ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	CLASSROOM LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT
	Karen Feagin, Doctor of Philosophy, 2023
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Students designated as English learners (ELs) make up a substantial and growing portion of the K–12 population in the U.S., so all teachers should expect, at some point, to be teachers of language learners and will need to address the complexities of managing a multilingual classroom. This management is considered classroom-level educational language policy and is an area of importance for understanding and improving the educational experiences of EL-designated students.

This qualitative study used nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) to examine the nature of and influences on classroom-level language policymaking at two small Maryland public high schools which exclusively serve EL-designated students. Maryland lacks explicit state-level language policy, thus creating a potentially neutral policy environment for the education of EL-designated students. Data sources included in-depth interviews with two principals and five teachers from the two high schools; documents from twenty years of meetings

of the State Board of Education; and other state-level and federal policy documents. Data were analyzed using thematic data analysis.

Findings showed that educators managed language in the school and classroom through instructional practices that positioned English as the default language of academics and as the predominant, if not sole, language goal. Language management was mediated by educators' language ideologies and preparation in TESOL. Through the lens of their assessment literacy, teachers weighed the burden of testing against the benefits of the data obtained through testing and either implemented instructional practices that fully embraced the test and its associated policies or practices that minimally complied with the policies. Principals used their understanding of policies to navigate unavoidable constraints and create space for success. Finally, state-level policy was significantly influenced by federal policy, in particular, *No Child Left Behind*, and its legacy continues in Maryland education policy today.

This study highlights the need for pre-service education and in-service professional development to clarify educators' roles as language policy agents. Implications for teacher education also include a call for expanding offerings in asset-based language education and assessment literacy. Policy implications include recommendations for the State of Maryland to enact proposed policies from the English Learners Workgroup and to revise regulations that govern high-stakes testing for high school students.

CLASSROOM LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT

by

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Dedication

In memory of my father,

JAMES PHILIP FEAGIN

(1953–2022)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the educators who participated in the research I report on here. During a time of unprecedented hardship, they selflessly volunteered their time and shared so much with me. This research would not have been possible otherwise, and I am beyond grateful.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Students learning English as an additional language currently make up about 10% of the nationwide K–12 student population, and their share of the population is increasing (Department of Education, 2016). Students designated as English learners (ELs) are marginalized in the U.S. public education system. They are generally educated in under-resourced schools and classrooms (Callahan, 2013), and they are often economically disadvantaged (Quintero & Hansen, 2021); this holds true in Maryland, specifically, as well (Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools, 2022, p. 26). Additionally, they are more likely than their non-EL-designated classmates to be refugees (National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2014). That is not to say that all EL-designated[1] students have suffered trauma or are disadvantaged, but they are more likely than other students to be coping with additional personal difficulties that can affect their performance in school, beyond the inherent difficulty of learning an additional language in a second language setting. According to Pentón Herrera (2020), "students cannot learn successfully when they are afraid, hungry, scared, excluded, discriminated, invisible, unsupported, depressed, homeless, fearing family separation or deportation; the list can go on" (p. 5). To succeed in school, all EL-designated students need language-related supports, and many would benefit from supports beyond just language instruction.

Students who have been designated as ELs have not demonstrated average academic achievement on par with their non-EL-designated peers in terms of graduation rates and

[1] I follow Rosa (2019) in using the term "EL-designated student […] in an effort to emphasize that this label is an institutional attribution rather than an objective fact about one's language proficiency" (Rosa, 2019, p. 217).

performance on standardized tests of math and reading. For example, according to the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), in 2014, the national average for high school graduation rates was 82.3%, compared to only 62.6% for EL-designated students (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2016). The difference is even starker in Maryland, where the overall average high school graduation rate in 2014 was 86.4% but only 54% for EL-designated students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Additionally, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment in 2017 showed that in fourth grade, 32% of students designated as ELs scored at or above the "Basic" level, compared to 71% of students not designated ELs (9% and 39%, respectively, at or above "Proficient"). The rates for eighth-graders almost exactly mirrored those for fourth-graders: 32% to 78% at or above Basic and 5% to 37% at or above Proficient (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). These disparities in achievement measures suggest inadequate and inequitable educational experiences for EL-designated students, who require and deserve greater support than they currently receive in school. For teachers to be able to provide the support EL-designated students deserve, schools and districts need funding and infrastructure, which require federal and state policy action.

The EL subgroup is the fastest growing population of students in the U.S. (Department of Education, 2016), so it is increasingly likely that all teachers will teach EL-designated students in their classes at some point, whether or not they have been prepared to do so. However, EL-designated students have academic needs distinct from their non-designated peers, and what counts as "just good teaching" for mainstream students is inadequate for EL-designated students (de Jong & Harper, 2005). All teachers need and deserve sufficient and relevant preparation for meeting all their students' needs and building on their resources because the ways teachers

address students' unique needs and embrace their assets will indelibly mark students' academic lives, in the moment and in the future.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

Classroom language policies and practices have the potential to support and affirm students' knowledge, experiences, and sense of self (e.g., through funds of knowledge; Vélez-lbáñez, 1988; and culturally sustaining pedagogies; Alim & Paris, 2017), or to undermine these very qualities, so it is important to know what is happening in the classroom. Classroom-level research most directly focuses on the experiences of students and the ways that teachers' ideologies, policies, and practices affect students' experiences. The practices that teachers enact in the classroom are mediated by many factors, including explicit policies that directly speak to pedagogical directives. Teachers' implicit beliefs, in turn, influence their interpretation and implementation of those directives via practice. Ricento and Hornberger (1996) argued for the importance of studying language policy in the classroom because while "teachers are often socialized to see themselves as simply carrying out policies that others have articulated […] teachers can transform classrooms, thereby promoting institutional change that can lead to political and, ultimately, broader social change" (pp. 417–418).

As many scholars have noted, teachers are the final arbiters of policy (e.g., Hornberger, 2002; Johnson, 2013; Menken & Garcia, 2010) and so their interpretation and implementation of policies merit closer examination. Because teachers do not implement top-down policies precisely as written, but rather negotiate them according to their knowledge and beliefs and the demands of their context (Menken & García, 2010), classroom-level research is needed to understand the policy as implemented, while policy analysis is needed to understand the policy

as written. Therefore, the topic of classroom language policy also deserves examination, and with specific attention to the ways it is affected by assessment pressures.

Assessment policies and practices are important research foci because of their enormous impact on public education in the U.S., in particular over the past two decades. Assessment drives instruction in the age of high-stakes accountability, and EL-designated students are not protected from its demands. The fact that standardized tests designed for and normed on monolingual children are entirely inappropriate for bilingual children is largely ignored or swept aside through the use of ineffectual accommodations (Abedi et al., 2004; Mahoney, 2017; Menken, 2009). In addition, EL-designated students are tested more than other students because of mandates regarding English language proficiency testing, to which English-dominant students are not subjected (Hernandez, 2017; Menken, 2008). Mahoney (2017) suggested that the accountability movement, specifically NCLB, improved education for EL-designated students in that they were made a priority for schools and districts in a way that they never had been: schools could not simply ignore the experiences and outcomes of EL-designated students because the evaluation of the entire school depended in part on how well these students performed on tests. However, she argued, the increase in oversight was outweighed by the negative consequences that accompanied accountability mandates, describing the tradeoff as a swing between validity and accountability (Mahoney, 2017, p. 26).

