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C. D. Williams

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**SPEAKING OF RIVERS: DEMYSTIFYING FOREIGN-BORN BLACKS
THROUGH A SECONDARY ESL CONTEXT**

by
C. D. Williams

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
Rowan University
May 4, 2012

Dissertation Chair: Ane Turner Johnson, Ph.D.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved maternal grandmother, Luvenia Weinberg. My grandmother's unwavering belief in me coupled with her prayers and words of inspiration permeated my soul, which led me from a GED to the pursuit of an Ed.D. in educational leadership.

Additionally, my life, travel, and educational journeys that spanned the globe afforded me the opportunity to encounter several magnificent people who enhanced and change my life. I thank God for the opportunity to speak of rivers by calling attention to Diasporian cultures through this research.

I also dedicate this research to all of those who encouraged my soul to grow deep like the rivers and strengthened my voice as a person, educator and researcher.

Psalms 19: 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Acknowledgments

A wide circle of friends and family has offered moral support and encouragement throughout this dissertation process. I have numerous people to thank and acknowledge. In lieu of sharing several names, I know that they know who they are because I have expressed my gratitude personally; however, this is a formal acknowledgement of my deepest appreciation.

My dissertation chair and committee members sparked me with ideas to extend which helped to hone my research into its present existence. I would like to thank my patient and supportive dissertation chair, Dr. Ane Turner Johnson. I was extremely fortunate to have a dissertation chair that provided sincere guidance and stimulating dialogues that shaped my research. I wish to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Joanne K. Damminger and Dr. Burton R. Sisco, for reading and providing detailed feedback regarding my research study and offering encouragement and support.

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In addition, I would like to recognize the faculty and students who comprised the ESL Department and the administration within my research context. Their individual and

collective contributions furthered my development as an educator, leader, and researcher and contributed a unique, richness to my study.

To my mother, Billie Letitia Weinberg, sister, Danielle, and immediate and extended family, the basis of my entire outlook on my life and many levels of my discernment derived from diverse and unique familial interactions. I am indebted to my childhood sister-friends, Sharon, Sherry, and Donna and all my nearest and dearest friends for the culture, words, books, maps, music, dances, praises, and exposure that advanced my enthusiasm and intellectual life. Special acknowledgement to Channy Len Young for being a consummate motivator, who challenged me to excel in all areas of my life, and Pamela Eleanor Murray for preparing and guiding for me through unfathomable life learning events. I am eternally grateful for the kindness, wisdom, care, guidance, humor, encouragement, and all forms of moral and practical support that was offered by all, which molded my concept of self in relationship to the world.

Abstract

C. D. Williams
SPEAKING OF RIVERS: DEMYSTIFYING FOREIGN-BORN BLACKS
THROUGH A SECONDARY ESL CONTEXT
2011/2012
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Doctorate in Educational Leadership

Linguistic imperialism and societal assumptions can become dominant issues that

lessen the significance of the identity, language, culture, and communication of

minorities in English as a second language (ESL) settings, which may hinder the

possibilities of acceptance and success (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Morgan, 1997;

Ogbu, 1992a). Students from Africa and West Indies, foreign-born Blacks, represent

English language learners (ELLs) who have distinct cultural and linguistic mores that

often go unnoticed. Foreign-born Blacks possess uncommon mother tongues and cultural

behaviors that present struggles with salient entrenched racialization in ESL because the

historical aspects of English are associated with Whiteness, dominance, and power (Amin

1997; Motha, 2006).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the invisibility of foreign-born Blacks

in a large, ethnically diverse, urban, secondary ESL context. Relevant aspects of Critical

Race Theory (CRT) were applied to the unseen perspectives of racial, ethnic, and cultural

conceptualizations in conjunction with language, culture, and teaching. Through this

study, I sought to identify foreign-born Black students in ESL, authentically explore

belief systems of teachers and students, examine current pedagogical views, address

cultural competencies, and infuse culturally responsive practices. In this action research project, I used a qualitative research design and phenomenological methods. I emphasized the importance of cyclical action research to formerly assess and improve cultural responsiveness in ESL settings and proactively enhance the significance of underrepresented cultures in ESL. Findings from this research suggest that studied attention is required to heighten the awareness of foreign-born Blacks as English Language Learners.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The risk of overpowering dominant societal issues as well as the lessening of significant elements of foreign students' language, culture, and communication over a period may detract from the possibilities of school success (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Ogbu, 1992a). Anyon (2008), Smith and Wolf-Wendel, (2005), Tatum (1997), and Thomas and Bell (2008) have found that social interaction and academic performance can be influenced by cultural factors as well as the lack of knowledge of cultural influences. These factors contribute to learners' attitudes, philosophy, motivation, and passion for learning.

Visible minorities, students with uncommon mother tongues and cultural mores, and minority teachers often struggle with salient, inherent racialization in the English as a second language (ESL) context because the English language was once historically associated with Whiteness, dominance, and power (Motha, 2006). The diverse perspective of foreign-born in ESL Blacks has caused not only the interest in their language and culture to arise, but also questions regarding the pedagogical practices and cultural knowledge currently in place. As a result of demographic shifts and the influx patterns of immigrants, English language learners (ELLs), particularly in the secondary setting, struggle to maintain their sense of self while acquiring a second language and gaining knowledge of a new culture.

Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and ESL are educational fields that encompass many global groups of people who have racial,

cultural, and linguistic distinctions. Race, a social construct, may influence perceptions about cultural and linguistic diversity as well as identity formation relevant to teaching and learning ESL (Albertini, 2004; Ibrahim, 1999; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1992b; Taylor, 2006; Traore, 2008). Moreover, the term racialization, which is the categorization of people based on the social construction of race in ESL instruction, has become more significant as recent research addresses the implications of race, language, power, and identity struggles within United States classrooms (Amin, 1997; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Motha, 2006). In addition, the examination of race in second language acquisition settings can be examined through the analytical lens of critical race theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT can be used to help researchers and educational practitioners use race as part of a framework to analyze and focus on educational inadequacies that could be based on race, but are often unnoticed or disregarded. Research may help to unveil how CRT contributes to the treatment and expectations of foreign-born Blacks, people of African descent who were born outside the United States.

Statement of the Problem

There is a gap in existing literature regarding foreign-born Black ELLs in ESL programs. Through this research, I explored factors relative to the phenomenon of invisibility of this student population in second language settings. This area needs to be addressed in education as schools, as well as society, become more culturally and linguistically diverse. This study is needed to heighten the awareness of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. There is mutual ownership of social, linguistic, cultural, and academic success of underrepresented groups among students, teachers, parents, communities, and

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the broader society. Learning situations that attempt to fit culturally and linguistically diverse students into a learning environment that does not embrace the dynamics of all may hinder students' sense of visibility and progress. Students from underrepresented groups require advocacy as well as representation, because they could be easily dismissed or ignored by the dominant culture within various educational situations. Institutional and instructional practices often compromise the social, academic, and emotional perceptions of students from underrepresented groups such as foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

Theoretical Framework: CRT

CRT was developed by legal scholars in the 1970s to address the effects of race and racism within the American legal systems (Delgado, 1995). The interdisciplinary approach to CRT uses the socially constructed nature of race as the main lens for exploring legislation and political ramifications (Bell, 1995a, 1995b, Delgado, 1995; hooks, 1990; Matsuda, 1995; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). The main objective of CRT is to produce change that leads to social justice. The critical premise of CRT is the permanence of racism in society. CRT scholars argue that racism has been and continues to be a dominant force in determining inequity in America. CRT presents a framework for the analysis and monitoring of political, economic, social, and educational institutions in efforts to discontinue the "othering of people in all areas, including education" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27).

CRT has been applied within the context of education to explore the significance of race in schooling, particularly marginalized students of color (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004; Tatum, 1992). Although some educators may fail to realize or acknowledge the Whiteness or

racially entrenched aspects of their practices, discourse, and interactions, according to the basic tenet of CRT as relates to education, race can affect perceptions of students as well as the instructional and educational aspects of schooling (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tatum, 1992). In an attempt to analyze the perceptions of foreign-born Blacks in an urban secondary school setting, CRT presented a theoretical framework for my research objective of analyzing the complicity and marginalization of foreign-born Black students in ESL.

The theoretical rationalization of CRT allows for the critical exploration of and engagement with the specificities of the ESL context and foreign-born Black student experiences, motivated by what is essential to heighten the awareness of the culture of foreign-born Blacks and salient and pertinent information significant to their marginalization within the ESL context. Two important elements of CRT that are relevant to my research are challenging considered societal norms and counterstorytelling. Presenting thought-provoking concerns about societal norms is important because it can lead to uncovering practices that are considered as norms, yet can be a marginalization to specific cultures. The storytelling approach, in particular counterstorytelling, is important because it presents opportunities for articulation that could highlight as well as uncover concerns that may challenge teacher and school practices, student behavior, and perceptions that contribute to these interactions.

According to Solorzano and Yosso (2002), counterstories in education can include various forms such as personal stories and narratives, other people's stories and narratives, and combined stories and narratives. Counterstorytelling is "a method of telling a story that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths,

especially ones held by the majority" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 144). Giving voice to the marginalized through various opportunities unveils their reality, which may validate their circumstances and experiences and present profound ways to challenge and transform perceptions held by others about foreign-born Blacks in ESL. Capturing the perspectives of foreign-born Blacks will "help us understand what life is like for others, and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 41).

For this action research study, CRT was used as a framework for identifying the invisibility of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, considering racial backgrounds relative to the perceptions about foreign-born Blacks and their schooling experiences, and demystifying foreign-born Blacks within the ESL context. The analysis of experiences of minorities in the ESL setting helped to unveil the creation of an environment that contributes to the marginalization of foreign-born Black students. Examining their experiences led to the consideration of how the ESL setting can be subjectively racialized in ways that may enhance others and minimize those who are in a position of powerlessness.

Context of the Study

An inclusive secondary school built in November 1994 located in a South Jersey shore community served as the research site for this study. The location encompassed an urban setting with a population of approximately 40,000 people at the time of this study. The research site was the sole high school in the major city and four surrounding municipalities and provided secondary education for diverse student populations that stemmed from the respective residential areas. The research site included an extensive multiplicity of racially, ethnically, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students. The influx of foreign student enrollment waxed and waned based upon

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economic, real estate, employment, and other socioeconomic variables. Student

population shifts, mobility rates, and demographic groups were heavily influenced by

tourism trends and casino gaming transitions. LaRosa (2003) suggests that since the

inception of legalized gambling in 1978 within the city, the casino gaming industry

generated revenue that advanced changes within the city; however, there has not been a

substantial upsurge of socioeconomic status for local residents. Moreover, LaRosa notes

that the locale of the research context is affected by politics, economics, and demographic

changes that extend to the school district.

The research context was part of an urban school district that provided services

for approximately 7,000 preschool to 12th-grade students who stemmed from diverse

academic, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. A reflection of the socioeconomic

groups of district residents within the research context was characterized by the New

Jersey Department of Education (1996-2010) classification of District Factor Groups.

District factor groups were calculated using seven indices developed from census data:

(a) percent of population with no high school diploma, (b) percent with some college, (c)

occupation, (d) population density, (e) income, (f) unemployment, and (g) poverty.

District Factor Groups ranged from "A" (lowest score) to "J" (highest score). District

Factor Group A indicated the poorest community. The research context was classified as

being District Factor Group A, the lowest of the eight groupings.

At the time of this study, the school district student population consisted of 40.9%

Blacks, 35.5% Hispanics, 10.6% Caucasians, 12.9% Asian/Pacific Islanders, and .1%

American Indian/Alaskans. The enrollment encompassed approximately 2,600 language

minority students with 34 languages represented. The research environment was a

comprehensive urban school district that contained a total 11 schools, one which was a secondary school used for the context of this study. The research took place in a large urban secondary school with an enrollment of approximately 2,300 students who encapsulated several facets of diversity. According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2011), during the 2009-2010 school year, the enrollment by ethnicity was 884 Black, non-Hispanic; 700 Hispanic; 454 White, non-Hispanic; and 311 Asian/Pacific Islander.

Included within the diverse student population at the research site was a comprehensive ESL program. Second language acquisition, content-knowledge, and socialization skills contributed to the assortment of ESL learning opportunities. The secondary school has been responsive to the educational concerns of the limited English population since the 1960s. Federal funding became available in 1965; subsequently, the first teacher of ESL was hired. The influx of foreigners increased as a result of economic, real estate, employment trends, and other opportunities.

The ESL program in effect during this research study was a language and content integrated program of study. Federal mandates ensured that ESL programs were supported by research about second language acquisition and high quality language instruction (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2002). In addition, district directives, and school culture contributed to the prevailing structural and symbolic frames that manifested as a result of the direction of the ESL Department. Bolman and Deal (2003) recognize that the structural frame is "a blueprint for formal expectations and exchanges among internal players" (p. 46) within organizational situations.

Teachers and administrators contributed to the structure of the program because they were highly motivated, autonomous, and contentious. The ESL teaching staff consisted of seven teachers with a plethora of knowledge in various areas of instruction. Some in-house resources included Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) training, educational technology, extended day programs, and special consideration programs for refugee/immigrants and regional immigrant newcomers.

The current secondary ESL level program consisted of ELLs from 22 different countries. The home countries of language sub-groups included Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Mauritania, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, United States, and Vietnam. Moreover, the language diversity was wide-ranging; the first languages found in the ESL program included Amharic, Bangla/Bengali, Cantonese, Cambodian (Khmer), Creole (English-Based Pidgin), French, Gujarati, Haitian Creole French, Hindi, Kongo, Mandarin, Pashto/Pushto, Spanish, Tagalog, Twi/Fante, Urdu, and Vietnamese. At time of this study, there were 166 students enrolled in ESL classes; the classes ranged from Newcomer to ESL 4 levels.

Foreign-born Blacks have an increased presence in ESL classrooms as result of Haitian and African migration streams (Gibson & Jung, 2006; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). For the purpose of this research, I examined broad demographic data for foreign-born Blacks in the United States and New Jersey. The Census Bureau estimates that there are over 500,000 Haitians and over 800,000 Africans who reside in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). There is a large population

of foreign-born Blacks in metropolitan areas; but they are extending into other regions. New Jersey has become a high-ranking state for number of foreign-born Black immigrants. Though the population of Africans and Haitians in Atlantic City is small relative to several other cities and immigrant groups, the numbers for foreign-born Blacks are rising. The presence of Haitians and Africans is becoming more visible in Atlantic City and the surrounding areas, changing diversity patterns and diversity patterns in schools.

Rationale for the Study

The school populace could improve interpersonal skills by accepting the self-expression of diverse groups while learning how to interact successfully and confidently with people from other cultures and ethnicities. Positive school culture tends to evolve when there is a school-wide emphasis on the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and acceptance of cultural distinctions (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tatum, 1992). The rationale for this study was to introduce initiatives and interventions that would increase cultural awareness and improve cultural responsiveness for marginalized groups such as foreign-born Black ELLs.

Over the past 20 years, I have observed that educational settings have become pluralistic and more accepting; however, race-based topics in education are still sensitive topics. My role as a secondary school administrator offers opportunities to notice cross-cultural interactions from several viewpoints. This research project enabled me to transition my familiar supervisory role to that of a researcher with a particular focus area. This study could enhance cross-cultural relationships and educational practices related to foreign-born Black students. From the vantage point of participants who lack familiarity

with the depth of Black culture, participants may become more knowledgeable, comfortable and cognizant of unfamiliar cultures in ESL classrooms.

Revealing the lived experiences of foreign-born Black students may unveil factors that contribute to their positionality, identity, and visibility in the classroom. Analyzing the perception of foreign-born Blacks provided insight as well as solutions to draw attention to their presence and enhance culturally responsive practices. The impact of this research would provide new exposure to diversity, which could prepare all within the polarized learning environment to be effective, globally conscience citizens and leaders who are equipped with the awareness of various diversifications found within schools, communities, and the world (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1992a). Also, ESL teachers as well as faculty members who encounter immigrant students and ELLs could benefit from an expanded knowledge base about the intricacies of cultural environments, linguistic varieties, and social intercourse (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological, action research study was fourfold: (a) to examine teacher awareness of the linguistic, social, and cultural processing of foreign-born Black students as ELLs; (b) to analyze the treatment of foreign-born Black ELLs' language and culture to improve cultural awareness in a secondary setting; (c) to increase the visibility and voice of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, and (d) to determine if the use of developed initiatives can provide sustenance for a culturally responsive, supportive learning environment.

Exploring the daily life of foreign-born Black students in an ESL setting may increase awareness of this group of students. Specifically, daily life for the purpose of this study related to the schooling experiences of foreign-born Black students who were enrolled in ESL in the United States. It was my desire to turn the phenomenon of foreign-born Blacks that interested me to contributions of knowledge about Black immigrants as ELLs. An investigation of learning experiences as they have lived them presented an opportunity to gain insight in lieu of attempting to conceptualize their experiences in ESL. Phenomenology, a qualitative research method, was the framework for the purpose of this study because it underscored that "the research indemnifies the 'essence' of human experiences as described by participants in a study" (Creswell, 2003, p.15). In addition, the use of phenomenology allowed participants to share crucial information about their experiences and enabled me to comprehend the essence and meaning of participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This study encompassed a combination of research approaches to reveal the specific phenomena of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs.

Action research enables practitioners to address educational areas of concern (Hinchey, 2008); participants may benefit from an action research design tailored to enhance cultural and pedagogical practices. Qualitative and phenomenological methods provided opportunities to collect rich descriptions to gain understanding of meanings of described experiences in efforts to illuminate and give voice to those whose views are seldom heard (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Sofaer, 1999; van Manen, 1984, 1990, 2007). These combined research approaches advanced my understanding of the complex, social phenomenon and essence of being foreign-born Black students and ELLs.

Research Questions

Using supporting data from this research, I determined perspectives about foreign-born Black ESL students. The following research questions guided this study.

1. What are the lived educational/schooling experiences of foreign-born Black students as secondary ELLs?

2. How do foreign-born Black students perceive the role of race and social class in their school experiences?

3. How do ESL faculty perceive foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

4. To what extent did my leadership traits contribute to increased visibility and awareness of foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

Definitions of Terms

There are specific terms that are associated with the research topic that require explanation to present a framework for this study. Several operational definitions of important terms that are relevant to this study follow. Using these terms consistently throughout the study informed the content of the research.

Foreign-born Blacks. Foreign-born Blacks is a term commonly used by the United States Census Bureau to describe people who immigrate from Africa and the Caribbean (McKinnon & Bennett, 2005). Black immigrants come from all over the world, but primarily from Africa and the Caribbean. This term is used to describe people from the African Diaspora, the "dispersion of Africans throughout the world from ancient to modern times" (Gavins, 2005, p. 105). Ajayi (1998) defines the African Diaspora as the movement of people of Africa and their descendants to places throughout the world. According to the Department of Homeland Security (as cited in Kent, 2007), "The term

foreign-born refers to any U.S. resident who was born outside the United States or its

territories, except for people who were born abroad to parents who were U.S. citizens"

(p. 5).

> African-born refers to any U.S. resident born in any African country who
> identified as black or as black and another race. Most are from sub-Saharan
> Africa, but some are from North African countries. Caribbean-born refers to U.S.
> Blacks born in the Caribbean or Latin America. (Kent, 2007, p. 5)

"Other terms referring to African-origin immigrants from the Western Hemisphere

sometimes include Afro-Caribbeans and West Indians – people from the English-

speaking Caribbean countries, along with their children" (Kent, 2007, p. 5). For the

purpose of this study, foreign-born Blacks are descendants of African Diasporian

populations consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent (Gibson &

Jung, 2006; Scruggs, 2007; Takyi & Konadu-Agyemang, 2006).

Culture. Culture relates to the term "cultural model" as defined as "an implicit,

often non-conscious, construction of reality that is created, shared and transmitted by

other members of a group" (Bonvillian, 2003, p. 407). Culture also includes learned

behavior patterns – manners in which we classify people, educate our children about

particular expectations, distinguish between right and wrong or good and bad (Nieto &

Bode, 2008, p. 15).

English language learner (ELL). This term is used to describe persons who are

in the process of acquiring English and have a first language other than English.

Additional terms frequently found in literature include ESL, culturally and linguistically

diverse (CLD), limited English proficient (LEP), and language minority students

(Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Ogbu, 1987). ESL refers to the use or study of

English in the United States by speakers with a different first language (Ballantyne et al., 2008).

Language. Language consists of the communicative structure that consists of sound, structure, and meanings (Bonvillian, 2003; Finegan, 1998). Language considers that cultural, social, and interactional purposes of communication (Bonvillian, 2003), expression, meaning, context, and content are essential elements of language, which are used to convey thoughts and feelings (Finegan, 1998).

Racialization. Racialization defines the process that places importance on racial identities or categories that can become significant when it infuses racial components into any given situation (Motha, 2006).

Significance of the Study

The number of Diasporian immigrants has grown noticeably in recent years. Haitian-born people residing in the United States encompass the largest concentration in one country of Haitians abroad (Gibson & Jung, 2006; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The influx of Haitians began in the 1980s as a result of political unrest and has continued to grow in the wake of a catastrophic earthquake in January 2010. Emigration patterns may possibly increase as result of recent natural disasters and devastation in Haiti. New Jersey has the fourth largest population of Haitians after Florida, New York, and Boston (Gibson & Jung, 2006; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The largest New Jersey population of Haitians is in North Jersey; however, there are emerging Haitian communities in South Jersey (Gibson & Jung, 2006; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Census data reveal that over 800,000 Africans reside in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Similar to the Haitian-born population, significant migration from Africa to the United States began in 1980s. African immigrants gained admission to the United States through family relationships, diversity immigrant visa programs, employment and other resources and as refugees and asylees (Gibson & Jung, 2006; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The main countries of origin include Nigeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya; African immigrants represent a small but increasing proportion of foreign-born Blacks in the United States as well as in New Jersey. New Jersey has fifth largest population of Africans after New York, California, Texas, and Maryland (Gibson & Jung, 2006; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The suburbs of New York, Newark, and Jersey City, contain significant proportions of African immigrants (Gibson & Jung, 2006; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The increased migration of Haitians and Africans to Atlantic County, Atlantic City, and neighboring vicinities presented a significant location and interesting place to concentrate on research about foreign-born Blacks as part of the evolving population of Diasporian students in ESL. There is a significant gap in research about foreign-born Blacks students within the ESL context. This study was significant because it may contribute to the new knowledge about ESL teaching and learning for marginalized ELLs, specifically focusing on the phenomenon of invisibility in the classroom and larger school context. Furthermore, it was significant because it presented opportunities for both foreign-born Blacks and faculty to reflect on their experiences, enhance their understanding of cross-cultural interactions, and address concerns. I employed the

taxonomy of research, practice, and policy to underscore the significance of the study (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Research. This research may contribute to research about foreign-born Blacks as second-language learners. Moreover, it may encourage further exploration of potential barriers and experiences of different immigrant groups that may be marginalized within the ESL setting. Future studies related to this research may encompass the examination of cultural and linguistic mores and the perception of self for foreign-born Black students in American classrooms. In addition, the study of effects of cultural and linguistic diversities on interactions among teachers, faculty, and foreign-born Black students may be worthy research because it may enhance the worldview of educators in a pluralistic society. The extension of future studies from this research may highlight various cross-cultural concerns that may contribute to the isolation and alienation of foreign-born Black students who may be disregarded or relegated by the larger school context as well as the broader society.

Practice. The relevance of studies like this one exists because of rising issues resulting from the influx of a multiplicity of languages and cultures in urban school systems. Foreign-born Blacks have significant cultural and linguistic distinctions that are worthy of exploration and observation, however, in most cases these immigrants are erroneously clustered with African American students. Misrepresentations and inaccurate perceptions about their national, cultural, and ethnic difference can negatively affect and influence teacher-student learning and interactions. Moreover, the lack of empathy in the classroom as well as the larger school context can have an unsettling effect on any subgroup not properly acclimated.

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The preservation of customs contributes to the sociolinguistic and sociocultural interaction of foreign-born Black students. An awareness of their respective cultures within the ESL context, however, is not evident. The student population of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs needs examination to determine if various aspects of their experiences could help to increase their visibility, advance perspectives about their respective cultures, and contribute to the improvement of cultural responsiveness.

Policy. The information presented in this study could assist administrators and teachers in developing and implementing initiatives that promote and increase cultural responsiveness, enhance the understanding of cultural and linguistic differences, and ultimately increase the visibility of marginalized student populations and opportunities for success. In addition, this research can provide a meaningful voice to foreign-born Blacks who were previously indistinct. Knowledge of cultural and linguistic mores as well as recognition of voice may enhance language, social, and academic development as well as advance intellectual engagements (Lee, 2005).

Limitations

Limitations of this study included the significance of the relationships and interactions with a limited student population representation in ESL. As with all research studies, this project had some initial limitations. One assumption was that I relied upon participants who agreed to participate, and I believed they would be able to fulfill the terms of the participation as described in the criteria for participation. I presumed that participants would be willing to share valuable and personal information; participation in the study would be non-coercive in nature. There may have been potential limitation regarding retention and loss of student participants during the course of the research. I

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had to rely upon the teacher participants to keep me abreast of the transfer as well as registration of foreign-born Black students in ESL. By reviewing the number of foreign-born Blacks students in ESL on a regular basis, I was able to monitor the retention of the student participants. No student participants opted not to continue with the research. I strove to ensure that my interactions with student participants did not present situations that would motivate them to discontinue their participation.

As a researcher, I had to be mindful of my responsibility to encourage discussions and dialogues that enabled participants to identify existing problems involving power as well as cultural and institutional ideologies. The emancipatory perspective considers sociopolitical and cultural factors that influence experience (Creswell, 2007). Emancipatory methods may engender change as a result of the research process for student participants who often are unnoticed or regarded as oppressed; however, participants may be apprehensive about sharing personal and cultural experiences that relate to the oppressed and the oppressors. An awareness of possible participants' apprehension may help to ameliorate concerns about addressing underlying problems and raising the collective conscious within the context.

As I sought to explore the possibilities of marginalization of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, I recognized that the long-standing cultural traditions relative to African origins may present areas of concern during the course of my research. Student participants, foreign-born Blacks, included people of African descent who may share common experiences and similar cultural mores. According to Nyasani (1997), some possible inherent characteristics of African comportments include congenital traits of sociality and sociability, a virtuous natural endowment of patience and tolerance, and a natural

disposition for mutual sympathy and acceptance; these areas are significant for the understanding of the "description of phenomenology of the African mind" (p. 57). The fundamentals of African identity and culture may present a culture of hospitality that stems from African social values of possessing the willingness to welcome and conciliate in most cases when encountering strangers.

Complex cultural and contextual challenges between the researcher and participants may arise during the course of the research. The possibilities of the extension of aspects of cultural genialities associated with foreign-born Blacks may hinder my ability to attain honest representation of the student participants. As a result, some student participants may not all be equally credible. Being cognizant of the social and cultural mores of Diasporian people heightened my awareness of the participants' representations during the data collection process. However, any information gathered during the research was assumed to be valid, truthful, and accurate.

The student participants, foreign-born Black students, were grouped homogeneously for the purpose of this study. However, they possessed a plethora of cultural and linguistic diversities that were representative of the countries of origin and specific social, cultural, and linguistic mores that were indicative of their respective cultures. Linguistic and cultural contrasts may present limitations in communication; however, prior cross-cultural knowledge may help to establish respect and precautionary measures to confirm that judgments are not made based on one's own standards (Lee, 1995). Participants had to be presented with situations that are easy to navigate, understand, and communicate; member checking and internal and external resources contributed to the quality of interaction between the researcher and participants.

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Research pertaining to cultural and cross-cultural topics presented concerns about insider and outsider perspectives of the researcher. Emic refers to the term when researchers report the views of participants from the insider's perspective; etic permits the researchers to report his or her own personal views from the outsider's perspective (Creswell, 2007; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Considering the etic and emic feature of research is essential to considering behaviors within and across cultures. Distinctive values and patterns of a given culture are essential to understanding experiences.

My ancestral ties are remotely connected to Africa, which enhanced accessibility and insider's vantage point and as a researcher to some extent; but I could be perceived as an outsider since I am not a foreign-born Black. While I am different, especially in regards to language and culture, I am somewhat familiar with some cultural understanding across the Caribbean and Africa spectrum that can lessen the affective filter during the research process. An analysis of foreign-born Black students in ESL from an emic perspective as an African-American researcher provided an opportunity to present an insider's interpretation of the student participants' world. The insider's perspective allowed for the discovery of concepts and increased the understanding of the culture of foreign-born Blacks in ESL as a whole. The emic perspective helped me to research foreign-born Blacks in ESL by means of a purposeful, scholarly, and contextual study.

The sample selection for my small qualitative study was limited to the ESL population of foreign-born Black students and those affiliated with the population. A small sample size may not be representative of the larger population and large enough to ensure that perceptions are shared. Moreover, a smaller sample size may narrow the

range of perspectives and scope of the study. However, Yin (1994) suggests that researchers should work with the situations that allow for the constructing of the best workable study that can be appropriately presented in research.

In addition, action research presented additional difficulties during my study. Monitoring my research practice while acting within it demanded space and time that was not readily available. It was difficult to maintain consistency while gathering and exploring data. However, I had access to participants based upon their daily schedules; all activities were scheduled in advance to ensure participant availability while considering flexibility for potential schedule conflicts.

It was my goal that the results from this qualitative study be transferred to other contexts, settings, and researchers (Toma, 2006). Using triangulation enabled me to check and establish the validity of my studies. Triangulation is defined as "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Observations, document analysis, and interviews provided multiple data sources for the analysis of any similarity of outcomes.

To ensure qualitative validity of this research, I provided rich, thick descriptions and gave participants the opportunity to review interview transcripts for clarifications of errors and interpretations. Peer review and consulting with committee members about categories, patterns, themes, and other areas central to data analysis helped to enhance the validity of my study. In addition, reasoning by analogy, transferring knowledge from one system to another, enabled me to feel secure about reporting research findings in a manner that was comprehensible to those who were interested in transferring the results

to a different context (Toma, 2006). These research practices helped to ameliorate some potential limitations of the study and ensured the consistency of results with the data collected in the research context.

Conclusion and Overview of the Study

Providing informative opportunities to learn more about unknown aspects of culturally and linguistically diverse students can have a positive effect on teacher-student cross-cultural relationships (Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2008). The goal of my research was to heighten the awareness of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs as a means to ensure an inclusive learning environment. The remaining chapters of this study provide supportive documentation and findings about my research, which is correlated with communication, learning, traditions, and social constructs of foreign-born Blacks within the secondary educational realm.

Chapter II acts as the literature review for the research based on the review of several journal articles, books, print media, and film sources. Chapter III, the methodology section, highlights information about the research environment and participants. Procedures for evaluation of data collection are also outlined. In Chapter IV, I include a profile of the target population and sample information as well as any visual texts generated from the data. I discuss the process and analysis of research cycles and findings in Chapters V and VI. In Chapter VII, I address my leadership within the context of this action research project in conjunction with overall findings. The final chapter, Chapter VIII, encompasses the implications, future recommendations, and conclusion of the research.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to use existing literature to gain insight into the distinctiveness of foreign-born Black ELLs as minority subgroups in ESL education. The literature review presents the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding about the identity construction of foreign-born Blacks in ESL programs. In an effort to provide an awareness of the significance of racial identity in second language instruction, this literature review concentrates on three areas. First, I examine the complexities of racial identity and teaching ESL. Second, I explore the influences, identity formation, and perceptions about marginalized ESL students, specifically Haitians and Africans. Finally, I discuss the implication of CRT on the didactic progression of TESOL and ESL.

TESOL and ESL is an educational field that encompasses many global groups of people who have racial, cultural, and linguistic distinctions. However, research about race and second language teaching and learning has not been significantly explored (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006). Although the scope of scholarly research about race abounds in sociology, anthropology, and education, research in the field of TESOL and ESL has internal and external gaps about the examination and influence of race (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999).

Race and ESL

Race, a social construct, may influence perceptions about cultural and linguistic diversity as well as identity formation relevant to teaching and learning ESL (Albertini, 2004; Ibrahim, 1999; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1992b; Taylor, 2006; Traore, 2008). Moreover, the term racialization, which is the categorization of people based on the social construction of race in ESL instruction, has become more significant as recent research addresses the implications of race, language, power, and identity struggles within United States classrooms (Amin, 1997; Motha, 2006). Racialization is the process that places importance on racial identities or categories that can become significant when it infuses racial components into any given situation. Visible minorities, students with linguistic minority status, and minority teachers often struggle with salient, inherent racialization in the ESL context, because the English language was once historically associated with Whiteness, dominance, and power (Motha, 2006).

Research that posits about various race-based constructs and sociocultural and political practices that impact the perception and identity of ESL teachers and ELLs is vital to improved understanding of cross-cultural engagements and definitions of self (Bachay, 1998; Ibrahim, 1999; Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2001; Kirkwood, 2002; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Nazroo & Karlsen, 2003; Ogbu 1983, 1990a; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004; Vollmer, 2000; Yoon, 2008). Minority status in education has contributed to a growing body of research (Albertini, 2004; Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a; Portes & MacLeod, 1996; Rodriquez, 2002), but has not been significantly explored to address the

pedagogical paradoxes of diversity, Whiteness, and language and culture perceptions that are imbedded within the context of ESL. Although several researchers have explored the collective and individual modalities of the language, culture, communication, and identity of minority and immigrant students (Albertini, 2004; Artiles et al., 2005; Boyd, 2002; Fuligni, 1997; Johnson et al., 2001; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Kirkwood, 2002; Nazroo & Karlsen, 2003; Ogbu, 1992b; Rodriquez, 2002; Saylor & Aries, 1999; Shin, Daly, & Vera, 2007), researchers are striving to offer more collective theoretical frameworks addressing the relevance of race and identity for ESL teachers and students (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006).

