students. The finding showed that there was a positive correlation between the ACCESS CPL for ELL students and the EOCTs at each grade level and the measured content courses.

Figure 11 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores are related. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slop indicates that the correlation is positive. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 11 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 9th grade EOCT language arts scale score is linear. For this relationship, 51% of the variance in language arts can be explained by the variance in ACCESS CPL ($R^2 = 0.505$).

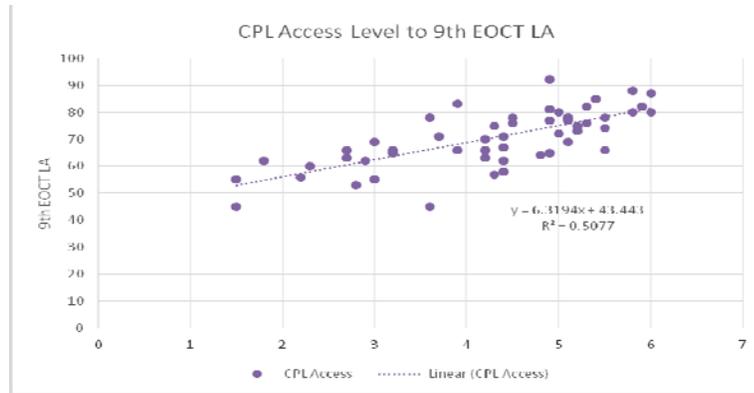


Figure 11. 9th Grade EOCT Language Arts

Table 14 (below) represents a Pearson's product-moment correlation that was run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 9th Grade EOCT LA. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with one variable normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$) and there were no outliers. There was a very strong positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and EOCT language arts, $r(53) = .711$, $p < .05$, at a value of .000 with ACCESS CPL explaining less than 51% of the variance in EOCT LA. The results of the regression analysis indicate that 9th EOCT language arts is a predictor of total points where the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 14

Correlation between ACCESS CPL and 9th Grade EOCT Language Arts

ACCESS CPL	Pearson Correlation	.711**
	Sig. (2-tailed) (P value)	<.001
	N	55
	R Standard Error	0.02
	H0 (5%)	accepted

Figure 12 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 9th grade EOCT

Mathematics are related to the ACCESS CPL. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slope indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 12 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 9th grade EOCT mathematics scale score is linear. For this relationship, 6% of the variation in Mathematics can be explained by the variation in ACCESS CPL levels ($R^2 = 0.063$).

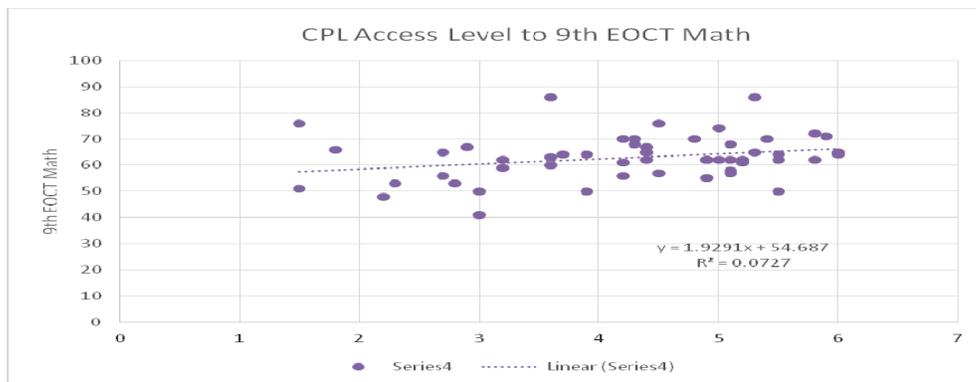


Figure 12. 9th Grade EOCT Mathematics

Table 15 (below) is a Pearson's product-moment correlation run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 9th grade EOCT mathematics. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with one variable normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There was a strong positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and EOCT Mathematics, $r(55) = .251$, Sig. (2 tailed) at a value of .060 with ACCESS CPL explaining 6% of the variance in EOCT Mathematics. Thus, it is possible the null hypothesis gets rejected.

Table 15.

Correlation Between ACCESS CPL and 9th Grade EOCT Mathematics

ACCESS CPL		EOCT Mathematics
	Pearson Correlation	.251
	Sig. (2-tailed) (P value)	.060
	N	57
	R Standard Error	0.02
	H0 (5%)	rejected

Figure 13 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 9th grade EOCT biology are related to the ACCESS CPL. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slop indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps to show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 13 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 9th grade EOCT biology scale score is linear. For this relationship, 18% of the variance in biology can be explained by the variance in ACCESS CPL where ($R^2 = 0.176$).