Accountability policies for schools and teachers have been standard fare in education for decades now, since the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 (Menken, 2009). Many students who began school the year that the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB, 2002) was signed into law have graduated from college since I began the research I report here, so standardized testing and high-stakes accountability have been the norm

throughout their academic lives. Although high-stakes accountability may be seen as well-intentioned, claiming to guarantee high-quality instruction to all children, the consequences of the accountability movement have been severe, for the students themselves, their teachers, school leaders, and district and state officials (Ewing, 2020; Nichols & Berliner, 2007). There has also been growing resistance to accountability via student testing, seen in the Opt Out Movement (Fair Test, 2018; Pizmony-Levy, 2018), which was taken up across the United States, most strikingly in New York City, where approximately 20% of students did not take part in standardized testing for accountability in 2015 (Strauss, 2016). Beyond the concerns regarding high-stakes testing for accountability as it affects all students, it is also crucial to consider the disproportionate burden placed on EL-designated students.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Assessment influences curriculum and instruction in a number of ways (Menken, 2009). A substantial research base (i.e., washback literature; Cheng & Fox, 2013; Sultana, 2018) has demonstrated that rather than assessments testing what is taught, teachers end up teaching what is tested. However, the effects of assessment on classroom language policy have not been as thoroughly studied and documented, and the research on this topic is somewhat diffuse, as I explain in my review of background literature in Chapter 2. Therefore, I set out to conduct the study that I document and describe in the pages that follow, which explores the relationship between high-stakes assessment of EL-designated students and the language policy environment they encounter in the classroom.

In this study, I focused on a unique context: two Maryland public high schools that exclusively serve EL-designated students, including newcomers, students designated as long-term English learners, and students newly reclassified as English-proficient. Because this is a

public school, the students are held to the same testing requirements for academic achievement as students at any other public high school in the state, but they are additionally burdened with English language proficiency testing (testing requirements are described further below). My research site falls in a lacuna in current literature: a high school serving only EL-designated students located in a state with an apparently neutral policy stance toward the education of EL-designated students.

High schools serve EL-designated students with potentially widely disparate needs because the students may be newcomers, having only recently arrived in U.S. schooling, or may be designated as long-term ELs (LTELs), having been eligible for language services for several years (the exact number depending on state definitions). Newcomer students may face especially steep challenges if they have limited experience with formal schooling or literacy in their home language(s), but they are nevertheless expected to learn to speak English, acquire literacy in English, learn academic content in English, and take academic content assessments in English, possibly within their first year in the U.S. So-called LTELs, on the other hand, may be well-practiced in "doing" school but remain designated as language learners for a variety of reasons; they might instead need more straightforward supports for accessing grade-level academic content and assistance in preparing for graduation, college, and employment. And finally, newly reclassified students are no longer eligible for federally funded language services but might still require language-related assistance that content-area teachers are not trained to provide. Despite the enormous variation in need, students may be treated as a single group without differentiation in the structure of their educational experiences. Although high school students and their needs clearly merit study, most of the studies I review in Chapter 2 were located in elementary settings.

In addition, many of the studies focused on bilingual education programs, which are rare at the secondary level (Arias & Fee, 2019; Arias & Markos, 2018).

Further, the research I describe in Chapter 2 was conducted primarily in states that either had restrictive official policies in place (such as Arizona or California) or in states with official policies that were theoretically more supportive of bilingual education (such as Texas, New York, or Connecticut), even if such policies offered only weak support. In either case, the states had official educational *language* policies, specifically, not only policies for the education of EL-designated students. Maryland, on the other hand, addresses the education of EL-designated students in its state plan, as required by law, but does not otherwise encode educational language policy, per se, or any kind of language policy, in statute or regulation. Maryland educators are thus left in a potentially neutral and relatively open implementational space in which to interpret and implement policies, and research in this type of context could meaningfully contribute to the field of educational language policy.

For these reasons, my study focused on the classroom as the primary site for educational language policy appropriation (see Section 2.1.5.1. for discussion of "appropriation" as a policy process), while also highlighting connections between classroom-level policy and practice and policy discourses from larger scales of influence. In this way, I sought to answer the "perennial challenge facing the field of language policy [which] is how to make connections between the macro and micro, and between macro-level policy texts and discourses, and micro-level language use" (Johnson, 2011). A similar call was issued in education policy by Ball (1993), who advocated for more "policy trajectory studies," to "[provide] a mechanism for linking and tracing the discursive origins and possibilities of policy, as well as the intentions embedded in, responses to and effects of policy" (p. 16). To link and trace policy discourses across and their effects

across scales of time and space (also conceptualized as the micro, meso, and macro levels), I employed nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), a methodology that strives "to make connections across large and small scales of human activity" (Hult, 2015). Through my research, I set out to understand the nexus of practice of educational language policy. Specifically, I asked the following research questions:

1. How do educators of EL-designated students manage language in the school and classroom?
2. How do educators of EL-designated students appropriate high-stakes testing policies in the school and classroom?
3. How are the relevant state-level, high-stakes testing policies appropriated by policy agents across time and space(s)?

1.4 Overview

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters. In this chapter, I have described the background to and rationale for the study. I explained the significance of the study, briefly showing how it is situated in the relevant empirical literature and addresses an understudied context. Chapter 2 contains the theoretical framework and literature. I open the chapter by explaining my understanding of language policy, broadly, and educational language policy in particular; I then describe the educational language policy landscape in Maryland. I then discuss the theoretical side of nexus analysis, to lay the foundation for the practical side of the methodology I provide in Chapter 3. Chapter 2 closes with a review of empirical research on the impact of high-stakes testing on classroom language policy to contextualize my study in the research base. In Chapter 3 I describe my research design, data collection procedures, approach to data analysis, and my position as a researcher. Chapters 4 through 6 contain my findings for

my three research questions. In Chapter 4, I present the findings for research question 1, in Chapter 5, I present the findings for research question 2, and in Chapter 6, I present the findings for research question 3. Finally, in Chapter 7, I discuss my findings, their implications for policy and practice, and the limitations of the study, and I outline directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

In this chapter, I set out my understanding of language policy, broadly, and educational language policy, in particular. I then provide an overview of educational language policy in Maryland, setting the stage for the study I conducted. Following this section, I describe nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), the methodology I employed for my research. Finally, I review empirical research related to the role of assessment in classroom-level educational language policy.

2.1 Language Policy: Theory and Concepts

In this section, I briefly cover some definitions of "language policy" that have been put forward by different researchers over time. I then provide an in-depth account of the definition I follow, from Spolsky (2004). Last in this section, I cover "educational policy" and some associated concepts within it.

2.1.1 Definition(s)

Language policy as a field of work and study has been variously defined and delimited over the years since its inception less than a hundred years ago, "having grown out of pragmatic concerns with solving language 'problems' in decolonizing, multilingual polities during the second half of the 20th century" (McCarty, 2011, p. 5). There are many perspectives on what, precisely, language policy is and should include. In this study I focused on language *policy*, in contrast to language *planning*, which refers to the efforts undertaken to solve such language "problems," although the distinction between planning and policy is not entirely straightforward, as different researchers have used the terms differently, e.g., whether "language planning subsumes language policy" or "language policy subsumes language planning" (Johnson, 2013, p. 3). I provide example definitions below:

(1) Cooper (1989): "*Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes*" p. 45; italics in original).

(2) Tollefson (1991): "language planning-policy means the institutionalization of language as a basis for distinctions among social groups (classes). That is, language policy is one mechanism for locating languages with social structure so that language determines who has access to political power and economic resources" (p. 16).

(3) Schiffman (1996): "language policy is primarily a social construct. It may consist of various elements of an explicit nature – juridical, judicial, administrative, constitutional and/or legal language may be extant in some jurisdictions, but whether or not a polity has such explicit *text*, policy as a cultural construct rests primarily on other conceptual elements – belief systems, attitudes, myths – the whole complex that we are referring to as *linguistic culture*, which is the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, religious strictures, and all the other cultural 'baggage' that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their background" (p. 277; italics in original).

(4) Kaplan and Baldauf (1997): "Language planning is a body of ideas, <u>laws and regulations (language policy)</u>, change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop a change from happening) in the language use in one or more communities. To put it differently, language planning involves *deliberate*, although not always *overt, future oriented* change in systems of language code and/or speaking in a social context" (p. 3; underline mine, italics in original), and, to clarify,

"a language policy is a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the society, group or system" (p. xi).

(5) Spolsky (2004): There are "three components of the language policy of a speech community: its language practices – the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire; its language beliefs or ideology – the beliefs about language and language use; and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management" (p. 5).