Although students of color have been enrolled in ESL programs for several years, the number of African-American teachers and Haitian and African ELLs encompass small, underrepresented groups of minorities within the field (Amin, 1997; Bachay, 1998; Ibrahim, 1999; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Motha, 2006; Taylor & Lambert, 1996; Taylor, 2006; Vilme & Butler, 2004). In the case of foreign-born Blacks in ESL programs, oppression is actualized when "otherness" becomes a problem. In some cases, the dominant culture tends to beset these underrepresented subgroups with societal pressures to conform into prescribed cultural and linguistic norms of "acceptable" patterns of behavior and other forms of expression if they are to be respected and perhaps accepted by the larger society (Morgan, 1997; Ogbu, 1992a). Moreover, the examination of race in second language settings can be examined through the analytical lens of CRT. CRT can be used to help researchers and educational practitioners use race as part of a framework to analyze and focus on educational inadequacies that could be based on race, but are often unnoticed or disregarded.

Racial Identity and ESL Instruction

Socially constructed differences such as race and racialization contribute to social practices, instructional practices, and institutional climates. People of color in ESL are often divided by perceived or discursive constructions based on specific traits and cultural characteristics; such concepts are based on the ideas of race and racialization (Kubota & Lin, 2006). Racialization can best be defined as racial categorization that assigns individuals to categories based on biological features (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006). Racialization is similar to racial formation where racial categories are established and transformed by the socio-historical process (Kubota & Lin, 2006). Thus, racialization places racial significance on social groups. However, racialization can be imposed by minority or subordinate groups who racialize themselves by choice to form their own positive identity for the intention of opposition to socially powerful or dominant groups (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim 1999, 2000, 2008; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Motha, 2006; Rodriguez, 2002; Tatum, 1992; Taylor, 2006).

Social identity gives consideration to ethnic membership and can originate from group memberships, which can be established by how people categorize themselves (Ogbu, 1983; Tajfel, 1978). Tajfel (1978) relates concerns about aspects of identity that can derive from group memberships. Social identity theory suggests that society is composed of social groups that have status and power associations to one another and these implications contribute to identity formation (Tajfel, 1978).

Tajfel (1978) suggests that people categorize themselves to the world as in-groups and out-groups and membership in either group can influence self-esteem. The assumption is that members of the in-group, the higher status or superior group, have a

positive social identity and high self-esteem; members of the out-group, the lower status or inferior group, have a less positive social identity and lower self-esteem (Tajfel, 1978). Behavioral concerns relative to social identification are worthy of consideration when members from the in-group want to change their position to attain progressive distinctiveness and in-group members strive to maintain their notions of superiority (Ogbu, 1983; Tajfel, 1978).

Minority status, culture, and identity are integral to ESL instruction. Second-language instruction consists of learning the language and culture of White America (Motha, 2006). In the case of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, invisibility within the constructs of a diversified classroom may contribute to a sense of displacement that could prove to be detrimental to their identity, sense of security, belonging, and self-esteem (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Tate, 2005; Taylor, 2006). Linguistic stereotypes can relate to social identity and acceptability issues for second language learners (Ibrahim, 1999; Ogbu, 1981; Tajfel, 1978). ESL students could be subjected to out-group homogeneity and sub-typing by dominant members of society with in-group mindsets (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1981, 1983).

The construction of native speakers' concept of dominance and norm as the linguistic representations for second language learners is a current problem in second language classrooms (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006). Most ESL students are instructed by White teachers who can be perceived by students as being the ideal speakers of English; problems could arise in the propensity

to equate the native speaker as White and the non-native speaker as persons of color (Motha, 2006). These practices present discrimination against teachers of color who have the capabilities to teach ESL, but are racialized as non-native speakers, which limits their opportunities (Motha, 2006). However, the voice and experiences of ESL teachers of color can be used to address racial discrimination as well as the marginalization of African-American teachers in ESL.

Motha (2006) uses critical feminist ethnography to examine the challenges that K-12 teachers face given consideration to racialization and ESL instruction. Motha (2006) concentrates on the primary and secondary school in the United States and investigates the challenges that beginning female ESOL teachers encounter during complex negotiations between their own racialized positional ties and those of their students of color. Moreover, this article addresses how students of color are racialized based upon social language acceptance concerns. Motha (2006) suggests that methods in which identities attain racial meaning in school can impact language teaching. Similar to the findings of Motha (2006), other researchers found that teachers of color must negotiate space to give themselves voice and privilege in an inherently racialized teaching context (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006).

Furthermore, the experiences of ESL teachers of color are often complicated by the concern about their racial identity as well as the students' racial identities. Racial identities of both teachers and students are significant in the social process of immigrant students in United States schools (Albertini, 2004; Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Johnson et al., 2001; Motha 2006; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b; Taylor, 2006). Ibrahim

(1999) notes that educators must consider colonial history entrenched in ESL classrooms when considering White teachers and students of color. In the case of teachers of color in ESL, the use of negotiations lessens the significance of dominate representations encompassing ESL and race (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Motha, 2006). For ESL practitioners of color, the concept of teacher identity is often compromised by hidden assumptions that White ESL teachers are more legitimate than teachers of color (Amin, 1997; Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006).

While Motha (2006) specifically explores the racial position and identity of teachers of color, Taylor (2006) underscores that racial and linguistic identities are crucial interactions that contribute to English language learner situations. The researcher uses qualitative approaches to suggest that the understanding of racialized power dynamics is essential to social construction. In addition, Yoon (2008) examines teachers' viewpoints of ELLs. Yoon (2008) suggests that participation and power of ELLs are related to positioning and teacher's varied approaches. The application of positioning theory to teachers and students reveals the significance of roles and power in the classroom (Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Yoon, 2008).

The examination of racial identity can shape teaching practices that inhibit accepted colonial wisdom, provide more opportunities for the exploration of race in ESL classrooms, and consider the implication of racial identity in teaching practices (Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Yoon, 2008). Motha (2006), Taylor (2006), and Yoon (2008) present strong arguments for ESL teachers to give more consideration to the sociopolitical and sociocultural context of English language learning. Also, research suggests that ESL teachers should recognize that second language classrooms should not be perceived as

being neutral because they are entrenched within racialized and imperialist pedagogies that could be maintained or challenged (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1992a; Taylor, 2006).

ESL teachers of color should be cognizant that they may be a part of the hidden curriculum that reinforces the concept of English as White language and White native speakers as the most qualified to teach ESL (Amin 1997; Taylor, 2006). Knowledge about race and ESL can help teachers challenge curricular design and cultural representation in teaching materials. Also, a broader cross-cultural perspective of knowledge could be incorporated into ESL classrooms, and improvements toward student-centered classrooms and inclusive school environments could be implemented by effecting changes in conceptualization about race and ESL (Johnson et al., 2001; Taylor, 2006).

There are several complexities associated with race, language, and identity within English language instruction. Despite the concept of diversity that is presumably ingrained with the ESL classroom, the teaching experiences of teachers of color mirror the learning experiences of foreign-born Blacks in ESL that are often complicated by implicit and explicit positions about race, language, power, and identity (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1992a; Taylor, 2006; Vollmer, 2000).

Foreign-Born Blacks in ESL

Mostly unobserved is the reality that foreign-born Blacks in the United States represent a growing international group of second language learners. There is an increasing number of linguistic minorities from the West Indies and other African influenced regions (Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002;

Vilme & Butler, 2004). Such populations are the legacy of ancestors from the slave trades and imperialists, who developed preconceived notions about their race, class, identity, power, and language (Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Kamya, 1997; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Ogbu, 1992a; Vilme & Butler, 2004). Although West Indian and African immigrants speak different languages, they share the commonalities of European colonization, the annihilation of indigenous people, and the subsequent importation to enslavement (Azevedo, 2005; Lopez, 2002).

On account of previous history, when ESL practitioners discuss foreign-born Blacks in ESL, we are considering a group of students who maintain their Diasporian cultural heritages. In many communities, there are a growing number of immigrants from the Caribbean populations of Haiti and Africa, whose first language is not English (Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Vilme & Butler, 2004). Thus, Black immigrant population, specifically Haitian and African, is a significantly diverse faction within ESL classrooms.

Although research is available about the linguistic elements of the Haitian Creole, Diasporian languages, and the racialization of such speakers based on their heritage language framework, there is limited research on Black immigrants, specifically West Indians, and their assimilation within social and academic constructs (Lopez, 2002; Rodriquez, 2002). Foreign-born Blacks in ESL spend most of their time in school. Value systems within cultures and a schools' composition can shape the attitudes and behaviors about a sense of belonging and success in academic achievement (Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Fuligni, 1997; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Rodriquez, 2002; Vilme & Butler, 2004).

Rodriquez (2002) considered a series of ethnographic case studies to design a study using data in the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) to investigate the negative attitudinal and behavioral responses of non-immigrant and involuntary minority youth concerning schooling. Rodriguez (2002) notes that some studies suggest that West Indian foreign-born Blacks in American classrooms, who accept school authority, may be accused of betraying the culture of resistance by obeying the White man (Ogbu, 1991). Moreover, Rodriquez (2002) posits that researchers and educators should exercise caution when examining Haitian students' academic performance, because any decline cannot solely be attributed to the results of oppositional influences. Rodriguez (2002) notes oppositional influences are a part of the oppositional culture, which can be defined as a subculture's rejection to the conformity of established, conventional, values and norms. Rodriquez's (2002) findings suggest that oppositional culture and effects have a small impact on the performance of immigrant minority youth, although a "normative climate" of indifference and failure may inhibit the school performance of minorities in ESL (Rodriquez, 2002).

Experiences and schooling of West Indians, Haitians, and other racialized Caribbean groups are examined by Lopez (2002) in a qualitative study. The researcher draws on life history interviews, focus groups, and participant observations to determine how the collective race-gender experiences influence their positions about schooling. Unlike other Caribbean immigrants, Haitians and Africans tend to enter the United States as permanent residents or sometimes without the proper documentation (Lopez, 2002). Lopez (2002) concurs with other researchers who believe that foreign-born Blacks in ESL are an immigrant group that have been assigned racial meanings as a result of their

predominate connections to African characteristics and traits (Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Vilme & Butler, 2004). Since Black immigrants are characterized similar to African Americans, they are often classified or racialized into a racial subgroup that is at the lower level of the racial pyramid in United States (Lopez, 2002). Ogbu (1990a) presents the cultural ecological theory as "the study of institutionalized patterns of behavior interdependent with features of the environment" (p. 122). Black immigrants can be subjected to influencing factors from the system, society at large and schools, and community forces, responses to treatment, and schooling (Ogbu, 1983, 1985). Both Ogbu (1981) and Lopez (2002) place significance on the cultural-ecological factors of minority immigrant schooling as a framework to understand the process of immigrant adaptation, assimilation, and identity formation. West Indian and African students can be racially stigmatized in school settings by intrinsic ideologies that may contribute to the deconstruction of linguistic and cultural practices (Azevedo, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991; Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, & Martin, 2006; Ogbu, 1982, 1983, 1985; Saxena, 2009). Research about linguistically and socially constructed processes associated with minorities and second language learning can eliminate the ideas that may contribute to stigmatization for foreign-born Blacks in ESL (Butterfield, 2004; Ibrahim, 1999).

With the influx of more Haitian and African students of color to the United States, ESL teachers should be prepared to be culturally responsive to this group. ESL teachers cannot simply perceive foreign-born Black immigrants as Black children among other Black children in America (Butterfield, 2004). Although both groups are of African ancestry and have similar exodus movements, both cultures have distinctive cultural

mores and backgrounds (Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Vilme & Butler, 2004).

According to Butterfield (2004), some West Indian students have specific ideas of what it means to be African Americans, and some do not view themselves within that identification. Butterfield (2004) uses an analysis of semi-structured, open-ended interviews to analyze how identity choices contribute to the social world of West Indian students. Butterfield (2004) argues that West Indians tend to uphold symbolic ethnicity as a means to maintain group identity in addition to other distinctions from other ethnic and racial groups.

In the vein of identity choices, the research of Ibrahim (1999) examines identity choices as it relates to cultural and linguistic influences on learning. Ibrahim (1999) uses the assertions of W.E.B. DuBois about the problems of the colorline to highlight the politics associated with social choices of ESL students who identify with Black Americans. Ibrahim (1999) posits that identity choices can impact the (mis)treatment of students by hegemonic groups. Racial and ethnic identities are intricate, fluid, categories that cannot be easily constructed by a homogenous society (Butterfield, 2004; Ibrahim, 1999).

Research also suggests that most teachers need assistance with racial multiplicity because they may be ill-prepared to address unique cultural and linguistic differences associated with Black immigrants (Allard & Santoro, 2006; Kirkwood, 2002). Kirkwood (2002) increases the awareness of the social and pedagogical needs of African students who are within the dominant school culture of the United States. Kirkwood (2002) suggests that African students should not be easily typified similar to African American

students. In addition, Bachay's (1998) use of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) to evaluate Haitian adolescents provides insight into the psychological and emotional connections associated with identity development. Bachay's (1998) analysis of the ethnic construction of Haitian adolescents in an urban setting can increase my understanding of Haitian students within diverse school districts. Moreover, the understanding of identity construction provides structural connections for language for minority students.

Morgan (1997) suggests that identity enables immigrant students their place in the new social order of the ESL classroom. This research details the relevance of connecting language, power, and identity to ESL pedagogy. Morgan (1997) provides insight to the linkage of identity and language to ESL classroom dynamics. Teachers play a significant role in the development of identity construction of the "typical" ESL student by giving prescribed credence to selective admired and discredited virtues.

Vollmer (2000) suggests that teachers can contribute to identity construction. Vollmer's (2000) ethnographic study used observations, interviews of teachers and students, and teacher discourse to explore preconceived identity constructs that typify ESL students. Vollmer (2000) examined the conception of archetypal ESL students and underlying assumptions that may impact interpretations of behavior and performance. The findings suggest that identity constructs of ESL students of color in an urban secondary setting are heavily influenced by teachers' predetermined perceptions. Also, research suggests that foreign-born Blacks are often confronted with stereotyping, racialization, racism, and other forms of linguistic and cultural discrimination based upon ethnic group membership (Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Kao & Thompson, 2003;

Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Vilme & Butler, 2004). An understanding of identity development is crucial to foreign-born Blacks in ESL because it can create a school culture and learning environment that respects differences (Taylor & Lambert, 1996; Traore, 2008).

In addition, ESL pedagogical views could be enhanced by crediting the language, values, and cultural mores that are indigenous to Haitian and African immigrants. Thus, learning experiences of foreign-born Blacks in ESL may become (de)racialized, which may address some of the underlying inequalities in systems where identities and experiences are entrenched (Artiles et al., 2005; Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Kirkwood, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Lopez, 2002; Portes & MacLeod, 1996; Vilme & Butler, 2004).

The intricacies of race as related to second language instruction also intersect with other research about identity construction, negotiation, and reformation (Albertini, 2004; Artiles et al., 2005; Boyd, 2002; Fuligni, 1997; Johnson et al., 2001; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Kirkwood, 2002; Nazroo & Karlsen, 2003; Ogbu, 1992b; Rodriquez, 2002; Saylor & Aries, 1999; Shin et al., 2007; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004; Vollmer, 2000) and CRT in education (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Solorzano,1997; Solorzano & Ornelas 2004).

CRT and Future Implications on ESL

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) credit W.E.B. DuBois as one of the scholars who, through his intellectual philosophies, initially used race as a theoretical basis to consider social inequality. DuBois (2005) affirms, "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line" (p. 17). This statement from 1903 initially referenced that

racial separation structured divisions and infused a range of injustices in the United

States. Subsequently, the analysis of race has become more significant in the examination

of various inequities relevant to people of color. DuBois' (2005) sentiments are relevant

to positions of Haitian and African students in ESL. DuBois (2005) notes that the

problems with color also include "the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in

Asia and Africa, in America, and the islands of the sea" (p. 17). DuBois (2005) provides

understanding of the global extent of the struggle in the United States for democracy and

the elimination of dominance by the larger collective. Observations of the dominant

society's treatment of people of color during recent years suggest that color as well as the

color-line is also a problem in the 21st century (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings

& Tate, 1995; Tatum, 1992).

CRT addresses and attempts to transform relationships between race, racism, and

power in the fields of law, sociology, history, and education (Bell, 1995a, 1995b; hooks,

1990; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Omi & Winant, 1994;

Solorzano 1998; Solorzano & Ornelas 2004; Tatum, 1992). Kubota and Lin (2006) use

the research of Delgado and Stefancic (2001) to outline the following basic tenets of

CRT:

- Racism is ingrained in the various aspects of everyday life as part of societal
  impact and cannot be repaired through cursory policies that attempt to address
  racial bias and inequality.

- Racism can serve as an advantage to elite and working-class Whites, large
  segments of society hardly have motivation to eliminate it.

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- Races are categories that society creates, manipulates, or withdraws based upon opportune situations.

- Socioeconomic needs of the dominate society contribute to inconsistent conventions about racialization or racial discrimination.

- Acknowledgment that a range of diversity can exist within racialized groups and they should not be viewed as being homogeneous.

The distinctive voice of people of color can be communicated through storytelling, which can expose hidden racism in daily interactions.

In addition, CRT in education provides a context to help understand the educational experiences of Black students in ESL. CRT delves into the approaches, perceptions, and pedagogies that seek to question as well as change structural and cultural aspects of education in which notions about race decide dominant and subordinate positions in learning situations and environments (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tatum, 1992). Solorzano and colleagues' work on CRT (Solorzano et al., 2000; Solorzano, 1997; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004) note that the following five views construct the basic model of CRT in education:

- Race and racism as central aspects can intersect with other types of subordination in educational settings;

- The opposition of dominant beliefs that contribute to the inadequacies of schooling;

- The obligation of ensuring social justice in education;

- The vital importance of investigational knowledge; and

- The interdisciplinary perspective (Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004).

Applied to ESL education, CRT as a framework focuses on understanding the correlation among race, power, and the schooling of immigrants. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that race is still of notable significance in American society and the premise of racism can be used to explain social and educational inequalities. CRT can be used as form of opposition that challenges the measurements, controls, and other authoritative standards and judgments that are pleased upon culturally and linguistically diverse learners by dominant forces (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b). Moreover, culturally and linguistically diverse students have been subjected to labels that identify them as students outside the mainstream. These labels create categories that can function as pre-established beliefs about respective groups (Ogbu, 1992a; Sodowsky & Plake, 1992).

One of the central principles of CRT, storytelling, or giving voice from peoples' narratives and stories, enables educational leaders and researchers to gain valuable insight about language, minority students' perception of their socialization, and scholastic viewpoints as diverse learners (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Moreover, storytelling can assist with the elimination of ESL classrooms that feign diversity and inclusiveness while allowing the multiplicity of foreign-born Blacks in ESL to go unnoticed. Ladson-Billings (1998) found that members of minority groups are often marginalized in education, which can contribute negative perceived personalities. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings (1998) notes that some minorities internalize socially constructed stereotypic images that can also weaken their sense of

power. Storytelling can reveal conditions that underscore the realization minority learners may be in an oppressed or subjugated position in the classroom (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

The development of voice is crucial for transformation of educational systems. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) contend that the voice of people of color provides views from their communities and is necessary for a thorough study of the educational system. However, Dixson and Rousseau (2005) posit that voice in the form of storytelling provides profound insight into educational experiences that should be subject to a deeper analysis. The researchers suggest that storytelling should stimulate social activism and motivate actions to enhance the educational experiences for students of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Gutierrez & Orellana, 2006; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Opportunities for outward expression can be used as learning forums to enhance and create a more inclusive and culturally diverse classroom (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 2005). Tatum (1992) notes that some minorities can be more self-reflective and articulate when given a sense of voice. Ladson-Billings' (1998) analysis of the voice of people of color as means of providing a profound interpretation of the educational system finds that the voice of teachers of color is often silenced. Ladson-Billings (1998) makes note of the frustration teachers of color feel about being left out of the dialogue of how to best educate students of color. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) compliment the work of Ladson-Billings (1998) by asserting that voice provides knowledge from people of color. Moreover, the researchers

suggest that storytelling is part of a larger social perspective that can be used to disadvantage an individual or a group while providing an in tandem advantage to others.

In addition, removing the rigidity of language learning instruction and offering opportunities for storytelling may give foreign-born Blacks in ESL different learning opportunities. Storytelling can evolve into favorable situations that will allow teachers and others to see the extent of the complicated realities of these students' experiences in the classroom as they interact with teachers and classmates (Gutierrez & Orellana, 2006). Noticing and acknowledging African American ESL teachers and Black students in ESL may provide confirmation or at a minimum, a different realization of the way society works for this distinctive student population.

CRT can also be used to help teachers understand how racism can take form by subconsciously imposing culturally sanctioned beliefs on minority students who are stigmatized and subordinated by race (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Habitual thinking as a result of cultural entrenchment and personal convictions could stifle cross-cultural interactions; however, the examination of teacher behavior may motivate second language educators to analyze their ethics of care, justice, critique, and profession (Ladson-Billing, 1999). Ladson-Billings (1999) finds that the responsibility of teaching students is not attenuated solely to language acquisition, and the function of teachers should expand to include the cultural and social needs of their students. CRT can contribute to the central purpose of second language teachers by examining their roles with regards to foreign-born Blacks in ESL and their pedagogical approaches that relate to this group.

CRT has an intensive responsibility – to accomplish fair treatment in education. The recent review of race, ethnicity, and education literature likens the expectations and directions of CRT in education to Scriptural teachings (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Tate, 2005). Tate (2005) explores the concept of treating others as you wish to be treated. In examination of social policy, he posits that some guide their thinking based on self-interest instead of considering the greater good. Tate (2005) suggests the concept of partaking in the reciprocity of valuing and respecting one's neighbor is difficult. Tate (2005) suggests that questions that stem from race, social policy, and education research can help bring understanding of how to value and appreciate differences. Tate finds that questions from CRT research may not be an answer to societal challenges and problems, but will provide opportunities for universal understandings.

Ladson-Billings (2005) references the story of the prophet Jeremiah who was distraught because his people did everything that they were supposed to do; however, they were still not saved. Ladson-Billings (2005) compares this sentiment to the plight of people of color in education. Although Ladson-Billings (2005) suggests that CRT cannot save everything quickly, she believes that CRT is a theoretical treasure that could be used to move toward new critical interpretations of education and CRT. In accordance with Ladson-Billings (2005), Dixson and Rousseau (2005) suggest the story of Jeremiah is a distressing reminder of the unmet expectations of progress.

The framework of CRT assures researchers and practitioners of things that are expected such as voice, justice, equality, and respect and convinces us of the existence of change we cannot easily see. CRT in education scholarship provides a lens for the

analysis of the educational imbalance found in the schooling of students of color. CRT provides a theoretical framework to assess critically accepted educational practices (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billing, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano 1998; Solorzano & Ornelas 2004; Tate, 2005; Tatum, 1992).

Conclusion

In this literature review, I explored the constructs of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs in American classrooms in terms of their treatment and phenomenon of invisibility in second language settings, positionality, and identity as ELLs, and notions about race and linguistic imperialism in ESL situations (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b; Tatum, 1992; Taylor, 2006). The significance of racial identities of both African American second language teachers and Black ESL students could foster positive reciprocal learning experiences (Albertini, 2004; Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Morgan, 1997). Moreover, preconceived notions about race can contribute to the perceptions about foreign-born Blacks as language minority students (Lopez, 2002; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b). Since foreign-born Blacks in ESL are small in number, dominant societal influences could stifle their sense of voice (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Tajfel, 1978; Tatum, 1992). Voice is an acknowledged visibility that is crucial to foreign-born Blacks in ESL gaining understanding and acceptance similar to their other culturally and linguistically diverse peers within the same learning environment.

Several viewpoints about race and diverse learning forums are necessary to bring many concerns about underrepresented groups, such as Blacks in ESL, to the forefront. There are significant gaps in the literature and more empirical studies could contribute to

the growing body of literature about race, specifically foreign-born Blacks in the ESL classrooms. The research has demonstrated that there is concurrence that foreign-born Blacks in ESL, as voluntary and involuntary minorities, have concerns that should be addressed to ensure their linguistic, cultural, academic, and social success in school and beyond (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b; Taylor, 2006).

CRT is one element of research that can be used to ensure that foreign-born Blacks in ESL have more positive learning experiences during their quest to acquire a second language and maintain a positive cultural outlook about themselves as well as others. Tatum (1992) posits CRT can also eradicate the socialization that American society imparts justice in education. Foreign-born Blacks in ESL, as minority language learners, may feel more comfortable in their learning environment once notions about oppression are adequately addressed (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b; Tatum, 1992; Taylor, 2006). CRT helps to address educational inadequacies that exist for underrepresented and underserved students of color, which may also impact culturally and linguistically diverse students outside of school (Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004).

As evidenced by the recent concerns about race and ESL, researchers, students, teachers, and parents should increase their sense of urgency to augment diversity and reduce racial tensions and misconceptions about foreign-born Blacks in second language programs in the United States. This literature review may contribute to future research that can benefit underrepresented populations of ESL teachers and students within a

vastly multicultural urban school district. Chapter III details research methods used to further explore the topic of foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological, action research study was fourfold: (a) to examine teacher awareness of the linguistic, social, and cultural processing of foreign-born Black students as ELLs; (b) to analyze the treatment of foreign-born Black ELLs' language and culture to improve in a secondary setting; (c) to increase the visibility and voice of foreign-born Blacks in ESL; and (d) to determine if the use of developed initiatives can provide sustenance for a culturally responsive, supportive, learning environment. I selected this qualitative research study to examine foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. A phenomenological research method helped to ascertain insight about the lives of foreign-born Blacks of ELLs. Supporting data from this research determined perspectives about foreign-born Black ESL students. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the lived educational/schooling experiences of foreign-born Black students as secondary ELLs?

2. *How do foreign-born Black students perceive the role of race and social class in their school experiences?*

3. *How do ESL faculty perceive foreign-born Black students as ELLs?*

4. To what extent did my leadership traits contribute to increased visibility and awareness of foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

Rationale and Assumptions of Qualitative Methodology

The objective of this research study was accomplished by use of a qualitative research

design approach. Creswell (2006) describes qualitative research as:

> [A]n approach to inquiry that begins with assumptions, worldviews, possibly a
> theoretical lens, and the study of research problems exploring the meaning
> individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Researchers collect
> data in natural settings with sensitivity to the people under study, and they analyze
> their data inductively to establish patterns or themes. The final report provides the
> voices of participants, a reflexivity of the researchers, a complex description and
> interpretation of the problem, and a study that adds to the literature or provides a
> call for action. (pp. 50-51)

The aforementioned description of qualitative research approach best summarises the

rationale for selecting a qualitative methodology. Specifically, this study employed a

phenomenological strategy of inquiry, which consisted of the direct observation of

individuals in a setting that enabled the researcher to capture the essence of their lived

experiences and find patterns and meanings (Creswell, 2007). Since this study explored

the phenomenon of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, the qualitative approach and strategy of

inquiry were suitable for the purpose of the research.

The analytical nature of the research questions is well suited to the qualitative

design and the assumptions associated with a qualitative approach. The assumptions and

rationale of qualitative research contain characteristics that are conducive to my personal

interests, previous experience, and the nature of my research. Qualitative researchers

focus on meanings; they are interested in how people shape their lives, experiences, and

world (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The qualitative researcher participates in fieldwork by

going places to observe and record information. A qualitative researcher is descriptive

because a significant aspect of qualitative research is the process and meaning gained

through the analysis and comprehension of words and pictures (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The main instrument for data collection and analysis is the qualitative researcher, which enables the researcher to build meanings from various constructs (Creswell, 2007). Overall aspects of the qualitative methodology generated data, which conveyed a rich, in-depth understanding of foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a methodology that gives emphasis to exploration, discovery, and descriptions that provide meanings that can lead to profound knowledge of social settings and phenomena (Creswell, 2003). The depth of qualitative research methods is its "validity and its potential to discover new areas, to identify patterns, to reveal and explain complexity, and to develop construct and test concepts/theories" (Sofaer, 1999, p. 1101). This study was designed to examine what it means to be a foreign-born Black ELL. The goal of qualitative research was to depict the participants' perspectives and to understand how they came into being. Qualitative research methods allowed me to gather description and interpret meanings of the described phenomena (Sofaer, 1999). The value of qualitative research for this study was to capture the lived experiences of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs through process and meanings.

I chose the qualitative research strategy because the concept of my study was not readily researched. Ideas and available theories about foreign-born Blacks, particularly in ESL, may be erroneous or biased. Given that underrepresented student populations often encounter invisibility within the larger school context, there is a need to explore and

describe the phenomenon of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. Also, the type of the phenomenon is not suited for quantitative measures (Creswell, 2007).

Strategies of Inquiry

Qualitative research can incorporate several strategies of inquiry to answer questions related to the research. In this section, I describe these strategies in more detail. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative inquiries focus on inductive reasoning that is repetitive, comprehensive, and simultaneous. The phenomenological strategy of inquiry informed the procedures of this study. Phenomenology captures lived experiences and allows for the analysis of reality as it appears to the participants. I selected this strategy of inquiry because there were gaps in the literature about foreign-born Blacks in ESL, and phenomenology captures the essence of lived experiences as a means for establishing voice for the study participants (Creswell, 2007).

Moreover, the phenomenon of invisibility of foreign-born Black students could be readily explored by a researcher using this approach to the research. Action research is a system for implementing change that is instrumental to the aim of heightening the awareness of foreign-born Blacks as a recognizable culture within ESL. All approaches require an investigation and use of findings. Knowledge acquired during the course of the research may contribute to the transformation of collective and individual actions as I discover emerging data. Action research enables practitioners to address educational areas of concern (Hinchey, 2008); participants may benefit from an action research design tailored to enhance cultural and pedagogical practices.

Phenomenological Research

Qualitative research enables researchers to achieve understanding of deep knowledge of social settings or phenomenon through employing techniques that include observations, triangulation, member-checking, and rich, thick description (Creswell, 2003). In this study, I attempted to explore and impart meanings as they were lived in the daily occurrences of the research participants. I incorporated a phenomenological research design that "recognizes the value of human experiences that are not approachable through quantitative approaches" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21). Phenomenology, a term coined by Husserl (1931), describes a qualitative approach that presents the concept of capturing the essence of lived experiences through process and meaning. The basis of this study was primarily based on Husserl's phenomenological research approach. This approach encompasses a method of inquiry that encourages the researcher to set aside presuppositions and focus essentially on a specific phenomenon that captures the essence of the lived experiences of those under study (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). My principal objective as the researcher was to use the phenomenological approach in understanding and grasping the significance of various encounters as lived by foreign-born Blacks as ELLs within the high school context. The study of this phenomenon intended to examine and give voice to the lived experiences of foreign-born Blacks in ESL that were previously unnoticed.

Phenomenological research approaches include descriptive observation of a phenomenon, focus groups, and in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2003; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological studies allow researchers to understand the meaning and essences of research participants (Moustakas, 1994). According to Creswell (2003), in

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phenomenological research, "The researcher identifies the 'essence' of human experiences as described by participants in a study" (p. 15). Moustakas (1994) notes, "Evidence from phenomenological research is derived from first-person reports of life experiences" (p. 84). An in-depth view of the experiences of foreign-born Black students was provided within this study by using phenomenological research to articulate the essence of the perspectives of what it means to be foreign-born Black ELLs.

The rationale for opting to use phenomenology was because it explores the richness of experiences by seeking meanings and essences rather than focusing on measurements and explanations. Moreover, phenomenology allows for various opportunities for expression in the form of interviews and conversations that provided me with first-person accounts and descriptions of the experience of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. The research questions reflected my interest and concentration on giving voice to the research population. The experiences provided significant data that are important in understanding cultural and linguistic behaviors and serve as evidence for methodical investigations.

Action Research

Action research, a term coined by Lewin (1946), shaped the design of my research and intervention. Action research can inspire educators to assume leadership roles to take action within their educational context and inform them about their instructional as well as institutional practices. Mills (2003) provides the following definition of action research:

> Action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. The information is gathered

with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment (and on educational practices in general), and improving student outcomes and the lives of those involved. (p. 5)

Hinchey (2008) outlines the basics of action research as follows: (a) formulating research questions and developing a plan; (b) collecting and analyzing data; and (c) producing and sharing findings. Moreover, the cyclical nature of action research contributed to the evolutions of cycles of plans, actions, observations, and evaluations that may lead to improvements based upon experiences during the study (McTaggart, 1997).

Action research attempts to generate knowledge, recommend and implement change, and advance practice and performance (Stringer, 1996). Action research is contextualized and localized in an attempt to explore a specific situation in a specific setting (Burns, 1999; Mills, 2003). During the action research process, opinions, observations, and perceptions may be substantiated based on data and overall research. Motivations for changes in practice should stem from the cyclical process of systematically collecting and gathering information (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998). Action research can be participatory and collaborative, which may contribute to the creation of new knowledge and enriched leadership opportunities (Burns, 1999; Fullan, 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998; Mills, 2003; Stringer, 1996).