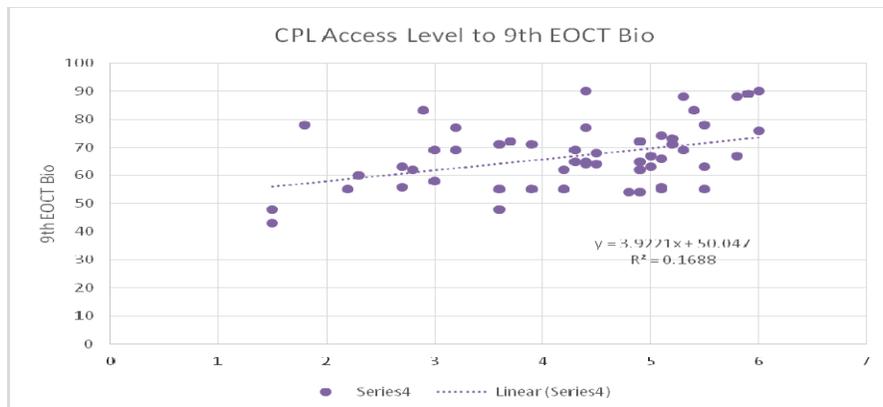


Figure 13. 9th Grade EOCT Biology

Table 16 (see below) shows the representation of a Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 9th grade EOCT biology. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with one variable normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There was a moderate positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and 9th grade EOCT biology, $r(54) = .419$, $p = 0001$, at a Sig. (2-tailed) value of .001 with ACCESS CPL explaining 17% of the variance in 9th grade EOCT biology.

Table 16

Correlation Between ACCESS CPL and 9th Grade EOCT Biology

		EOCT Biology
ACCESS CPL	Pearson Correlation	.419**
	Sig. (2-tailed) (p value)	.001
	N	56
	R Standard Error	0.02
	H0 (5%)	accepted

Figure 14 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 10th grade EOCT Mathematics are related to the ACCESS CPL. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slop indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. This plot shows a correlation, because clearly there is a line through the dots.

However, the line is horizontal, thus having a slope value close to zero. The pattern of data points in Figure 14 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 10th grade EOCT mathematics scale score is linear. For this relationship, less than 1% of the variance in Mathematics can be explained by the variance in Composite Proficiency ACCESS levels ($R^2 = 0.003$).

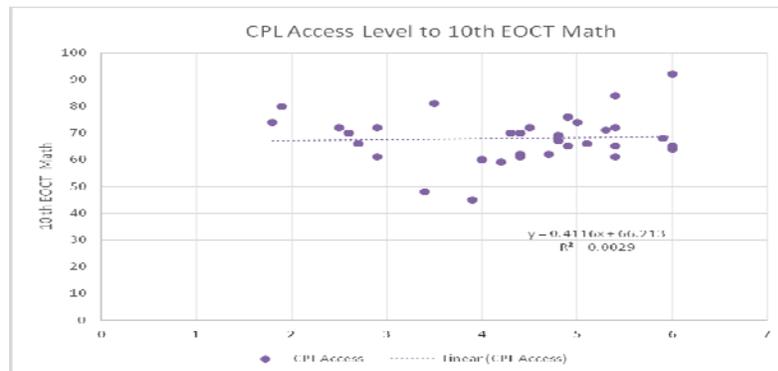


Figure 14. 10th Grade EOCT Mathematics

Table 17 (below) is the representation of a Pearson's product-moment correlation run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 10th grade EOCT mathematics. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with one variable normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There was a negligible positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and 10th grade EOCT mathematics, $r(31) = .054$, $p > .05$, Sig. (2-tailed) value of .767 with ACCESS CPL explaining 3% of the variance in 10th grade EOCT mathematics. With such a high p value, it is less likely that mathematics is a predictor even with such a low standard error, therefore the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Table 17

Correlation Between ACCESS CPL and 10 th Grade EOCT Mathematics		EOCT Mathematics
ACCESS CPL	Pearson Correlation	.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.767
	N	33
	R Standard Error	0.03
	H0 (5%)	rejected

Figure 15 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 11th grade EOCT language arts are related to the ACCESS CPL. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slop indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 15 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 11th grade EOCT language arts scale score is linear. For this relationship, 37% of the variance in language arts can be explained by the variance in ACCESS CPL ($R^2 = 0.374$).

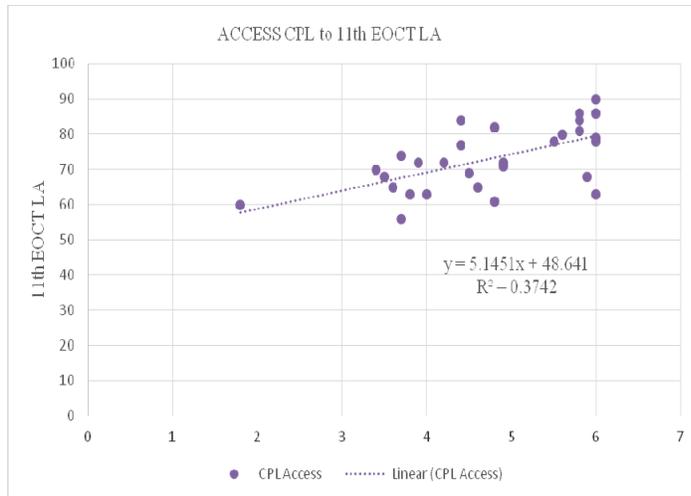


Figure 15. 11th Grade EOCT Language Arts

Table 18 (see below) is the representation of a Pearson's product-moment correlation run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 11th grade EOCT language arts. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with one variable normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There was a strong positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and 11th grade EOCT language arts, $r(27) = .612$, $p < .05$, with Sig. (2-tailed) .000, with ACCESS CPL explaining 37% of the variance in 11th grade EOCT language arts.