(6) Shohamy (2006): "the real LP [language policy] of a political and social entity should not be observed only through declared policy statements, but rather through a variety of devices that are used to perpetuate language practices, often in covert and implicit ways" (p. xvi).

(7) McCarty (2011): "I have characterized language policy as a complex sociocultural process: 'modes of human interaction, negotiation, and production mediated by relations of power' (McCarty, 2004, p. 72). The 'policy' in these processes resides in their language-regulating power; that is, the ways in which they 'express normative claims about legitimate and illegitimate language forms and uses,' thereby governing language statuses and uses (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008, p. 9)" (p. 8).

(8) Johnson (2013): "A *language policy* is a policy mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language and includes: (1) Official regulations […]; (2) Unofficial, covert, de facto, and implicit mechanisms, connected to language beliefs and practices […]; (3) Not just products but processes – "policy" as a verb, not a noun […]; (4) Policy texts and discourses across multiple contexts and layers of

> policy activity, which are influenced by the ideologies and discourses unique to that context" (p. 9; italics in original).

The definitions differ from one another in variety of ways, but some common threads that run through most of them include the deliberateness of some policy or policymaking process; the role of power in policymaking; reference to official policies as well as extending beyond them to unofficial and implicit policies; the ideological nature of policymaking; and the recognition that policymaking is always contextual, never occurring in a vacuum. Ultimately, I chose to employ the definition of language policy put forward by Spolsky (2004), because it resides at the intersection of flexibility and precision that made the most sense to me. For example, while I agree with Tollefson's (1991) conceptualization of language policy as a means of structuring society and locating individuals within that structure, that definition was too strict in its delineations and too macro in its focus for my purposes. Additionally, Schiffman's (1996) characterization of language policy was broader and more amorphous than I needed for my study, which was more tightly constrained in its scope.

In the sections that follow, I describe Spolsky's three components of language policy and other key concepts in greater detail. I have ordered these sections to reflect the relationship I understand the components to have with one another, that is, *language ideologies* mediate the formation and implementation of *language management* activities, which seek to affect the *language practices* of individuals and/or a community. Therefore, I first discuss language ideologies, then language management, and then language practices. Following these three components and relevant concepts within them, I discuss *educational* language policy, which relates specifically to my study.

2.1.2 Language Orientations and Ideologies

It is crucial to consider language ideologies in relation to language policy because language planning and policy activities are inherently political (Tollefson, 2006), and unavoidably influenced by one's ideologies, in particular one's language ideologies. In this section I present two approaches to theorizing about and understanding the ideological underpinnings of language management activities, beginning with orientations to language.

2.1.2.1 Orientations to Language in Planning and Policy. Johnson (2013) stated that one of the earliest treatments of language ideologies in language policy literature was put forward by Ruíz (1984) through his conceptualization of *orientations* in language planning. Ruíz (1984) defined orientations as "a heuristic approach to the study of basic issues in language planning" in which an orientation "refers to a *complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society*" (p. 16, italics in original); and so orientations shape attitudes toward language. He described the task of the language planner, relative to language orientations, as that of "discovering" orientations present in existing policies, or proposing new policies with alternative orientations.

In his original conceptualization (specifically intended for the U.S. context), there were three possible orientations to language: language as a problem, as a right, or as a resource. For example, holding an orientation of language-as-problem might lead a policymaker to propose an English-only policy in a multilingual setting; viewed from another angle, an English-only policy might contain and promote a language-as-problem orientation. In this way, orientations, as defined by Ruíz, are evident in policies and are contributors to policymaking, though not clearly causal or restricted to a particular "direction" of influence.

In this work, Ruíz (1984) argued that a language-as-resource orientation be adopted by policymakers and the public because it would lead to an essentially win-win situation for all involved. As a proponent of multilingualism and multiculturalism, he obviously did not support a language-as-problem orientation, and he contended that a language-as-right orientation was not likely to be well-received, in that its ultimate goals were unclear and its nature was confrontational, since legally guaranteed rights require enforcement for compliance, which "[creates] an automatic resistance to whatever one is talking about" (p. 24). Therefore, he argued, if policies positioned language as a resource, they would increase popular support for languages and foster collaborative relationships between language users and language learners, and so everyone would benefit.

This position was critiqued for conceiving of language's value as solely or primarily economic (Petrovic, 2005); for positioning languages as having value only when serving the interests of the state, not the language's community of speakers (T. Ricento, 2005); or for abandoning the goal of language rights for minoritized groups too soon (Bale, 2016). Ruíz (2010) responded to such critiques. He argued that "value is multifaceted," and while economic considerations are inevitable, many languages not previously seen as economically advantageous "have lived for many generations without the esteem of outside communities in large part because their speakers give them value that others may not appreciate in even their own languages. LAR [language-as-resource] is a call to create opportunities for the rest of us to gain some of that appreciation" (p. 162). Ruíz also clarified how he viewed the relationship between language-as-right and language-as-resource orientations, stating that "language-as-resource [is] a precondition for language-as-right" (2010, p. 165).

The framework was elaborated on by Hult and Hornberger (2016). They expanded on each of the orientations and explained in greater detail than the model originally contained how they could be used analytically in LPP research. In the article, the authors included a table (non-exhaustively) listing characteristics or "(pre)dispositions" to the different orientations; this table is reproduced in full in Appendix A. They noted that "the language as problem orientation is a set of values that stem from a monolingual ideal and assimilationist mindset," and that language education programs associated with this orientation tend to be monolingual, submersion-based models (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 34). The language as right orientation, on the other hand, is compensatory, in that legal remedies are intended to compensate for prior wrongs, though "in the United States, language-related rights have been asserted indirectly" (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 36). Because of this relatively weak landscape of language rights, U.S. language education programs aligned with the language as right orientation could be highly variable in nature and still potentially fail to develop lifelong bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism. A language as resource orientation positions linguistic diversity as a personal and societal good, and language education programs within this orientation are additive, in which "the ability for speakers to develop advanced bilingualism in *both* a national language *and* another language is considered desirable" (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 38). The authors expressed caution, though, that even within a language as resource orientation, members of minoritized language communities could be excluded and further marginalized, or that members of these communities could themselves be used as resources to assist members of the dominant group to learn the minoritized language. Language planners and policymakers therefore must be on guard against such potential risks.

2.1.2.2 Language Ideologies. Ruíz's (1984) framework of orientations is similar to the concept of language ideologies, although ideologies have been theorized differently. Other

researchers (prior and subsequent to the original publication on orientations) have written productively about language ideologies and their formation, providing a substantial base to draw on for theoretical utility.

In 1994, Woolard and Schieffelin reviewed the extant research on language ideologies (whether called that or labeled with another term), which was "an area of scholarly inquiry just beginning to coalesce" (p. 55)—one with "no single core literature," as Woolard wrote in 1998 (1998, p. 3). They defined "linguistic/language ideologies" with references to works from Silverstein (1979), Heath (1977), Irvine (1989), and Rumsey (1990), noting that differences between them were due in part to different understandings of *ideology*, itself, and that there was a division in the field as to whether studies of ideology necessarily take a critical stance (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 57). They noted that "a naturalizing move that drains the conceptual of its historical content, making it seem universally and/or timelessly true, is often seen as key to ideological process" (p. 58). That is, belief systems become seen as "natural" or commonsensical. Language users, especially those in a non-dominant group, may find it difficult to question "the way things have always been" when the origins and development of such beliefs and practices have been obscured.

In their review, they covered the various approaches to the study of language ideology up to that point in time, including the ethnography of speaking; language contact, competition, and politics, of which language policy was a sub-topic; doctrines of correctness, standardization, and purism; literacy; historical studies; and linguistic structure and language change. In the section on language policy, they included Cobarrubias's (1983) work on language ideologies that underly language planning activities and Ruíz's (1984) framework of orientations as being "at an even more fundamental level" (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 63). Also under "Language

Contact, Competition, and Politics," they discussed the one-nation-one-language ideology, a historical phenomenon "conventionally dated to Herder and eighteenth century German romanticism" and which was "exported through colonialism to become a dominant model around the world today" (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 60). Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) concluded, "The topic of language ideology is a much needed bridge between linguistic and social theory, because it relates the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, confronting macrosocial constraints on language behavior" (p. 72).