Action research is based on the interaction of practice, theory, and change; the central focus of phenomenology is lived experiences (Creswell, 2003, Hinchey, 2008; Moustakas, 1994). Action research can be adapted to address numerous educational challenges (Hinchey, 2008). Action research presented the opportunity to decide on a focus area of interest and provided answers about teaching and learning, specifically for

foreign-born Black students who may benefit from actions tailored to enhance and improve school experiences.

Action research and phenomenology encompass a range of research and analysis processes that are conducive to my qualitative research as shown in Figure 1. I used phenomenology to collect data and action research to implement change. The combination of action research with phenomenology provided an effective flexible framework to perform parallel tasks relative to implementing change, capturing the essence of live experiences, and providing voice for a silent population. Figure 1 illustrates the principal correlation of qualitative methodology, phenomenology, and action research developments.
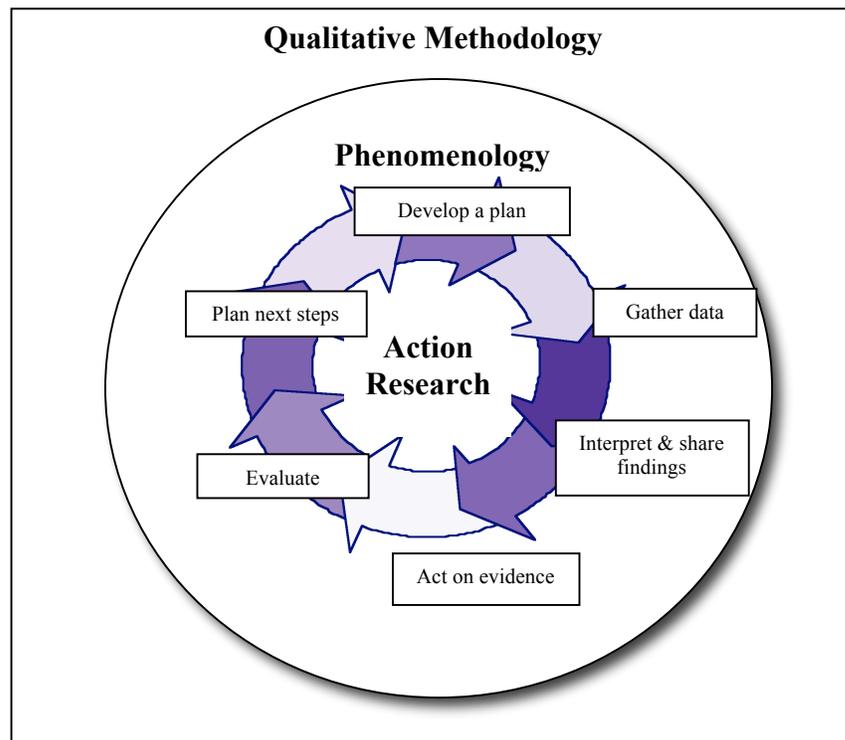
Figure 1. Cyclical and systematic connections of qualitative methodology, phenomenology and action research

Both action research and phenomenology have a distinct set of principles and procedures that may contribute to a manageable research design and provide opportunities for the participation in a mixture of research activities.

The purpose of action research is to discover, develop, and monitor changes to practice (Wallace, 2000). Characteristics of action research take into account leadership qualities that are conducive for collaborative cultures of change. The desire for change stems from leadership qualities that encompass vision, insight, a profound understanding of the organization under study, a pursuit for innovative knowledge, an aspiration for improved performance, reflective practice, and a commitment to effect change (Fullan, 2000b, 2001).

Change Framework

Everyone plays a significant role in the educational change process. According to Fullan (2007), shared meaning of educational change evolves when stakeholders are more aware of each other's roles and participate in collaborations. Power, influence, and relationships are often interchangeable given the situation. As society becomes more pluralistic in nature, individuals should be presented with opportunities to broaden their perspectives. Collegiality plays a significant role in the change process. Effective support during the change process helps to implement the change. As a transformational leader, I think that it is crucial to recognize the need for change and encourage others to become part of the process.

Fullan (2007) suggests that motivation and meaning can be effective in attempting to sustain change. Leaders at different levels help to move change forward. They help to contribute to the overall culture of change on many levels. Once leaders understand the

reasons and significance of change, the development of flexible mindsets may contribute to positive underlying actions. Change can only occur when certain factors are met; time and actions contribute to the process.

Fullan (2000a) notes that participation in a collaborative culture of change can affect instructional and professional practices. Action research affords leaders an opportunity to address challenges, participate in collaborative endeavors, discover a plan for intervention, and use newly acquired knowledge to improve educational practices and situations (Burns, 1999; Fullan, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). The mindset of action for leading complex change requires certain personal characteristics and components of leadership. Greenleaf (1977a) posits that stewardship, a quality of servant leadership, is defined as accountability for creating advantageous and long-standing change. Establishing attention and responsibility can contribute to planned change endeavors that can enhance cross-cultural understanding. Increased awareness of underserved student groups can facilitate faculty learning and develop positive relationships among teachers and students in the ESL setting and beyond. Implementing change can prove to be an arduous task because people may refuse radical change; however, the understanding of how change can be beneficial to all involved in the process may allay concerns. A clear understanding of the necessities of change contributes to the acceptance as well as the achievement of authentic and sustainable change (Argyris, 1990). Moreover, Schein (2004) also suggests that success and satisfaction stem from lasting change that results in new behavior that contributes to sustained change.

Fullan (2001) notes that personal characteristics of energy, enthusiasm, and hope, and five components of leadership – moral purpose, understanding change, relationship

building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making – can contribute to the motivations of actions to bring about significant change. Authentic change is a vehicle for the continuation of learning, reflection, and action, which can lead to various improvements within various levels of an organization (Fullan, 2001).

The change in the awareness of foreign-born Blacks may possibly become a part of the ESL culture if it fosters an improved understanding of what currently exists and improves the visibility of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. Given the nature of my study, I focused and relied on aspects of change that consider relationships, empowerment, and inspiration in efforts to acquire successful change (Bolman & Deal, 2003). As the participants experienced change and became more knowledgeable about self in relationship to other cultures, the experience and belief in change helped create acceptance and sustainability. My intentions were for the participants to have meaningful engagements that will contribute to lifelong learning.

Participants

The population under study consisted of students and faculty members with a specific connection to foreign-born Black students found within the school context of ESL. The teacher participants were secondary ESL teachers. Their ages ranged from 30 to 60. The span of their teaching experience was from 2 to 25 years in ESL education. The student participants were current ESL students in Grades 9-12 and their ages ranged from 14 to 19. For the purpose of this study, student participants represented various regions of the island of Haiti and the continent of Africa.

Participant Selection

For the purpose of this study, the participants consisted of seven adult and nine student participants who were connected by virtue of ESL. I recruited participants by using resources from a secondary educational context of English as a Second Language Instruction to initiate my research. In addition to observations and document analysis, specifically, for the student participants, I conducted in-depth interviews in a series of three interviews with the intention of obtaining a deep understanding about their experience and the meaning they make of their experience in this study as foreign-born Black ELLs. Given the cultural and linguistic background of student participants, arranging three separate interviews allotted time to pace the interviews, cogitate various experiences, and order a sequence of questions that made sense to participants (Seidman, 2006).

I conducted research with foreign-born Black students by focusing on this student population and ESL teachers and other faculty who have had a range of engagements with the respective population. Student participants consisted of foreign-born Black students who identified or self-identified as Black during their initial secondary school registration and language testing sequence. Participants had to be willing to engage in extensive interviews and focus group discussions. Participation in this study was non-coercive and on a voluntary basis. Purposive criterion sampling was used to identify research participants. In this study, the criteria for participants were foreign-born Black students and ESL teachers who interact with ESL students. Patton (1990) notes that purposive criterion sampling can be used by researchers to select participants based upon predetermined criteria.

Student sample criteria. The student sample for this study consisted of secondary foreign-born Black students who were second language learners. Typically, most foreign-born Black students may derive from Africa or the West Indies; however, there may be some students from various cultures whose lineage may be connected to the African Diaspora. I identified nine student participants for this study by analyzing school registration ethnic codes, ESL testing demographic information, and additional student background information shared by teachers. Additionally, I investigated demographic information about possible foreign-Black students who did not identify themselves by a respective school ethnic code during school registration or the ESL testing process.

Teacher/faculty sample criteria. The teacher sample for this study consisted of seven secondary teachers who were certified in ESL instruction. These teachers were selected because they had direct interactions with foreign-born Black ELLs in formal class settings, tutorial sessions, and testing environments as well as co-curricular situations. I identified teacher and faculty, personnel who were not responsible for classroom instruction, as participants by their participation in various ESL-centered situations. I also considered the relevance of each teacher/faculty participant in the study given the extraneous roles each has within the research context that includes the need for cross-cultural interactions.

Patton (1990) recognizes that purposive sampling allows for the study of "information-rich cases" (p. 169) from which researchers can acquire extensive information about interests relevant to the purpose of research. This study included seven faculty members and administrators who were connected with ESL students and approximately nine foreign-born Black ELLs. Purposive sampling best fits the purpose of

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the study given consideration to the subjects who have common characteristics and the nature of research questions for this study.

There were some sampling concerns that had an impact on the overall study population. As I, in the role of the researcher, became more familiar with the participants and learning environment, the potential for researcher bias increased because of intensified interactions. Although appropriate steps were taken to be as inclusive as possible, the sampling and selection of respondents had to be limited in order to complete the study within the respective timeframe.

Procedures for Gathering Data

Data collection strategies included the need to gain access to information about foreign-born Black students and ESL teachers through multiple data sources. I relied on the expertise of others, starting with a small group of collaborators and widening to the participating subject (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Burns, 1999; Creswell, 2007; Kemmis, & McTaggart, 1998.). Data collection tools included open-ended and semi-structured interviews, observations, analysis of material culture, and reflective journaling. The triangulation of data collection methods provided different perspectives to gain understanding and confirm interpretations by comparing multiple data sources (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne, 2005).

Interviews

Informal interviews and semi-structured interviews were used in this study; however, the nature of interviews varied in type and degree of formality. The interview process was adjusted for the tiers of participants in efforts to generate multifaceted data. The purpose of varying interview strategies and collecting data from three different kinds

of informants is a form of triangulation. The purpose for gathering data from interviews is to analyze data and give attention to data that may engender similar findings.

The goal of the interview process was to capture the lived experiences and perspectives of participants by speaking with key informants and members of the specific population under research. Key informant interviews served as primary data sources for adult participants. Fetterman (1998) defines a key informant as someone who provides knowledge about interpersonal relationships, historical data, and sketches of events. Identification of key informants was based on the criteria of sphere of influence, area of expertise, knowledge, leadership role, level of involvement with the population, and skills. In addition, phenomenological interviewing encouraged participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and images along with descriptions (Moustakas, 1994).

Student interviews. Student participants partook in phenomenological interviews. I developed a schedule of interviews for student participants because they had less flexibility than did the other participants. A combination of semi-structured interview questions and informal conversations were conducted with foreign-born Black students. The procedures for gathering data from this particular group proved to be complex given the social, cultural, and linguistic differences between the researcher and the researched (Bonvillian, 2003; Bourdieu, 1991; Burns, 1999; Ogbu, 1981; Saxena, 2009; Wallace, 2000). The three-part, semi-structured interview style was selected to maximize flexibility and give participants opportunities to express themselves freely with moderate probes from the researcher (Seidman, 2006). The student interviews (See Appendix A) primarily consisted of open-ended questions that allowed me to initiate reciprocal

dialogue as a means to capture the rich descriptions of phenomenon of being foreign-born

Black in an urban, secondary ESL setting (Seidman, 2006).

      Teacher/faculty interviews. Since my professional position is an administrator in

the research context, I had to maintain my rapport with participants by making

concentrated efforts to maintain the trust of teacher/faculty participants during the

research process. I considered fixed questions (See Appendix B) that were thoroughly

designed and presented in same succession to each teacher/faculty participant (Seidman,

2006). Moreover, to ensure neutrality during data gathering procedures, teacher/faculty

participants had the preliminary option of perusing the interview questions to show that

questions were relevant to the context of the research and not covertly designed for

erroneous purposes to investigate irrelevant information (Seidman, 2006; Toma, 2006;

van Manen,1997). Teacher and faculty members require standardized open-ended

interviews to alleviate any feelings of anxiety and misconceptions about coercion to

participate in the research as well as to reduce the affective filter during the research

process (Seidman, 2006). Use of a small sample allowed opportunities to capture in-depth

descriptions and intimate interactions (Patton, 2002).

      The adult participants took part in formal semi-structured interviews as well as

extended pre- and post-interview components concerning their background and

awareness of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. The adult participants answered 50 questions

from the categories of demographic information, linguistic background, employment

history, current experience, professional development, and reflection. The responses to

the demographic information were answered prior to the interview session via email and

questions from the reflection category were answered at the conclusion of Cycle II to

gather information about possibilities of gained knowledge and continual growth

connected to change and leadership. The online component helped to expedite the

collection of information and alleviate some uncertainty felt by certain participants.

Observations

Participant-observation enabled me as a researcher to develop a deeper

understanding based on firsthand experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Glesne, 2005).

The participant-observation enabled me to understand the research setting, participants in

the study, and the behavior of the ESL teachers and faculty and foreign-born Black

students.

A researcher who uses the participation-observation method should carefully

observe analytically situations and perceptively record in detail the many aspects of an

observed situation. Moreover, observations, coupled with interviews and comprehensive

field notes, provided data about the confidence of foreign-born Black secondary students

and the degree of cultural and linguistic knowledge of teachers and faculty about this

student population. Observations provided information about teacher awareness of the

presence of foreign-born Blacks in the classroom as well the behaviors and sentiments of

this student population within their respective classroom. Observations and field notes

provided reflective opportunities for planning future actions as well as gauging progress.

Material Culture

Material culture, a secondary data source of documents and materials, contributed

to my understanding of the history of cross-cultural visibility, recognition, and

relationships within my school context. Material culture can present how social

experiences are organized and represented. I gathered material culture to look carefully at

behaviors that may have been interrelated to my topic. I used suggested methods for discerning material cultures from Hodder (2002), such as: identifying written texts and artifacts that are representative of numerous and differing voices; discovering the context within which items can share meaning; recognizing similarities and differences within context boundaries; and, noting that material culture is communicative and representational of aspects that are entrenched within the internal experiences can provide a framework for the collection of materials. Collecting documents and artifacts relevant to the research by considering perceptions that are not easily noticeable through language could unveil the lived experiences through ESL of foreign-born Blacks (Hodder, 2003; Hodson, 1999).

My sample included visual representation of the ESL population from a local newspaper article, school records, information brochures, and teacher/student-centered video projects to welcome new students. These items were selected because they were designed to enhance the school experiences for immigrant students, and they highlighted various aspects of learning opportunities and assistance for immigrant students. My sample represented items that were presented to the community, parents, faculty, and students. In addition, some of these items included material culture that was created because of joint collaborations among teachers, faculty, and students.

I collected, observed, and classified material culture based upon the level of recognition of respective cultures and information available to enhance the social, cultural, and academic experiences of immigrant students. I considered material culture by thinking about the history of the documents, purposes, and intended audiences. Factors about the authors of documents were important because finished products

represented the authors' interpretations and provided background information about what the author was trying to accomplish.

Supplementary Data

My role as a researcher was significant because my background influenced what I chose to investigate, the approaches and methods of investigations, the analysis of findings, and conclusions of the research. Journaling and reflexivity enabled me to take notice of my insights, observations, and intuitions. The process of self-reflection enabled me to take notice of how people responded to my role as a researcher and the topic under study. Reflexive journaling gave me a private forum to record my interpersonal thoughts about my values and interest during the research process as I constructed new knowledge. Reflexivity increased my understanding of setting, context, and social, cultural, and linguistic phenomenon of foreign-born Black students. It also allowed for an examination of the research process since I analyzed school personnel, students, and myself by questioning social and cultural conditions of the current school structure.

Journaling and reflexivity allowed me to reflect on my progress as a researcher, leader, and be a participant-observer. I documented various situations related to the research and my leadership role as well as noted some aspects of participatory action research in which the research proceeded through cycles (McTaggart, 1997). In addition, I employed the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI) designed by Kouzes and Posner (2003) to objectively assess my leadership skills through the analysis of adult participants' responses to leadership-based questions. The LPI, an on-line 30 item questionnaire, included additional open-ended questions to compare the self- reporting of

my leadership behavior with the opinions of the adult participants. The use of LPI provided objective and comparative leadership data.

Other sources of data included descriptive and analytical field notes and the collection of material culture that contributed to the development of information and perspectives. Additional data from email provided about insights of the characteristics of foreign-born Black English language learners from the vantage point of their ESL teachers. The use of email as a written source allows the researcher to gather information volunteered by participants that is not disclosed, seen or influenced by other participants (Meho & Tibbo 2003; Murray & Sixsmith, 1998; Young, Persichitte, & Tharp, 1998).

Using various sources of data, I explored the level of awareness of the social, cultural, academic, and linguistic needs of foreign-born Black students and their sense of visible presence within the classroom. The results of the data collection contributed to the design of an intervention to elucidate concepts about foreign-born Black secondary learners. Interviews, observations, and the collection of documents provided a range and variation of data. Qualitative methods were used for the data analysis approach.

Data Management and Analysis

Qualitative research can generate voluminous data that can become too intense and will confuse and frustrate researchers who engage in this cumbersome research undertaking. Patton (as cited in Creswell, 2007) notes:

> The data generated by qualitative measures are voluminous. I have found no way of preparing students for the sheer massive volumes of information with which they will find themselves confronted when data collection has ended. Sitting down to make sense out of pages of interviews and whole files of field notes can be overwhelming. (p. 150)

An overabundance of data can be managed in advance through efforts to avoid saturation by identifying what is necessary for the research.

Data Management

Prior analysis of background information determined what information was needed, the best plan for data collection, and to make decisions about collecting and preparing data conducive to the research. Logical preparation for the management of documents, transcripts, and procedures were essential to the organization of data for subsequent analysis. An initial analysis of potential data streams helped to prepare focused data for analysis that was suitable for the research by creating a data collection and analysis plan for the research objectives and study populations. In addition, after reading interviews and noting reoccurring themes, I developed a coding scheme to organize data significant to my study. Coding reduces data and improves data management because it can be used to prepare for analysis, note the emergence of themes, and organize data for sorting, analysis, and reporting (Creswell, 2007; La Pelle, 2004). In addition, establishing realistic timelines also helped me to reduce excessive data and circumvent potential problems of attempting to organize and analyze overwhelming qualitative measures.

Information about the participants was kept confidential, and participants' identity was not revealed. Participants had the opportunity to review transcriptions of taped interviews for validation. Within the framework of phenomenological research, parallels of raw data from interviews were complied by texts to generate common themes for interpretation.

Data Analysis

Data derived from the review of relevant literature, information from interviews and observations, and auxiliary data sources were analyzed for the possibilities of recurrences of thought-provoking concerns, comparable responses, and emergent themes of foreign-born Black ELLs. There was also a cultural and linguistic consideration that was given to the identification of themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). My student participants, foreign-born Blacks in ESL, possessed distinctive cultural and linguistic mores that required a prior and theoretical sensitivity when identifying themes (Patton, 1990; Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Being cognizant of colloquial aspects of the language of foreign-born Black second-language students improved my abilities as I identified and categorized themes. Considering that student participants were foreign-born Black second-language learners who had a plethora of linguistic distinctions, some student participants infused indigenous terms and sounds that were unfamiliar to me as a researcher (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Ryan and Bernard suggest that qualitative researchers should consider linguistic connectors when attempting to understand themes. During the identification of themes, factors about the ability of foreign-born Black ESL to approach words and phrases should be considered. All of these factors helped me to form ideas about making connections by identifying themes that corresponded to the ideas and beliefs of participants.

The content analysis procedure employed for this study included conceptual and thematic analyses, which included categorizing, coding, and noting the frequency of concepts and patterns in the data collected (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Denzin &

Lincoln, 1994; Hodson, 1999; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The conceptual analysis of the frequency of concepts in qualitative data such as discussions about learning and cultures were placed in narrative text for coding. This was then converted to chart form to highlight the emergence of recurring themes, patterns, and answers to the initial research questions. The chart aligned data sources with research questions in efforts to develop themes and categories and triangulate findings (Anfara et al., 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The overall analysis that generates connections within the coding, as suggested by Creswell (2006) may be incorporated where deemed appropriate during the analysis process. Table 3.1 presents the graphic process of coding data. Knowledge of literature relative to the topic, research questions, and comprehension of patterns and connections in data are essential concentrations for coding data and developing themes.

Table 3.1

Data Categories Codes Themes

Data	Categories	Codes	Themes
Data	Categories	Codes	Themes
Data	Categories	Codes	Themes
Data	Categories	Codes	
Data	Categories		
Data			

Theoretical lens analysis. This study employed an analysis strategy that allowed patterns to emerge from data, while using CRT as a theoretical lens to examine culture competency of teachers, non-teaching faculty, and administrators and reveal any structures of oppression for foreign-born Black students that often go unnoticed (Ladson-

Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999; 2005). It was necessary to use CRT as a

lens to reveal possible oppressive experiences of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. Based on

the tenets of CRT, the analysis was guided by race or ethnicity as significant to the

consideration and analysis of the research problem. The development of analytical

strategies to identify the similarities and differences in the range of responses from

participants sorted out patterns and helped to reveal themes. I conducted a thematic

analysis to categorize the gathered data by the inclusion or exclusion of race and ethnic

concerns in ESL education. I classified and coded data disclosed during data collection

and analysis by considering instances of race, ethnicity, and the degree of visibility and

placing these occurrences in a priori categories of disclosed, minimally disclosed, not

disclosed. A three-phase data analysis process includes (a) preliminary, (b) collaborative,

and (c) final data analysis phase (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Data Analysis

Data Collection	CRT A Priori	Patterns	Emergent Patterns, CRT and Research Questions
Data	Categories	Codes	Themes
Data	Categories	Codes	Themes
Data	Categories	Codes	
Data	Categories		
Data			
Preliminary Phase	Collaborative Phase		Final Data Analysis Phase

The continual analysis of text and theme statements and considering variations of themes and categories may contribute to a better conceptualization and understanding of experiences. Table 3.2 reflects the process of data analysis to reveal possible relevant themes.

During the preliminary phase, I identified themes in the data, using categorical analysis. Established themes extracted from the data were shared with participants as part of the collaborative data analysis phase. I shared themes constructed during the preliminary analysis with participants that subsequently led to a dialogue about themes. The participants and I discussed themes, categorization of themes, and rationale for theme usage. Moreover, participants had the opportunity to review data to discuss how their own understandings concurred with or refuted my findings. This dialogue allowed the researcher and participants to connect their experiences to others, and consider how larger social, cultural, and educational phenomenon have shaped those experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 2005; Solorzano & Yosso 2002).

During data analysis, the interaction between the researcher and participants allowed time to observe data in manners that they would not have visited and presented opportunities for deeper comprehension and reflection and clarification. This process also was used as a form of member-checking and as a means to gain insight to the validity of the findings that were produced in the final analysis phase. This phase combined the findings of both the preliminary and collaborative phases to construct a final version of themes that I coded to produce a final analysis of the CRT and research findings.

Action research analysis. Action research coupled with phenomenology provided the basic research theory and techniques for my qualitative methods. This combination contributed to future planning, implementation, and evaluation as my research evolved. This allowed for reflective data collecting and the interpretation of data through multiple viewpoints (Glesne, 2005). The use of multiple-data collection methods, participant-observations, interviewing, and collection of material culture produced triangulated data to improve trustworthiness (Glesne, 2005; Toma, 2006). Action research enabled me to gather qualitative data for the cyclical processes of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

In this action research project, I examined the possibilities of developing an awareness of the specific needs of foreign-born Black students and enhancing the visibility of foreign-born Blacks in the classroom. The cyclical nature of action research, planning, acting, observing, and reflecting contributed to questions and ideas that resulted in future actions as the research progressed (Creswell, 2003; Hinchey, 2008; Patton, 1990). Three cycles of action research evolved during the course of this study. A visual map illustrates the key actions and steps of the three action research cycles. Figure 2 is a visual map that illustrates the key actions and steps of each action research cycle.
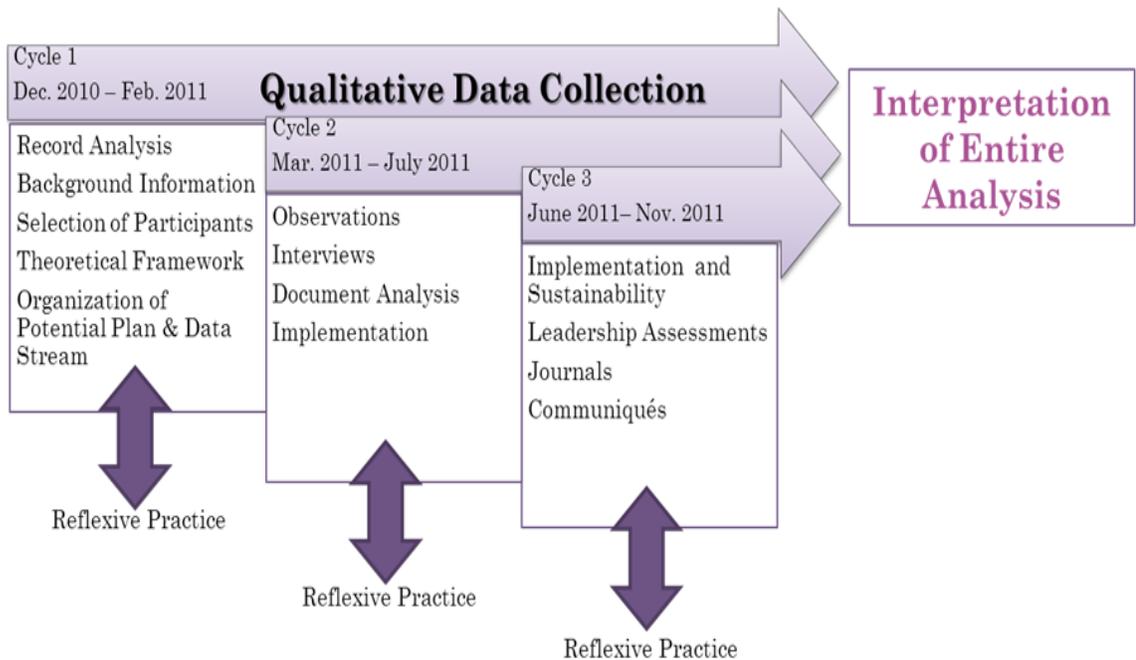
Figure 2. Connections of action research cycles for qualitative data collection and interpretation of entire analysis.

Cycle I. The first cycle consisted of investigating background information as part of the inquiry process of learning about the perceptions of faculty members as related to foreign-born Blacks in ESL. Cycle I, from December 2010 to February 2011, provided a basis for Cycle II and Cycle III. The steps of action research – plan, act, observe, and reflect – were repeated in sequential order to inform and improve decision making and practices. Cycle I and Cycle II consisted of the collection, review, and analysis of multiple sources of data. The cyclical nature of action research allowed for continual improvement. Cycle II, from March 2011 to July 2011, consisted of planned strategies and presented innovations that highlighted the understanding and visibility of foreign-born Blacks in ESL that stemmed from information from the previous cycles. Cycle III,

from June 2011 to November 2011, consisted of the analysis of data from previous cycles to answer research questions and assess my leadership.

During Cycle I, I began planning the framework for multi-tiered improvements for foreign-born Black students. During my first action step, I identified ESL teachers who worked closely with foreign-born Black students. Subsequently, I met with the ESL testing coordinator and guidance counselor to identify student participants by checking the ethnic codes by accessing the student database as well as checking with teachers for accurate schedules.

Cycle II. Cycle II of this action research project was a stage of inquiry about the level of awareness of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. Information from Cycle I was used to consider observations, interviews, and document analysis in Cycle II. I chose to collect data from multiple sources to ensure that data reflected wide-ranging perspectives and purposes. This cycle enabled me to understand the realities of foreign-born Blacks in ESL in terms of inclusiveness and experience, and address research questions. Cycle II included the implementation of activities to stimulate communication and engagement during various aspects of the action research process. I assessed data from previous cycles, reflected, and considered actions needed to implement change. Cultural engagement activities were implemented within environments for which the need for intervention had been identified. I used activities to accomplish cross-cultural exchanges, because as a researcher, I believed that such interactions would enable teachers and student participants to interact with each other. Moreover, research did not provide a wealth of information relative to ELLs, specifically from Africa and Haiti, and peer and group interactions. I selected this approach because after giving consideration to limiting

intrusion and disruptions, it was convenient to implement the actions and interventions within this context and previous cycle data revealed that it was a missing element within the environment. During the following cycle, Cycle III, I collected and assessed data to design implementations for teachers and students, completed follow-up actions, and reevaluated the final cycle plan.

Cycle III. This cycle occurred concurrently with Cycles I and II, as well as following the completion of research when I was able to review the study comprehensively. In addition to the overall analysis of data, Cycle III encompassed an in-depth analysis to assess the study of my leadership. Consideration of my leadership began from the inception to the conclusion of this study. In Cycle III, I focused on addressing and answering questions about my leadership qualities that emerged as a result of this study. Through the focus of this cycle, I was able to review various forms of data as well as the conversations and actions of adult and student participants in efforts to analyze my leadership throughout this study. I assessed how it related to my leadership and efforts to effect sustainable change for foreign-born Black ELLs and ESL teachers.

Actions and interventions streamed through each cycle as interest increased in the population under study. The continuing spirals of action evolved and concluded subsequently during the course of the research. Cycle III transpired concurrently with Cycles I and II. The conclusion of Cycle III enabled me to review my study holistically. In Cycle III, I reviewed my leadership progress through self-reflecting, self-reporting, and a formal leadership assessment tool to acquire feedback from participants. The study concluded with an analysis of cycle data to answer research questions based on findings and provide recommendations for future research. The subsequent section provides a

brief overview of each cycle. The use of qualitative data analysis helped to unveil ideas and information relevant to my research. This research revealed any possible effects that exposure and interventions for teachers, faculty, and foreign-born Black students can have on both populations in terms of changes in attitudes and actions within the ESL setting as well as the larger school context.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of data must be taken into consideration during the research design, data collection, and overall course of the study (Glesne, 2005; Toma, 2006). Establishing trustworthiness of data through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were essential for this qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Toma, 2006). Credibility determines whether research findings exemplify a credible conceptual interpretation of data based on participants' original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is the degree to which findings from this research can transfer or extend beyond this project. Dependability assesses the quality of the research process in relationship to data, and theory and confirmability measure how findings from the research are supported by data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this action research study, trustworthiness was developed by the strategies detailed below.

I addressed credibility by employing a sound research design and generating rich data. To ensure credibility during this research, I provided rich, thick descriptions and gave participants the opportunity to review interview transcripts for clarifications of errors and interpretations. Peer review, member checking, and consulting with committee members about categories, patterns, themes, and other areas central to data analysis

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helped to enhance the strength of my study. Using triangulation enabled me to check and establish the coherence in my studies. Triangulation is defined as "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Observations, document analysis, and interviews provided multiple data sources for the analysis of any similarity of outcomes. These research practices helped to ensure the consistency of results with the data collected in the research context.

I addressed transferability through the analysis of data to generate answers to research questions and encourage other researchers to transfer some conclusions from this project to continue the exploration of a limited topic. It was my goal that the results from this qualitative study be transferred to other contexts, settings, and researchers (Toma, 2006). In addition, reasoning by analogy, transferring knowledge from one system to another, enabled me to feel secure about reporting research findings in a manner that was comprehensible to those who were interested in transferring the results to a different context (Creswell, 2007; Toma, 2006).

I addressed concerns about dependability and confirmability by reviewing original transcripts, data analysis documents, journal entries, and member-checking. Member-checking involved checking with participants to ensure the accuracy of responses and obtain additional feedback. Triangulation and member-checking enhanced the dependability and confirmability of my study and allowed me to be more confident about research conclusions. Dependability relates to the stability of findings over a period of time, and the focus of confirmability is the internal consistency of findings, interpretations, and recommendations and research findings (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln &

Guba, 1985). The maintenance of accurate records of qualitative measures such as transcripts and coding analyses during the research process can be shared to seek agreement about reliable analysis that reflects how I justified my findings and conclusions.

Using prior knowledge effectively, addressing ethical concern, documenting study methods, and communicating findings effectively ensured the trustworthiness of the research. The use of triangulation of methods reinforced the validity and credibility of the data. There is a common concern about the soundness of qualitative research; however, qualitative researchers can increase rigor by displaying data. According to Toma (2006), qualitative researchers must approach research methods with rigor by becoming cognizant of various ideas and approaches as well as developing a set of standards that make sense to those doing the research. There is a significant gap in the literature about foreign-born Blacks in ESL. It was my goal that this study would contribute to a body of work specific to the population studied.

Researcher Assumption

Qualitative researchers have philosophical assumptions that influence the researchers' choice of engaging and designing a qualitative study. Additionally, qualitative researchers bring their own set of beliefs that inform the conduct and writing of a qualitative study. Creswell (2006) notes that it is important to consider the philosophical assumptions that motivated the study because they have implications on the research design and process. Creswell (2006) also notes that researchers bring a set of beliefs called paradigms, which are inclusive claims about knowledge that informs the practice of qualitative research.