Table 18

Correlation Between ACCESS CPL and 11th Grade EOCT Language Arts

ACCESS CPL		EOCT Language Arts
	Pearson Correlation	.612**
	Sig. (2-tailed) (p value)	.0001
	N	29
	R Standard Error	0.05
	H0 (5%)	Accepted

Figure 16 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 11th grade EOCT social studies are related to the ACCESS CPL. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slop indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 16 shows that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 11th grade EOCT social studies scale score is linear. For this relationship, 35% of the variance in 11th grade EOCT social studies can be explained by the variance in ACCESS CPL levels ($R^2 = 0.353$).

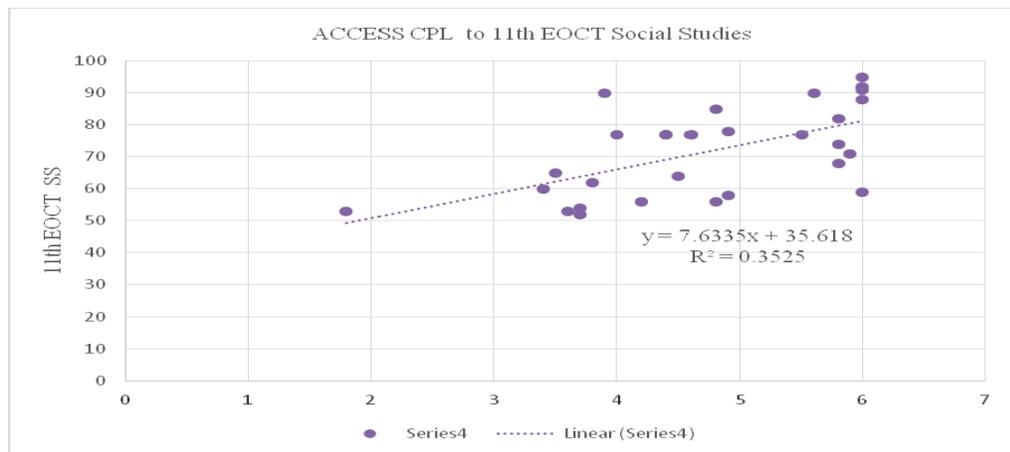


Figure 16. 11th Grade EOCT Social Studies

Table 19 represents a Pearson's product-moment correlation run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 11th grade EOCT social studies. Preliminary analysis showed the relationship to be linear with not all variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and one outlier. There was a strong positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and 11th grade EOCT social studies, $r(27) = .612$, $p <$

.05, Sig. (2-tailed) .0001 with ACCESS CPL explaining 37% of the variance in 11th grade EOCT social studies. While the relationship between ACCESS CPL and the EOCT social studies scores is moderate, there is still some error associated with predicting scores from ACCESS CPL.

Table 19

Correlation Between ACCESS CPL and 11 th Grade EOCT Social Studies		EOCT Social Studies
ACCESS CPL	Pearson Correlation	.612**
	Sig. (2-tailed) (p value)	.0001
	N	29
	R Standard Error	0.04
	H0 (5%)	accepted

Research Question 2

The GHSGT was the measurement used because Georgia’s graduation tests are state assessments used to measure growth. It was important to understand if there was a correlation that showed growth for ELL students. Although the writing test was required for provide information for the cohort of students who enrolled in high school from Fall 2008 through June 2011, the data for those students in 2010 and 2011 were not used in an since students who enter grade nine in 2011 – 2012 and beyond did not take that the GHSGT in writing. All students, including the ELL students, were required to prove their proficiency in the four GHSGT content areas by either passing each of the GHSGTs or by passing one of the two equivalent End of Course Tests in each corresponding content area. To determine if there was a correlation between the ELL students ACCESS scores

and their final year in school, data was analyzed for the cohort of 12th grade students in the four content courses in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Figure 17 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 12th Grade GHSGT Language Arts are related to the ACCESS CPL. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slop indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 17 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 12th Grade GHSGT language arts scale score is linear. For this relationship, 2% of the variance in language arts can be explained by the variance in ACCESS CPL ($R^2 = 0.022$).