One such example of bridging linguistic and social theory was Irvine and Gal's (2000) presentation of semiotic processes in *linguistic differentiation*, which detailed some of the means by which the one-nation-one-language ideology developed. Because "linguistic forms, including whole languages, can index social groups" (p. 37), linguistic differentiation functions to draw boundaries between social groups, reifying and reinforcing notions about *us* and *them* (p. 39). Irvine and Gal (2000) defined language ideologies as "conceptual schemes" that "are suffused with the political and moral issues pervading the particular sociolinguistic field and are subject to the interests of their bearers' social position" (p. 35).

Kroskrity (2004) defined language ideologies as "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds" (p. 498). Although on its face this definition may seem straightforward, it is hardly simplistic. He argued that language ideologies are best understood as a "cluster concept" made up of "partially overlapping but analytically distinguishable layers of significance […] (1) group or individual interests, (2) multiplicity of ideologies, (3) awareness of speakers, (4) mediating functions of ideologies, and (5) role of language ideology in identity construction" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 501). That is to say, language ideologies structure and

reproduce beliefs about language in the world to benefit a particular social group, such as through the standardization of a language by setting the language of the dominant social group as the standard by which all others are judged. Further, it is important to conceive of language ideologies as "unmarkedly multiple" (p. 503), within individuals as well as within communities, to draw attention to the nature of the "dominant" ideology, including the processes by which it formed and attained supremacy (i.e., hegemony). Members of a community have and may exhibit awareness of the different ideologies at play in the community to greater or lesser degrees; certain ideologies may be the overt subjects of attention, including contestation, while others go unremarked and unnoticed. Language ideologies also influence community members' language use because "language users' ideologies bridge their sociocultural experience and their linguistic and discursive resources by constituting those linguistic and discursive forms as indexically tied to features of their sociocultural experience" (p. 507)—an individual's lived experience as member of a community shapes their language use and that language use reflects their membership in the community.

Finally, Kroskrity described how language ideologies are used in the formation of social and cultural identities, pointing to the role of language in "naturalizing the boundaries of social groups" (p. 509). This function is clearly related to the prior dimensions of significance, in which "linguistic and discursive resources" become associated with a particular social group, multiple ideologies interact and perhaps become dominant, thus benefitting the dominant social group; that is to say, *hegemony*, or the processes of ideological formation and reproduction in service to the dominant social group. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) described this process as revalorization, in which "language varieties that are regularly associated with (and thus index)

particular speakers are often revalorized—or misrecognized—not just as symbols of group identity, but as emblems of political allegiance or of social, intellectual, or moral worth" (p. 61).

Tollefson (1991) defined hegemony as "the successful production and reproduction of ideology" (p. 12), and hegemonic practices "tend to reinforce privilege and grant it legitimacy as a 'natural' condition (Fairclough, 1989)" (Tollefson, 2006, p. 43). This "taken-for-grantedness" is one of the ways that hegemony has such power, because it obscures and erases other ways of doing, thinking, and being, and it is perpetuated through "the 'spontaneous consent' of the people to the direction of social life imposed by dominant groups," which Tollefson (1991) named as one of the ways that hegemony is achieved, the other being "through the apparatus of state coercive power which enforces discipline on members who do not consent to the dominant ideology" (p. 12). That is, members of society who do not "consensually" subscribe to the dominant language ideologies and do not participate in the associated hegemonic practices are coerced into doing so, in particular through overt language management, through policies such as English-only education to stamp out children's multilingual practices or local ordinances about what languages may be used on signs in public spaces.

In this section, I have described some approaches to understanding and explaining the role of language ideology in language policy. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) provided an overview of language ideology research, showing it to be a rich, diffuse, and far-reaching research base. Kroskrity (2004) proposed dimensions of significance of language ideologies that connected the individual to the social and societal, and Tollefson (1991, 2006) theorized ideological reproduction at the societal and state level (hegemony). Ideologies mediate both the formation and implementation of policies, although Johnson (2013) warned against claiming a cause-and-effect relationship between ideology and policy because "it is not enough to show that

a particular ideology is inherent or implicit in policy language; one must show how and why particular policy authors intentionally put it in there" (p. 113).

2.1.3 Language Management

Spolsky named language management as one component of language policy, referring to "any specific efforts to modify or influence [language] practice[s] by any kind of language intervention, planning or management" (2004, p. 5), or "the way in which some individual or group or institution set out to modify the practices and beliefs of members of the community" (2019, p. 326). Language management is perhaps what most clearly appears to be language policy, that is, someone telling someone else what to do with or in a language. However, as I mentioned above, it is only one part of language policy, because it fails to tell the whole story. Rules about language use (whether official or not) may be external manifestations of some policy actor's language ideologies, and they may ultimately be ineffectual for changing someone's language practices or produce a constellation of other effects beyond those intended by the rule.

Language management is not always *official*, but it is *deliberate*. That is to say, an individual, group, or institution consciously and intentionally takes action to change someone else's language practices, broadly construed (see Section 2.1.4, "Language Practices" for more detail on what I understand language practices to consist of). The actions may not take the form of explicit, enforced rules, but neither are they simply communicative norms, which I consider to be part of language practices. Language management might be official or unofficial, formal or informal, explicit or implicit, overt or covert. Wiley (2012) stated that "*implicit policies* include those that may not even consciously start out to be language policies but have the effect of policy," while "*covert* policies, as the word implies, are more ominous. They are policies that seek to use language or literacy requirements as a means of barring someone from social,

political, educational, or economic participation" (p. 72, italics in original; see also Wiley & Wright, 2004). Schissel (2019) detailed how testing policies have accomplished these kinds of pernicious goals throughout U.S. history, such as through restricting immigration, voting, and other civic participation. A policy's goals contribute to its *orientation* to language.

2.1.3.1 Policy Orientations. Language policy orientations—distinct from Ruíz's (1984) language orientations in policies—characterize governmental or institutional recognition of and support for languages (Wiley, 2004). The "schema to categorize various types of official language policies or language laws" was originally articulated by Kloss (1977/1998) and later expanded on by Wiley and Macías (1998) (Wiley, 2004, p. 325).

Table 2-1. Policy Orientations with Implications for Educational Language Rights

Governmental/State/Agency Policy Orientation toward Language Rights	Policy Characteristics
Promotion-oriented policies	The government, state, or agency allocates resources to support the promotion of specific languages.
Expediency-oriented policies	A pragmatic use of minority languages, typically involving accommodations to overcome perceived communication barriers between government agencies and clients.
Tolerance-oriented policies	Characterized by the noticeable absence of state intervention in the linguistic life of the language minority community.
Restrictive-oriented policies	Legal prohibitions or curtailments on the use of minority languages; age requirements dictating when a child may study a minority language or foreign language.
Null policies	The significant absence of policy recognizing minority languages or language varieties.
Repression-oriented policies	Active efforts to eradicate minority languages.

(from Wiley, 2012, p. 71)

In Table 2-1, I have reproduced, in part, "Policy Orientations with Implications for Educational Language Rights," from Wiley (2012, p. 71). Policy orientations are evidenced through both the policy's intended purposes and its consequences, whether intended or

unintended (Wiley, 2004). An emphasis on consequences is important, not only because of the potential for unintended consequences (Wiley, 2004), but because policy actors can try to obscure the intentions behind a policy. For example, Wiley and Wright (2004) questioned the intentions behind the English-only movement, which, on its face, focused expressly on language use and the role of language in promoting or hindering cultural assimilation. Some of the primary movers within the movement resigned from leadership positions "following the disclosure of a racially provocative internal memo" and when one leader's "ties with White supremacy groups were discovered" (Wiley & Wright, 2004, p. 148). These discoveries are hardly surprising, but in one sense, they are also immaterial because impacts outweigh even the best of intentions, and the *intentions* of these movement leaders were certainly not beneficent. The *impacts* of the English-only movement included "fostering interethnic hostility, ignoring civil rights through efforts to disenfranchise its minority citizens, failing to promote the integration of language-minority children, and failing to value multilingual citizenry in an age of globalization" (Wiley & Wright, 2004, p. 148). As I discuss further below, the explicit goal of language policies is to change language practices in some way, but the practices may not be the only, or even the true, targets of a given policy.