Researcher's Paradigm

During formative childhood experiences, some characteristics of our respective culture, beliefs, values, and ideas emerge from family, environment, and life experiences (Mezirow, 1981). In most cases, cultural beliefs and norms are not challenged when we attempt to transition ideas and beliefs into principles that provide guidance and understanding for adulthood and life (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1990). Personal conventions can become ingrained in the manner in which we view the world based on our background, experience and culture, and are conveyed as our perceptions (Mezirow, 1990). Senge (1990) defines these conventions as mental models that are "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures and images, that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8). Throughout various journeys of life and educational situations, my beliefs and values were often challenged, which prompted me to examine my experiences and explore opportunities to grow. According to Mezirow (2000), critically examining experiences can transform axiomatic frameworks to "make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (pp. 7-8). Experiences gained from life, education, and exploration created new perspectives about my perceptions and viewpoints about the world as well as me.

The approach to the research was based on my view of reality as it related to culture and education. I believe that what I know and believe to be true about the world I constructed; specifically, how people interact with one another over time reveals various aspects of experience that may be worthy of investigation. The interpretive paradigm is

conducive to my research. Conceptualizing research from this paradigm enabled me to define shared constructs of foreign-born Blacks in ESL and the contextual characteristics of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). Participants were able to tell their stories as meaning was created through interactions between the research and participants. My researcher's paradigm produced a profound understanding about foreign-born Blacks in ESL and gave directions that were needed for actions to improve their schooling experiences.

Experiences help researchers to construct expectations of how identity is achieved. My experiences comprised my axiological framework that was strongly influenced by culture, society, and reflexivity. These ideals were essential to the determination of the way I constructed my identity and the type of actions I undertook as a qualitative researcher. My axiological framework emphasized that I had interest in foreign-born Blacks in ESL that extended beyond the quantity of knowledge that students were acquiring as second language learners, to concerns about the quality of their lived experiences that resulted from that knowledge. The phenomenological approach for my student population presented a strategy of inquiry that enabled me to explore my overall concern about the treatment of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. The exploration of self-concepts and the role of values warranted attention because it developed an awareness of biases and improved the suspensions of judgments during research.

Qualitative research regards the human aspect of research involving the participants as well as the researcher. While conceptualizing my study about the possible marginalization of underrepresented students, I realized that my story was an essential feature of shaping my study. My journey to research was linked with the foreign-born

Black students under study. I interpreted the stories from foreign-born Black students from my own perspective. I shared viewpoints through a phenomenological approach that intended to understand the profound meaning of individual experiences and how these experiences were voiced (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that considering the stories of the researcher as well as those being researched is part of a relational process whereby both stories are shaped together. The stories of the researcher and the participants are imparted during the course of qualitative research. The relationship between researcher and participant is reciprocal. The researcher and the researched are interconnected. Giving consideration to what led me to embark on this study was an important question and underlying feature of my research. My interactions and the way I made meaning of my world influenced my position as a researcher. The manner in which I describe the world describes me (van Manen, 1984, 1990, 1997, 2007). Sharing these experiences did not reveal any biases or assumptions that I could unconsciously bring to my research considering my interpretation of the world and the phenomenon of foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

My experiences suggest that my research interest was shaped by cross-cultural experiences and my own journey as a student, educator, and traveler. My professional and personal experiences underscored that I can learn much from the listening and sharing of stories. Listening to and telling stories presented an opportunity to find out more about myself and who I am.

Education

I used to be ashamed to reveal the fact that I never received my high school

diploma. I was forced to obtain a GED as a result of my refusal to submit to cavalier

instruction and various instances of bureaucracy and ineptitude during my formal years of

school, especially during my final high school years. Although I am a professed lifelong

learner, I used to think it was quite audacious or beyond my wildest dreams to attempt to

evolve from GED to Ed.D. Based on my current research of CRT, I found that I had

ingrained, preconceived notions about myself based upon the frustrating aspects of

schooling (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Tate, 2005; Tatum, 1992). Moreover, during my

educational journey, I was able to search myself to answer the profound questions: Who

are you? How did you get here? What is your purpose in education? Where are you

going?

It was not until I experienced a drastic change in my educational learning

environment and demographic area that I noticed I was able to see society and myself

from a different perspective. In my initial school environment, cultural stability and

predictability helped to shape my identity. However, after being removed from my

cultural realm and being introduced to multiculturalism, I gained a deeper insight about

culture, education, and the concept of voice. Transferring through several schools and

living in different regions throughout my education introduced me to my first critical

experience with reflective thinking.

Connections and associations became more significant when I was removed from

my natural comfortable environment; my concept of power, purpose, and trust became

strained. My first thought was of betrayal because I was forced to be uncomfortable in a

new learning environment, which positioned me to deal with different learning expectations, behavioral changes, and diverse cultures; however, I had to relearn how to develop trust. The learning process occurred when I started writing down thoughts, goals, and dreams, and I was able to unveil and gain information about others and me. Moreover, I realized that I had to develop trust in order to have meaningful relationships that would enable me to survive. Trust, I have learned, has to transcend ethnic, cultural, gender, and age differences because it is one of the most powerful aspects of any relationship, especially in terms of education and reciprocal respect.

Past and present experiences are simultaneously directing my future aspirations to use my knowledge of socio-cultural aspects to improve personal and professional relationships. I often reflect about my educational experiences from various perspectives such as race, class, locality, ethnicity, language, and culture. Societal ills and pressures, stature, and stereotypes were supposed to consume and define me. However, my academic and social experiences with heterogeneous peers and the critical evaluation of education from all vantage points in my life has led to transformation and continuation of my desire to be an observer, learner, educator, and, ultimately, a qualitative researcher.

Exploration

My desire to learn about cultures through observations and informal conversations has guided and stimulated my desire to embark upon ethnographic travel to different places in the world. I sought to gain a deeper insight about the treatment of people and the relationship between education and society from the global perspective. Travel enabled me to explore and go to and find the deepest residences of my own life, existence, and education in a quest to expand my knowledge of self and others. The

aspiration to travel and learn more about diverse students and their culture of learning resulted from recalling some of my former foreign students who sat silently in my mainstream classes. In most cases, they had been conditioned to believe they could not succeed and their visibility in the classroom was not important. Although some books attempted to offer teaching suggestions for various immigrant student populations, I found that I needed to know and learn some of their authentic experiences so that I could sincerely reach out to them. I felt that we could share and learn from each other as I made attempts to expand my awareness of international learners.

My initial globetrotting sphere of reference took place in New York City when I was exposed to uncomplicated entrées to snippets of multitudes of diverse languages and cultures. However, in June 1994, I decided that I wanted to engage in authentic learning experiences by becoming a part of the real world of interesting cultures. I enrolled in a class at the University of West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica; I studied Caribbean Culture and Society. I spent a month immersed in the Jamaican culture. Traveling outside my comfortable atmosphere fostered my desire to continue to pursue immersion opportunities and expand my global educational explorations, because I wanted to be able to use my experiences to maximize learning situations for all students.

My ethnographic travel experiences include Bahamas, Jamaica, England, France, Portugal, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Spain, Haiti, Argentina, and Uruguay. The amalgamation of my travel encounters gave insight to the awareness of invisibility, being ignored or going unnoticed when in the position of a stranger. As a cultural observer, I found that when I became the foreigner, the concept of invisibility became real to me whenever I was relegated to the periphery of some language, social, and cultural

situations. Feelings of "outsiderness" evolved while I struggled to develop, inhabit, and balance social and cultural space as a newcomer to unfamiliar places. Operating within the confines of invisibility, stemming from language and identity barriers, I was prompted to reflect upon foreign-born students negotiating their visibility in American classrooms. Involvement with the Jamaican, Cuban, and Haitian cultures provided the foundation for exploring foreign-born Black students in the United States prior to the inception of this study. While in Jamaica, Cuba, and Haiti, I was fascinated by the resiliency of the people given the varying social, political, and economic climates and maintenance of mores and traditions connected to the African Diaspora as well as the intense values placed on education.

The journey of life and education can be enhanced when we come to learn more about each other. Looking beyond our borders made me realize that taking the commonalities of lineages and learning may help to mold a great sense of understanding about culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Brown (2004) suggests, "Exploration of new understandings, the synthesis of new information, and the integration of these insights, throughout personal and professional spheres leads educational leaders to a broader, more inclusive approach in addressing issues of student learning and equity" (p. 87). Engaging in rich excursions provided profound opportunities to learn from individuals to understand various aspects of cultural dynamics through my travel engagements. Exposure, immersion, observations, and various cross-cultural interactions enriched my assumptions, values, and beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse learners and equipped me with the confidence and knowledge to work with and guide others to effectively educate all students.

My understanding of the global perspectives helps me to dispel some of the stereotypical myths that some educators have about children who are culturally, ethnically, or linguistically diverse. My interactions with the world have changed my perception of self and others (Begley, 2006; Rosener, 1990). With the mass influx of culturally and linguistically diverse students into the mainstream population, leaders must take into consideration "how differing voices contribute to a better understanding of pluralistic contexts" (Grogan, 2000, p. 133). Some culturally and linguistically diverse students within the research context of my study are often slighted because the current organizational structures have created cultural norms and expectations that are inequitable and oppressive in nature. The disposition of open-mindedness may help to ensure that I, as well as others, am prepared to meet the plurality of educational expectations and societal demands, because I believe that there is more than one kind of reality in terms of the values that society places on equitable education for all people.

Leadership

Building a sense of acceptance, community, respect, and value of differences does not seem to be at the academic forefront within all levels of schooling and aspects of society. In some cases, embarrassing situations, problems, or affronts must occur before most can recall the purpose and meaning of "social justice for all." The Golden Rule, which is also ingrained in various forms of world religious texts, encourages all races, creeds, and colors to "do unto others as you would have others do unto you." If educational leaders considered the impact that we have on the lives of all whom we encounter, we may become more aware of our actions and deeds and treatment (or mistreatment) of people.

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"Change is good for the soul" is an adage that is often applied to individuals who partake in implementing profound changes. Change means growth, and the definition of soul, relative to education, can take on a variety of meanings. As an emerging 21st-century leader, I have enhanced and advanced my leadership skills, acquired knowledge about organizational structures, examined and implemented policies, explored research areas of interest, and gained perceptiveness that change is something that is impossible for souls to avoid. I often apply this philosophy to personal and professional life because I could never accept being thwarted by static mindsets about educators and the educated.

In efforts to meet the challenges of my profession, I had to search my soul in terms of addressing my private thoughts and feelings that were hidden because I underestimated the personal and public power of voice. Prior to participation in the doctoral program, I undervalued my role of being a voice for underrepresented groups and those desiring a change from an outmoded school culture. I had to search myself to answer the profound questions that permeated my stream of consciousness: Who are you? How did you get here? What is your purpose in education? and Where are you going? Pondering these questions brought my hidden ideas about using the spiritual depth, emotional intelligence, and sensitivity forward, as they became the most important, active, and responsible positions in the development of my models for leadership. Being of service to others as well as encouraging the transformation of attitudes about education and those being educated evolved from the ongoing soul searching process.

Greenleaf (2002) suggests that people tend to "freely respond" to individuals in the leadership role because they have been "proven and trusted as servants" (p. 20). Greenleaf's (2002) theories about servant leadership, such as leading by serving others,

accomplishing goals by serving others, and encouraging others to use their talents to accomplish common goals are essential components of my leadership. Moreover, recognizing the needs of others and fostering their growth as outstanding individuals inspires my leadership styles. I have a purpose with passion about the interconnectedness of education and the ideals of social answerability, racial harmony, diversity, equitable education, and unselfish service. My desire is to share these sentiments that contribute to my transformational leadership style so that change is reciprocal in terms of change, outlooks, opinions, and outcomes by working towards shared goals (Burns, 1978).

Servant leadership and transformational leadership enabled me to use my vision, personality, and strength to challenge the accepted, comfortable way of doing things, specifically when considering diversity and underserved students. My participation in this research project inspired, strengthened, and advanced my leadership. During the course of the research, I regularly had to consider my leadership qualities in relationship to the research and its significance for the larger collective.

Throughout this study, I assessed my own leadership through applications from the methodology and engagements within each action research cycle. Growth evolved as I attempted to apply theories in use, observation, and monitoring to the progression of teachers and students as well as myself during each cycle of research. Reflection and journaling while attempting to lead others to reciprocal relationships for the improvement of learning, revealed aspects of my affinity for transformational leadership (Burns, 1978). My research experience was enhanced by learning about teachers' perspectives and gathering interesting data sources about the respective student population for this study.

Employing action research and qualitative phenomenological approaches contributed to the development of actions to orchestrate change by stimulating dialogues, intensifying voice, and heightening cultural awareness and recognition. I anticipated learning about the depth of my transformational and servant leadership abilities as I embarked upon studying unexplored areas within my professional workplace (Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1977b, 2002). Patience is an attribute that I have strived to acquire and maintain. Since research is a tedious, time-consuming process, I tested the capacity of my fortitude during the progression of cycles and the overall course of the research. In addition, qualitative research requires intense interactions that may increase the difficulty of detaching the relationship of the researcher and the research participants. It was my goal to be aware and conscious of my biases and prejudices in efforts to monitor them during the entire study.

This methodology provided approaches and procedures for the structure and evaluation of my research. Details described in this study will present reflections, data, and outcomes that may offer findings relevant to the nature of the research, implement change, provide more insight about my topic of interest and enhance my leadership styles.

Ethical Considerations

Application to the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committee detailed aspects of fair treatment to potential subjects. Subsequent review and approval from the IRB ensured that participants were treated accordingly during my study. In an effort to respect and protect the rights of those participating in the study, I issued an informed consent form to all selected for the research to explain the purpose of

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the study and request their participation in the study (Appendix C). Information collected

during the course of this research was kept confidential. Given the sensitive nature of

materials and information that I collected from the district supervisor, guidance

counselor, testing coordinator, and secured sites, I had a heightened sense of

confidentiality and security. I was granted access to this information for the purposes of

collecting information to conduct my research. I referenced names in the study by initials

or pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

The research site was conducive to participants because they did not feel they

were being coerced to participate in the study. In addition, I honored my participants'

privacy by ensuring anonymity. An observation and interview schedule gave

consideration to the time commitment of participants. I informed participants of what was

expected of them as well as what they could expect from me in the role of the researcher

and the research process. This helped me to safeguard them from any form of

embarrassment and harm. All informants were treated with respect as I sought their

cooperation throughout the entire research process.

There may be an unconscious power dynamic between the researcher and the

researched. I was interacting with a population of students with lineages connected to the

African Diaspora who may have been subjected to oppressive treatment as well as

political controversy and various forms of discrimination by the broader society. It was

imperative that I ensured that the rights, desires, and requests of participants were

honored during the course of the research. During the course of my research, I strove to

suspend judgments about the student participants. Ensuring equity was crucial to every

aspect of my study, given the sensitivity involved with cross-cultural interactions and communication.

Language, a primary source of communication, constructs structure in relationships. Kegan and Lahey (2002) note that experiences can contribute to how language is used and also how it constructs experiences. Kegan and Lahey (2002) support the concept that language is crucial and language is power, because how leaders distinguish categories, events, and people can make the difference between whether they are treated favorably or repressively. Public and inner conversations enable leaders to transform interpersonal and social relationships as well as organizational culture through language. Kegan and Lahey (2002) posit that the rationale for word choices can establish feelings, attitudes, and actions. Moreover, considering the linguistic differences of the student participants, language should be uncomplicated so that it that does not frustrate, confuse, or alienate participants.

Endeavoring to ensure equity during the entire research process was a crucial element of my study. Seidman (2006) suggests that striving for equity is essential to being conscious when broaching ethical as well as methodological considerations. My research design evolved from my desire to raise conscious issues and allow participants to speak for themselves. Giving foreign-born Black students a voice by sharing their experiences promoted equity and challenged social constructs that may have relegated their significance as ESL students.

Conclusion

It was my intention to develop my skills as a qualitative researcher. As a qualitative researcher, I had the responsibility of discovering and interpreting the

importance of what was observed and establishing a connection between observations and conclusions in a concise study. It was my anticipation that this study would demystify foreign-born Blacks as ELLs, enhance recognition of the culture within the larger school context, and contribute to research about foreign-born Blacks in ESL. The understanding of research paradigms and guided research practices during qualitative observations, interactions, and analyses enhanced my study.

This action research project began in September at the beginning of the 2010 school year and continued to develop and evolve until November 2011. Data collected during each of the three cycles provided pertinent information to advance the research and answer research questions about the study of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. Moreover, the analysis of my leadership streamed through each cycle as I evaluated my capability of attempting to lead sustainable change. The subsequent chapters provide discussion of cycle details, findings, implications, and suggestions for research. The following chapter provides an overview of the continuing spirals of actions that evolved and concluded subsequently within a 15-month timeframe.

Chapter IV

Cycle I

This chapter focuses on the systematic analysis of the process I used to engage in this action research project. The use of multiple data sources gave emphasis to exploration, discovery, and descriptions that provided meanings to my participants' experiences in the educational environment. The combination of qualitative, action, and phenomenological research best suited my needs to discover and interpret meaning and perceptions about being foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

The cyclical nature of action research provided a process to enhance cultural and pedagogical practices as it relates to the population under study. The action research cycles were employed to organize, collect, analyze, reflect upon, and act on the data gathered for this study. Three collaborative action research cycles evolved during the course of study from December 2010 to November 2011. The overview of each cycle includes data collection strategies, analysis of data, and the development of actions, as well as descriptions of limitations and conclusions of each cycle. Each cycle is clearly delineated to involve a systematic inquiry that included information gathering, analysis, and reflection to ascertain knowledge about how people, think, and feel. Moreover, information from the cycles underscored connections to the theoretical framework of this study and contributed to the development of my leadership. Cycle I, which took place between December 2010 and February 2011, encompassed identification of the problem, selection of participants, and student recruitment. Themes that emerged from analysis of

the data are also addressed in this chapter. Also, I explain how the data from Cycle I informed the subsequent actions in Cycle II.

Cycle I: Developing a Plan

The purpose of action research, a continuous process of systematic inquiry, is to engage in actions that generate change, progress, and advancement (Hinchey, 2008). As I pondered my research topic, I was initially apprehensive about selecting a topic that dealt with the sensitive topic of race and education. During my master's degree project, I was encouraged to explore something that was unique as well as interesting to me – I explored the language, lineage, and linkage of a Gullah Geechee speech community. However, as I reflected and extended my observations and experiences, I believe capturing the essence of learning experiences of a marginalized population would be worthy of investigation. This consideration contributed to the initial concept of this dissertation. As I presented information during my doctoral studies that shaped my research topic, I was offered support and encouragement to investigate the possibility of studying Black immigrants as ELLs.

Reconnaissance

Since the inception of my career as an educator, I have firmly believed that values systems within the composition of schools can shape attitudes and behaviors that impact students' sense of belonging. Prior to the research, I noticed that foreign-born Black students in ESL classrooms went unnoticed because they were often silent and reserved. These preliminary observations generated interest in the possibilities of marginalized and disenfranchised groups in educational settings. After I Identified and limited my topic, I began the preliminary gathering of information that Mills (2003) refers to as

reconnaissance. These reconnaissance activities help [researchers] clarify what they already know about the proposed focus of the study; what they believe to be true about the relationship of the factors, variables, and context that make up their work environment; and what they believe can improve the situation.

In addition to reviewing literature and initiating discussions with others to discover their perceptions about my proposed research problem and inquire about their ideas to inform my topic, reconnaissance involved taking time to reflect on my beliefs in efforts to gain a better understanding of the nature and context of my research. The process of reconnaissance is a threefold approach: self-reflection, description, and explanation (Mills, 2003).

Self-reflection. As I engaged in the process of self-reflection, I explored the connotations associated with being labeled as an outsider or "other" in an educational setting (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ogbu, 1983; Tajfel, 1978). In light of this, I began this action research project with the desire to change the educational situation for foreign-born Blacks in ESL by heightening an awareness of the culture and improving cross-cultural relationships, learning, and social opportunities for this respective population (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b; Tatum, 1992; Taylor, 2006). I used evidence from observations of interactions, interviews, journaling, and reflections upon the literature related to the topic to arrive at the decision that this particular focus area required studied attention (Creswell, 2007).

Reconnaissance in Cycle I unveiled critical factors such as limited knowledge about the cultural mores of underrepresented group and the lack of open dialogues about

how race and education, specifically for immigrant students, affects schooling situations for underrepresented groups. The actions of reconnaissance provided an opportunity for the exploration of my own understanding as my research focus area (Mills, 2003). Self-reflection and background knowledge enabled me to assess my own understanding, describe the contexts of foreign-born Blacks in ESL and explain how improvements could change the complexity of this underrepresented group in ESL.

Description. The aspect of reconnaissance required that I uncover evidence of the problem within my context, identify those immediately impacted by the area of focus (as well as those affiliated with its amelioration), and describe the critical factors (e.g., organizational culture and current practice). Mills (2003) refers to this as the who, what, when, where, and how of reconnaissance.

Through preliminary background investigations about foreign-born Blacks, I became more informed about their position in ESL and school. Evidence, such as inaccurate student population and minimal, accessible information about the existence of this population acquired during the initial phases of research presented the problem that Diasporian students in ESL are not readily recognized and considered in the same manner as students from other countries. Educational stakeholders, such as administrators, ESL teachers, parents and community members could be affected by the problem of lack of accountability to this population of immigrant students. In addition, acknowledgment of the problem could motivate stakeholders to collaborate to develop and propose different courses of action to address concerns and improve practices germane to foreign-born Blacks as part of the collective of immigrant students.

Identity in respect to ESL students was a salient theme that encompassed the complexity and confusion associated with discussions and gathering data about identification and immigrants (Allard & Santoro, 2006; Amin, 1997; Motha, 2006). Discussions about the identification and location of foreign-born Black students in the ESL settings provided background information for this cycle. During the inception of this cycle, I considered the correct operational definition for my target population. I pondered several questions: How do I group these students from diverse areas of the African Diaspora? Do I identify my target population as Black? Do I identify my target population as Pan Africans? After extensive queries, discussions, and research, I discovered the appropriate term for my target population was foreign-born Blacks. When identifying the affected population at the heart of my study, I had to ensure that they were enrolled in ESL classes and derived from locales connected to the African Diaspora as well as being categorized by school demographic data or self-reporting as being Black. I used initial school registration data, current school demographic data, and ESL test demographic data to generate a list of potential student participants. Moreover, in an attempt to gain more insight about the identification of foreign-born Blacks within the research context, I followed up with the potential participants' teachers. This allowed me to clarify as well as identify students who were from Diasporian regions but did not consider themselves as Blacks. I decided that for the sake of the research, it would be prudent to select student participants who self-identified as being Black. The testing coordinator checked her records of the students that I identified to ensure that they were either from Haiti or Africa and opted to identify as Black on test demographic data. The selection of participants was based on connections to ESL. The faculty participant

selection was limited to the ESL department and additional select faculty members who had been exposed to ESL learning situations.

ELLs are often overwhelmed by new challenges in language and culture in a new school setting. Different learning styles and physical, intellectual and social domains can affect students' academic progress. Positive reinforcement and encouragement within the culture of the organization help to create a realistic and accommodating educational situation for ELLs. The ESL program is a language and content integrated program of study. Traditional rituals that celebrate the language and culture of most groups in academic and social settings are a part of school activities and events. The different languages and cultures contribute to the symbolic nature of the ESL Department and guide the culture of the school. Some teachers and administrators contribute to the structure of the program because they are highly motivated, autonomous, and contentious. Bolman and Deal (2003) recognize that the structural frame is "a blueprint for formal expectations and exchanges among internal players" within organizational situations (p. 46).

Although the principal, ESL, and select mainstream teachers and administrators recognize the need for cultural inclusiveness, it is status quo for the school culture to attempt to take little notice of diversity and inclusivity issues. Thus, the organization presents the perception of a positive stance to maintain positive, harmonious relationships with the school and community-at-large in efforts to avoid power struggles and conflicts that seem to occur rarely. Still, the ESL Department genuinely reflects educators who strive to recognize the intrinsic value of motivating students who are struggling to survive the many facets of life in the United States. The ESL teachers are often lauded by their

colleagues and other departments for structuring their department to best suit the needs of the students by being progressive.

However, there is a disconnection between the ESL department and the rest of the school, which contributes to hindrances to cross-cultural understanding and advancement. Value is not placed upon linguistic code-switching and cultural identities. Moreover, there are limited situations for communicating the particular, unnoticed needs of ELLs to administration, teachers, parents, peers, and mainstream population. As a result, the practice of infusing cultural relevance during instruction and giving attention and support to underrepresented cultures remained an unspoken issue prior to the research.

Some members of the school culture and surrounding community do not give credence to or fail to recognize the importance of diversity. The district and school supervisors have managed to prevent the ESL program from being subjected to the typical political dominance that is often associated with some ESL programs throughout the nation (Amin, 1997; Artilies et al., 2005; Ballantyne et al., 2000; Burns, 1999; Gutierrez & Orellana, 2006; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Motha, 2006). As a result, politics are one of the lesser concerns of the ESL program and the culture of the school. However, there are some variables that exist within the surrounding communities that polarize the dynamics of the overall school culture. In some cases, socioeconomic differences, social backgrounds, and personal convictions contribute to factors that perpetuate xenophobia, ethnocentrism, and elitism. These factors may intensify bias when encountering and discussing cultures that are different than what some consider as the "norm" of traditional high school students.

Recognizing contributing factors within the school culture and community may initiate a dialogue about becoming more accepting of and accountable to underrepresented groups. Collaborative efforts to share accumulated wisdom from variety of resources may help to present challenges to rethink the educational processes associated with educating children in a pluralistic society. Overall, the circumstances that surround foreign-born Blacks in ESL are important because they reveal various assumptions about the responsibility of the school to ELLs and all children.

Explanation. Mills (2003) suggests that once the circumstances surrounding an area of focus are described, then the action researcher must focus on the why. This leads to the development of a purpose statement and relevant research questions related to the phenomenon under investigation. Additionally, I conducted an extensive review of related literature (see Chapter II) and determined a theoretical lens, CRT, through which I could examine the experiences of foreign-born Black ELLs within my educational setting.

As a result of the explanation process of the reconnaissance phase, I developed a purpose statement and research questions that would enable me to explore the experiences of foreign-born Black ELL students in more detail. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological, action research study was fourfold: (a) to examine teacher awareness of the linguistic, social, and cultural processing of foreign-born Black students as ELLs; (b) to analyze the treatment of foreign-born Black ELLs' language and culture to improve in a secondary setting; (c) to increase the visibility and voice of foreign-born Blacks in ESL; and (d) to determine if the use of developed initiatives can provide sustenance for a culturally responsive, supportive learning environment. I

selected this qualitative research study to examine foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. A phenomenological research method helped to ascertain insight about the lives of foreign-born Blacks of ELLs. Supporting data from this research determined perspectives about foreign-born Black ESL students. The following research questions guided this exploration:

1. What are the lived educational/schooling experiences of foreign-born Black students as secondary ELLs?

2. How do foreign-born Black students perceive the role of race and social class in their school experiences?

3. How do ESL faculty perceive foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

4. To what extent did my leadership traits contribute to increased visibility and awareness of foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

What I discovered during the reconnaissance phase of my study underscored that foreign-born Blacks in ESL are not thoroughly included in various aspects of schooling because of their limited presence in ESL classes and the degree of awareness of their cultural backgrounds and experiences. If ESL educators strive to enhance their overall knowledge of foreign-born Blacks, there should be improvements of inclusivity and awareness of their mores and presence (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1981, 1983).

The reconnaissance phase and the gathering of data in Cycle I did not occur discreetly, as is common in action research. In fact, the reconnaissance phase is often referred to as preliminary information gathering (Mills, 2003). Therefore the activities

affiliated with data collection and interpretation described below overlap with the reconnaissance phase of developing this action research plan.

Cycle I: Gathering Data

After I determined the nature of the problem, the actors affiliated with the problem, broadly reviewed related literature and theory, and developed appropriate research questions, I used qualitative data collection methods to gather information on the foreign-born Black ELLs in my context. I opted to use multiple data sources to access and review documentation to acquire basic background information necessary to undertake the research. In Cycle I, I collected data through observations, document review, and fact-finding inquiries.

I used purposeful sampling for potential interview candidates because teachers and select students from the ESL department could provide the specific insight to my research questions (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1990). From the 220 faculty members and 204 ESL students, I identified seven faculty participants, consisting of four females and three males. Also, information from this cycle informed my decision to gather more information about the adult participants to provide details about the wide-ranging background information regarding ESL faculty in the research context. Table 4.1 provides detailed background information about the selected adult participants.

Table 4.1

Adult Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Cultural identity	Birthplace	Age	Native language	Other languages spoken*	Years teaching at the research site
BMM	F	American of Italian and Polish descent	Darby, PA	40	English	Spanish German	18
TQM	F	American	Atlantic City, NJ	60	English Yiddish	French German Spanish Farsi	25
MSK	M	American	Somers Point, NJ	40	English	Spanish	13
NLM	F	African American	Mt. Holly, NJ	57	English	Spanish	21
SJC	M	American	Vineland, NJ	53	English	German Spanish	12
MD	M	German Polish	Atlantic City, NJ	47	English	Chinese Spanish	14
MJM	M	Mexican Jewish American Russian English	Camden, NJ	30	English	Japanese Spanish	2

* Does not indicate fluency.

I identified nine foreign-born Black ESL students, consisting of four females and five males; and an additional female mainstreamed student from Haiti who served as a translator for a Haitian newcomer participant who met the requirements to contribute to

this study. Table 4.2 presents detailed background information about the student

participants.

Table 4.2

Student Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Age	Grade	Cultural identity	Birthplace	Entry date
Rence	F	15	10	West African	Ghana	12/8/10
Rie	F	14	9	Haitian	Croix-des-Bouquets	8/27/07
Adou	M	19	11	West African	Kaedi, Mauritania	12/15/10
Ean	M	15	9	Haitian	Croix-des-Bouquets	3/8/11
Learo[1]	F	16	11	Haitian	Côte d'Ivoire	1/27/11
Vi	M	15	9	Haitian	Port-au-Prince Haiti	8/27/07
Adel	M	15	10	Haitian	Port-au-Prince Haiti	9/8/09
Bea	F	16	11	West African	Ghana	9/3/08
Bin	M	18	12	East African	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	9/11/08
Louve	F	19	12	West African	Côte d'Ivoire	9/8/09

[1]Translator for Ean (non-ESL)

Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the identity of participants. In addition to

acquiring information about the demographics of each student participant, consideration

about their language levels was equally important. Table 4.3 provides details of home

languages spoken and the language function of student participants.

Table 4.3

Student Participant Language Function/Level of English Language Proficiency

Participant	Cultural identity	Birthplace	Native language	Overall language function[1]
Rence	West African	Ghana, West Africa	Twi/Fante	Expanding/Bridging
Rie	Haitian	Croix-des-Bouquets	Haitian Creole/ French	Developing
Adou	West African	Kaedi, Mauritania	French	Developing/Expanding
Ean	Haitian	Croix-des-Bouquets	Haitian Creole/ French	Entering/Beginning
Learo[2]	Haitian	Croix-des-Bouquets	Haitian Creole/ French	Standard English Advanced
Vi	Haitian	Port-au-Prince Haiti	Haitian Creole/ French	Developing/Expanding
Adel	Haitian	Port-au-Prince Haiti	Haitian Creole/ French	Bridging
Bea	West African	Ghana, West Africa	Twi/Fante	Developing/Expanding
Bin	Ethiopian	Addis Ababa	Amharic	Developing/Expanding
Louve	West African	Côte d'Ivoire	French	Developing/Expanding

[1] Level of English language proficiency according to WIDA CAN DO Descriptors for the Levels of English Language Proficiency [2] Non-ESL translator for Ean

All of the identified participants indicated they were willing to participate.

Participants represented wide-ranging cultural backgrounds. The teacher participants

represented diverse cultures and different teaching experiences. Their years of teaching

experience at the research site ranged from 2 to 25 years. The student participants represented geographical locations that are currently experiencing or recovering from various forms of strife. The turmoil found in the homelands of the student participants included, but was not limited to human rights, war, poverty, national disasters, and civil and political unrest. Their time as students in the United States ranged from less than 6 months to 4 years.

My targeted student population has been traditionally marginalized and underrepresented in ESL, which contributed to underlying inaccuracies in student demographic data collected from school registration, which was discovered during initial data collection attempts. In addition to reviewing school records, databases, class schedules, and test data to verify the accuracy of enrollment information, information from key informants was an integral part of the data collection process. The wealth of information derived from Cycle I included the access and analysis of voluminous records as well as the verification and cross referencing of multiple streams of data that included comparing registration data to testing information that required students to self-report about their background, and verifying information with teachers, counselors, and students. Through member-checking, I was able to ensure that I had accurate information to represent the participants and had acquired accurate information relevant to my research topic. Moreover, additional data from my personal leadership reflections and feedback from the participants supported as well as contributed to my espoused conceptualization of my leadership styles.

Cycle I: Interpreting and Sharing Findings

During Cycle I, coding enabled me to find relevance by identifying individual pieces of data, documents, words, and phrases as belonging to a certain theme (Hinchey, 2008). The system I used in Cycle I consisted of color-coding words and phrases gathered from interactions and documents. I subsequently reduced the codes by condensing them into themes (Creswell, 2007). The themes that emerged in Cycle I were hidden culture, identity in ESL, and backgrounds and perceptions in ESL. These themes are associated specifically with participation identification and selection. Each theme is addressed in this chapter.