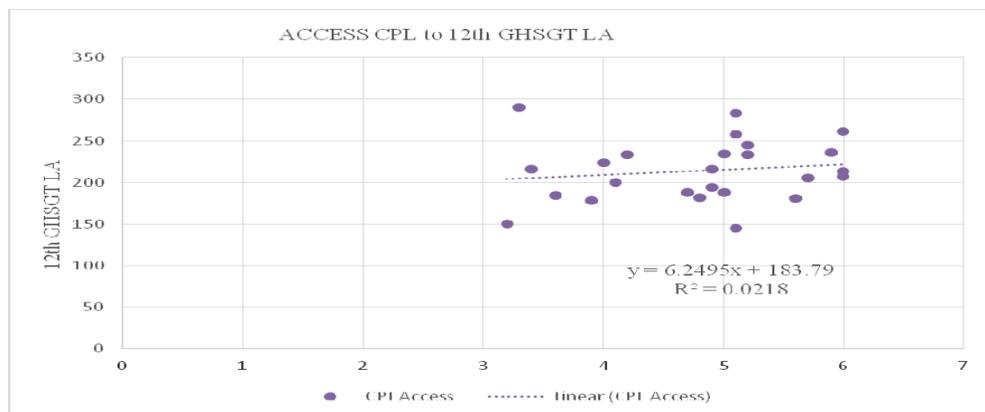


Figure 17. 12th Grade GHSGT Language Arts

Table 20 is the results of a Pearson's product-moment correlation ran to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 12th grade GHSGT language arts. Preliminary analysis showed the relationship to be linear with both variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There was a weak

positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and 12 grade GHS GT language arts, $r(23) = .148$, with Sig. (2-tailed) .481 with ACCESS CPL explaining 2% of the variance in 12th grade GHS GT language arts. There was no statistically significant correlation between ACCESS CPL and 12th grade GHS GT in language arts. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Table 20.
Correlation Between ACCESS CPL and 12th Grade GHS GT Language Arts

		GHS GT LA
ACCESS CPL	Pearson Correlation	.148
	Sig. (2-tailed) (p value)	.481
	N	25
	R Standard Error	0.04
	H0 (5%)	Rejected

Figure 18 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 12th Grade GHS GT mathematics are related to the CPL ACCESS levels. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slope indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 18 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 12th Grade GHS GT mathematics scale score is linear. For this relationship, 4% of the variance in mathematics can be explained by the variance in

Composite Proficiency ACCESS levels ($R^2 = 0.0435$). From the residual analysis, two observations emerged as outliers.

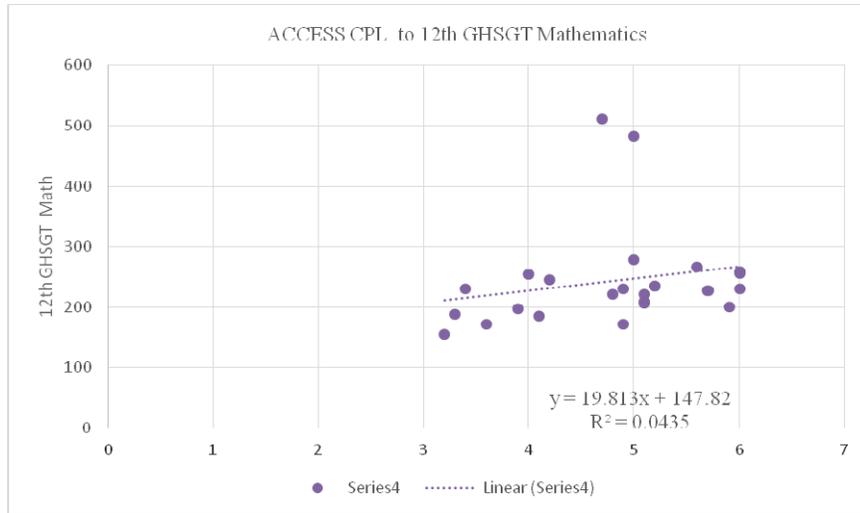


Figure 18. 12th Grade GHSMT Mathematics

Table 21 (below) is a representation of a Pearson's product-moment correlation was that was run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 12th grade GHSMT in mathematics. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with not all variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were two significant outliers. There was a weak correlation between ACCESS CPL and 12 grade GHSMT mathematics, $r(23) = .209$, Sig.(2-tailed) .317 with ACCESS CPL explaining 4% of the variance in GHSMT mathematics. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Table 21

Correlation Between ACCESS CPL Levels and 12th Grade GHSGT Mathematics

		GHSGT Mathematics
ACCESS CPL	Pearson Correlation	.209
	Sig. (2-tailed) (p value)	.317
	N	25
	R Standard Error	0.04
	H0 (5%)	rejected

Figure 19 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 12th Grade GHSGT social studies are related to the CPL ACCESS levels. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slop indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 19 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 12th Grade GHSGT social studies scale score is linear. For this relationship, 12% of the variance in social studies can be explained by the variance in Composite Proficiency ACCESS levels ($R^2 = 0.0125$).