2.1.3.2 De Jure Language Policy. Official language management in the U.S., or *de jure* language policy at the federal level, has taken place through court actions and through legislation. There are several key language policies in U.S. history that affect the education of second language learners, which I only outline here, since a full review of such policies is

outside the scope of the present report[2]. Here I briefly describe the cases *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923), *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), and *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981), as well as legislation in the form of the Bilingual Education Act (1968; Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965), the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), the latter two being reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

In *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923) the Supreme Court ruled that states could not prohibit teaching foreign languages to children. Nebraska had passed a law prohibiting teaching German to young children, as part of a wave of anti-German and xenophobic sentiment during and after World War I (Baker & Wright, 2017). The Supreme Court found the Nebraska law to violate the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (*Meyer v. Nebraska*, 1923). However, Wiley (2012) called this ruling only a "weak precedent" (p. 78) given that the Court's ruling also included reasoning that "the power of the State to compel attendance at some school and to make reasonable regulations for all schools, including a requirement that they shall give instructions in English, is not questioned" (*Meyer v. Nebraska*, 1923). Baker and Wright (2017) also noted that this ruling "did not, in essence, support bilingualism or bilingual education" (p. 175).

In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), a parent, on behalf of a child in the San Francisco Unified School District, brought suit against the president of the school district because, following integration of the district, more than a thousand Chinese students who were not fluent in English were not provided educational experiences they could access (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). Almost

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[2] For more in-depth treatments of language policy, see: Kloss, 1977/1998, for a detailed historical analysis of the "bilingual tradition" in the U.S., from before the founding of the nation; Faingold, 2018, for a current inventory of legally encoded language rights in the U.S. and its territories; and Moore, 2021, for a comprehensive overview of bilingual education in the U.S., with particular attention to the "politics of language policymaking."

3,000 Chinese students were integrated into the school system, of whom roughly 1,000 were given English language instruction, while the rest of the students were left to languish. The Supreme Court found that the school district violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 "because it deprived those students of an opportunity to participate in the public education program," but did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). The petitioners sought "relief against the unequal educational opportunities" but did not urge a "specific remedy"; therefore, the Court did not mandate any particular approach for addressing the educational needs of children who are not yet sufficiently fluent in English to access mainstream instruction (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). The Office of Civil Rights has issued various guidelines for school districts regarding how to assist children learning English as an additional language to access public education. Initial guidelines were known as the "Lau Remedies" and included options such as ESL supplemental classes and bilingual education (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 176); later attempts were made but ultimately failed to prioritize bilingual approaches (Moore, 2008). As guidelines and not regulations, the Lau Remedies were not easily legally enforceable.

Castañeda v. Pickard (*Castañeda v. Pickard*, 1981) was a case brought before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Plaintiffs alleged that a school district in Texas violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act because segregated, ability-based grouping hindered student learning; "educators' backgrounds were not representative of school demographics […]; the district' provision of bilingual education for overcoming linguistic barriers to core content learning was inadequate; and administration of English-only standardized assessments to identify academic growth was inappropriate" (Moore, 2021, p. 114). The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals "ruled in favor of the plaintiff, and as a result, the court decision established a three-prong test for determining how bilingual education

programs would be held responsible for meeting the requirement of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974" (Jimenez-Castellanos et al., 2022, p. 295). With respect to the *Lau* ruling and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, the court ruled that school districts must take "appropriate action" to meet bilingual children's educational needs, but that action need not necessarily be offering bilingual education (Jimenez-Castellanos et al., 2022, p. 297). The appropriateness of the educational approach was to be decided based on a three-prong test: whether the district's program (1) was "based on sound educational theory; (2) [had] a reasonable plan for implementation, including the hiring of appropriate personnel; and (3) [produced] positive educational results" (Wiley, 2012, p. 82). The legacy of this ruling was examined in depth in a recent issue of *Language Policy*, in order "to critically (re)examine and reimagine *Castañeda v. Pickard* at the national, state and local level to promote and enhance bilingual education and the civil rights of bilingual children" (Jimenez-Castellanos et al., 2022, p. 295).

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968 was added to the landmark legislation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 as Title VII. The BEA allocated funds for educating students not yet proficient in English and "indicated that bilingual education programs were to be seen as part of federal educational policy" (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 176). Initially, the BEA contained poverty criteria to target funds to schools that served poor families, a goal in line with the larger anti-poverty aim of the ESEA, although these restrictions were removed in later reauthorizations (Moore, 2021, pp. 50–51). Despite its name, the BEA was initially vague as to what constituted "bilingual education" (Wright, 2005, p. 4). Reauthorizations over the years changed the focus and the accomplishments of the law; for example, in 1974, removing the poverty requirement, conceptualizing bilingual education as

specifically transitional, allowing native English speaking children to enroll in funded programs, and creating the Office of Bilingual Education; and in 1984, emphasizing English use and instruction more than bilingualism and bilingual education, and setting aside funds for "Special Alternative Instructional Programs," which did not employ students' first languages (Baker & Wright, 2017; Moore, 2021).

In 2001 Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act to reauthorize the ESEA, and President George W. Bush signed it into law in 2002, producing a sea change in public education in the U.S. and having an especially dramatic effect on education for language learner students who were labeled "limited English proficient" (LEP). NCLB removed the Bilingual Education Act and instead placed text related to the education of LEP-designated students in the new Title III, "Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students," while also entirely eliminating the word "bilingual" from the law. In addition, "the name of the 'Office for Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs' was changed to the 'Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students,' and the 'National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education' was changed to the 'National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs'" (Wright, 2005, p. 20).

Schools were required to teach LEP-designated students the state's standards for academic content and English to assist them in reaching proficiency, without stipulation of how they should be taught (e.g., through a transitional bilingual program, structured English immersion, or some other approach). Bilingual education was not outlawed, but it was also not protected in the cases of states that had already restricted bilingual education, thus potentially preventing the use of Title III funds for bilingual education (Wright, 2005, p. 23). NCLB also

increased the testing to which LEP-designated students were subjected, in that they were included in the same high-stakes academic achievement testing regimen as mainstream students, and they were required to take annual English language proficiency tests. Schools were monitored on LEP-designated students' progress to English proficiency and their performance on state academic achievement tests, and consequences for schools if their students did not perform well (if the schools did not make "adequate yearly progress," or AYP) were potentially severe. Ironically, part of the definition of LEP was based on students' "ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in [Title I]" (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001, cited by Wright, 2005, p. 21), yet schools were punished if students, including the LEP-designated subgroup, failed to meet the proficient level of achievement. These are only a few examples of the changes to the educational experiences of second language learner students in U.S. schools wrought by NCLB, of which much has been written (for an in-depth analysis, see Menken, 2008).

The latest reauthorization of the ESEA came in 2015 with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced NCLB, although maintaining much of its overall structure. I go into ESSA in greater detail in Section 2.2.1, so here I only briefly note that ESSA conferred greater flexibility to state education agencies (SEAs) for determining how to evaluate schools and school districts although there was still a heavy emphasis on testing for academic achievement and English language proficiency.

While there are many more de jure policies that affect life and education for students classified as language learners in U.S. public schools, these cases and pieces of legislation are important milestones that bear mentioning. One major area which I have omitted is the case law, statutes, and regulations that govern the treatment of Indigenous peoples and their languages.