Hidden Culture

The theme "hidden culture" emerged from the analysis of comments and reactions noted during reconnaissance. Most adult participants mentioned that that had rarely noticed the culture of foreign-born Blacks as their own entity. Some participants noted that this particular culture was mysterious, unknown, and suppressed within our educational context. One participant suggested that foreign-born Blacks opted to isolate themselves within their peer groups from their homeland, often overshadowed by more familiar cultures in ESL because of their sporadic presence in ESL classrooms. I have noticed that over the past 20 years the face of ESL has changed to include more students of color. The influx of students of color, specifically foreign-born Black students, has required that ESL teachers obtain assistance in gaining cultural and linguistic knowledge about learners from Diasporian cultural groups. Dialogues about foreign-born Blacks in this research context have unveiled some significant viewpoints regarding this particular group of students. For example, a teacher participant opined, "I've seen that quietness

about that particular group that could be cultural or it could be that we're not pulling

them in more." Another teacher participant stated:

> I think [foreign-born Black students] are very hidden. I know that we have them.
> I've met them. I'll often ask, because of an accent, where are you from? Haiti—or
> if they happen to be from an African country. But they are not as evident to me as
> the Hispanic students and even more especially our Mid-Eastern students. They
> seem to be much more evident to me. Part of that could really be their personality.
> There could be…Most of the Mid-Eastern kids are very outgoing with the fact
> that they need help. I would say the Africans and the Haitians are little much more
> reserved. To me, anyway, that's how I perceive them.

These statements underscore the "hidden" nature of foreign-born Black students within

the school and the ESL classroom.

Foreign-born Black students require studied attention as a means to heighten their

visibility because little is known about this particular group with the larger scheme of

ESL. ESL teachers in particular, need an awareness of foreign-born Black students in

order to provide positive and progressive learning experiences and better understand the

significance of diversity and the impact of Whiteness, as well as uncover language and

cultural assumptions embedded within the context ESL.

Identity in ESL

My first approach was to observe ESL classes to get an idea of the number of

foreign-born Black students enrolled in the ESL program. The attempts to gain access to

demographic data during Cycle I enabled communication and clarity for planning. After

the teacher participants verbally agreed to participate and the student participants were

clearly identified by means of data and inquiries, I gave both groups of participants

informed consent forms, which outlined the research study and provided the guardians of

the student participants with pertinent information about the nature of the research,

contact information, and a request for their permission for their child to participate in the research.

Their teachers followed up with potential participants to ensure that they understood the research, voluntary participation, purpose of the form, and need for parental consent; parents received phone calls to avoid any misunderstandings. I recruited 10 student participants; however, one opted not to participate. I initially thought it was because of lack of interest or parental concerns, however, I later learned the potential participant was moving to a different city. Nine students readily returned their informed consent forms.

Even though the collection of data relevant to the student participants was an arduous task, I decided that it was also important to consider the date of entry of the foreign-born Black students into the United States to assist with preparing for interactions in subsequent cycles (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3). According to World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium (2009), language variability can be attributed to the ELLs' varying age and grade levels, learning classifications, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and the diverseness in the educational and life experiences.

Increasing Awareness of ELLs.

Given the cultural and linguistic concerns of interacting with students and parents when English is not the primary language, after the informed consent forms were returned, I reiterated information to each student participant about the research, the option to participate, and the types of activities in which they would partake. I met with eight student participants individually to explain the research process. In every instance, the

students' initial facial expressions indicated fear and anxiety. I greeted each student with a smile and invited him or her to my office.

As each student came in, they looked around my office and found something that was familiar to their culture and asked me a question about it. Haitian students in particular were extremely excited to see something that related to Haiti in the room, and they wanted to chat incessantly about their home country. I explained the interview process to them and requested their questions and concerns about the research. I informed them that I would contact them in their ESL classes after I checked with their teachers to schedule interviews. Each student participant left my office with a smile and inquired about the next meeting. A few Haitian student participants returned with their friends who wanted to meet me and participate in the study. One student remarked, "I want to talk too, Miss; I want people to know more about me and how Haitian people are. I am good student!" For the purpose of this research, I could not expand the scope of my study beyond Haitian students currently enrolled in secondary ESL classes.

Another Haitian student returned alone and asked for me by name. She explained to me that her cousin wanted to participate in the research; his consent form was returned but he does not speak. I asked her to elaborate about her cousin not being able to speak; she started laughing and informed me that she meant that he could not speak English because he was new to the United States. She suggested that she could bring him to my office and be his translator during the study. I graciously accepted her offer, gave her an informed consent form, and continued with the same introductory procedure that I used for the other student participants.

Short narratives. This research piqued the interest of at least becoming more familiar and aware of the once unobserved population of foreign-born Blacks within the research context. The participatory and collaborative nature of this action research provided opportunities for ESL teachers to consider the unique context of foreign-born Blacks as ESL students. I requested the adult participants via email to write a short narrative about the student participants. The narrative included, but was not limited to, the background, academic performance, and personality traits of their foreign-born Black students. Collecting short narratives via email afforded adult participants the opportunity to present their observations and opinions about foreign-born Black students in a less structured form (Meho & Tibbo, 2003; Murray & Sixsmith, 1998; Young et al., 1998).

I asked teacher participants to create short descriptions of each student participant, sharing their perceptions of them as a student in the ESL classroom. The faculty participants prepared short narratives that included but were not limited to the student participants' background, academic abilities, and overall personalities in their respective classes. I wanted the teacher participants to take notice of foreign-born Black students in their classrooms; the short narratives gave the teacher participants an opportunity to give attention to this population by actually observing these students in relationship to their peers and teachers in their natural classroom setting. These narratives are provided below with the corresponding teacher pseudonym.

Rence, from Ghana, West Africa, is 15 years old. She is a sophomore student, who has been in the United States since December, 2010. Teacher participants noticed that Rence set high standards for her academics and has a pleasant disposition:

> I had the pleasure of having Rence in my class. Rence is from Ghana and entered my ESL class in late September. She was a very happy student who always had a smile on her face. She came to my class with a background of more English and schooling than most of my students. She received all A's on her report card.

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Rence comes to my class almost every day this year to visit and say hello. It is wonderful students like Rence that make my job as an ESL teacher so enjoyable! (MSK)

Rence, from Ghana, has a warm personality; everyone feels comfortable around her. She arrived during the academic year and excelled immediately. She enjoyed working with others, followed directions, and held a high standard for herself. Presentations always stand out, and hers were presented with pride. She was a joy to teach. (SJC)

Rie, from Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti, is 14 years old. She is freshman student, who has been in the United States since July, 2007. In the following descriptions, two teacher participants mention her strong sense of cultural pride and propensity to excel as a student:

Rie is from Haiti, and that class knew about the devastating earthquake. They bombarded Rie with questions about conditions now, and if there still might be something they could do. They were fascinated with Haitian Creole, and Rie happily obliged giving the class a few lessons. Also, they learned about Haitian history and food. Rie is an excellent source of all things Haitian. Bon appétit! (TQM)

Rie, from Haiti, is charming. Her smile is illuminating. She worked well in groups, but during presentations she was inhibited; her bright social personality became closed and tired. Academic successes were marginal, but that did not show her capabilities. In a class of 30, she required multiple explicit cues. In a class of 10 or 15, I could see her excel. She was a pleasure to teach. (SJC)

Adou , from Kaedi, Mauritania, West Indies, is 19 years old. He is a junior student, who has been in the United States since December 2010. Comments about Adou underscore his character and desire to learn:

Adou, from Mauritania, is personable and quiet, very focused. He arrived later in the year and quickly acclimated. His politeness and adherence to standards was refreshing, an energy boost. His effort was apparent, as he presented assignments and worked well with others. His attention to the teacher's voice, followed by visual attention, marks his standard of respect, an academic indicator, too. An excellent student, he was and is an asset to a class. (SJC)

Adou entered the country very quiet, and having limited English skills and background. He was a very motivated student, who was determined to improve

his skills. In my tutorial class, he quickly improved his comprehension and writing and learned new vocabulary and idioms. Adou has become very popular with not just the ESL population of students but students from all over the school. Adou always carries a big smile, and is always very friendly. He has become very confident with his abilities as a student. His progress has been very rapid, and I know he will continue to progress. (MJM)

When Adou entered our class, the students had by then become more familiar with Africa and African geography. They immediately wanted to know all they could about Mauritania and Adou and whether or not he could play basketball, simply because he is so tall. The entire class learned so much from Louve and Adou, and I was so thankful they were a vibrant part of our class. (TQM)

Ean, from Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti is 15 years old. He is a freshman student, who has been in the United States since March 2011. The teacher participants provided a detailed account about Ean as a newcomer student:

Ean was a student in my ESL Newcomer class last year. This year, he is again my student in ESL 1. Ean is from Haiti and was a very quiet student and often reticent to speak. He has experienced some difficulties in applying what is being taught in the classroom. He sometimes requires additional time to complete in-class activities but when provided with this extra time, is able to successfully finish the task. In conversations with one of his relatives, I learned that Ean is not very motivated to practice English outside of the classroom. I am happy to report, however, that this year, he has opened up a bit more and is using English to converse with his fellow classmates although he is still quite shy. I continue to encourage Ean to "come out from his shell" and increase his interactions in English with others and am designing activities to allow him to do so. (MD)

Ean, from Haiti, is quiet and polite. He started as a seed and began slowly sprouting. He doesn't interact a lot with other students, but his focus in class is excellent. Watch him reach the sky! He was and is a pleasure to teach. (SJC)

Vi, from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is 15 years old. He is a freshman student, who has been in the United States since August, 2007. Here are narratives that capture the many facets of the personality of Vi:

Vi, from Haiti, was challenging and polite, but a rule breaker. His class exploits were minor, but they derailed his academic focus. Many cues and encouragement were left on the floor of the classroom. He charmed his way. He taught the teacher many lessons. Thanks! (SJC)

Vi was my student for 1 year. He is from Haiti. Vi has two sides to his personality: a good side and a bad side. His bad side always seemed to need to have everyone's attention. He really tried to push the envelope with rules. If I dealt with him one-on-one, he was a different person. He has a very good heart, and he's very religious. I hope that as he matures, he will outgrow his need to have his peers' approval. Vi's writing skills are his weakest skill in English. His handwriting is poor because he rushes to finish an assignment as quickly as he can. His reading comprehension is quite good. If Vi applies himself and completes his homework, he will do well in his mainstream classes. (BMM)

Adel, from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is 15 years old. He is a sophomore student, who

has been in the United States since September, 2009. The comments from two teacher

participants illustrate similar notable, strong academic qualities of Adel:

Adel, from Haiti, was a growing tree. His wisdom and academic growth was apparent throughout the year. He asked many questions and succeeded. He was an excellent collaborator in group situations, very responsible. He was a joy to teach. (SJC)

Adel was my student for 2 years. He was a dream to have in class! He is a very polite young man. He came to the United States from Haiti extremely well educated. During the past 2 years, it has been a pleasure watching his personality become more outgoing. Adel continues to be eager to learn. He is considering a career in nursing, and I have encouraged him to pursue that. All of Adel's skills in English are very strong. His organizational skills and attention to detail will serve him well in his future endeavors. I have no doubt he will be successful in whatever pursuits he follows. (BMM)

Bea, from Ghana, West Africa, is 16 years old. She is a junior student, who has

been in the United States since September, 2008. Teacher participants took notice of her

maturation process as well as her attitude about learning:

Bea entered the class very immature. Bea at first was very lazy, and would try to get out of her work. However, during the year, she matured greatly and really picked it up. Bea transformed into a diligent worker. Her grades greatly improved as did her confidence as well. (MJM)

Bea was my student for 2 years. She was an enjoyable student because she has an outgoing personality and a good sense of humor. She is from Ghana. During the 2009-2010 school year, Bea returned to Ghana for a couple of months. She didn't seem to lose or gain English proficiency while she was gone. Her reading and writing skills have never been strong, but she is able to make herself understood. I

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think a lot of this had to do with the fact that Bea is more interested in her social life rather than her studies. She has become quite adept at doing the bare minimum to get by. She was not happy to leave ESL, but I feel that she can have success in her mainstream classes if she applies herself. (BMM)

I had the esteemed privilege of teaching with Bea. She was a bit reticent about staying in the class at first, as she believed that there was no way she could pass the HSPA exam. However, once she became aware of certain methods and approaches to test taking that were to be mastered she applied herself to learning all that she could in preparation for the exam. There were times when it seemed overwhelming to her but what I appreciated the most about Bea was that she never gave up. She knew what she was capable of achieving, and she worked to strengthen those abilities. I am sure that while the exam may prove to be challenging for her, she will move toward taking the test with a mind to pass it and not to fail. I would venture to say that she left the class with a measure of self-confidence that will support her as she endeavors to complete the proficiencies required for her high school diploma. I look forward to seeing her score results, as I am sure they will express a measure of success. (NLM)

Bin, from Addis, Ababa, is 18 years old. He is a senior student, who has been in

the United States since September, 2008. The comments below highlight his disposition

as of one of his enduring traits:

Bin was truly a pleasure to have in my class. He was one of the most pleasant and caring students in the department. He was an ultimate team player. Bin really helped mentor other students. His English also improved greatly, especially his vocabulary and reading comprehension. He made great strides and worked very hard to graduate. (MJM)

The first time I had Bin as a student, he was in my ESL 1 class. I have never seen Bin angry. Although it's hokey to say, his smile lights up a room. He was a definite bright spot in my ESL 3 class last year! His personality had grown so much from when he was my shy ESL 1 student. All of the students adored him—it was almost as if he were President! He is my second student from Ethiopia—both students had beautiful, positive personalities. Bin's reading and writing skills were not very strong, but he has only been in the United States for about 3 years, so I am confident that if he continues his education, he will continue to strengthen his reading and writing skills. It was so gratifying to see Bin picking up his diploma in September! (BMM)

Louve, from Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, is 19 years old. She is a senior student,

who has been in the United States since September, 2009. MJM noticed how Louve

evolved linguistically, academically, and socially during the course of the school year.

MJM comments:

> Louve progressed very well during the 2010-2011 academic school year. Her
> progress was displayed as she became a more responsible student. Her language
> skills greatly improved, especially in regards to performing presentations. At the
> beginning of the year she was very hesitant to speak in public. Toward the end of
> the year she loved being the star of the show. Louve, from a social outlook,
> became more outgoing and very social with her classmates from all parts of the
> country. It was a pleasure watching her growth as a student and individual.
> (MJM)

In the following description, a teacher participant described Louve, Adou, and Rie, whom

their classmates admired and respected:

> I had the pleasure of getting to know three outstanding students: Louve, Adou,
> and Rie. Louve and Adou were in the same ESL class. The students in the class
> were fascinated with Louve and Adou because they spoke French. The rest of the
> class really had no idea where the Ivory Coast was, let alone Mauritania. This
> provided a fantastic opportunity to explain that Africa is not a country, but a
> continent consisting of more than 57 countries. Louve made a lively presentation
> about the Ivory Coast. Louve was always very well dressed and elegant, and the
> class paid rapt attention and asked excellent questions. When, last year, there was
> political turmoil in the Ivory Coast, the class was genuinely concerned for
> Louve's family back home. (TQM)

Although foreign-born Black ELLs share some common characteristics, given

cultural and linguistic variations, they are a particularly heterogeneous and diverse group

of learners. The framework of CRT allowed me to ascertain, recognize, comprehend, and

reveal experiences of foreign-born Black ELLs who are outside the dominant culture of

traditional ESL students (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). ESL teachers were given the

opportunity to take in-depth notice of foreign-born Blacks, members of marginalized

students in ESL, through observation. Providing these details about the context of perceptions in classrooms contributed to encapsulating these students' lived experiences. Sharing the perceptions help ESL educators to understand the emergent population of foreign-born Black ELLs' diversity, prior knowledge skills, attitudes, beliefs, and background educational experiences. Specific groups have their own set of shared social boundaries, which are defined and learned by group members. Several factors contribute to cultural models or identity such as geographical region, ethnicity, displacement, natural origin, education, social class, religion, gender, and contact with other cultures. I needed to figure out a means to explain what I was doing and why it was important for foreign-born Blacks in ESL as well as for other immigrant children.

I began sharing my discoveries in Cycle I with adult participants through meetings each month. Initially, I shared discoveries about my study; however, as time progressed, they demonstrated interest and took ownership by asking me questions about my research, offering feedback, and providing updated information. Also, I shared my experience and evolving findings with my building principal, who gave me individual time and attention to formally as well informally discuss my discoveries. My concerns and generated knowledge about foreign-born Blacks in ESL provided insight about practices within ESL and the mainstream culture. This information would not have been available to the building principal, a major decision maker, about challenges worthy of addressing and the qualities involved in ensuring that challenges are handled effectively. Sharing my experiences and emerging data extended beyond the formality of a meeting; it became an infused topic during informal conversations, telephone calls, e-mails, and digressions during meetings on unrelated topics with faculty, administrators, and adult

participants. Details about how I shared discoveries with student participants are detailed in Cycle II.

Limitations to Cycle I

I faced some challenges making this project with ELL students viable, worthwhile, and reliable. Among the limitations I encountered during this cycle was the time spent on planning, accessing data, sorting data, analyzing data, and all the other actions necessary to develop and implement the research. At the inception of my research, I had numerous responsibilities at school. I was a curriculum supervisor, and I was the department head of four departments, which meant that I was a responsible for a plethora of organizational and administrative tasks. I was concerned about the time that I could realistically dedicate to the research project.

I was initially apprehensive about presenting my research topic because it was connected to race. I wanted to be sure that it was possible to share results that could enable ESL teachers to gain an understanding about foreign-born Blacks at the conclusion of the research. I found both of these constraints to be challenging because of the complexity of the topic; I wanted to use my research as a means to heighten the awareness of the culture of foreign-born Blacks within ESL classes.

Experiences from Cycle I made me aware that conducting an action research project was not an easy task to embark upon, but what I learned made me feel that it was not something that would be unachievable. Although I found constraints in the research process during Cycle I, I considered possible solutions that could be more effective for the participants, the ESL Department, and my role as the researcher, and future cycles. As I took into account the possible constraints and ways in which to address perceived and

actual challenges, I relied heavily upon my leadership skills, which also became an

essential part of the learning process during Cycle I as well as subsequent cycles.

Leadership Applications in Cycle I

I had to be self-critical as I aspired to understand the relationship between the

actions and circumstances that surrounded my research (Burns, 1999; Hinchey, 2008;

Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998; Mills, 2003; Stringer, 1996; Wallace, 2000). I documented

notes about myself to reflect my sentiments as I was going through various spirals of

Cycle I (Mills, 2003; Hinchey, 2008). The basis of my research was demystifying

foreign-born Blacks; revealing information about their culture and learning experiences

that may heighten an awareness of this population in ESL. However, one of the ironical

discoveries during Cycle I was that as I identified student participants, I realized that

although I was familiar with some of their faces, I did not know anything about the

students' backgrounds, personalities, and academic backgrounds prior to the research.

This contributed to the elimination of possible preconceived notions about student

participants, but increased my motivation to learn as much as I could within the limited

timeframe. In my journal, I stated:

> For a while, I have seen some brown faces with silent voices in ESL classrooms.
> What do I call this student population? I know that they are not African
> Americans but for the purposes of further investigation, can they, for example, be
> called Africans even though they are living in America? But they are not all
> Africans! If I am thinking about this group, how do I put a name to these faces?
> Before I get back to thinking about these brown/black faces for now I will call
> them Blacks in ESL. However, I am not satisfied; my concern is unsettling.
> Actually, it is driving me crazy. Right now, I feel extremely dumb. I have traveled
> the world, have immersed myself in various cultures, and have learned so much
> information about language, culture, and communication during the course of my
> lifetime—how could I not know what term to call this group. Although I have
> learned better as result of this experience, I still feel dumb about putting names to
> the faces given the fact that the African heritage is connected to my own culture!

I found the appropriate operational definition for my student participants after exhaustive exploration of the categorization of Diasporian students in ESL. I started using foreign-born Blacks, the term that derived from the extensive research about what I initially thought would be a basic familiar identification of this population. I found that the more I used the term when engaged in discussions about the research and the student participants, faculty members throughout the research context started to reference this population in the same manner with confidence. This subtle aspect of leadership of slowly introducing the culture to the larger population and giving the nameless, voiceless, group a source of identification was a small milestone at the inception of my research (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

I became more cognizant of minor things as I progressed. I noticed that information about foreign-born Blacks was accessed from multiple school records and information from some faculty members did not correspond when initially cross-referenced. I found one key informant who had the most accurate data and developed a plan to verify demographic information with each potential participant to ensure accuracy. I made notes of the different data sources that had inaccurate information and listed suggestions for improvement that was shared with the appropriate personnel.

I knew from experience that being able to access students by demographic information can be very helpful in providing background information. During the conceptualization of my research in Cycle I, the Haitian students were beset on Tuesday, January 12, 2010, with a major earthquake. An administrator wanted the Haitian students to meet in efforts to offer comfort, support, and assistance. During this time, the focal points of my observations were interactions and comments that placed emphasis on the

importance of students' background and recognition of respective cultures. In my journal, I documented the following:

> An administrator approached me this morning and told me he heard about the earthquake in Haiti and it is very upsetting. He said he knew that I was really upset because I was just there. He asked that we call the Haitian students to the conference room and set up counseling services for them. I called a few counselors down to the conference room that I knew who were sensitive to needs of all students. An ESL teacher made an announcement on the intercom for Haitian students to report to the conference room. When I reported back to the conference room, the students had not shown up yet. I called the respective offices that have access to student information and asked all the students from Haiti to report to the conference room. Much to my surprise, students starting arriving who were from Africa. I explained that I was looking for another group of students from Haiti. Although some entered with smiles and puzzled expressions, they all left in disappointment. One teacher called the principal's secretary and asked in indignant tone, "How do I know if any of my students are Haitian? How am I supposed to know that?" The ESL testing coordinator had to help as best as possible by going through a list to see how students self-identified during testing. This took some time—valuable time that belonged to distraught children. *Why is there so much confusion about knowing about students? Why isn't vital information about these students readily accessible? Did the teacher ever have a conversation with his students to learn background information about them? How does the lack of knowledge make students feel?*

The experiences, observations, and contemplations in Cycle I fostered a collaborative approach to problem solving. Many instances in Cycle I related to transformational leadership in that I had to select a purpose and foster as well as support all the changes that evolved from actions (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is when leaders and followers motivate each other to advance to an increased level of motivation that leads to positive change.

Transformational leadership recognizes the strength of vision and personality; transformational leaders share their vision, which inspires followers to change expectations, perceptions, and motivations to work towards common goals (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Sharing my personal vision enabled me to gain support, intellectual

stimulation as a result of questions and views that arose, and conceptualize change, as well as modeling change for ESL educators that extended to other faculty and administrators (Bass, 1985; Burns 1978; Fullan, 2001, 2003, 2007; Kotter, 1996, 2008).

In efforts to gain understanding about foreign-born Blacks in ESL, reflection and application occurred throughout Cycle I. I questioned how my research as well as experiences from it influenced me as an educator, researcher, and leader (Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1977; Hinchey, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; McTaggart, 1997; Mills, 2003). Various interactions, challenges, decisions, and actions promoted recognition of a shared fluidity of research and relationships, which were a crucial combination during the continuation of this investigation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Burns, 1999; Creswell, 2007; Mills, 2003).

Conclusion to Cycle I

The purpose of Cycle I was to gather background information for the viability of the research and the selection of participants connected to the ESL program. It was quite an arduous task to attempt to piece together information about the demographics of potential participants. I accessed the school database to identify foreign-born Black students and cross referenced demographic information with the ESL testing coordinator in efforts to identify students in ESL who self-identified as Black. The testing data represented all subgroups in ESL, which provided a greater analysis of data based on demographic and self-identification factors and provided an accurate representation of my target population under study.

This cycle included the actions of developing relationships; interviewing key informants; accessing and reviewing documents; calling attention to the need to create

and maintain a system that correctly identifies foreign-born students in the school database; and establishing collaboration to obtain information, participants, and consent. I learned that I would not have been able to acquire any information without access, key informants, and collaborative efforts. During this phase, I began to develop relationships with teacher and student participants, and others, by extension of the processes during this initial cycle.

The activities in Cycle I advanced my investigation to include acting on evidence, evaluating, and planning next steps. At the conclusion of Cycle I, I found that trust was a factor for me as a leader as I attempted to gain access to information in efforts to guide a change effort. The change framework of Kotter (1996) became apparent when I began to realize as well as experience the hard work found in various aspects of Cycle I. My experiences mimicked Kotter's change progression of developing an essential vision, communicating widely about the vision, stimulating the interests of people to engage in action, ensuring credibility, gaining short-term wins, leading change, and securing new innovative approaches within the organizational culture. Without communication, collaboration, and teamwork, I would not have been able to obtain any information or assistance; establishing trust advanced the process and progress during Cycle I.

Cycle I helped me to gain insight about the level of awareness of foreign-born Black ELLs. I documented observations and interactions, recorded notes about my leadership, reviewed the countries of origin of student participants, and read information about the demographic identification of people from the respective various Diasporian regions. Information from Cycle I contributed to the development of a semi-structured interview protocol, which allowed me to prepare consistent questions for participants and

explore topics relevant to my research (Hinchey, 2008). In Cycle II, I used the data

collected in Cycle I as a foundation for the interviews I conducted with participants who

agreed to assist me in demystifying foreign-born ELL in my educational context.

Chapter V

Cycle II

During the initial process of data collection in Cycle I, I asked ESL faculty various questions concerning their perceptions about foreign-born Black ELLs. This provided background information about the basic extent of perceptions faculty shared at the inception of the research. This cycle enabled me to work with ESL teachers in a different capacity as research participants and establish parameters, expectations, and various aspects of a plan to work together with the student participants. I found this time to be essential to convey the purpose of the research, develop relationships, and establish trust. Trust was established by ensuring that the participants had clarity about what the research was about and what to expect during the process. During Cycle II, it was crucial for me to establish and substantiate my role as a researcher, share expectations and timeframes, and continue to gain their trust. I continued the cyclic components of action research by committing to plan, act, observe, and reflect as I progressed through the study (Hinchey, 2008).

Cycle II began in March 2011 and concluded in July 2011. Cycle II of this action research advanced the inquiry about the perceptions of foreign-born Blacks ELLs who have been part of the current ESL setting; however, Cycle II overlapped with Cycle III, which continued to build upon actions and data collection activities.

Cycle II: Gathering Data and Acting on Evidence

In this cycle, observations, document analysis, and interviews provided multiple data sources for the understanding of the lived experiences of foreign-born Black ELLs.

Moreover, the cyclical nature of action research contributed to the evolutions of plans, actions, observations, and evaluations that may lead to improvements in the overall nature of the study (McTaggart, 1997). I continued to employ the same color-coding process as in Cycle I. The analysis strategies for observations, document review, and interviews allowed patterns to emerge from data. I used CRT to explore any instances of possible oppressive experiences of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs by categorizing gathered data by the inclusion or exclusion of race and ethnic concerns in ESL education. I classified and coded interview and document data that disclosed instances of race, ethnicity, and the degree of visibility and placed these indications in a priori categories of *disclosed, minimally disclosed*, and *not disclosed*. The themes that emerged in this cycle were (a) leading shared change, (b) recognition of the culture, and (c) lack of awareness. In this chapter, I discuss highlights of each theme in Cycle II. During this action research cycle, opinions, observations, and perceptions were substantiated based on data and overall research. Motivations for changes in practice stemmed from the cyclical process of systematically collecting and gathering information. Also, I explain how data from Cycle II were used as a simultaneous continuation of actions in Cycle III.

Recognition of the Culture

The theme *recognition of culture* stems from the absence of presence and acknowledgment of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. During the course of my research, particularly during the observations, it was shown that teachers were inconsistent in their efforts take notice of the students' strong Diasporian heritage – their native language, experiences related to their home countries, and the spectrum of cultural mores – which demonstrated an absence of recognition of the culture in the classroom. The limited

attention given to the presence of foreign-born Blacks compounded feelings of alienation, as these students did not have any educational content that incorporated their personal and cultural experiences into their classroom and learning experiences. A student participant observed, "They never asked me about how we lived in West Africa but sometimes they talk about the way we dance…if they ask, I tell them it's different…I feel very sad…I want a lot of people to know me." Failing to notice considerable aspects of students' cultural identities and experiences and not taking into account important various aspects of their lives, unintentionally presents a void in the schooling experiences for foreign-born Blacks in ESL (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Lopez, 2002; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b; Tajfel, 1978; Tatum, 1992).

In the role of participant observer, I strove to ensure that I was a careful observer. I scheduled observations with teachers who had the necessary background and student population that were conducive to the needs of the research. I managed the responsibilities of my extended dual role as a supervisor and researcher participating in fieldwork by selecting observation times during the school day that were not subject to heightened "action." I made this plan based on the past experiences with school climate, students' temperaments, school calendar, activities, and daily schedules. Glesne (2005) notes that participant observation attempts to "make the strange familiar and the familiar strange" (p. 51). I constantly questioned my perceptions and assumptions about my observational data by revisiting and challenging my thoughts and findings through analytical memo taking in response to my field notes (Glesne, 2005).

During my observations, I found a place that was not extremely visible or disrupting, in an effort to assume the role of observer, and compiled field notes of events

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in real-time. Although I visited classes frequently, I found that in my role as observer, observations proceeded as normal because no attention or significance was attributed to my presence.

Data were generated regarding the phenomenon under investigation as a result of the analysis of field notes that referenced specific observations of foreign-born Blacks among heterogeneous ELLs. Inductive coding of observation field notes provided a framework to think about the characteristics of foreign-born Black ELLs. Some were extremely vocal and received immediate acceptance and attention, while others were silent, sullen, and reserved. Patterns of teacher-student dynamics also became evident. Given the nature of cross-cultural observations of teacher – student engagements in ESL classes, I noticed an emergent category during observations around silence and smiles. During the course of each observation, smiles were reciprocated among all involved parties. I noticed that the universality of smiles was something that was worthy of note, because smiles seemed to substitute participation and student interactions. The lack of voice of foreign-born Blacks in ESL became a prevalent theme that evolved from the initial theme of recognition of the culture, as evidenced by patterns of communication that included the categories of instructional, interpersonal, and non-verbal exchanges. In one particular instance, while walking down a crowded hallway, I thought about past observations of foreign-born Blacks either silently passing to classes or having a hurried conversation with their peers in their native language that immediately stopped when someone unknown approached. When I reflected on my thoughts about the social aspect of foreign-born Blacks in a large urban secondary school, I journaled:

> How do foreign-black students or actually any foreign-born students feel when they walk down the crowded American high school hallways. There is an

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expression that says you never know a person until you walk in their shoes. I have observed that the foreign-born students often travel through the halls unnoticed…They have stories to share voice to be heard…I believe most would be surprised if we "walked a mile in their shoes" – To where would it lead? I believe that sometimes they feel alienated –meaning that when they are in school sometimes they could not feel like themselves (i.e., alienation, acculturation, assimilation, and other "-ations")--like strangers in their shoes.

I compared data from my personal reflections to an experience when I shifted the observations to a setting that focused solely on foreign-born Blacks students in ESL outside the classroom as a means to recognize the presence of the culture of foreign-born Black students within the school. Initially, I stated in my researcher journal, "I have no idea how things are going to turn out. I am a little nervous because I will be dealing with a group of students who are virtually invisible by choice, circumstances, or more. Who knows? Time will reveal."

In efforts to compare and contrast my observational data, I wanted to observe the participants in a different realm. Although the library was a somewhat familiar place for some participants, it transitioned into a welcoming environment that focused solely on Diasporan students in ESL for that particular day; this type of attention challenged the status quo of traditional school actions as indicated by comments, facial expressions, and body language of some onlookers. Since I was familiar with the research setting, participant observation allowed me to focus on the settings, participants, and behaviors to gain a deeper understanding of these students and contribute to their sense of visibility in the educational process. An excerpt from my field notes highlighted the experience:

> Today, I was a participant-observer as foreign-born Blacks students participated in a variety of activities with the focus "Celebrate You!" I requested that the library be closed so that foreign-born Black students could have an exclusive setting to share their culture- special and important… uninterrupted time and attention. As they trickled into the library, they looked confused and anxious. However, their expressions changed when an ESL teacher with whom they were

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familiar smiled, greeting them and welcomed them to the table with the others. Initially, the students ate a light breakfast that I provided and looked around the room to try figure out what to expect. After observing the foreign-born Black students for a period of time I noticed that the foreign-born Black students became less reserved as time progressed. I saw smiles and positive facial expressions. I also overheard interesting stories. Comments from such as "Wow!" "This is great!" "Interesting!" "Intriguing!" were expressed by participants.

Students expressed excitement about being the focus of the activities and allowed me, as an action researcher, to both collect data and to act on previous findings regarding the students' hidden culture. In addition, I used this opportunity to share my research discoveries with students in a private forum before the "Celebrate You!" program began.

Interview data also contributed to the development of this theme and was the most illustrative of the treatment of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. One student participant opined, "[I want to be] a better person. [I want] to experience more things and talk about my culture, my country and my color and my feelings." Another student participant stated, "I don't think people notice me in the school because I don't have much friends and I'm not loud or speak English like they do." However, data also revealed that the limited instances of recognition weren't always positive; a student participant observed, "Some people recognize me. Some like to bully me. Like when you try to talk, your accent is a little funny and people tell me to be quiet. Maybe because I'm trying to be smart and they don't like that!"