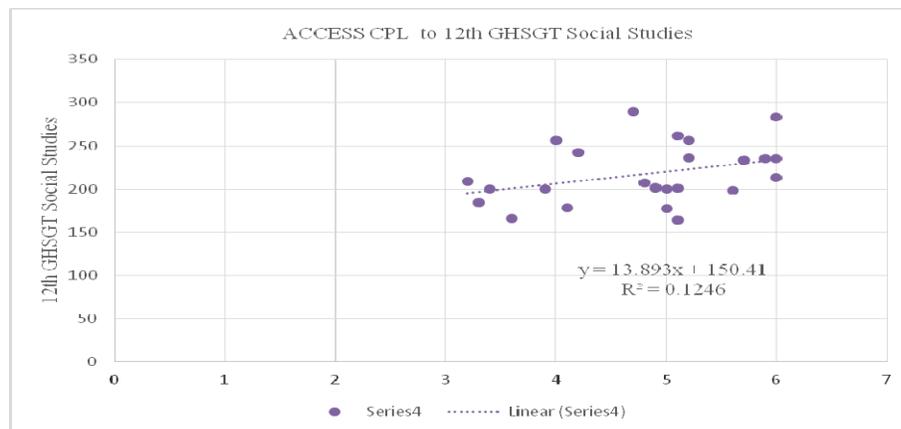


Figure 19. 12th Grade GHS GT Social Studies

Table 22 (below) is a Pearson's product-moment correlation that was run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 12th grade GHS GT social studies.

Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with all variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There was a moderate positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and 12 grade GHS GT social studies, $r(22) = .353$, with Sig. (2-tailed) .083, with ACCESS CPL explaining 12% variance in 12th grade GHS GT social studies.

Table 22

Correlation Between ACCESS CPL and 12th Grade GHS GT Social Studies

	GHS GT Social Studies	
ACCESS CPL	Pearson Correlation	.353
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083
	N	25
	R Standard Error	0.04
	H0 (5%)	accepted

Figure 20 shows a graphical representation of how the scale scores of the 12th Grade GHS GT science are related to the CPL ACCESS levels. On the scatterplot, each dot represents an ELL student. The right upward slop indicates that the correlation is positive and the grouping of student scores shows the strength of the relationship. The line drawn through the scatterplot is the regression line. It represents the line of best fit, minimized the squared distance of each point to the line, and helps show the direction of the correlation. The pattern of data points in Figure 20 show that the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 12th Grade GHS GT science scale score is linear. For this relationship,

21% of the variance in science can be explained by the variance in ACCESS CPL ($R^2 = 0.2091$). From the residual analysis, two observations emerged as outliers.

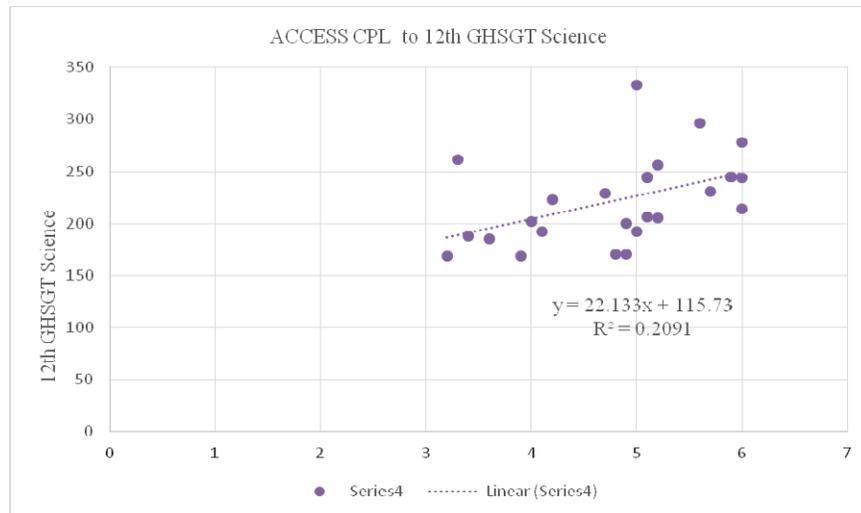


Figure 20. 12th Grade GHS GT Science

Table 23 (below) is a Pearson's product-moment correlation that was run to assess the relationship between ACCESS CPL and 12th grade GHS GT Science. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with all variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There was a moderate positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and 12th grade GHS GT science, $r(23) = .457$, $p < .022$, Sig. (2-tailed) .022 with ACCESS CPL explaining 21% of the variance in GHS GT science. Of the four GHS GTs, science is the one test with the most significance.

Table 23

Correlations between ACCESS CPL and 12th Grade GHS GT Science

		GHS GT Science
ACCESS CPL	Pearson Correlation	.457*
	Sig. (2-tailed) (p value)	.022
	N	25

R Standard Error	0.04
H0 (5%)	accepted

To determine if the needs of the ELL students in 12th grade are met, the GHSGT was administered for core course. While the ACCESS CPL scores determine placement for instruction, it should be noted that it is the responsibility of the teachers to prepare the ELL students for GHSGT. The findings showed that there was a correlation between the ACCESS CPL scores and the GHSGTs for students. It should be noted that while there is a correlation, that does not mean all the ELL students passed the assessment.