This area is of extreme consequence, but the history and current state of such policies are vast and complex, and I cannot do them justice with only cursory coverage here[3], and, to the best of my knowledge, the schools I have studied do not have any students classified as American Indian or Alaska Native, according to state data (available through the Maryland School Report Card).

2.1.3.3 De Facto Language Policy. Shohamy (2006) expounded on "de facto language policy," describing it as a necessary domain of inquiry because she claimed that official policies fail to tell the whole policy story. Shohamy argued that "the study of LP [language policy] should not be limited to formal, declared and official policies but rather to the study of the powerful mechanisms that are used in most societies nowadays to create and perpetuate 'de facto' language policies and practices" (2006, p. xvi). That is to say, whereas official language policies are explicitly stated, de facto policy is not materially present in the world, waiting to be discovered. However, as I understand Spolsky's (2004) definition, "language policy" is not limited to only official, explicit policies, so this concept of de facto policy is a category within the larger framework, not a departure.

Policies may be implicit or even covert, and they may be accomplished via mechanisms (including assessments), as Shohamy (2006) proposed. Policymakers might not wish to concede—or they might not even consciously realize—the ultimate goals of proposed policies if the goals may be seen as racist, xenophobic, anti-democratic, or in some other way in contradiction with the more beneficent values apparently held by society at large. Therefore, when stated goals are at odds with the impact of a given policy, the de facto policy may be discovered through analysis.

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[3] *Language planning and policy in Native America: History, theory, praxis*, by Teresa McCarty (2013) provides an excellent introduction to the field.

There is considerable overlap between language practices and de facto policy (for example, language practices are the sites of implementation of and resistance to official policy, thus constituting part of de facto language policy), but they are not interchangeable. Language practices, as the purported target of language policies, also require examination.

2.1.4 Language Practices

As previously stated, according to Spolsky (2004), the goal of language management is to change language practices through intervention; therefore, language practices are the assumed target of language policies. However, Johnson (2013) presented an important contrast, though he did so obliquely, by describing critical approaches to language policy "that portray language policies as mechanisms of power *intended* to subjugate or marginalize minorities and minority languages" (p. 113; italics in original, underlining mine). In describing the language policy approaches in the literature, I follow the authors in referring to language practices as the targets of policy; however, it bears mentioning that in making language *practices*, rather than language *users*, the intended target of a policy, the policymaker thus sidesteps accusations of discriminating against individuals or communities, given that linguistic discrimination is one of the remaining bastions of widespread, socially acceptable prejudice (Lippi-Green, 2012; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 62).

Taking language practices to be the intended targets of language policies begs the question, "What are language practices?" Spolsky (2004) answered the question by defining language practices as "the sum of sound, word and grammatical choices that an individual speaker makes, sometimes consciously and sometimes less consciously, that makes up the conventional unmarked pattern of a variety of a language" (p. 9). While this conception of language practices is precise, it is also narrow. To expand the range of practices that may be

grouped together as language practices, I augment Spolsky's (2004) concise definition with Gee's (2011) broader concept of Discourses.

According to Gee (2011), "A Discourse is a characteristic way of saying, doing, and being" (p. 30), meaning that the linguistic resources drawn on (ways of saying) are associated with particular practices or activities (ways of doing), and both are used to project a particular type of identity (ways of being). These components work together and feed into each other: the identity being projected is recognizable in part because of the associated activities, and the activities are recognized as such in part because of the identity of the actor performing them. In Gee's (2011) description of Discourses, *recognition* plays a central role—of one in-group member recognizing or disputing another's status as in-group. Discourses (capital D) contain discourses (lowercase d), and he distinguished them as follows:

> [Socially] accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting, in the "right" places and at the "right" times with the "right" objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or "social network"), I will refer to as "Discourses," with a capital "D." I will reserve the word "discourse," with a little "d," to mean language-in-use or stretches of language (like conversations or stories). "Big D" Discourses are always language *plus* "other stuff." (Gee, 2011, p. 34)

This conceptualization of Discourse is useful here in that it makes explicit reference to the identities associated with various Discourses (and their related activities and discourses) and the values differentially attributed by in-group and out-group members to such Discourses (or the associated "social goods"). "Big D" Discourses as a theoretical frame allow for characterization and analysis of individuals acting out certain social identities as well as characterization and

analysis of communities who participate in and recognize other participants in the Discourse. This expansive definition encompasses much more than simply utterances, enlarging the more constrained scope of Spolsky's (2004) definition of language practices.

2.1.4.1 Policy as Practice, or Policy in Practice. Spolsky (2004) stated that "the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than its management" (p. 222), given the inevitable tension between official policies and actual practices, whether practices diverge from official policies, or practices constitute interactional norms in the absence of official policy. Bonacina-Pugh (2012) took up this idea that practices constitute policy, or "policy as practice," and introduced the concept of "practiced language policy" for "a policy found within language practices" (p. 216). She argued that "practices constitute a policy to the extent that they are regular and that as a consequence, they provide implicit interactional rules of language choice that influence speakers' language choice acts" (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012, p. 218) and recommended conversation analysis as a method for revealing the regular patterns of language use that produce such rules. Spolsky (2019) later referred to "speakers' language choice acts" as "self-management."

While Spolsky did, indeed, give substantial weight to the role of language practices in his framework for understanding language policy, I see a distinction between practices, in and of themselves, and policies embedded within practice. Policies need not be official or overt to qualify as policy, per se, but they must be deliberately performed or enacted. For example, if students and teachers all regularly use French in French class, beginning when they walk in the door to the classroom and ending when they walk out, that set of practices constitutes the class's interactional norms (e.g., Heath, 1983; see also Schiffrin, 1994). The norms are not violated if a

student does not know a certain word and asks, "Comment dit-on notebook?[4]" to which the teacher replies "le cahier," and moves on with the lesson. If instead, a student says, "Je n'ai pas my notebook[5]," the teacher might respond by telling the student to say it in French or asking the class how the student should have said that. It is the reaction of the interactant, not the initial speech act that reveals the policy. If the teacher (or potentially other students) redirect the student who was using the "wrong" language, then a policy has been enacted through practice. However, if the interactants in the classroom accommodate the student's language use without attempting to manage it in some way, even if they continue to use French themselves, there is no policy being enacted; rather, the members of the classroom community are co-producing interactional norms. Management is the key to distinguishing policies from practices, no matter how subtle the distinction might be.

2.1.5 Educational Language Policy

Following on from the definition of language policy I have expounded above, as encompassing language ideologies mediating language management to alter someone's language practices, *educational* language policy can be understood as that same framework, placed in an educational context. However, this is not the only term or definition in the literature base.

According to Johnson (2013), *educational language policy* functions as an umbrella term, encompassing the related terms of *language-in-education planning* (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), *language-in-education policy* (Menken & García, 2010), *language education policy* (Menken & García, 2010; Shohamy, 2006), *language education polices* (Menken & García, 2010), and *language policy in education* (Tollefson, 2012). These terms refer, for the most part, to what is

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[4] "How do you say notebook?"
[5] "I don't have my notebook."

also called acquisition planning (e.g., Cooper, 1989), although various researchers distinguish between “planning” and “policy,” or “policy” and “policies” to differentiate the types of language-related and policy-related activities in question, and the sources and sites of those activities. However, educational language policy can also refer to other activities that affect the education of language-minoritized students (and dominant-culture students, as in dual-language immersion or world languages education, although this population of students is not my specific focus), not only their language acquisition.