Data from Cycle II showed that some foreign-born Black students felt that their teachers did not know much about them or, in some cases, what the students thought the teachers should know or needed to know about them. There was limited understanding of their previous educational experiences and underlying factors that contributed to their current concepts of being a "student" in the American context. In addition, the student

participants found opportunities for aspects of their culture to be included in learning experiences ranged from rare to non-existent. Since Diasporian cultures have a strong sense of history and pride, the students interviewed were pensive when speaking about opportunities to bring their culture into their learning environment and limited classroom interactions.

I further triangulated my findings by reviewing school artifacts, also referred to as material culture, to gain a greater insight into the culture of the ESL Department. I met with faculty members who contributed or had access to ESL documents and artifacts. While in the field, I encountered skepticism when I attempted to procure materials. When I sought out documents that I knew existed, it was difficult to determine source information, such as the location of items and creators of specific documents. I had difficulty finding materials in a reasonable time; some items that were once available never surfaced.

I realized that as part of my quest to collect material culture, I had to resolve issues regarding the retrieval of documents by being tenacious. I followed up daily with gatekeepers about my request for particular items and other items that they could potentially offer. I considered individuals as "leads" if they were knowledgeable about information regarding ESL and my student participants. I also questioned reasons provided by staff and teachers for the lack of artifact availability, especially those items designed purposely for sharing information with parents and acclimating students to the school culture. As a result of my experience and frustration, I offered suggestions to stakeholders about addressing the lack of availability of information. The pursuit of material culture created opportunities for me to continue to develop relationships, as well

as piqued interests and inquiries relevant to the research topic. Each encounter provided me with opportunities to engage in conversations about the research topic and acquire leads on potentially useful documents and other school artifacts.

I collected, considered, and classified material culture designed to represent the entire ESL perspective within my educational context. My sample represented items that were presented to the community, parents, faculty, and students. Moreover, some of these items included material culture that was created as a result of joint collaborations between faculty and students. I selected various items based upon the level of recognition of respective cultures and information available to enhance the social, cultural, and academic experiences of immigrant students. My sample represented items that were presented to the community, parents, faculty, and students. Material culture included items that were joint collaborations between faculty and students. The material culture of the ESL Department included artifacts from the ESL Student-Staff Dessert Programs, ESL Senior Dinner, field trips, newspaper articles, Orientation DVD, ESL student handbook, photographs, memory books, Immigrant Newcomer Student Center Brochure, and student-produced movie productions.

I gave consideration to material culture by thinking about the history of the documents and essential purpose. My sample included visual and textual representation of the ESL population from the local newspaper articles, school records, information brochures, and teacher/student-centered video projects to welcome new students. These artifacts that represent the ESL staff and students could be considered as historical data that enables me as a researcher to gain perspectives (Glesne, 2005). Artifacts can

represent data that unveils different patterns of behaviors which allows for improved

connections to ideas or events (Glesne, 2005).

I considered the documents in terms of the context of the production, purpose of

the presentation, anticipated and actual audiences, and the contextual conditions in which

the documents were developed and being interpreted (Hodder, 2002). Factors about the

authors of documents were important to analyze because finished products represented

the authors' interpretations and provided background information about what the author

was trying to accomplish. I gathered material culture to look carefully at behaviors that

may have been interrelated to my topic by using Hodder's (2002) suggested methods.

These methods include: identifying the context within which items can share meaning,

recognizing similarities and differences within context boundaries, and considering the

parallel evaluation of similarities and differences providing a framework for the analysis

of documents.

Hodder (2002) stated that particular texts can be understood as a form of artifact

produced under certain material conditions embedded within social and ideological

systems. I used CRT as a theoretical lens to categorize the inclusion or exclusion of

foreign-born Blacks in ESL documents. The content analysis included contextual and

thematic analyses, which included categorizing, coding, and noting the frequency of

concepts and patterns in the data collected (Anfara et al., 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994;

Hodson, 1999; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I classified and coded data by color-coding and

noting the instances and frequencies of the textual and visual representation of foreign-

born Blacks. The a priori categories that considered the exposure of the race and ethnicity

of foreign-born Blacks in ESL ranged from *minimally disclosed* to *not disclosed*. In the

case of thematic analysis representative of materials and documents representative of the culture, a priori categories were visible, minimally visible, and not visible. The thematic analysis followed the patterns of the inclusion or exclusion of ESL students representative of the population under study.

The analysis of documents and material culture contributed to my understanding of history of cross-cultural visibility, recognition, and relationships within my school context. The continual analysis of text and theme statements and the variations of themes and categories that transcended documents contributed to a better conceptualization and understanding of experiences. Existing data sources revealed patterns of invisibility in specific documents that were translated and directed to specific cultures. Coding the documentary evidence, written, oral, and visual artifacts relevant to ESL revealed the themes of the need for or the lack of visibility and validation.

During this aspect of Cycle II, I realized that perceptions about foreign-born Blacks as ELLs were related to the overall presentation of their respective cultures in ESL documents. Hodder (2003) notes that analyzing text provides information that may differ from, as well as not be present in, spoken form; and because text withstands time, it can provide historical insights. The collection and critical examination of material culture unveiled how the ESL department established reality and shaped knowledge relevant to treatment of and level of inclusivity of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. An example of the inadequacies in the representation of foreign-born Blacks in ESL was reflected in the limited information available for parents and students associated with the African Diaspora.

As I reflected on the material collection process, I found that data gathered provided an historical insight about foreign-born Blacks and ESL. The artifacts of an organization include the formal descriptions by which behaviors and actions have become routine and acceptable (Schein, 2004). Data included tangible artifacts such as school programs, newspaper articles, and brochures that gave minimal insight about foreign-born Blacks in ESL; however, this material culture was created by or on behalf of the ESL Department to give information, meaning, and attention to ESL interests. Also, contrary data about the lack of emphasis and representation of foreign-born Blacks in ESL originated from the absence of data in selected material culture. Through observations, interviews and the review of material culture, I established a clearer understanding of cross-cultural perceptions of both student and teacher participants.

Lack of Awareness

Although my study context has become pluralistic and more accepting over the years, race-based topics are still sensitive subjects. From the vantage point of participants who were not familiar with the Black cultures or who may be apprehensive about intensive cross-cultural interactions, this may have presented some level of perplexity about the information I was seeking and what I actually planned to do with it. Lack of awareness as a theme highlights the widespread ambiguity about foreign-born Blacks that I encountered from examples such as gathering demographic data, receiving inconsistent data in reference to the same case, as well as comments from both participants such as: "unknown," "ignorant," "racist," "mysterious," "society," "skin color," "unique," "different," and "quietness," and phrases such as "they don't know me," "my country is not like…," "I never gave that group much thought," "Well, we only have a few of

them," "I don't much about them, and I never thought to ask," and "how am I supposed to know about the background of these students?"

In addition to the observation and material culture data that shaped the theme, lack of awareness, perceptions of foreign-born Blacks and their experiences in ESL of the student and teacher participants were captured in the interview process. An excerpt from an interview with an adult participant frankly details information that contributed to the discovery of the theme:

> Prior to your research, no real consideration had been given to these students. They were lumped in with African American students overall, and the ESL teachers were faced with addressing them as second language students; but in the minds of both students and teachers, they were not supposed to be in our class. No one looked like them in the ESL classes, no one related to them outside of the classes; and everyone treated them like what they did not know was their own fault given the various opportunities available to them, as Black people in the United States. Now that this study has shed light on their presence, an awareness of who they are as foreign-born Black students provides added insight for the teachers and cultural significance for the students. (NLM)

Moreover, some student participants found that the lack of awareness and understanding of their culture was often disheartening in their overall school experiences. One student participant candidly expressed:

> About my culture and how my country is good because a lot of times with the information they know only about the bad stuff. Stuff like how Africans are starving and hungry. I want them to know that there are good parts too.

The review of the interview data and research questions coupled with critical feedback provided "new/old (mis)understandings" that advanced the progress of my work. In this particular instance, the data demonstrate pre-existing misconceptions about the culture of foreign-born blacks as either African America or as victims of a pervasive African crisis narrative.

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Prior to beginning the interview process, I field tested my interview questions with faculty members who were indirectly connected to ESL as well as former ESL students who recently exited the program to ensure that the questions were not overly complex for the respective participants. I revised questions for the student participants based upon their feedback as well as level of difficulty observed when I presented the questions, giving consideration to potential language limitations of ESL students.

At the inception of each interview with both student and adult participants, I reviewed the informed consent form, explained the purpose of the study, assured anonymity by assigning pseudonyms, and established comfortable levels before I began tape recording interviews. I interviewed seven ESL faculty members and nine student members; I used the multiple-interview approach to conduct a total of 14 adult interviews and 27 student interviews. One student participant required the assistance of a translator. Seidman (2006) notes that when researchers use multiple interviews, it helps to encourage a stronger relationship with participants; they may feel more at ease when discussing difficult and emotional experiences with someone with whom they have had prior contact and established a degree of trust. I considered the objectives for interviews for both student and adult participants and developed interview questions based upon previous observational data, field tests, and background information. During the interview process for both participant groups, I reflected about my behaviors as an interviewer and continued the same analysis about the interviewees.

When I noticed that the interviewees were somewhat concerned about how their responses would be interpreted, I provided assurance that they could respond openly and candidly, and the interview process would not be overwhelming. After the completion of

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the first few questions, participants became more relaxed and willing to share opinions and observations about the topic. Probing helped the respondents to expand their thinking about areas that were worthy of development. The combination of silence and probing presented respondents with the opportunities to revisit viewpoints that they may have been reluctant to expand.

During data analysis, I reviewed interview transcripts and looked for information that could have evolved into themes, information that was noticeably missing from the interview texts that could have evolved into themes, and information that was noticeably missing from the interview texts that could also serve as relevant data. Examining, classifying, and coding are techniques that make sense of interview data by presenting pieces to the puzzle as a finished product. Table 5.1 illustrates the iterations of analysis that occurred during Cycle II. The first cycle shows the a priori codes related to the theoretical framework of CRT. The second iteration shows needed actions to change mindsets and enhance cross-cultural knowledge. The third iteration shows what is needed to improve cross-cultural interactions.

Table 5.1

Iterations of Data Analysis

First Iteration	Second Iteration	Third Iteration
• Identity/Acculturation • Stigmas • Language Statuses • Lack of Awareness • Denial as a Barrier • Cultural perceptions	• Reducing xenophobia/ ethnocentrism • Recognizing unfamiliar cultures • Valuing cultural competencies • Accepting responsibility for learning • Participating Group learning • Developing an awareness of cultural patterns	• Value of cultural diversity • Dialogues • Improved authentic interactions • Increased active engagements • Time to learning about uncommon diverse cultures • Accurate information about cultures

During the interview process, the continuum of interviewees' emotions ranged

from excitement to curiosity. Content analysis and respondents' hesitancy in some

instances unveiled that some of the interviewees were not quite comfortable with the term

"foreign-born Blacks." I can surmise that it could have been because of their

unfamiliarity with the term or the grouping or dynamics of this student population. Some

interviewees limited or avoided the use of the term, which could have indicated the

participants' level of knowledge, comfort with the culture, and familiarity or

unfamiliarity with direct cross-cultural behaviors. I documented periods of silence that

may have indicated that some of the interviewees were reluctant or apprehensive

discussing a culture about which they were not that familiar. As an African American

researcher, I considered that given that 5 of 7 adult participants were Caucasian, some of

the participants may have been concerned about the possibility of saying "something wrong" or considered the topic to be one of awkward sensitivity.

On the opposite spectrum, one respondent made assumptions that I already knew a great deal about the topic and limited the discussion. A different interview with another respondent revealed specificity and passion when the interviewee was self-reflective about her lack of knowledge about Diasporian ELLs who were connected to her ancestral lineage. This information made me realize the impact of my research as it related to racial identity in ESL and strengthened the confidence in study. I revisited the review of the literature because I was excited that I could relate a newly acquired authentic experience to previous research. The research supported that reflection about racial identity can influence teaching practices that inhibit accepted colonial wisdom, afford more opportunities for the study of race in ESL classrooms, and consider the implication of racial identity in teaching practices (Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Yoon, 2008).

Data revealed that the level of indistinctness about foreign-born Blacks indicates that this student population has not been readily explored. The perspectives, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of the respondents evolved into data that revealed that cross-cultural relationships are difficult to initiate because of assumptions about particular culture and lack of cross-cultural understanding. Some may want to maintain the appearance of being knowledgeable and accepting unfamiliar culture.

I found the interview process to be more intense and complicated than the document analysis and observations. Through the interactions with adult participants, I gained a better understanding about student participants in terms of preparing for their interview experience. During Cycles I and II, I continued working with the ESL testing

coordinator and ESL faculty to learn information about the student participants. I learned basic information about language levels and social factors that would enable the best approach to each student participant. Being aware of the language levels enabled me to understand the student participants' self-concept, identification with their culture, and communicative practices during the research process.

I modified Seidman's (2006) three-interview series to conduct semi-structured interviews for the adult participants to encompass their backgrounds, experiences, and reflections. I combined interviews with different focuses and purposes due to scheduling constrictions. I combined the background interview information retrieved online with the interview that focused on the teachers' experiences. I scheduled the reflection and future outlook interview at the conclusion of the final cycle in conjunction with the final phase of member checking.

I used a different approach with the student participants because prior to conducting an interview, consideration must be given to the actual questions that will be presented, for the reason that "at the root of . . . interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2006, p. 3). Additional insight gained during Cycle II contributed to my decision to have the student participants engage in a three-part face-to-face interview approach. This approach enabled me to capture the essence of students' experiences with in-depth phenomenological interviewing. Seidman (2006) describes the three-part interview as: Focused life history, the first interview, allows participants to share as much as possible about themselves relevant to the topic. Details of experience, the second interview, focuses on the participants' experience in a particular topic area.

Reflection on the meaning, the final interview, encourages participants to consider the meaning of their experiences relevant to the topic.

As I planned for the student participant interview process, I reviewed the basic background information about ESL students that I had acquired from the adult participants to ensure that I was being mindful of any initial social, cultural, and linguistic concerns of ELLs. In designing these phenomenological interviews to collect data, I scheduled the three interviews separately, up to five days apart, because I did not want to overwhelm the student participants. The three-interview series was conducive for ELLs because it allowed for the flexibility to explore further views, positions, or reactions to previous interviews during subsequent interviews. Moreover, this approach allowed me to recapitulate significant points and clarify any points of concern, confusion, and content at the beginning of each new interview.

Although I employed the basic concept of the three-interview series from Seidman (2006), concentrating on student participants' experiences, context of their experience, and personal meaning of experiences, cultural, and linguistic factors shaped the student interview process. For the foreign-born Black students in this study, English was a second language and not all participants were at equivalent levels of English proficiency. Some participants had low language proficiency, which added difficulty during the rigorous interview process. One student participant was of newcomer status with less than 6 months in the United States; he required the assistance of a translator because his English was essentially non-existent. I made a note to greet him with a smile and hello at the beginning of each interview. During the first interview he mumbled to his translator, asked her for clarification, and responded to questions with head hung low

during the entire time. He made eye contact with me when I asked each question and turned to his translator to respond. By the time we approached the third interview; he greeted me with a smile and hello first and made a point to give additional comments at the conclusion of the interview via his translator.

Data revealed that foreign-born Black ELLs do not have learning situations that reference their culture; a sense of presence is missing. Voice is recurrently invalidated indicating feelings of visibility in terms of recognition and inclusion. The student participants are proud of their identities and experiences; they would like to see some of their cultural mores incorporated into their learning experiences. A few students attempted to recall a learning situation that included their culture. They struggled to find an example, after which they simply dismissed their response by explaining that it was fleeting, for example, based upon a vocabulary word in a story that briefly called attention to their respective culture. The lack of presence, voice, and visibility was denoted by phrases such as "not before the earthquake," " one time," " only American Blacks," "not usually at all in any of my classes," "no, never seen or heard anything," and, "I only hear about slaves." The student participant interviews brought these viewpoints to the forefront of their individual experiences. In addition to phrases, their emotions changed as they discussed experiences about connections and exposure to their own culture in the classrooms. During this portion of the interview, the student participants' answers were very short. Some shifted eye contact, frowned and shook their head they answered "no" or "never" with conviction about engaging in lessons that highlighted aspects of their culture. Moreover, none of the student participants elaborated about these types of learning experiences.

It was crucial that I considered important factors before interviewing, such as recognizing and understanding cross-cultural behavior related to values and functional language to help put the participants at ease. The depth of the face-to-face, one-to-one interviews contributed to the richness of the communication. Student interviews depended heavily on face-to-face communication to amplify non-verbal and verbal communication to increase understanding of unfamiliar situations, words, and statements. I had to distinguish the language with which each student participant would feel the most comfortable. The one participant who had little to no language ability still wanted to participate. Initially, I considered asking a French teacher to assist with the interview translation process. However, after I was presented with this challenge, I consulted research to minimize the dilemma of second language speakers and qualitative interviewing. Relevant to this particular situation, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggest that participants are more inclined to share their experiences with a person who speaks the same language. I believe that the use of a translator with the commonalities of same home country and language may have enhanced the interview experience for the participant and me.

Gathering information about the participants' lived experience during the three-part phenomenological interviews was somewhat problematic because the language of the participants was not fully developed. Sharing transcripts and analysis with student participants for verification and member checking was vital to ensuring the dependability of my findings, thus establishing the trustworthiness in the research process. Moreover, I wanted to make sure they understood the contents of the transcription and confirm that I was being true to their perspectives and experiences.

Limitations to Cycle II

Determining the limitations during the study increases the trustworthiness of data during the course of the research (Glesne, 2005). My current job capacity as a district administrator requires the evaluation of teaching staff for four departments. The ESL faculty members may have felt that they were obligated to respond in a favorable manner. Thus, I have to acknowledge some adult participants may not have offered their feelings; however, I found their interactions to be candid, genuine, and straightforward. The student participants had linguistic and cultural contrasts that limited to some degree the communication during the interview process; however, prior cross-cultural knowledge enabled me to use precautionary measures to ensure that judgments were not constructed by my own assumptions (Lee, 1995). In some cases, I had to modify and clarify questions to make them easier to understand. Also, I used probes to advance the discussions. In one instance, I had to incorporate the use of a translator to assist a student participant who was a newcomer to the United States. An additional limitation was that I was a stranger to the student participants. The culture of hospitality that originates from African social values may have been an underlying factor for any student participant who demonstrated a willingness to placate during the interview process. Moreover, some of the student participants may not have reflected their true feelings. As a result, some student participants may not be equally credible. However, any information gathered from participants during the research is assumed to be valid, truthful, and accurate.

Leadership Application in Cycle II

During Cycle II, I was guided by the basic principles of CRT, which highlighted the significance of transforming situations through dialogue and relationships and

discovering the voice of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. I realized that my research served various purposes other than to simply answer research questions, when I really listened intensely to the participants to absorb the backgrounds of the adult participants and capture the stories of an unvoiced culture in ESL. My leadership abilities were engaged when I realized I could get the ESL department interested as a group through the wide ranging goal to heighten the awareness of foreign-born Blacks in ESL (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). I had to consider the organizational structure of the context of my study, sincerity, tenacity, hard work, and interpersonal skills, as elements of my leadership that enabled me to plan and implement interventions.

Leading Shared Learning

The evolution of professional learning evolved during the conclusion of Cycle I and developed during Cycle II. The teacher participants had established leadership qualities that resulted from informal aspects of shared learning. In efforts to ensure that the adult participants took ownership for learning more about foreign-born Blacks as ELLs, I encouraged participants to function as a professional community of learners to enhance their current practices as well as encourage stewardship about learning more about the underrepresented populations in ESL.

The nature of the participants' comments endorsed the need for cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. In general, participants found the need to function as a professional learning community, which would be an easier and less intimidating undertaking. A series of similar responses lead to the theme of leading shared learning. What follows are excerpts of adult participants' anonymous responses that are examples of data relative to the theme:

> Participating professional development regarding Blacks, in particular as a language minority sub-group would contribute to my knowledge base because of the opportunity to create a best practice to provide effective pedagogical practices to prepare students to succeed in the academia with the skills and knowledge that will expand beyond the classroom and become applicable to the global world that students will encounter.

Well, since I consider myself to be a life-time learner, I think anything that is going to help me better service the students here would be helpful. I'm always open to that. So, I don't know that all of my peers would feel that way but I just personally feel that anything that will help me do a better job would be beneficial not only to me but to the students.

> I think it would be beneficial for all language instructors 9-12.to understand the dialects and [Diasporan] history. The only in-service I could think of would be something if gave backgrounds to where the students come from, what their education background might be, and how you need to be a just a little…if you that maybe it's easier to take steps forward by looking into their background, how they were brought up, how they got to this country. That would be it.

After the theme of *leading shared learning* surfaced, I reviewed literature to better understand the significance of correlations that were not initially considered. Leading shared learning was a surprise theme that became relevant as I found more information in the literature that connected to the experiences. Research indicates that teachers can become more engrossed in collaborations if they have the opportunity to share in the experience (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk 1995; Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Newmann et al. (2000) define a professional community of learners as the manner in which teachers interact beyond the classroom realm.

Newmann and Wehlage (1995) suggest that a professional community allows teachers "to a clear shared purpose for all students' learning; to engage in collaborative activity to achieve the purpose and to take collective responsibility for learning" (p. 30).

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Kruse et al.'s (1995) definition and characteristics of the professional community

paralleled those identified by the work of Newman and Wehlage. Kruse et al. defined the

professional school community as sharing five core characteristics: shared norms and

values, reflective dialogue, deprivatization of practice, collective focus on student

learning, and collaboration. According to Newmann et al. (2000), a professional

community of learners should be evidenced by:

- Sharing clear goals for student learning;
- Collaboration and collective responsibility among staff to achieve the goals;
- Professional inquiry by the staff to address the challenges they face; and,
- Opportunities for staff to influence the school's activities and policies. (p. 266)

The adult participants engaged in group activities, as well as individual and collective

dialogues, which demonstrated their receptiveness about the shared vision of gaining

more knowledge about foreign-born Blacks who they may encounter. In *The Fifth*

Discipline, Senge (1990) stated that shared vision is:

> Not an idea. It is, rather, a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes further—if it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person—then it is no longer an abstraction. It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision. (p. 206)

The shared vision was a crucial element of my research because the topic was my

personal interest; however, faculty could benefit from being accountable for

understanding culturally and linguistically diverse students. The commitment of the

faculty to collaborate continuously during the research provided an opportunity for

perspectives to be shared as well as changed, which contribute to growth and

sustainability. The ESL teacher found that sharing learning was an element of the

individual and collective success. I thought about the importance of the collaborative

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spirit found in the ESL department and planned one of my first actions in Cycle II. I

decided to have the ESL department formally develop professional learning communities

as a form of teacher leadership to enhance additional skills that they could use in the

classroom and beyond. Moreover, this addressed the need for more opportunities for

educators to attempt to learn to become more comfortable when discussing race-based

topics and diversity issues pertaining to education and underserved student populations.

My servant leadership traits were also employed during Cycle II. Greenleaf

(1977a) reminds me that I, as a leader, am no greater than the people that I serve. I care

about the intrinsic value of people because my life experiences have taught me that many

can make tangible contributions to life and school experiences. As a servant leader, I am

committed to the growth of faculty and students and through expanding opportunities for

cross-cultural interactions; both faculty and students are encouraged to engage in

activities that are meaningful to them beyond the realm of school. This may have been

the only time that I could take the time and responsibility to do everything within my

power to nurture this selected group about cultural advancement. Another aspect of my

servant leadership enabled me to build a sense of community. Greenleaf (1977a) states,

> All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of
> people is for enough servant leaders to show them the way, not by mass
> movements, but by each servant leader demonstrating his or her unlimited liability
> for a quite specific community related group. (p. 77)

I identified a common purpose that school community could work towards. For this

study, the ESL teachers and I were working together to improve cross-cultural

relationships and bring attention to foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

The collective understanding of the plan, purpose, and outcome of the

implemented interventions made me consider the effects on participants during the

process. As part of being a transformational leader, I had to consider the developments and progressions that got the participants to an outcome that initiated the opportunities for their own change and transformation. Acknowledging my sense of truth and knowing the extent of my capacity, as well as being cognizant of the organization, are vital to success when progressing with the passage of change. This cycle proved to me that leadership extends from care and concern, which leads to responsibility and answerability. As each action research cycle progressed, I developed my skills as researcher and leader simultaneously.

Cycle II addressed the need for a dialogue about individual and group differences, because when given a chance, I made mention that we cannot grow personally, professionally, or as a society if we do not attempt to take action to make improvements within our school and society. Although I am constantly challenged about actually serving as a leader, I refuse to compromise my position of being concerned about the development of students' social, emotional, physical, moral, and academic capabilities and limiting cultural disparities in education.

Conclusion to Cycle II

The analysis of data revealed that exposure of foreign-born Blacks within the ESL Department was limited. Data from the teacher interviews revealed that they were interested in learning more information about the population under study. Furthermore, the data revealed the need to increase the awareness of foreign-born Blacks in ESL and advance the understanding of Diasporian cultures in ESL. Coding of data from observations, document analysis, and interviews allowed significant themes to emerge. The particular theme of presence transcended the documentation of connections among

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themes and identification of reoccurring themes that were important to both adult and student participants. Visibility, validation, and voice were salient themes that emerged from the data in Cycle II.

Cycle II consisted of successfully implementing interventions to address the awareness of and participation in initiatives to learn more about foreign-born Blacks in ESL. Actions in Cycle II successfully piqued interest in the topic and contributed to the implementation of interventions to increase the awareness of foreign-born Blacks and motivated the participation in shared learning activities that intensified cross-cultural interactions. Improvement initiatives included developing a professional community of learners to address concerns regarding foreign-born Blacks in ESL, planning to increase the exposure of foreign-born Blacks in material culture as well as traditional ESL endeavors, and providing a platform from which students could share aspects of their respective culture. This was accomplished by creating a school-wide cultural club with an emphasis on inclusion and presenting a "Celebrate You!" program to allow ESL students to engage in a cross-cultural showcase with peers and teachers. Initiatives in Cycle II afforded teacher participants to learn more about foreign-born Blacks and facilitated cross-cultural interactions between the student and adult participants.

The combination of Cycle I and Cycle II data provided the framework for the analysis and continuation of activities that garnered attention to and provided a voice for ESL students from West Indies and Africa that would extend beyond Cycle III. Based on the feedback from faculty, students, and administrators about active engagements to heighten the visibility and awareness of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, the activities and programs were successful undertakings. As a result, I planned to continue the same

activities each school year. Also, I intended to provide teachers with collaborative as well as self-directed learning opportunities about foreign-born Blacks during the course of the school year. Finally, I would work closely with ESL faculty to ensure that foreign-born Blacks were highlighted in the same manner as other cultures represented within the ESL population.

The goal of my action research study was to generate interest, ensure that practices and initiatives were sustained, and impact underserved populations in ESL such as foreign-born Blacks. In Cycle II, the participants advanced because they became more acquiescent in their thinking, open to new ideas, and motivated to enhance the experiences for foreign-born Black ELLs. During the transition of multi-tiered interactions, both student and adult participants were given the opportunity to reflect during the change process. I found that the participants were able to identify and understand how the changes in understanding Diasporian ELLs benefitted them. As the ESL department and students were in the process of learning by doing, the focus was on continual growth, gaining knowledge, and improvement. Data collected during Cycle I and Cycle II through observations, interviews, and document analysis, provided profound insight and informed actions that presented opportunities for sustainable change for foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

There was overlap in Cycle II and Cycle III because information informed actions that progressed during the transition of cycles. In the subsequent cycle, I collected data to access perspectives about my leadership. The data collection in Cycle III included using communiqués and open-ended questions as well as the *Leadership Practice Inventory*

(LPI) by Kouzes and Posner (2003), and self-measurement and feedback on my

leadership qualities.

Chapter VI

Cycle III

Cycle III encompassed the study of my leadership. Consideration of and reflection upon my leadership abilities began from the inception to the conclusion of this study. I continually assessed and related my leadership and efforts to effect sustainable change for foreign-born Black ELLs and ESL teachers.

It was my goal to change perceptions about foreign-born Black students as ELLs by revealing experiences, increasing visibility, and emboldening voices. Moreover, I focused on performing research activities within the realm of transformational and servant leadership. I measured my leadership by selecting participants to answer questions relating to my leadership and the change I undertook within my educational context. I asked participants and school administrators for feedback. This cycle occurred concurrently with Cycles I and II, as well as following Cycle II, when I was able to review the study comprehensively. Therefore, Cycle III focuses on feedback on and assessment of the leadership qualities I displayed during the action research process. My data collection concluded with the online administration of a leadership assessment, the LPI questionnaire, to adult participants.

Cycle III: Evaluating My Leadership

In addition to data collected in previous cycles, I incorporated a thorough, formal assessment to draw conclusions regarding my leadership of the action research process. Following the concluding stages of data collection from adult and student participants, I administered a survey to adult participants that assessed my leadership qualities (Kouzes

& Posner, 2003, 2007). The brief survey enabled the adult participants to rate my leadership prior to the final member-check, to ensure that I would incur a greater return rate. The combination of the rating scale and open-ended items allowed respondents to provide additional feedback to expand upon their responses and provide additional details.

Leadership Survey

Prior to administering the survey, I conducted research to determine the best instrument. Kouzes and Posner undertook 30 years of empirical research to create the LPI, which is the basis of their signature Leadership Challenge Model (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, 2007). I opted to participate in a telephone consultation with a Leadership Consultant, obtained permission to administer the LPI, and purchased the LPI 360 assessment instrument. The development of the LPI stemmed from data gathered through an abundance of leadership surveys based upon the theoretical framework, consisting of "the five practices of exemplary leadership" (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, 2007): (a) model the way, (b) inspire a shared vision, (c) challenge the process, (d) enable others to act, and (e) encourage the heart. I had to gain permission to use the LPI by contacting a leadership consultant via telephone. I described the nature of my study and my desire to use the LPI to assess my leadership skills in conjunction with the conclusion of my research. Permission was granted directly from an authorized LPI administrator; I purchased access to the LPI 360. The purpose of the LPI survey with adult participants was to discover any similarities or dissimilarities about the perceptions of my leadership in alignment with the adult participants' observations and viewpoints.

The LPI inventory includes 30 statements that describe various leadership behaviors. Each statement is rated according to the frequency that the leader actually engages in the behaviors on a typical and consistent basis. The ratings range from 10 (a*lmost always*) to 1 (*almost never*). First, I completed the LPI self-assessment of my own leadership. The nine adult participants, considered LPI Observers, completed the assessment at a later time. LPI Observers are people selected to provide feedback about the leader, however, their responses remain anonymous (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, 2007). The Observers for my leadership survey included what the LPI categorizes as direct reports, co-workers, or others with a level of experience of my leadership roles and responsibilities and worked closely with me during this study (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, 2007). The LPI inventory also includes five open-ended questions.

Data, as found in Table 6.1, indicated that there was a consensus between the self-rating and the average adult participant rating by less than +/- 1.5. Table 6.1 details the leadership behavior rankings as measured by the LPI.

Table 6.1

LPI Leadership Behaviors Rankings for Comparison of Self-Ranking to Observers (*N*=9)

LPI statements	Practice	Self-rating	Average observer ratings	Difference +/-
High				
Give team members appreciation and support	Encourage	10	9.9	-0.1
Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments	Encourage	10	9.9	-0.1
Treats people with dignity and respect	Enable	10	9.9	-0.1
Ensures that people grow in their jobs	Enable	10	9.8	-0.2
Speaks with convictions about meaning of work	Inspire	10	9.8	-0.2
Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership	Model	10	9.8	-0.2
Creatively rewards people for their contributions	Encourage	10	9.8	-0.2
Actively listens to diverse points of view	Enable	10	9.8	-0.2
Praises people for a job well-done	Encourage	10	9.8	-0.2
Recognizes people for commitment to shared values	Encourage	9	9.8	+0.8
Gives people choice about how to do their work	Enable	10	9.7	-0.3
Follows through on promises and commitments	Model	10	9.7	-0.3

Table 6.1 LPI Leadership Behaviors Rankings . . . Observers (Continued)

LPI statements	Practice	Self-rating	Average observer ratings	Difference +/-
Expresses confidence in people's abilities	Encourage	10	9.7	-0.3
Challenges people to try new approaches	Challenge	10	9.7	-0.3
Makes certain that people adhere to agreed-on standards	Model	10	9.7	-0.3
Sets a personal example of what is expected	Model	10	9.7	-0.3
Makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set	Challenge	10	9.6	-0.4
Paints "big picture" of group aspirations	Inspire	10	9.6	-0.4
Builds consensus around organization's values	Model	10	9.6	-0.4
Shows others how their interest can be realized	Inspire	10	9.6	-0.4
Describes a compelling image of the future	Inspire	10	9.6	-0.4
Supports decisions other people make	Enable	10	9.4	-0.6
Appeals to others to share dream of the future	Inspire	10	9.4	-0.6
Develops cooperative relationships	Enable	10	9.4	-0.6

Table 6.1 LPI Leadership Behaviors Rankings…Observers (Continued)

LPI statements	Practice	Self-rating	Average observer ratings	Difference +/-
Seeks challenging opportunities to test skills	Challenge	10	9.4	-0.6
Talks about future trends influencing our work	Inspire	10	9.4	-0.6
Searches outside the organization for innovative ways to improve	Challenge	10	9.3	-0.7
Asks "What can we learn?"	Challenge	10	9.2	-0.8
Ask for feedback on how his/her actions affect people's performance	Model	10	9.0	- 1
Experiments and takes risks	Challenge	9	8.9	+0.1

Low

The average of LPI responses in comparison with my self-rating indicates that I exhibit strong leadership practices. A wide range of responses by observers would have indicated that I did not have an accurate perspective of my existing leadership practices at the conclusion of this research. The correspondence between my self-rating and the rating of others is a substantiated indication that reflective practice and actions are aligned with my espoused beliefs and positive leadership traits.