Summary

This study provided information that is useful to the GCPS county office, Archer High School, and other local schools within the system. The information in this study should be used to restructure the criterion that is used to schedule the ELL student’s four content classes. With the correct placement of the ELL students, they will be better prepared to be successful when they sit the EOCTs and the GHSGTs. Among the results of the statistical analysis, the following proved relevant and/or practical:

- There is a positive correlation between the ACCESS CPL scores and the EOCT scores where language arts shows a strong positive correlation and mathematics shows a positive weak correlation.
- There is a positive correlation between ACCESS CPL and GHSGT scores where language arts shows a weak positive correlation, social studies, mathematics, and science showed a moderate positive correlation, and

This chapter highlighted data that showcases the fact that the ELL students at Archer High School (AHS) are not adequately prepared for the various EOCTs and GHGTs. Furthermore, ELL students’ inability to post passing scores on these two Georgia state

and county tests also affects the graduation rates of ELL students at AHS. Chapter V discusses at what point it appears that ELLs are able to succeed on the different EOCTs and the patterns that are helpful to note when determining future course offerings and course placements.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the research findings from this study. This study explored the gap that exists in the literature regarding the instructional placement and academic achievement of ELL students in Archer High School after their language assessment. Specifically, the conclusions and discussions focus on findings guided by two research questions. The data collected and examined the correlational relationship between the End of Course Tests (ECOT) and the Georgia High School Graduation tests (GHSGT).

Summary of the Study

This study analyzed the EOCT and GHSGT for 9th – 12th grade ELL students who attended Archer High School from 2010 – 2014. Data examined for 9th graders were gathered from EOCT scores in language arts, mathematics and biology. ELL 10th grade student data was extracted from the EOCT SCORES in mathematics. The 11th grade data was examined from EOCT SCORES in language arts and social studies. The 12th grade data was collected and analyzed using the GHSGT scores in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The data was analyzed using a Pearson Correlation to the predictability of ELL students' ability to pass two state summative assessments based on their composite proficiency levels achieved on the annual ACCESS test. The summary of this study will be discussed according to the hypotheses tested in this study.

The results of this study indicated that there is a relationship between the stated variables, ACCESS CPL, EOCT and GHSGT. The results of this study also showed that there were positive correlations at varying degrees for each grade levels.

While the null hypothesis for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 were rejected, there was a slight relationship between the variables. The subsequent paragraphs highlight the results of the data analysis with respect to the research hypotheses.

Research Question 1 examined the relationship in grades 9th –11th between the ELL students’ ACCESS composite proficiency level scores and their performance on the EOCT tests. Table 24 is a summary of the findings indicating that the hypothesis was accepted. The overall finding indicate that there is a significant relationship between the ELL students’ Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the EOCT tests in 9th grade biology, 9th and 11th grades language arts, 11th grade Social studies but not for mathematics.

The statistical analysis suggested that there was no significant difference between the ELL students’ ACCESS CPL composite proficiency level scores and their performance on the EOCT. Although the differences were not found to be statistically significant, there is still a positive correlation between the ACCESS CPL and the three different EOCT tests. In other words, both the independent variable (ACCESS score) and the dependent variable (EOCT scores) mirror the other.

Table 24.

Research Question 1 Summary of Results

TABLES	ACCESS CPL vs	PEARSON COEFICIENT	SIGNIFICENCE	R2
14	EOCT Lang Arts 9	0.711	0.001	0.505
15	EOCT Math 9	0.251	0.06	0.063
16	EOCT Biology 9	0.419	0.001	0.176
17	EOCT Math 10	0.054	0.767	0.003

18	EOCT Lang Arts 11	0.612	0.001	0.374
19	EOCT US Hist 11	0.612	0.001	0.353

Research Question 2 examined the relationship between ELL 12th grade students (from 2010 – 2014) Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT scores in science, mathematics, language arts and social studies. Table 25 is a summary of the overall findings. The hypothesis was accepted and the finding showed that there was a relationship between the ELL students ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level scores and their performance on the GHSGT tests in science, language arts, and social studies but not in mathematics.

Table 25.

Research Question 2 Summary of Results

TABLES	ACCESS CPL vs	PEARSON COEFFICIENT	SIGNIFICENCE	R2
20	GHSGT Lang Arts	0.148	0.481	0.022
21	GHSGT Math	0.209	0.317	0.044
22	GHSGT Social Studies	0.353	0.083	0.013
23	GHSGT Science	0.457	0.022	0.21

Discussion of the Results

This study examined the ELL students’ instructional program in content class based on their performance on state assessments. Based on the accumulated findings in research, there does appear to be a limited relationship to the instructional program and

the opportunity for success of the ELL students at Archer High School.