I have included Johnson’s (2013) lengthy definition of educational language policy in full here, because it also informs my understanding of and perspective on educational language policy:

> The term *educational language policy* [describes] the official and unofficial policies that are created across multiple layers and institutional contexts (from national organizations to classrooms) that impact language use in classrooms and schools. Educational language policies are interpreted, appropriated, and instantiated in potentially creative and unpredictable ways that rely on the implementational and ideological spaces unique to the classroom, school, and community. Such policies can, but don’t necessarily, impact language education (i.e. the teaching of languages) as they can also impact the language used in content classrooms (e.g. science, history, art). Educational language policies have historically been used to eradicate, subjugate, and marginalize minority and Indigenous languages and their users and are, therefore, instruments of power that influence access to educational and economic resources. They have also been used to develop, maintain, and promote Indigenous and minority languages, especially in additive bilingual education programs. At every level of educational language policy, and throughout the educational

> language policy process, there are different and potentially divergent ideologies about language and language education that are unique to the discursive processes within that level/layer/institution. (p. 54)

Among the salient points in this definition are (1) the dual nature of policy as a "practice of power" (McCarty, 2011, p. 3) to potentially be used by policymakers to impose hegemonic and oppressive policies on non-dominant groups, and/or by non-dominant groups to exercise their self-determination by creating their own policies or resisting others' policies; and (2) the enormous scope of educational language policy, in terms of types of policies, policy processes, contexts of action, actors involved, and potential implications of, and for, policies. Menken (2008) was also sweeping in her characterization of the scope of policy in her study of the impact of assessment on language education policy for EL-designated students in New York City high schools, stating,

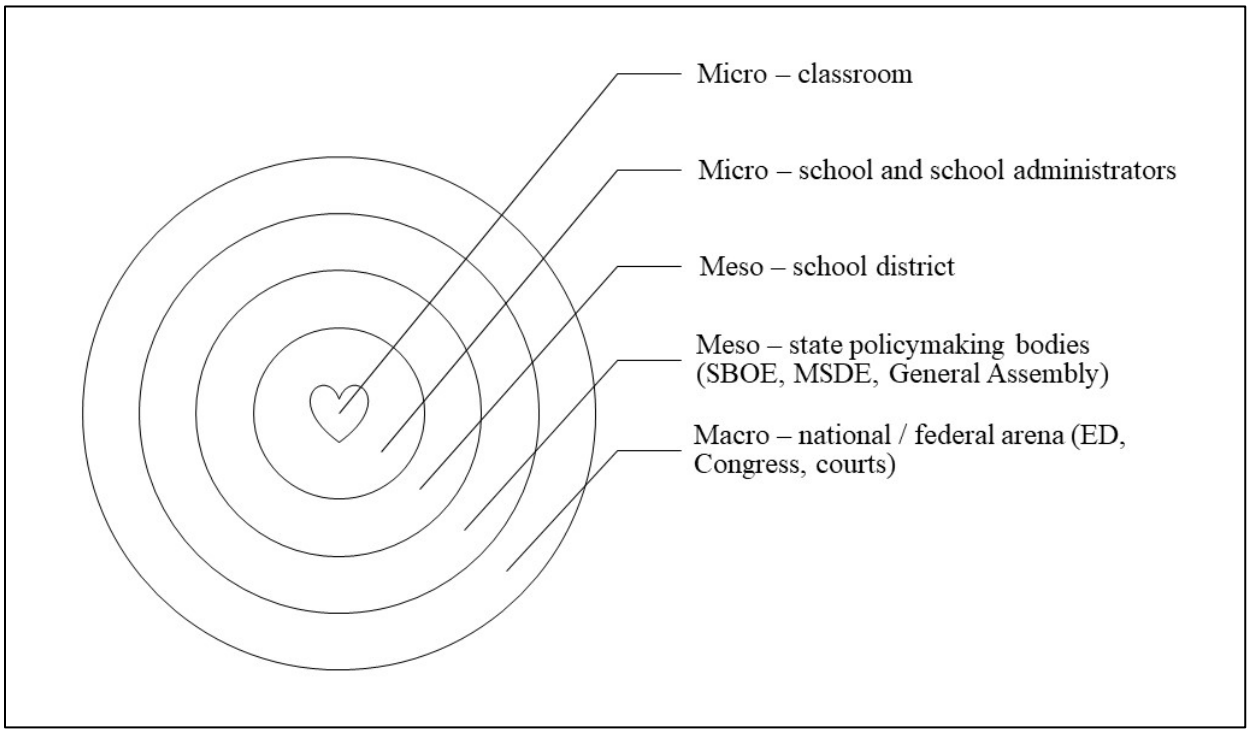
> High-stakes tests have become *de facto* language education policy, shaping the content that schools teach, how it is taught, by whom it is taught, and in what language(s) it is taught. In schools serving language minority students, 'teaching to the test' necessarily involves changes to school language use, with teachers and school administrators becoming the primary language policymakers. (p. 118, italics in original)

These expansive definitions are relevant to my research because of the sites of my study, public schools designed to serve only EL-designated students, and my focus on the impact of assessment on classroom language policy, which is necessarily broad in this unique setting.

2.1.5.1 The Language Policy Onion. The metaphor of the language policy onion presents a "schema characterizing various components in which policy decisions and practices are realized" (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 402). According to Ricento and Hornberger

(1996), each layer, from the macro through the meso to the micro, is composed of "language planning agents, levels, and processes" (p. 402), and the components in each layer interact with each other and with components in other layers. Figure 2-1 shows an example of the language policy onion. Following Ricento and Hornberger (1996), the classroom is placed "at the heart of language policy (at the center of the onion)" (p. 417).

Figure 2-1. Language Policy Onion



Using this heuristic is one way in which researchers of language policy can investigate de facto language policy because it provides an alternative conception of language policy in action, away from a focus on only top-down creation and implementation of language policies and toward a more nuanced conception that accounts for both structure and agency. The onion metaphor provides a framework for conceptualizing how top-down policies might be interpreted and implemented in varying ways as they "trickle down" through the layers, and how bottom-up policies could be produced and leveraged up through the layers. For example, Menken and

García (2010) illustrated such movement within and across layers in the contributed chapters about educators as policymakers who create, "negotiate" (Menken & García, 2010), and "appropriate" (Sutton & Levinson, 2001) policies in a variety of educational contexts.

I employ the term "appropriation" to refer to the policy processes of interest in my research. Johnson (2013) wrote that "'appropriation' is used instead of 'implementation' to describe what happens when a language policy is put into action at the local level" (p. 236). This use of *appropriation* was explored in Sutton and Levinson (2001), in which the editors explained:

> Instead of separating them entirely, we prefer to examine policy formation and implementation (or, as we prefer, *appropriation*—see below) as a dynamic, interrelated process stretching over time. […] Appropriation, of course, highlights the way creative agents "take in" elements of policy, thereby incorporating these discursive and institutional resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation, and action. Appropriation is a kind of taking of policy and making it one's own. (Levinson & Sutton, 2001, pp. 2–3, italics in original)

Appropriation, then, recasts policy actors at all levels as possessing and acting with agency when they engage with policy. Johnson (2013) distinguished appropriation from policy creation and interpretation, essentially replacing "implementation" with "appropriation," but I argue that, based on Levinson and Sutton's (2001) description, "taking in" a policy also encompasses the processes of interpretation and formation, although it may be necessary or analytically useful to disentangle them from each other.

I note here that I use the language policy onion to visualize the potential arenas in which policy agents may act. However, the micro-meso-macro distinction does not capture certain

nuances of perspective in policy processes. Whether a person, institution, or place is at a micro, meso, or macro level depends on one's point of view[6]. While the classroom is the arena in which educational language policies have the most direct impact on students, it is not the only site for micro-level interactions. For instance, two senators discussing education policy in committee would also be having a micro-level interaction. Further, to students sitting in a classroom, the school principal might appear to act on a macro level.

As I discuss further below in Section 2.3, "Nexus Analysis," the micro-meso-macro distinction is not as useful within nexus analysis for describing the interaction of policies and other discourses in policy appropriation. Policy actions as part of a nexus of practice are social phenomena produced at the intersection of many discourses circulating through multiple scales of human activity (Hult, 2015, 2017). It is the responsibility of the researcher to illuminate the different scales that are "meaningful *emically* for understanding how research participants organize their experiential reality" (Hult, 2017, p. 91; italics in original) and to impose etic categories, such as micro, meso, and macro as they serve to be analytically useful. I explain these concepts in greater detail further below.