The LPI assessment provided a guide to analyze and evaluate my personal as well as professional attitudes, behaviors, and practices as they relate to being a leader within

my educational context. It enhanced my understanding of what it meant to be an influential leader. According to the LPI, an essential aspect of the five leadership practices shared by successful leaders is "Encourage the Heart" (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, 2007). I believe in people and expect the best of them, which leads to inspiring the heart. According to Kouzes and Posner (2003), leaders encourages the heart when they (a) set clear standards, (b) expect the best, (c) pay attention, (d) personalize recognition, (e) tell the story, (f) celebrate together, and (g) set the example. Encouraging the heart was the highest score on the ratings of "the five practices data." The high score indicates that this aspect of leadership is parallel with my core values. The scores range from 6 to 60 with 60 being the highest possible score. Table 6.2 details the summary of the average score for each leadership practice.

Table 6.2

Average Score Summary for the Leadership and Practices Measured by LPI (*N*=9)

Traits	Average Score
Encourage the heart	58.8
Enable others to act	58.0
Inspire a shared vision	57.3
Model the way	57.3
Challenge the process	56.1

I take professional and personal pride in being in the field of education, and respect those individuals along the educational spectrum that contribute to creating an equitable and effective learning environment. As a result, I am inclined to set high standards, yet

provide support as others attempt to meet those standards. During the course of my study, I shared my concerns, reflections, learning, and experiences with the participants. I found that I also exemplified another LPI component of "Modeling the Way." I modeled my expectations by setting an example, being transparent, building trust, taking risks, and being reliable and consistent in my values. These are values frequently associated with transformational and servant leadership, theories that I avow in practice.

Verifying the Vision

Verifying the vision is a theme that emerged from various data that were used to determine and assess my leadership. As I approached the conclusion of my study, I realized that increasing an awareness of and the visibility of foreign-born Black students, meant building a knowledge base. Fullan (2001) notes that "effective leaders understand the value and role of knowledge creation; they make it a priority and set about establishing and reinforcing habits of knowledge exchange among organizational members" (p. 87). It was imperative that I communicate the purpose and shared findings frequently at various junctures throughout the research.

Journaling about various events that occurred during the action research process enabled me to reflect upon meaning (Janesick, 1999). By journaling about my study, I was able to relate theory to practice and change my behaviors to facilitate changes in perceptions about foreign-born Blacks in ESL. Reflection is a major component of servant leadership. Senge (1990) notes that effective leaders have the ability to hold a vision while simultaneously and honestly examining the current reality. During the entire action research process, I took part in reflective practice as leadership theories became practices in action. Reflective practice provided a chance for me, as leader and

researcher, to distinguish reality from research philosophies. Moreover, reflection provided me an opportunity to learn from and improve upon my actions and those directly impacting my participants.

Reflection on knowledge building and my leadership enable me to understand the significance of theoretical, practical, and pedagogical connections within my educational context. Throughout this study my vision contributed to a common vision that heightened the awareness of underrepresented cultures in ESL. The examination of race and ESL, as it relates to foreign-born Black students, significantly impacted my leadership.

Knowledge of Critical Race Theory (CRT) gave me confidence to approach my research topic and open discourse about the Diasporian representation and treatment in ESL. CRT perspectives challenged my leadership ability to attempt to discern and challenge possible subtle culturally entrenched habits associated with race and accepted school practices (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2000).

I know from my own experiences and observations that common race matters in school are typically silent issues. CRT provided a lens to analyze and interpret classroom and school practices to offer opportunities for actions to change various schooling situations for foreign-born Blacks in ESL. By collecting and sharing knowledge, I hoped to provide a vision that valued cultural visibility to a growing, yet unfamiliar culture in ESL. As I applied the characteristics of a servant and transformational leader, I made an effort to communicate a vision that was interesting to educational stakeholders as well as meaningful to the students whom it impacted. The combination of personal experiences, servant and transformational leadership, and knowledge of CRT enabled me to partake in an analysis and reflection about race, perceptions, and experiences as an area of concern

for foreign-born Blacks in ESL. Consistent communication and reflection provided me with opportunities to advance the culture of Diasporian students in ESL.

Validation

The theme of validation best encompassed observer perspectives of my leadership. As my leadership evolved during the research process, I was able to review data, such as journal entries, interview responses, personal communications, dialogues with participants, as well as commentary from other faculty and administrators not engaged in the research, that demonstrated analogous sentiments that validated my leadership practices. Prior to this study, reflection did not play a common and significant role in my practice. Whenever I was fortunate enough to have quiet time, my thoughts were fleeting; I did not take time to ponder, write things down, and revisit thoughts. I had to restructure my routine in order to take time to ruminate upon thoughts, happenings, actions, communiqués, and conversations, as well as my function and purpose within my organization. In addition, I consulted with my critical friends to confirm/disconfirm assumptions regarding my research and my practice. As reflection in and upon action progressed during each cycle, so did the development of my researcher and leadership skills.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) note that action research is self-reflective and self-critical. Self-reflectiveness entails critical reflection on the research process and the role of the researcher that is essential to understanding the outcomes of each cycle. My research created a new sense of purpose within my educational context. The adult participants were empowered to work in diverse ways to achieve common goals. The student participants were encouraged and supported as they slowly made their presence

known. The collective understanding of the plan, purpose, and outcomes of innovations in practice during this action research have continued to become embedded within my organization, creating a new culture in ESL.

The LPI provided further evidence, or validation, of the changes I made within my participants and myself during the research process. The LPI encourages the use of open-ended questions, in addition to the close-ended items, to add an additional layer of rigor and in-depth analysis of leadership. To construct these questions, I incorporated leadership literature and data on my leadership generated from journal entries, interviews, personal communications, and a LPI consultation to create open-ended questions that would enable me to gain more intense, authentic perspectives about my leadership. The observers (or adult participants in my study) responded anonymously to the LPI survey as well as to the open-ended portion. The following leadership questions were presented to the observers:

1. What three adjectives best describe this person's leadership?

2. What three words best describe the impact this person has on you?

3. Of all the things this leader does, what do you want him or her to continue doing and make sure not to change?

4. Do you believe that as an educator, I have brought change to our school? If so how?

5. To what extent did my leadership traits contribute to increased visibility, interest, and awareness of foreign-born Black students in ESL?

The LPI's open-ended responses provided feedback for an in-depth analysis about my observable leadership behaviors. The following response gives an impression of my leadership:

> You have brought change to the supervisor's position as you seek ways in which to work with and collaborate with others under your supervision, to bring out the best in them. One example is in the club you have succeeded to establish, which reflects the diversity of our school. Additionally, the high level of expectancy you demand of yourself and from your co-workers has served to improve the entire ESL Department, as well as the Supervisory staff with whom you work.

This sentiment, among others, further validated that the action research process had a profound effect on the organization, creating change in the way supervisors may be perceived and improving the practices of ESL Department members.

The data from the survey also revealed a level of consistency between how I perceive my practice and presentation of my leadership abilities and the observations and perceptions of others. During data collection on my leadership, a participant noted the connections between leadership traits and change:

> You are a visionary, who looks to be on the cutting edge, with excitement and vigor. You pass it down. Work is new and fresh each year. There is always something to look forward to at work. For example, you always bring us the newest tools of the trade, you bring us the newest programs, but mostly it is your positive approach to everything you do or say.

As a transformational leader, I considered the developments that moved participants toward a particular outcome and that initiated opportunities for change and growth (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

Data from Cycle III underscored that while I was faced with many challenges in attempting to serve and function as a leader during the research process, I refused to compromise in my concern for the development of students' social, emotional, physical, moral, and academic capabilities, and the limiting cultural disparities in education.

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> You are sincere about the importance of educating today's youth. You want to see adults interacting in positive ways with the students as teachers, mentors, and as guides when students are faced with challenging decisions. You often align yourself with other educators whenever it comes to what is best for the children. In effect, you frequently test yourself as classroom educators do: Should I do what is right, or should I do the right thing?

These data show that observers' perspectives on my abilities were commensurate with my beliefs about the role of leadership in education. Responses such as this also illustrated the outcome of my reflective practice, in that participants were aware of my attempts to reflect upon and improve practice for all educational stakeholders.

The LPI also demonstrated that leadership extends beyond care and concern for students and colleagues, to included accountability. The following feedback from an Observer underscores this:

> This leader exhibits an unwavering ability to remain true to her beliefs regardless of the situation no matter how challenging it may be. In spite of many temptations that exist to compromise one's beliefs in efforts to choose an easy solution to a problem, this leader does not cower in her position and does not tolerate those who compromise their own beliefs. It is under this circumstance that I am immediately encouraged to accept the challenge of whatever situation is presented and to pursue the correct resolution to conclusion. As one climbs the organizational chart, we are more frequently exposed to the injustices that exist within an organization as we continue to climb. As the exposures increase, the necessary internal fortitude must continue to increase to keep one close to their beliefs and remain true to oneself. It is the unwavering ability to remain true to your beliefs regardless of the situation that I would want this leader to continue doing and make sure not to change.

I found that recognizing my strength and operating within the scope of my influence enabled me to maintain balance during the rapid pace of change. Instead of using positional power to coercively effect decisions, I convinced others by building consensus that allows room for varying viewpoints, that lead to sound solutions. I do not view my leadership in terms of position, title, power, status, and authority. I consider my leadership in terms of my faculties. I care about people, as evidenced by LPI feedback. I

have established credibility because my values and behaviors are in alignment with others' perceptions of me. As a district supervisor, I believe that I have a shared responsibility in implementing change and ensuring that the visibility and voice of diverse cultures are regarded within my educational environment.

Visibility and Voice Through Action Research

Since the inception of this action research study, visibility and voice have been reoccurring themes because their absence within my chosen student population, foreign-born Blacks, was evidenced by data. Fullan (2003) suggests that change requires ownership, participation, and the cognizance of meaning that derives from partaking in interaction, encouraging people, and noticing students' needs. This action research study highlighted that the ESL department needed to be recultured. According to Fullan (2003), reculturing is one of the key functions of leadership and requires the creation of moral purpose among stakeholders. This purpose then contributes to the sustainability of action research innovations due to transformations in social and moral contexts.

Exposure to different cultures, through travel and research, have contributed significantly to my life and my understanding of schooling experiences, as well as made me more perceptive of the experiences of others. Hence, I have a moral imperative in education and know that it is important to provide opportunities and forums to encourage students' voice, in this particular case for ELLs, in conjunction with the maintenance and appreciation of their heritage and culture. A participant observed, "[This leader] is supportive and has the students' interests at the forefront of decisions . . . understanding the unique challenges faced by our students." In the case of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, they lacked voice in that they had a limited command of English combined with limited

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exposure to cultures outside of their own. Moreover, they encompassed an underrepresented and, in some instances, unfamiliar population of students. I desired to relate my own life situations, experiences, and culture as a connection to my moral purpose as an educator. My moral purpose, as it related to this study, was to bring an unspoken diversity concern to the forefront and improve cross-cultural relationships. I sought to make a difference in the lives of foreign-born Black in ESL by facilitating their recognition and encouraging student voice.

The dialogue from its inception provided an outlet for ESL faculty and foreign-born Black ELLs, which brought wide-ranging attention to this group. However, I understand that greater adjustments will be required to continue to shape change so that it is sustainable and remains meaningful to my participants and others. This is the standard by which double loop learning and change occur within organizations (Argyris, 1990). I realize that I must continue to collaborate and to use the strength that emanates from moral purpose to sustain interest. An observer offered this advice:

> I want her to continue to maintain a high level of expectation of her colleagues, keep an open-mind and an open door for collaboration and communication, and I want her to maintain her confidence and assuredness for what is right and effective in education.

One of my areas of concerns as a leader and change agent was developing trust that others within ESL and the school body would continue to be stewards and maintain the shared vision as it relates to marginalized populations in ESL. Comments after the conclusion of my research evidenced that the impact of change was not fleeting:

> I do not take for granted the many opportunities that you have provided and continue to provide for my growth as an educator. I embark on this new endeavor filled with curiosity and the hope that I may be able to contribute to the foundation that you have already laid.

One participant commented, "The students seem really excited about being involved this year. I guess the library presentation really made an impact!" Findings from my research established that both student and adult participants appreciated the opportunities to gain their own voice as well as hear the voices of others through a variety of activities and actions. Both student and teacher participants believed that their individual and collective experiences gave them a greater voice, understanding, and respect in ESL classes and beyond.

Conclusion to Cycle III

The data inclusive of all cycles underscores the need to routinely build awareness about foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. Data also suggested that the focus on foreign-born Blacks in ESL had a constructive impact on the ESL Department as well as the school at large. Moreover, data collected from the LPI demonstrated that my leadership behaviors are congruent with the perspectives of those with whom I interact and serve. Data collected in each cycle contributed to the overall assessment of my leadership in this final cycle.

At the conclusion of Cycle III, I discovered that by highlighting the significance of transforming situations through dialogue and relationships, I was able to "uncover" the voice of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. I realized that my research served other purposes, beyond simply answering research questions, when I sought to capture the backgrounds of the adult participants and tell the stories of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, an unvoiced culture in ESL.

Chapter VII

Overall Findings

My action research study investigated the phenomenon of foreign-born ELLs in ESL classes within my professional educational context. Through the cyclical process of action research, I was able to seek to improve and bring insight and understanding to the identified population by planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Hinchey, 2008; McTaggart, 1997; Mills, 2003). My dissertation study, using a phenomenological approach, was initially formulated in Fall 2009 as I observed and sought to address the action research needs of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs in addition to capturing the essence of their schooling experiences.

Insights into the schooling experiences of foreign-born Blacks allowed me to facilitate activities that built relationships, encouraged diversity, and fostered positive cross-cultural relationships while developing the visibility of the foreign-born Black culture. My sense of moral purpose stimulated my desire to explore the experiences of foreign-born Blacks in ESL through dialogue, and created awareness among educational stakeholders of this often overlooked population of students. Specifically, this action research project led to the increased presence, participation, and acknowledgement of foreign-born Blacks in established, traditional programs, and the implementation of a diversity club, school-wide cultural presentations that specifically focused on students from Haiti and Africa, and the pre-production of a student-centered film to illustrate the resiliency of Haitian students after the impact of the catastrophic 2010 earthquake. Fullan

(2001) notes that leaders are motivated by a sense of moral purpose that contributes to a commitment to improving the quality of life within organizations as well as society.

While students of color have been enrolled in ESL programs for several years, foreign-born Blacks comprise a small, underrepresented group of minorities within the educational domain (Amin, 1997; Bachay, 1998; Ibrahim, 1999; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Motha, 2006; Taylor & Lambert, 1996; Taylor, 2006; Vilme & Butler, 2004). Foreign-born Blacks are not a familiar culture in the ESL setting of the research context, giving rise to of their invisibility. In many cases, ESL teachers do not reflect upon their pedagogical practices in order to consider the implications of race, language, power, and identity within U.S. classrooms (Amin, 1997; Motha, 2006). Consistent effort to gain knowledge about culture is critical to improving understanding of cross-cultural nuances and contributing to definitions of self among students (Bachay, 1998; Ibrahim, 1999; Johnson et al., 2001; Kirkwood, 2002; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Nazroo & Karlsen, 2003; Ogbu 1983, 1992a; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004; Vollmer, 2000; Yoon, 2008)

The purpose of this study was fourfold: (a) to examine teacher awareness of the linguistic, social, and cultural processing of foreign-born Black students as ELLs; (b) to analyze the treatment of foreign-born Black ELLs' language and culture improvement in a secondary setting; (c) to increase the visibility and voice of foreign-born Blacks in ESL; and (d) to determine if the developed initiatives can provide sustenance for a culturally responsive, supportive learning environment. This study consisted of three cycles that took place from December 2010 to November 2011. The first cycle focused on presenting my role as a researcher, discovering background information, building relationships and establishing trust, and gathering documents and other forms of material culture for

analysis purposes. Subsequent cycles focused on interviews, interactions, and implementations. An essential aspect of this study was to focus attention on foreign-born Blacks by showing interest in their culture and the realities of their experiences as second language learners.

In concurrence with the action research cycles, I developed and examined my espoused leadership styles. The integration of servant and transformational leadership created a synergy that focused servicing ESL teachers while empowering them to be committed to engaging in shifts in organizational objectives (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1977a). Moreover, good leaders recognize that professional and pedagogical practices are enhanced by newly acquired knowledge. This enables educators to appreciate foresight, envision the future, and transform from being followers to leaders (Greenleaf, 1977a). This chapter details how the data collected and subsequently analyzed, addressed the research questions and contributed to meaningful change among participants and within my educational context.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided the exploration of experiences of foreign-born Blacks as ELLs. The first research question sought to discover the intricacies of schooling for ESL students from Haiti and Africa. The second research question about race and school was designed to add information to the significant gap in research that pertains to foreign-born Black ELLs as well as race and ESL. The third research question attempted to increase notice of foreign-born Blacks in second language learning situations. The final research question pertained to my leadership abilities and the treatment of perceptions and practices as it relates to the topic under study. In addition,

the final research question addressed the degree, if any, to which my leadership influenced change initiatives and impacted subsequent changes within the research context.

By attempting to address each research question, I sought to demystify foreign-born Blacks in terms of their personal journeys that related to being second language learners in high school, to increase awareness and recognition, and to enhance their experiences while in a secondary ESL setting.

The research questions that were answered included the following:

1. What are the lived educational/schooling experiences of foreign-born Black students as secondary ELLs?

2. *How do foreign-born Black students perceive the role of race and social class in their school experiences?*

3. *How do ESLfaculty perceive foreign-born Black students as ELLs?*

4. To what extent did my leadership traits contribute to increased visibility and awareness of foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

These research questions are significant because they addressed the phenomenon of foreign-born Blacks in ESL that needed to be studied and may contribute to a larger body of knowledge.

I used the code mapping model and methods detailed in Anfara et al. (2002) to manage voluminous data and answer research questions. Code maps are a plan to analyze and chart connections; reduce and organize data; and present and discuss large amounts of data without losing meaning (Anfara et al., 2002; Creswell, 2007; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In addition, code-mapping data can show a consolidated picture of large amounts

of data (Anfara et al., 2002; Creswell, 2007). The selected research questions aligned to

the code map represent knowledge gathered and relationships in the data. Through the

analysis of multiple streams of data, the code map of the selected research questions

show the preconceptions about foreign-born Blacks, limitations to awareness,

intercultural relations, and the future focus of the area under study based upon leadership.

Figure 3, a code map model adapted from Anfara et al. (2002), illustrates three iterations

of data analysis.

Research Questions 2, 3, and 4		
2. How do foreign-born Black students perceive the role of race and social class in their school experiences?	3. How do ESL faculty perceive foreign-born Black students as ELLs?	4. To what extent did my leadership traits contribute to increased visibility and awareness of foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

Third Iteration: Interpretation

Speaking of Rivers: Demystifying foreign-born Blacks through a Secondary English as a Second Language Context

Foreign-born Black students are part of a underserved group of English Language Learners within the larger English as a Second Language. However, foreign-born Blacks, students from West Indies and Africa, are not adequately recognized within the school context. The purpose of my research is to demystify perceptions about foreign-born Blacks. I will employ a qualitative, phenomenological, action research approach to gather information relevant to my research. Qualitative techniques will allow for analysis of the interpretations of participants' perceptions and cultural representations presented through material culture. I will apply collected qualitative data and quantitative survey data to design and facilitate an intervention to increase awareness and visibility of this subgroup that may have a positive impact on faculty and students.

Second Iteration: Themes		
2.Cross-cultural Complexities (Limitations to Awareness)	3.Intercultural Relations (Relationship Building)	4.Future Focus (Need for Change)

First Iteration: Initial Codes		
2a.Identity/Acculturation 2b.Stigmas 2c.Language Statuses 2d.Lack of Awareness 2e.Denial as a Barrier 2f. Cultural perceptions	3a.Reducing xenophobia/ ethnocentrism 3b.Recognizing unfamiliar cultures 3c.Valuing cultural competencies 3d.Accepting responsibility for learning 3e.Participating Group learning 3f.Developing an awareness of cultural patterns	4a.Value of cultural diversity 4b.Dialogues 4c.Improved authentic interactions 4d.Increased active engagements 4e.Time to learning about uncommon diverse cultures 4f.Accurate information about cultures

Figure 3. Code Map adapted from Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002).

The following pages provide further analysis of each research question.

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Research Question 1. What are the lived educational/schooling experiences of foreign-born Black students as secondary ELLs?

My first research question explored the experiences of secondary foreign-born Black ELLs during their pursuits to conquer a second language and gain education and opportunities in the United States. In interviews, observations, informal conversations, and through document analysis, I found that foreign-born Blacks within the research context had both positive and negative experiences as they strived to be successful in ESL classes as well as school overall. The prevalent themes that emerged during the three cycles underscored the challenges that foreign-born Blacks encounter when attempting to acquire and maintain voice, visibility, and validation. Foreign-born Blacks in ESL have to vacillate between two varying cultural identities and the expectations of family, peers, and school. This notion supported the significance of recent research regarding the implications of race, language, power, and identity struggles within U.S. classrooms (Amin, 1997; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Motha, 2006).

Since there is limited information about foreign-born Blacks in ESL, the use of counterstorytelling during student interviews provided data that dispelled any erroneous validity of accepted myths held by those dominant in ESL (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Foreign-born Blacks in ESL strived to maintain pride in their country, culture, and ethnicity while trying to establish themselves in a world that often conflicts with their sense of self. The following excerpts from student interviews provided insight into their world:

> I think that we the Africans, we really believe in our culture, and in my country you don't have to have a special way of dress like the scarves of the Bangladesh people. We can wear clothes like American people. Only kings and queens dress like Africans or when we go to church.

> I'm proud to be Black because normally, everyone is unique in their own way and everyone is different, and I am happy 'cause I am different, and it also helps us know more about people and that is it.

> I'm mysterious. My friends say I'm mysterious. I'm cool with everyone. I like to make friends. I'm pretty smart. I really don't have a definition for mysterious, but that is what my friends say.

These excepts reveal that Diasporian students have a strong sense of cultural pride that they are rarely given the opportunity to convey, which limits their sense of voice in school.

During this research process, I found that Diasporian students were rarely placed in a situation to freely share their perspectives about connecting life to daily school experiences. In addition to encapsulating perspectives, actually listening to how and what is being shared "help us understand what life is like for others, and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 41). Research has established that the acquisition of voice for underrepresented student populations can reveal their sense of reality, which validates their circumstances and experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Lee, 2005). Moreover, being cognizant of the significance of voice provided a framework for the transformation of perceptions within the research context. Data from student interviews revealed that foreign-born Black students are proud of their identities and would appreciate elements of their backgrounds incorporated into their learning experiences. In addition, some students felt that they did not have a reference point during presented lessons. They also questioned their sense of presence during class discussions when their voice was sometimes stifled by their peers and invalidated by class dynamics that did not encourage their participation. In some cases, some participants became less vocal in class and relied upon contained interactions with other

foreign-born Blacks when possible. Expressions of discomfort about being limited in classroom engagements created perceptions of invisibility.

During the course of the research, the student participants conveyed their feelings about being unnoticed. Excerpts from student interviews recounted their sentiments about invisibility:

> I feel very sad. I want a lot of people to know me. They say, "She speak French, She speak English." If you don't know me, I feel sad. I sometimes want someone to talk to. There not a lot of people here from Africa, mostly Spanish people or English speaking people. I want people to come talk to me.

> Since I been here, I have like 2 friends from my country and I just talk to them. In the cafeteria, I have no one. I just relax and talk to no one, eating and no one talking to me. I don't try to make a conversation with anyone. It don't bother me. I'm cool with everyone.

> They act like I'm not there. No one has a conversation with me and I don't start a conversation with them because I'm scared of bullying. I just want to learn and to become a good nurse. I think people act this way because I'm from a poor country.

Research affirms that foreign-born Blacks are often subjected to an out-group existence based upon dominant forces in the school context (Ogbu, 1983; Tajfel, 1978).

The analysis of experiences of foreign-born Blacks highlighted their marginalization by non-inclusion in significant ESL documents and various aspects of schooling. The examination of their experiences directed my attention to ESL situations that can be racialized, endorsing some and relegating others to a position of powerlessness. Research suggests that ignoring Black students' identities and experiences is tantamount to discounting Black students directly (Carter, 2008). In addition, some foreign-born Black students may surmise that they are invisible, and their desire to participate is dismissed in the educational environment because of their ethnicities. Carter (2008) suggests:

A Black student whose voice is invalidated during a class discussion or who is never called upon when his or her hand is raised feels invisible: He or she wants to be acknowledged just like other students as having valuable thought about the topic at hand and is likely to interpret the ignoring as occurring because he or she is Black. (p. 233)

The impressions of entrenched cultural invisibility reaffirmed the research, in this particular case of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, which found that invisibility in the form of lack of inclusiveness within the paradigms of ESL, may contribute to a sense of alienation that could prove to be detrimental to their identity, sense of security, belonging, and self-esteem (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Tate, 2005; Taylor, 2006).

Research Question 2. How do foreign-born Black students perceive the role of race and social class in their school experiences?

For the second research question, I used CRT as a framework to address invisibility of racial backgrounds and schooling experiences. The student participants shared the experiences in ESL classes. A few of the students were very candid about this topic, while most appeared self-conscious. This may be contributed to their limited presence in ESL or the limited ability to express their viewpoints in English about the complex topic of race as recent immigrants and rising second language learners. Moreover, some participants may have been unaccustomed to participating in open discussions about race-based topics. The data collected from Cycles II and III found that in terms of influences, the student participants did not place strong significance on race and social class as dominating and interruptive factors in their school experiences in ESL classes.

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Critical race theory provided a valuable lens with which to investigate underlying, prevailing attitudes and perceptions about foreign-born Blacks in ESL education. Overall findings suggest that critical race theory concerns are subtle, yet ingrained in school practices within the research context. The treatment of foreign-born Black English Language Learners can be comprehended through critical race theory mainly in the inconsistencies and deficiencies of culturally relevant academic and social practices. The linguistic and cultural mores and traditions of foreign-born Blacks are often disregarded or minimized in comparison with their peers. For instance, the home languages of Haitian and African students are not significantly supported. Moreover, opportunities to develop a voice, share perspectives, and be recognized are limited as a result of the standpoint of overlooking or avoiding concerns about race and school involvements. Foreign-born Blacks in ESL have expressed the need for more culturally responsive and inclusive practices to extend their social and academic possibilities. Critical race theory perspectives support the findings that foreign-born Black English Language Learners encounter various instances of marginalization as chronicled by their experiences and observations in class and school.

Research has suggested that examination of race in ESL through CRT can reveal educational inadequacies and other stratifications that are often unnoticed or disregarded (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004; Tatum, 1992). Although concerns about race and social class were not directly evident or openly discussed with the adult participants, data from student interviews substantiated the existence of issues that suggest that behaviors based on race are a part of their school experience. The students provided descriptions of these factors

and the impact on their lived experience. The first set of data reveals student perceptions

of race based-interactions:

> Well, some people are kind of ignorant. They won't talk to you 'cause you're Black. They still do that. Also, because of where you live and what kind of food you eat. That I don't like. I always hang out with people who actually want to be a friend to me. They don't care where I come from.

> Some of them, they just, well, this girl in my lunch from last year, she tried to talk to me but she thinks I'm like the other Black girls in this school. So one time this year, I was talking to some Spanish girl, and she came up and was like, "Can I be your friend?" and I was like, "Why not?" and she said always when she comes she thought I may yell and say bad words like the other Black girls.

> Some are good, but some are ignorant, kind of racist. The good Bangladesh people want to talk to me and do homework and call me on the phone. It make me feel good and that my color don't matter. One girl asked me how I feel to be Black, and I say I feel good because only the White people are White.

The following data show that students did not let race-based interactions influence their

sense of self and resilience.

> I want them to know that; White, Black, any color, we all the same. Some ESL people be like, "Oh look, Bea is Black and whatever." It makes me know that what you can learn so can I. Whether it's a test or whatever, I trust myself.

> I'm 15. I'm Black, and I like who I am no matter what I do, what I want to do, if it is right. Sometimes, maybe, you go through society and someone thinks you are no good and the person is complaining and hurting your feelings, but I don't really care about that.

> Ok sometimes, someone may say something but I'm, ok. Sometimes they say things like I'm too Black.

Their comments showed that race-based interactions among African Americans and other

ethnicities was not considered to be a significant factor in their schooling experience.

However, foreign-born Black students did perceive that the role of race and social class

might be a possible reason for isolation, inaccurate cultural perceptions, and rejection.

Research has established that educational climates have not been inclusive and supportive

to unfamiliar cultures and the experiences of Blacks in ESL (Ladson-Billings, 1999;

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Lopez, 2002; Motha, 2006; Ogbu, 1983, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b; Tajfel, 1978; Tatum, 1992).

While the participants are characterized by distinct sociocultural contexts with diverse educational backgrounds, all demonstrated the desire to embrace a second language and culture development through ESL programs. The student participants had overcome several barriers to attain learning experiences within the research context. The institutional demographic was predominately a mainstream culture that presented challenges, essentially with language and culture. Although student participants were subjected to various situations based upon unfounded perceptions about race and social class, the exposure did not overwhelm the maintenance of their social, linguistic, and cultural mores as they strived to assimilate in a different cultural and educational situation. A student participant related,

> I'm different from others, Most of my teachers say I'm from Haiti, but I'm different from other students from Haiti. I don't know why they say that? I'm nice to others. I myself, I don't tell the teacher, I handle things myself when people mess with me. Like push me or try and act tough.

Although research suggests that foreign-born Black students can be racially stigmatized in school situations by underlying ideologies that could be factors in the deconstruction of linguistic and cultural practices (Azevedo, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991; Creese et al., 2006; Ogbu, 1982, 1983, 1985; Saxena, 2009), research has confirmed that cultural-ecological factors are significant to understanding the process of immigrant adaptation, assimilation, and identity formation (Lopez, 2002; Ogbu, 1981).

The sense of awareness and identification of foreign-born Blacks were not solely associated with their current school experiences; the expansion of identity and cultural mores instilled by their parents made them resilient in nature. Opportunities to meet

family expectations, gain a better education, acquire a second language, and advance to post-secondary goals were common factors that overshadowed concerns about race and social class. They all expressed their various journeys to gain the privilege of learning in America. Students also demonstrated an awareness of the connection between privilege and sacrifice, because in most cases some were the first to go to school in the United States. They placed much importance on school experiences, as education would allow them to make their families proud.

Although the student participants had an awareness of cultural barriers, such as race, that impacted school, most opted not to bring these obstructions to the forefront of their experiences. Research has confirmed that there is private yet significant conflict that is not often expressed outwardly with race and ESL, specifically for Blacks, against stereotypes, relegation, prejudices, and degree of expectation in terms of understanding, acceptance, and inclusion (Bachay, 1998; Butterfield, 2004; Kamya, 1997; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Ogbu, 1992a; Vilme & Butler, 2004).

Research Question 3. How do ESL faculty perceive foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

Research regarding foreign-born Blacks in ESL did not provide a specific classification for those born in Diasporian countries. As a result, I tried consulting with ESL teachers with the intention of gaining new knowledge about the specific classifications associated with ESL students from Haiti and Africa. However, the ESL teachers were not familiar with any specific classifications to individually or collectively reference this group. This exchange led to informal conversations that shaped this research question.

In regards to this research question, I expanded upon fleeting comments about

foreign-born Blacks in ESL to more formal discussions during the interview process and

conversations between the participants. These methods encouraged reflections about the

perceptions of foreign-born Blacks as the research progressed. Although some of the

participants focused on the perceptions of foreign-born Blacks as being "hard workers"

who are "good students" and "ready to excel," others considered factors that contributed

to their perceptions. A participant commented:

> Africa—those students can be an especially tricky group to deal with because they
> often speak English very well, but their literacy and writing skills are weak. The
> Haitian students, due to the conditions of their home country, are often very low
> skilled all-around both in English and their native language.

Another participant suggested, "Haitian students have more environmental and economic

concerns and often come in at a lower level or lack of education from their home

country." Personal experience was also a contributing factor to participants' perceptions.

One participant shared:

> I have a lot more experience with the Haitian students than I do with the African
> students, and I have to say that they are some of the most beautiful people I have
> met. They come here with such happiness and joy. I really appreciate my Haitian
> students, I really do.