The findings between the ACCESS CPL and EOCT and GHSGT indicate that a stronger correlation could be an indication of a parallel relation between the two variables. In other words, a weaker correlation might indicate that things are changing for at least some ELL students. A strong negative correlation might entail that things are getting bad for the strong students and really good for the weak students. It is possible that a show of correlation suggests that the students who entered Archer High School with a high ACCESS CPL score remained high and were able to earn a high score on the end of course assessments. On the other hand, the students who entered with a low ACCESS CPL score earned low scores on the end of course assessments.

Results in Relation to the Literature

This study was based on Bourdieu's cultural capital theory. While the finding in this study did not discuss the specific resources the educators in this school have at their disposal, the ELL students' lack of progress implied that additional resources may have further supported the ELL teacher in an effort to add value to instruction. Bourdieu (1986) contends that schools instructionally value the learning and educational norms of the middle and upper class, and tend to devalue the speaking and behavioral styles of the culturally disadvantaged. The results of this study showed a relationship based on the assessments administered to the ELL students during their tenure at Archer High School.

Conclusions and Implications

If that is the case, other contributing factors should be considered such as the course offerings in the ELL program. Additionally, the problem encompasses how to best serve the ELL program students in an era of budget shortfalls in the correct content

courses to better prepare students for success on the EOCT and the GHSGT.

It was important to conduct this study in order to draw some conclusions from the identified problem of ELL students failing to meet the standards identifying for passing the state assessments at Archer High School. The ELL teacher was classified as a non-tenured teacher since she had less than three years teaching experience as a Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) teacher. This teacher served as the ELL teacher, ESL department chair, and language arts teacher for three non-ESL classes. As such, the underlying question is, “Should a school leader reasonably expect the ELL teacher to conduct these duties and still meet the needs of children?” While the results of study data was not examined for this study, the data of the ELL teacher from 2010 – 2014 was examined for this study. The underlying question for this study is “Is the results of the current ELL teacher consistent with the student assessments of the former ELL teacher?”

Implications of the Results

The information in this report could serve to affect change in policies and practices for the ELL students in Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS). Additionally, the manner in which ELL students in GCPS are prepared to take the culminating assessments in the four content areas which ultimately determines how many of them, after four years, are successful at earning a high school diploma should be revisited.

The information in this report could identify the point it appears the ELLs are able to succeed in passing EOCT courses and post a *meets* score on the GHSGTs. In addition, are there variables other than proficiency in English that can explain the lack of progress for the ELLs who are unsuccessful at passing the EOCT tests and courses and the GHSGT assessments.

Another area of concern is whether or not the ELL students in GCPS are making consistent progress in their Composite Proficiency Levels. If they are not, are there any patterns emerging that can help administrators to determine the factors that are preventing these students from becoming proficient English speakers so that they can exit the ELL program? In addition, it would also be useful to identify what factors seem to be contributing to their success so that those factors can be replicated. Administrators may also need to consider that ELLs need additional support to help them succeed in these courses and improve passing rates in EOCT courses and on the tests themselves.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study proposed to examine the ELLs' content preparation classes at Archer High School and their performance on county and Georgia state high-stakes tests. Specifically, the ECOT and the GHSGT assessment scores are correlated to ACCESS scores and the number of ELL students who successfully earn a high school diploma. Further, the achievement levels of the ELL students in the four content courses (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics) at Archer High School were examined. Based on the findings and the review of literature, multiple recommendations are been made for future research.

It is recommended that a qualitative descriptive case study be conducted in all schools within the GCPS district to determine if test scores should be considered when evaluating a teacher's effectiveness as it relates to increasing student achievement of ELL students. This qualitative research will be fundamentally interpretive, since interpretations of the data are necessary in order to gain in-depth information that will help to further analyze the finding from the correlational data gathered from the EOCT

and the GHSGT test. Yin (2009) states that the strength of a case study comes from the researcher's ability to examine a full variety of evidence. Such evidence can include artifacts, documents, interviews, and observations. This method will permit a practical inquiry into the contemporary phenomenon of ELL programs in multiple schools within the same district.

It is further recommended that another a qualitative case study be conducted, since test scores for ELL students is only one measure of their limited English skills. Conducting a case study will allow the researcher to collect information in the form of words and or pictures rather than numbers. The personal accounts of other ELL teachers experiences in ELL classrooms can allow a researcher to examine the earlier concerns noted by the ELL teacher who was the referenced in this study. These kinds of data collection activities would include interviews with parents, students and the administration. In addition, the EOCT and GHSGT scores and other records, field notes from observations, and the interviews would be used to triangulate the data. In the quest for understanding, the researcher would not attempt to reduce the data to numerical symbols, but rather to portray all the information in a way that expressed what actually had been observed and recorded.

It is further recommended that four quantitative studies be conducted for future research. The first recommendation for a quantitative study in made as a result of information gathered during the data collection phase of the study. It was determined that ELL students are often very mobile. Due to student mobility, evidence suggests programmatic inconsistencies regarding the records of all the students who begin the school year. In obtaining useable data, the total number of subjects in the study may

differ from the list of ELL students who started the school year. As such, it is recommended that a study be conducted to track the student's actions and placements during the high school years.

The second quantitative study would collect data on ELL assessment measures and current ELL assessment strategies. This study looked at the correlation of the assessments and the subjects taught. A study examining the specific strategies used to teach the content course would allow the researcher to further understand the instructional style of the ELL teacher. This study was based on the insight gained from a former ELL teacher at Archer High School. Mary Smith, the former ELL teacher, moved to this highly progressive school district in central Georgia. Mary was classified as a non-tenured teacher, since she had less than three years teaching experience as a Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) teacher. Mary, a naturalized citizen who spoke English as a second language herself, felt she had landed her dream job. Her excitement stemmed from her having the opportunity to be part of the inaugural opening of a school and the architect of its ESL program. Mary felt like her class size and responsibility was a bit excessive and the students were to instructionally wide range on their ACCESS scores. At the end of the year, her contract was non-renewed because the students were deemed unsuccessful in meeting End of Course Test (EOCT) and Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT). Given the number of correlations uncovered in this study, it is clear the many of the ELL students at Archer High School may be in a sink or swim environment and so the ESOL chair was not really in a situation where success should have been expected.

The third quantitative study is recommended to extend the current study to examine the effects of placement on ELL students as measured by the quarterly report cards and the end of unit tests during the first year of instruction. Gathering data immediately would identify the misidentification early in the ELL student's placement, to identify if students are not receiving the language support and education that is appropriate to their language skills.

The final recommendation for future research would be a mixed method study. Part of the background for this study were the actions of the school principal at Archer High School as it related to the assignments he gave to the ELL teacher and the decision to non-renew this teacher. Since the enactment of No Child Left Behind in 2001, the instructional focus has centered on hiring "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom (Hyatt, 2007) and reducing the achievement gap for all children, including ELL students. Consistent with the information gathered during this data collection process, studies have shown that ELL students score below their classmates on standardized tests (Marcias, 2002).

The final quantitative study is recommended to investigate the effects of the ACCESS scores on passing the Georgia state assessments when administered two times by different evaluators. The results would be assessed using a holistic scale resulted in higher inter-rater agreement. Since the evaluator is the main source of variability in terms of scores and decision-making behavior, this study would provide greater insight into the overall placement of ELL students.

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Appendix A



LOCAL SCHOOL RESEARCH REQUEST FORM

Name of School: Archer High School
 Name of Researcher: Jacqueline C. Ellis
 Position or Grade: Teacher

A. Research Project

a. Title: English Language Learners: Providing Instruction that Fits

b. Statement of Problem and research question: _____

This study seeks to explore whether or not the instruction the ELL students received at Archer High School from 2009 to 2014 adequately prepared them for the EOCT and the GHSGT tests in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts as measured by their scores.

c. Subjects or population for the study: _____
ELL Students at Archer High School

d. Reason for doing this research:

- Graduate Study at Florida International University University/College
 Publication/Presentation
 Other (please specify) _____

e. Dates research will be conducted: October 1, 2014 to May 26, 2015

B. All research and researchers must a) Protect the rights and welfare of all human subjects, b) inform students and/or parents that they have the right not to participate in the study, c) Adhere to board policies and applicable laws which govern the privacy and confidentiality of students records.

C. This request applies to research conducted within and by local school personnel. All other research requests must be submitted by completing a GCPS Research Application and submitting it electronically according to instructions. For complete details and instructions, please visit our Web Page at the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/ce7pmpm> or you can simply go to gwinnettk12.ga.us. When you open our webpage, click on "I want to" section.....Apply for Research Approval." This will take you to our webpage.

D. Principals ONLY need to approve Local School Research Requests. The copy sent to the Research & Evaluation Office is for filing purposes only. No further approval is necessary.

E. After approval by the principal, please forward a copy of this completed form to:

Via GCPS Courier: Colin Martin GCPS - Research & Evaluation ISC	Via US Mail: Dr. Colin Martin, Executive Director Research & Evaluation Department Gwinnett County Public Schools 437 Old Peachtree Road, NW Suwanee, GA 30024	Via Fax: Colin Martin 678-301-7068
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Principal's Signature

9-24-14
Date of Approval

VITA

JACQUELINE CAROLINE ELLIS

1986-1991	B.A., English Rutgers University New Brunswick, New Jersey
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PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Ellis, J.C., & Brouillard, L. (2012). Unwrapping the Common Core Standards. An In-service training offered to the teachers at Archer High School, Lawrenceville , GA.

Ellis J.C., & Brouillard, L. (2013). Teaching Close Reading Strategies. An In-service training offered to the teachers at Archer High School, Lawrenceville , GA.

Ellis J. C., (2014). Understanding Features of Text Complexity. An In-service training offered to the teachers at Archer High School, Lawrenceville , GA.