With the exception of one ESL teacher of African American descent, the foreign born

Black students were obviously different from their teachers in terms of race, religion, and

other social and cultural mores. Additional perceptions of foreign born Blacks were based

on individualized perceptions about personality characteristics and behavioral traits in

relationship to language difficulties and work ethics. A significant discovery was that

most participants' responses were consistent with their perceptions of foreign-born Black

students among Caucasian teachers; however, the response from one ESL teacher of

color was incongruent. Vollmer (2000) notes that some teachers tend to appreciate and

admire characteristics that are perceived as more "American," such as being aggressive and outgoing. While most teachers highlighted the characteristics of foreign-born Blacks as being quiet, reserved, polite, introverted and self-motivated, the ESL teacher of color found a connection with the group and imparted that she found foreign-born Blacks to be "gregarious" and "engaging." The participant offered, "My Haitian students, my African students, they are very open. They are very open and receptive of me . . . I don't have any preconceptions; I accept them for who they are." Research confirms that experiences of ESL teachers of color can help to eradicate the subtleties that stem from racialized positions, marginality, and social acceptance concerns associated with students of color in ESL (Motha, 2006).

Prior to the study, the participants during their teaching experiences did not readily focus on the qualities of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. The perceptions of the adult participants, ESL faculty, provided data for an in-depth analysis of background factors and characteristics that contributed to student learning. One participant found it significant to note that foreign-born Blacks in ESL "have a lot to teach other students, and you need to build on what they know and their skills to try to make connections to help them succeed." This statement was significant because I attempted to get ESL teachers to notice qualities that would warrant reflection on the treatment of foreign-born Blacks in ESL classes. In addition, the consideration of perceptions of foreign-born Blacks would ultimately lead to discussions to improve culturally responsive practices and to develop meaningful teacher-student dynamics.

Research Question 4. To what extent did my leadership traits contribute to increased visibility and awareness of foreign-born Black students as ELLs?

My final research question addressed the manner in which, if any, my leadership heightened the awareness of foreign-born Blacks in ESL. This research provided a chance to combine personal, professional, and travel experiences with the educational and developmental advancements associated with leadership to explore a significant topic of interest and relevance. The overall goal of the research was to call attention to, provide information about, and shift perceptions concerning foreign-born Blacks as ELLs, providing them with an opportunity to make their presence known in ESL classrooms and beyond.

A major feature of action research is maximizing leadership qualities that are advantageous for shared cultures of change (Fullan, 2000a, 2000b). The aspiration for change that shaped my action research study stemmed from transformational and servant leadership qualities that emphasized pursuing advanced knowledge and seeking improvement through vision, insight, and knowledge of the organization (Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2000b, 2001; Greenleaf, 1977a, 1977b). I placed a high priority on researching how to best support foreign-born Blacks as an underserved population of English Language Learners. The amalgamation of leadership and change generated responsiveness and responsibility among participants to improve and advance the educational experiences of foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

Servant leadership practices enhanced my interactions with foreign-born Blacks in ESL and motivated faculty to develop interest in an unobserved student population. I endeavored to inspire both faculty and students to develop, stimulate interest in an

underserved population in ESL, and become responsive to foreign-born Black English Language Learners' needs. As my leadership evolved, transformational and servant leadership qualities influenced my desire of serving underserved students by changing the level of awareness of Diasporian students in ESL. The tenets of servant leadership provided a framework to advance my service to foreign-born Black students in an attempt to improve their schooling experiences (Greenleaf, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 2002).

As a servant leader to students, I sought to create an environment in the ESL classrooms and beyond that supported the inclusiveness and visibility of foreign-born Blacks. I noticed when foreign-born Blacks in ESL established their presence, they gained confidence and voice as they continued to grow and gain experiences, which will contribute to their future success in school and society. It was my goal to inspire foreign-born Black students to develop into confident ESL students as well as inclusive members within mainstream school context. As time progressed, Diasporian students in ESL were able to move beyond imposed cultural and school expectations to define and share their own values and maintain their own sense of identity.

The participants commented about the level of excitement and inquired about repeating and continuing activities designed to advance understanding of unknown cultures and improve cross-cultural relationships. The extent to which my leadership qualities heightened the awareness of foreign-born Blacks is illustrated by comments made during the collection of data in Cycle III to assess my leadership. Of this shift in attention, the adult participants noted:

> It has made me more aware of some of the issues of foreign-born Black students. It is nice to have some focus on ethnicities other than Hispanic. The students feel even more welcomed than before.

This leader heightened awareness by creating and expanding upon both in-school and out-of-school programs designed to increase student achievement and increase the awareness of the challenges faced by foreign-born Black students.

Prior to this leader, the foreign-born Black students in ESL were included in all ESL activities and were viewed as students within the ESL Department. Through increased activities and discussions with these students, they now have a forum, an identity, and a feeling of pride that not only are they individual students . . . but members of a trusting community of peers as well.

[Your] leadership traits have been instrumental in contributing to the increased visibility of foreign-born Black students in ESL because these students are not lost in the shuffle. They are appreciated for their unique perspectives and celebrated for their unique cultural heritage.

My leadership of this action research project advanced foreign-born Black students by changing their position within ESL classes and the mainstream setting. Moreover, this student population became a part of the larger collective of students instead of existing in isolation. Teachers became more cognizant of their responsibility to the culture of foreign-born Black students by engaging in the research process, professional interactions, and in new dialogues and activities that extended the timeframe of the research.

There was a change in my leadership once I comprehended the value of exploring an uncharted area and challenging the status quo with the intention of contributing to improved and open-minded practices for foreign-born Blacks in ESL. Although I had previously observed that some foreign-born Black students in ESL were culturally alienated, isolated and silent as part of their daily school experiences, I did not initially realize that I had the support, wisdom, and power to address these concerns. As I gained improved knowledge of self and found that my attributes aligned with servant and transformational leadership, I became more confident and courageous.

I realized that I had a responsibility and obligation to investigate experiences and perceptions of faculty and students to bridge cultural gaps that influenced various school involvements. Growth in my leadership underscored the necessity to place significance on cultural awareness, social consciousness, and positionality of an underserved population in ESL. Although my research primarily focused on Diasporian students in ESL, I shared my vision with anyone who encountered foreign-born Black students beyond the realm of an exclusive ESL context. Moreover, the progression of my leadership enabled me to address social justice and racial equity concerns in ESL that would promote positive cross-cultural changes within the school organization.

As a leader, I was aware that in addition to sharing my vision, I had to illustrate and incorporate the values and interests of those within the organization in order to motivate, inspire, and orchestrate participation in the change process (Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Understanding organizational culture influenced the manner in which I approached leadership and change. Schein (2004) describes culture as "a valid pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group" (p. 17). Although I was an insider to the organization, the examination of Schein's three levels of culture—artifacts and creations, values, and basic assumptions—highlighted motivating influences and framed my approaches with participants. My understanding of the organizational context was critical because it informed, guided, and advanced the changes associated with my research.

In efforts to integrate the participants' backgrounds, feelings, and perspectives into the overall vision of my study, I opened a dialogue on student identities as foreign-born Black ELLs. During the course of the research, I was able to advocate for the need

for change and secure commitment while creating an atmosphere of knowledge sharing (Fullan, 2001). I initiated collaborations with participants to implement programs and activities to make foreign-born Blacks more visible in ESL as well as within the institution. I worked to enhance the experiences of foreign-born Black students by cultivating their perspectives and while concurrently offering students an outlet and ESL faculty opportunities to enhance relationships and professional growth.

Implementations that developed from the action research cycles included the development of a diversity club and student-centered activities to learn more about the social, cultural aspects of foreign-born Blacks students. Moreover, I implemented strategies to ensure that foreign-born Blacks were included in diversity programs that showcased their talents and representation of their respective cultures. I believe that these supportive endeavors affected social change, enhancing teacher knowledge about culturally responsive practices and pedagogy. Enhancing teacher knowledge about foreign-born Blacks, thereby, removes these students from isolation. Also, increased interactions with foreign-born Blacks fostered positive relationships and increased interest among teachers in culturally responsive practices.

The combination of these reciprocal actions highlighted and detailed the foreign-born Blacks' distinguishing experiences, viewpoints, and backgrounds. In addition, inclusion and diversity became a part of the organizational context. The demographic shift in ESL classes in conjunction with personal, educational, and professional experiences emphasized the urgency to focus on foreign-born Blacks in ESL. This sense of urgency confronted prevailing organizational approaches and contested complacence (Kotter, 1996, 2008). Kotter (1996) affirms that the transition of culture is challenging

when attempting to anchor new approaches. The power of culture becomes its own force and often operates intuitively through people within the organization.

According Argyris and Schön (1978), a component of organizational learning is double-loop learning, which is defined as correcting core causes behind organizational problems. Underlying factors, norms and assumptions, as well as informal and ingrained practices, minimized the presence of foreign-born Blacks in ESL, subsequently stifling change. Prior to the onset of the research process, I had to consider the magnitude of change that would stem from this study. I knew that my organization needed to move away from the acceptance of prevailing values and norms toward the practice of confronting inequity and offering new approaches to address foreign-born Black students. While the research valued the existing knowledge of the adult participants, I had to work intensely with all participants to appeal for openness to change. The movement of change can be a disruptive process because change challenges people's competence and confidence (Evans, 1996).

According to Argyris (1990) and Evans (1996), isolated first order change improves single instances of organizational practices; second order change converts assumptions, values, and roles and helps to restructure current culture models. Progressing toward second order change, as a means of reculturing an organization, requires leaders to persistently engage in investigating, learning, sharing, encouraging, modeling, and presenting examples in order to encourage confidence in the change (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). During the course of the research, I used my leadership role to challenge current practices relevant to the treatment of underserved cultures, particularly foreign-born Blacks in ESL, and advance to second order change

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(Argyris, 1990; Evans, 1996). In addition, my transformational leadership attributes cultivated vision, and I strived to motivate the consciousness of others, increase faithfulness, and sustain competency development (Bass, 1997; Burns 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

The research context was static and passive as a consequence of being unresponsive to underrepresented groups. As a result of second order change, participants were able to consider the position of foreign-born Blacks from a different vantage point. Participants became motivated to challenge practices and assumptions relative to culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Although informal conversations and observations inspired the research, it transformed into something quite different and meaningful. The participants and I acquired new learning, revealed new stories that had never been shared, and increased awareness of an underserved culture.

Many studies assert that action research that is both participatory and collaborative contributes to the generation of knowledge that enriches circumstances (Burns, 1999; Fullan, 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998; Mills, 2003; Stringer, 1996). Data collected during Cycles I, II, and III affirm that programs that strive to be inclusive are needed and should be continued to decrease polarization, increase visibility, and establish and advance cross-cultural relationships between foreign-born Blacks and all members of the school community. The conclusions from this dissertation study further confirm research that the significance of increasing the visibility, voice, and validation of foreign-born Blacks in ESL subsequently develops a supportive environment, fosters cross-cultural relationships, and enriches their overall ESL learning

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and schooling experiences (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lee & Simon-Meada, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006).

Conclusions

In this study, I attempted to provide voice to an unobserved population in ESL – foreign-born Blacks – and highlighted their presence in the traditional ESL setting. Also, in this study, I documented my personal as well as formal observations and leadership activities to advance the treatment of secondary ELLs from Haiti and Africa. The specific purpose of this action research was to bring attention to these students in the ESL population. This study confirmed that collaboration, commitment, and care created a profound combination to generate change.

The research demonstrated that both the ESL teachers and students and the foreign-born Black ESL students realized the need for attention toward the students from Haiti and Africa and their cultures. This became evident during the collection of background information, the observations, and the review and analysis of records and documents. Analyses of interviews, observational journaling, leadership, conversations, and communications relative to my study affirmed my suppositions regarding the dormancy of foreign-born Blacks. Although one participant suggested that the culture of foreign-born Blacks was "hidden" within the school context, findings revealed that prior to the research, both teachers and students concealed their thoughts and observations positively or negatively concerning foreign-born Blacks in ESL.

There has been an influx of foreign-born Blacks in recent years, which has reflected a demographic shift of students of color in ESL. This study provided a supportive means for participants to engage open dialogue and learn about the

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background, experiences, and expectations of foreign-born Blacks students. These students possess a plethora of interesting social and cultural experiences and values that contribute to their conceptualization of life and learning and can enrich school.

The intention of this study was to break the silence for teachers and students. The combination of perspectives from ESL teachers and foreign-born Black ELLs allowed both to mutually negotiate their space in ESL and to diminish feelings of invisibility in ESL students. This action research project brought notice to foreign-born Blacks and increased awareness and heightened visibility in their ESL classes. This visibility expanded from their teachers and peers to include administration and other faculty members beyond the realm of ESL. Critical race theory framed this particular study, enabling me to uncover foreign-born Black students' experiences with race, social class, and identity.

Chapter VIII

Implications and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to demystify foreign-born Blacks in relation to the culture of students from Haiti and Africa in secondary ESL classes. Investigating this topic contributed to my sense of pride and resiliency as a leader and provided me with a new understanding of the complexities of being a foreign-born Black and an ESL student. The analyses of data from the research exposed there were several multidimensional challenges for these students in ESL and that educators are willing to create an inclusive and nurturing environment that fosters understanding and improves cross-cultural engagements.

In addition to the ESL Department, school-wide endeavors have recently been incorporated with the goal of calling attention and offering support and encouragement to underrepresented cultures. Invisible and silent cultures in large, urban school settings can be uncovered once organizations take bold measures to address and eradicate situations that derive from stereotypical perceptions, marginalization, and relegation. This is not a singular responsibility, but a collective effort and commitment in which a higher interest can be served, one in which equity in education can be achieved. Acknowledgment of this responsibility creates reciprocal teaching and learning experiences for faculty and culturally and linguistically diverse students.

In the following pages, I address the possible implications of my action research study for research, practice, and policy, beyond the walls of my educational context. In conclusion, I offer final thoughts on how, we, as educators, may speak of rivers.

Research

  This study was designed with the hope of providing a unified voice for foreign-born Blacks, students from Africa and Haiti, who have gone unobserved and unheard prior to the research. Research that could provide specifics about foreign-born Blacks, particularly in ESL, would decrease the significant gap in the literature relevant to this topic. Future research could include seeking to incorporate their experiences and linguistic and cultural mores into authentic learning experiences and increase awareness of this population, potentially contributing to culturally responsive practices. Data from this research support the need for extended studies to address the many facets of being Black immigrants, foreign-born Black ELLs, in secondary schools. Findings from my study have shown that visibility, voice, and validation are essential elements for the protection, survival, and advancement of linguistic, social, and academic experiences within ESL contexts.

  Time restraints did not allow for an intense study of each ESL population as its own entity based upon demographics. The ESL students from Haiti and Africa were treated as a collective of foreign-born Black students for the purpose of this research. However, additional research should be undertaken to further develop understanding of the interrelatedness between the backgrounds of Haitian, African, and other Diasporian students and their particular cultures. This will impact these students' learning experiences, with emphasis on their native geographical contexts, as well as being Black immigrant learners in the United States. To date, there is limited research. Research into CRT and ESL as it pertains to foreign-born Blacks could also make significant contributions to a meaningful, evolving body of literature about Blacks in ESL.

Additionally, this study could serve as a model for additional qualitative research needed to heighten the awareness of foreign-born Black students within ESL and larger educational contexts.

This research called attention to an underserved group in ESL and used their lived experiences in school to examine their perceptions about school as well as teachers' perceptions and treatment of this population. The results of this research may motivate more scholarly investigations to improve cultural awareness, cross-cultural relationships, and cultural responsiveness to underrepresented students. Sociocultural factors such as ethnocentrism, the belief that one's own culture is better than another and xenophobia, fear of foreigners, are critical concerns that can impact race, culture, and identity in ESL settings. In addition, the possible influences of xenophobia and ethnocentrism on teacher-student interactions may be a potential research focus that could aid in the understanding of foreign-born Blacks and other immigrant students. As society becomes more pluralistic in nature and the number of foreign-born Blacks increases, particularly in urban education settings, additional research may eradicate the possible sense of estrangement of foreign-born Black students and other English language learner subgroups who may be marginalized unintentionally by political, societal, and cultural factors within the learning environment (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004; Tatum, 1992).

Practice

School practices that focus on diversity will give foreign-born Black students, as well as students from all backgrounds, an optimal learning and social atmosphere. Teachers of foreign-born students could enhance all students' lives in the larger school

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context by generating student-centered activities and integrating specific content that highlight the unique differences found in a variety of linguistic and cultural mores. Moreover, these practices could motivate teachers to use more inclusive pedagogical strategies to highlight and infuse diversity in any given curriculum or particular activity.

School administrators should support approaches that actively engage and support cross-cultural understanding and sustain positive attitudes about culturally and linguistically diverse students. For instance, professional learning communities and student-centered clubs that concentrate on cultural multiplicity are inclusive practices that encourage dialogues and actions that promote change. Professional learning communities that focus on diversity can intentionally and naturally heighten awareness of unnoticed cultures, such as Diasporian students in ESL, within instructional programs and the overall school environment. Formal monthly meetings and informal conversations that foster interactions and dialogues help teachers to become more accountable to culturally and linguistically diverse students. The practice of accountability can also be extended through extra-curricular activities that encompass all cultures to illuminate underserved populations by placing significance on diversity, cross-cultural relationships, and social acceptance in an alternative learning situation.

Social engagements that consider student-centered approaches to convey diversity work best for foreign-born Blacks as part of the larger collective of ESL students, as it does for their mainstream peers. An inclusive student-centered culture club evolved from this research to call attention to unnoticed ESL students and to offer all faculty and students varying degrees of exposure to unfamiliar linguistic and cultural mores. Initially, activities that originated from the school club targeted and focused on underserved

populations such as foreign-born Blacks. Subsequently, the school club has broadened its scope to focus on students' attributes that significantly enrich school life and advance cross-cultural relationships that help enhance learning and social outcomes for students from all cultures.

In addition, cultural, social, and linguistic adaptations can be made for support services, parental involvement, and other services that are often afforded to other students. Knowledge of Diasporian cultures will help school faculty and administration to create strategies to consider cultural differences and fulfill the various needs of foreign-born Black students. For underserved populations such as foreign-born Blacks in ESL, support programs should be offered that foster a sense of belonging and provide equitable opportunities for recognition and success. ESL pedagogical practices should be revised to include the social and cultural mores of foreign-born Blacks to assist with their acclimation to a new society and school. Moreover, pre-service teachers could incorporate studies about Diasporian students and other underrepresented groups to gain a deeper understanding of the various needs of underserved populations (Ladson-Billings, 1999).

In this study, foreign-born Blacks expressed a concern about being likened to African-Americans and often isolated by lessons presented. For example, the enslavement of Africans and discussions about Haiti that arose as the focal point after a devastating earthquake often objectify Diasporian students during class discussions and activities. Foreign-born Black students are subjected to cultural ideations that are infused into lessons based upon stereotypes and preconceived notions. Unconsciously biased or historically offensive lessons may cause immigrant students to feel uncomfortable as well

as stigmatized (Amin, 1997; Ibrahim, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Ogbu, 1992a). Cultural responsiveness could evolve by emphasizing refined cultural presentations and acknowledging and presenting meaningful, adapted content to be imparted throughout a range of learning situations.

Foreign-born Black students are often typically assumed to be or classified as being African-Americans or Black (Ibrahim, 1999). Local policies could address the collection of student demographic data to consider placing distinguishing identification markers to augment school registration data instead of simply characterizing these students as Blacks. Student background information should be accurate and accessible, especially when specific sub-groups could benefit from services and attention. Access to detailed student demographic data may allow for formal recognition of academic and test performances. Student demographic data can also be used to drive culturally responsive school practices and generate policy initiatives.

Policy

Foreign-born Black students' educational needs often go unnoticed and undocumented because there is limited attention and dialogue about the existence and needs of this student population. This makes improving education for immigrant students, such as foreign-born Blacks in ESL, a policy priority. This research contributes to a growing body of work about Diasporian students within the confines of ESL by exploring barriers that may thwart efforts of acceptance by the larger school context and broader society. The development of policies can play a substantial role in providing support for foreign-born Black students in any given academic situation.

Information from this research may motivate academic stakeholders to play a significant role in the development and implementation of policies that will make a difference by increasing cultural responsiveness and heightening the awareness of the culture (Lee, 2005). The establishment of local, state, and federal policies could ensure the conformity of expectations to best service immigrant students such as for foreign-born Blacks.

Local policy. Identification of underserved students is important because it enables educators to recognize the type of support that foreign-born Black students and other ESL students may need. Acclimation and developmental concerns could transcend into behavioral problems when underrepresented groups in ESL face challenges with language difficulties and social acceptance. Accurate identification of Diasporan students can help educators and administrators accept the challenge to recognize difficulties and address various issues through appropriate programs and services. Comprehensive student background information will ensure academic progress and well-designed programming needs for populations that were previously unaccounted for, unnoticed, or inadvertently grouped with other subgroups. In addition, detailed student demographic data will provide the information needed to provide understanding of Diasporian students in the larger scheme of school, and offer a non-threatening school environment for these immigrant students.

According to Census Data (McKinnon & Bennett, 2005), there is a significant shift in immigration patterns of ethnic and linguistic student populations in the United States. Diasporian immigrants are particularly concentrated in New York, Florida, Massachusetts, and New Jersey (Gibson & Jung, 2006; McKinnon & Bennett, 2005). The

local district should enact a policy to validate and confirm the accurate identification of foreign-born Black students to ensure the appropriate, culturally relevant academic and social support services (Artiles et al., 2005; Creese et al., 2006; Gibson & Jung, 2006; Ibrahim, 2000).

State policy. Foreign-born Black students could benefit from accurate identification because demographic information can be used to proactively address the challenges associated ESL and standardized tests. ESL students are subjected to test mandates that were primarily designed for native English speakers. Standardized tests do not consider implications that affect ESL test taking skills and other issues that impact assessment. Factors such as cultural background, previous educational experiences, stages of acculturation, age at immigration, and literacy skills can present a bias and disadvantage to non-native speakers (Amin, 1997; Bachay, 1998; Ibrahim, 1999; Kirkwood, 2002; Lopez, 2002; Motha, 2006; Taylor & Lambert, 1996; Taylor, 2006; Vilme & Butler, 2004). Language barriers may also make it difficult for ESL students, especially underserved groups, to demonstrate their knowledge and actual level of competency. Moreover, language adaptations and other modifications for instructional and practice test situations are not readily available for ESL students from Africa and Haiti. The complexity of Diasporian languages limits the possibility of translation because it could be time-consuming and costly.

Many foreign-born Black English Language Learners have not been exposed to standardized tests and overall testing process could be overwhelming. Standardized testing requirements should be reviewed and adjusted to meet the needs of all culturally and linguistically diverse test takers. Policies are needed to examine theoretical and

practical elements associated with standardized testing and underrepresented groups such as foreign-born Blacks (Ladson-Billings 1998, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The specific needs of minority groups are often overlooked because several standardized assessments used for ELLs are not sensitive to the needs of underrepresented student populations.

Federal policy. The impact of global economic sanctions, human rights, natural disasters, wars, and political conflicts are factors that warrant national attention (Azevedo, 2005; Bachay, 1998). Federal funding and development of comprehensive, sensitive policies to service, counsel, and protect students from compromised areas such as Haiti and Africa are needed (Brown, 2004; Butterfield, 2004; Kamya, 1997). Many ESL students from Africa and Haiti derive from regions that may have been compromised by social unrest and have had wide-ranging life experiences and personal histories. ESL policy frameworks should consider that Haitian and African students may have been subjected to traumatic situations caused by social, political, and economic turmoil.

Some foreign-born Blacks may have left some family members behind in their home countries because they left abruptly and involuntarily. These students may require federally funded programs that address adjustment challenges associated with transitioning into a new culture, language, and school system. The effects of dislocation or traumatic experiences may cause some Diasporian ESL students to be perceived as withdrawn, preoccupied, and disinterested. Specialized counseling and home language literacy support may facilitate success for foreign-born Blacks in ESL. Specialized,

mandated, programs may enable teachers to make assessments to accurately understand and support the individual circumstances and needs of Diasporan students.

The combination of significant policies can bring attention and support to foreign-born Blacks as well as improve their opportunities for success. Policies that respond to the needs of foreign-born Black students and address the multifaceted extent of their academic, economic, social, and emotional concerns can directly influence the educational attainments of foreign-born Blacks as English Language Learners and other immigrant children (Boyd, 2002; Brown, 2004, Rodriguez, 2002).

Speaking of Rivers

The poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," by African-American poet, Langston Hughes, served as the springboard of my thoughts about what I wanted to study (see Appendix D). This poem contributed to the significance of the title of this study as well as to some reflections about culture, identity, and knowledge. This poem speaks about compassion for all races with a voice that promotes ancestral pride and cross-cultural interactions. The metaphors in "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" are related to endurance, progress, and knowledge. In this poem, the river symbolizes the relationship of identity and mankind. During this study, my soul has "grown" deep like the rivers, because I was able to make connections that enabled me to understand others as well as myself. The research emphasized an expansion of cultural knowledge and gave voice to foreign-born Blacks that revealed identity, culture, pride, and strength.

The attempt to demystify foreign-born Blacks in ESL through research could be the catalyst to innovate and implement local, national, federal, and international policies and practices that particularly address this student population as a collective or by

geographical and ethnic categorization. In order for foreign-born Blacks to be successful, these ELLs must take the responsibility of absorbing aspects of American culture while maintaining their own. Data from interviews unveiled that several parents made personal, familial, and financial sacrifices to provide the student participants with an opportunity to be educated in the United States. Parents of foreign-born Black ELLs are aware of their role of passing cultural and linguistic information to their children; however, they want their Diasporian children to excel in American schools to change the complexities of situations for their families as well as themselves. This study provided exposure for students from Haiti and Africa to open their world to those they encounter on a daily basis.

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Appendix A

Interviews Questions for Students

1. When did you come to the United States?

2. Why did you come to the United States?

3. How do your classroom experiences(s) in your home country compare to your current classroom experience(s) in the United States?

4. Share your best experience in the ESL classroom.

5. Share your worst experience in the ESL classroom.

6. What image do you think you project to your teachers?

7. What do you think or feel about your teachers?

8. Tell me about you social or academic interactions with students from a culture that is different from your own.

9. In what ways, if any, do you feel visible within your class?   -within school?

10. In what ways, if any, do you feel invisible within your class -within school?

11. How do people at school think or feel about you?

12. How do you think or feel about people at school?

13. As a student from _____ , how do you feel in your ESL class?

14. As a student from_____, how do you feel about learning English in your ESL class?

15. As a student from_____, can you make a connection with something from your native language and culture in your ESL class?

16. In what ways, if any, can the understanding of your language and cultural background help teachers to understand you?

17. In what ways, if any, can teachers' understanding of your language and cultural background help your learning and participation?

18. In what ways, if any, could support and recognition help you in the classroom? - in school?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Teachers

Demographic Information
Name
Preferred pseudonym
Birthplace
Nationality
Native language(s)
Other languages spoken, Years of study, & Proficiency
Sojourn in a foreign country (length & purpose)
Traveling experiences (frequency, location, & purpose)
Memberships in professional organizations related to language teaching
Professional conference attendance (frequency, purpose, & focus)

Focused Life History

Linguistic Background
Review information the teachers have provided in the "Demographic
Information" section, if collected via email.

How were the languages acquired/learned?

How often are the languages used?

Employment History
Tell me something about yourself.

Why did you decide to become an ESL teacher ?

How did you become an ESL teacher?
o Probe for other jobs held before
o Probe for both reasons for teaching for teaching ESL

What types of ESL programs have you taught at?
o Describe how you taught at those different programs (e.g. teaching styles, focuses of
instruction, materials used, etc.)

How long have you been teaching at _____ (current job)?

Share your best experience in the ESL classroom?

Share your worst experience in the ESL classroom?

How do you think students perceive you?

Current Experience

Who would you consider as a representative teacher in the program(s)? What about yourself? [*This question isn't really about the past, but it will help recruit participants at the early stage of the study, e.g. when this interview isn't combined with the one focused on the present.*]

(Questions for teachers only) What classes are you teaching this year?
o If different classes, probe for a typical and an atypical classes & Why

Describe the student populations in your classes

What do you think it means for someone to know English?

In your opinion, what makes an ESL teacher stand out?

How would you characterize the goal/mission of the ESL program?

How do you perceive your role as an ESL teacher?

What are your goals for yourself as a teacher? For the class(es)?

What aspects of your past life experiences have been most influential in making who you are as an ESL teacher today? [*This question will be repeated during final member checks .*]

Tell me about any other experiences you have had that have affected how you think about teaching English.

Tell me about any other experiences you have had that have affected how you think about students from various cultures.

What do you feel are your strengths in teaching ESL? Relative weaknesses?

How did you decide on the activities, lessons, viewings, etc. for your class(es)?
o Probe about other materials & resources.

How often do you usually read about cultural and linguistic backgrounds of ESL student populations?

What do you perceive as the goals of your students?

How do you relate to your students?
o On personal & instructional levels

How do you make your students feel involved in your class?

What do you think makes English difficult for students?

What could make the study of English easier for students?

Based on your experience, what common misconceptions do students have?

Based on your experience, what common misconceptions do you have about students that enter your class?

How do you think ESL students learn English?

If someone is a self-proclaimed expert in teaching ESL, what would you expect them to know?

Professional Development

Can you briefly talk about your professional development experiences that are related to specific cultures and or languages?

○ Probe with "why" questions: reasons for taking part in the professional development programs.

In what ways, if any, can the understanding of an ethnic group's cultural and linguistic mores contribute to teaching?

Recall, if any, can the understanding of an ethnic group's cultural and linguistic mores contribute to teaching?

Recall. If any, your social and academic engagements with foreign-born Black English language learners.

What presence, if any, of Black ESL students is visible within the school context and/or class?

What are your perceptions of speakers of Africanized and Creole languages?

What existing knowledge do you know about Blacks in ESL?

In what ways, if any, would an in-service about Blacks, as a particular language minority sub-group contribute to your knowledge base and or enhance your current pedagogical practices?

Appendix C

Informed Consent Forms for Adults and Students

I agree to participate in a research study entitled "Speaking of Rivers: Demystifying foreign-born Blacks through a Secondary English as a Second Language Context" which is being conducted by Ms. C. Dedra Williams, doctoral student at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. This research project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Ane Turner Johnson as part of a doctoral dissertation concerning the linguistic and cultural mores of foreign-born Blacks, people from Africa and West-Indies, in an English as a Second Language (ESL) setting.

The purpose of this study is to enhance awareness of the cultural and linguistic mores of foreign-born Black students and increase the visibility of this population. The data from this study will be analyzed in comparison of data from previous studies and/or will be submitted as a doctoral study.

I understand that I may be asked to engage in informal and formal interviews and focus group meetings and I may be requested to allow the participant-observer, Ms. Williams, to observe and engage in select activities with individuals or groups as deemed appropriate. My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in focus group meetings, interviews and complete surveys. Data collected in this study may be used to enhance, redesign or develop culturally responsive programs in the future. Data may also be used for public presentations as well as publication in a research journal.

I understand that my responses and data gathered will be confidential. I recognize and agree that I may be recorded during the study. I agree that any information obtained from this study may be used in any way thought best for publication and/or education provided that I am in no way identified and my name is not used.

I understand that I will not be affected unfavorably or favorably by opting or not opting to participate in the research. Participation is the study is voluntary and can be stopped anytime without any consequences. Participation does not imply that any employee will be placed in a position of advantage or disadvantage with Atlantic City Public Schools, Atlantic City High School, the principal investigator, or any others associated with the study.

I understand that there are no physical or psychological risks involved in this study, and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without penalty. If I have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this study, I may contact the principal investigator, Ms. C. Dedra Williams, at (609) 343-7300 ext. 2415 or I may contact Dr.Ane Turner Johnson at Rowan University at (856) 256-4000. I recognize that my time and consideration are greatly appreciated.

_____   _____
(Signature of Participant)   (Date)

_____   _____
(Signature of Investigator)   (Date)
Dear Parent/Guardian:

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I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Ane Turner Johnson, as part of my doctoral dissertation concerning heightening the awareness of foreign-born Blacks, students from Africa and the West Indies, in an English as a Second Language (ESL) setting. The purpose of the study is to generate teachers and faculty awareness of the needs of these students and give them support and visibility in the classroom and school.

I am requesting permission for your child to participate in this research. Your child may be asked to participate interviews and focus groups meetings and complete surveys. Also, your child may be asked to participate in a small group intervention to provide them with extra support in the classroom and other activities. Ms. Williams, as a participant-observer may observe and engage in activities with individuals or groups as deemed appropriate. Your child will not be affected by any means by agreeing or not agreeing to participate in the research. Participation is on a volunteer basis and can be stopped anytime without any consequences.

Participant responses and all data gathered will be confidential. Please be advised that any information obtained from this study may be used in any way thought best for publication and/or education provided that your child is not identified and names are not used. Data may also be used for public presentations, publication in a research journal, and the development of future programs.

There are no risks involved in this study, and your child is free to withdraw his or her participation without penalty at any time. If you have any questions or problems concerning your child's participation in this study please contact the principal investigator, C. Dedra Williams, at (609) 343-7300 ext. 2415 or you may contact Dr.Ane Turner Johnson at Rowan University at (856) 256-4000. Please recognize that your time and consideration is appreciated.

Sincerely,

C. Dedra Williams

Please indicate whether or not you agree to have your child participate in this study by participating in interviews, recordings and additional activities by checking the appropriate statement below and returning this letter to Mrs. Middleton as soon as possible.

Student's Name:_____

_____ I grant permission for my student to participate in this study.
_____ I do not grant permission for my student to participate in this study.

Parent / Guardian Signature:_____

Contact Phone Number:_____

Langston Hughes Poem

THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS

By Langston Hughes

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow
  of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went
  down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn
  all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.