2.1.5.2 Implementational and Ideological Spaces. The concepts of implementational and ideological spaces also provide tools for researchers to theorize about the power of individual actors to interpret, implement, and create policies. Hornberger (2002) proposed these concepts to account for differences in the implementation and success of language maintenance policies for Quechua in Bolivia. She demonstrated that the wording in different language policies can potentially leave "implementational space" open, if communities shape the "ideological

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[6] I thank Francis M. Hult for clarifying this point and providing the following two examples of point of view.

space" to create the conditions for practitioners to flexibly interpret and implement policies. Johnson (2007) also wrote about the power that individual actors have to implement top-down policies in a variety of ways, depending on whether their own ideologies propelled them to more expansive or restrictive policy interpretations, namely, whether language in the No Child Left Behind Act could be interpreted as permitting federal funding of bilingual education.

2.1.6 Summary

In this section, I have covered a large terrain in explaining the definition of language policy that I follow, of Spolsky's (2004) tripartite framework that *language ideologies* mediate *language management activities* to seek to modify *language practices*, and some important, related concepts under each of those components. In addition, I introduced educational language policy as a subfield of practice and research within language policy. The next section describes the educational language policy landscape in Maryland, to provide valuable background on the context in which I carried out my study.

2.2 Educational Language Policy in Maryland

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) contains the English Learners/ Title III Office, which "provides technical assistance to local school systems to ensure that the systems establish, implement, and sustain high-quality language instruction educational programs" (MSDE, n.d.). As suggested by the name of the office, their purpose is to comply with federal mandates regarding EL-designated students. The office advocates for "high-quality language instruction" but does not specify what form that instruction should take (e.g., transitional or maintenance bilingual education, sheltered English instruction, or Structured English Immersion), which leaves implementational space open for districts to create their own

language education policies, if they so choose (within the ideological spaces in which they operate; Hornberger, 2002).

Because the main driver of education policy for EL-designated students in Maryland is the federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), I will briefly describe the legislation, focusing on assessment of EL-designated students because assessment requirements are the basis for the accountability "stick" states must comply with to get the "carrot" of federal funds for education. I will also describe the relevant (to the education of EL-designated students) parts of the Consolidated State Plan that Maryland submitted to the U.S Department of Education to enumerate the ways in which it will comply with ESSA. Maryland's educational language policy for EL-designated students is an outgrowth of ESSA, and ESSA is driven by its assessment mandates, with assessment functioning as a language policy mechanism, much as it did in New York City, as reported by Menken (2008). Where legislation or regulation differs between elementary and secondary schools, I focus on secondary schools because of the relevance to my intended future research.

2.2.1 The Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 is the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Before ESSA, the ESEA had last been reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. NCLB's effects on instruction cannot be overstated, especially regarding its massively expanded standardized testing requirements. ESSA maintains the same overall structure as NCLB in its major titles, and a continuing strong focus on standards-based instruction and assessment, but has some changes to the legislation as well, some more substantive than others.

Title I ("Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged") is the flagship title of the law, with an emphasis on improving educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, specifically economically disadvantaged students, ethnically or racially minoritized students, students with disabilities, and EL-designated students. Title I has maintained the requirement from NCLB that states must test at least 95% of all students and 95% of students in each subgroup on the state academic content assessments (without permitting the formation of super subgroups, which was permitted under NCLB). This requirement means that states will have to ensure that 95% of EL-designated students participate in the academic content assessments. A major change to Title I, however, is the relocation of the accountability requirements for EL-designated students from Title III, since previously, requirements for their assessments were located alongside the provisions for their instruction in Title III. While this shift in placement reflects greater and more focused attention on the *assessment* of EL-designated students in schools, it arguably detracted from emphasis on them and instead "continued 'sunsetting' of the Bilingual Education Act, Title VII, which is where language minoritized learners' education was initially placed as of 1968/1969" (S.C.K. Moore, personal communication, June 15, 2022). Accountability requirements include assessing EL-designated students' English language proficiency (ELP) annually, using an assessment aligned with the state's ELP standards, which must also be aligned with the state's academic content standards.

States are also required to provide EL-designated students with appropriate accommodations on academic achievement assessments, which may include administration of the assessment "in the language and form most likely" to provide an accurate measure of student knowledge, although the law is somewhat weak in its wording by allowing that such an administration is only required "to the extent practicable" (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015,

Section 1111, p. 25). However, accommodations for EL-designated students are generally inappropriate for their language-related needs, having been borrowed from special education practices, and are largely ineffective (Abedi et al., 2004).

States may choose to include the scores of "exited" students, who had previously received English language instruction services but were later reclassified as proficient, in the EL subgroup for up to four years after those students have stopped received language services. States are also permitted to exclude newcomers (EL-designated students who have been enrolled in school in the U.S. for less than a year) from one administration of the annual math assessment and language arts or reading assessment.

Title III ("Language instruction for English learners and immigrant students") contains most of the language in ESSA regarding EL-designated students. As mentioned above, assessment accountability for EL-designated students has been moved from Title III (under NCLB) to Title I (under ESSA), and Title III also contains new provisions regarding the education of EL-designated students. States are required to establish and implement statewide, standardized procedures for identifying students for entrance into and exit from dedicated English language services, which was not previously the case under NCLB. States must maintain accounting of and report on the number and percentage of students who are in title-funded language programs, "who are making progress toward achieving English language proficiency" (Section 3121, p. 208), and who are attaining designations of proficiency and exiting services. ESSA does not require that schools or districts be evaluated on these two measures directly as annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs), which is a change from NCLB's use of these measures, but student progress toward attaining English language proficiency must be included in the overall accountability system for schools in the state.

2.2.2 Maryland ESSA State Plan

The Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan (Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE], 2018) laid out the ways that MSDE intended to comply with the education mandates legislated in ESSA. It was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and approved in 2018. Below I will describe the parts of the plan that relate to the assessment of EL-designated students. MSDE has since made changes to their testing program, which I briefly describe in the subsequent section, but here I present the testing program as articulated in the approved state plan.

2.2.2.1 Accountability System. According to the state plan, "An accountability system is the State's primary way of ensuring that schools and LEAs are making progress towards attaining state goals" (MSDE, 2018, p. 16). The accountability system is composed of several indicators, which reflect the state's long-term goals for academic achievement for all students, and it serves to monitor school performance in order to demonstrate attainment of established goals and to target low-performing schools for improvement. The long-term goals expressed in the state plan were to (1) reduce by half the number of students scoring below the level of "proficient" on academic achievement assessments, (2) reduce by half the number of non-graduating students, and (3) increase the number of EL-designated students who are successfully reclassified as English proficient within six years. These goals are captured by indicators in the accountability system, which uses a formula to calculate an overall score for each school, and the score is used to identify schools in need of improvement. The formula for high schools contains the following accountability indicators: an indicator of academic achievement (ELA and math assessments composite score), graduation rate (four-year and five-year adjusted cohort graduation rates), progress toward English language proficiency (according to a growth-to-target

model set by MSDE), an indicator of school quality (rates of chronic absenteeism, school climate survey score, percentage of students with access to "well-rounded curriculum," and percentage of ninth-grade students deemed "on track"), and a state-determined indicator of student readiness for post-secondary success (percentage of students graduating with documentation of post-secondary readiness).

High schools that fall within the bottom 5% of Title I high schools, as measured by the overall score obtained through the accountability formula and/or that have four-year graduation rates below 67% are identified as "Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools" (p. 31), a status that is accompanied by substantial penalties for the school and its faculty and staff. High schools with one or more student groups performing as low as the lowest 5% of Title I high schools are identified as "Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools" (p. 31). High schools which have been identified as TSI schools for three years without improvement are then reclassified as chronically low performing CSI schools.

2.2.2.2 Academic Achievement Assessments. At the time of writing and submission of the plan, Maryland was part of the PARCC Consortium (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) and used the PARCC language arts and mathematics assessments for all tested grades. The statewide academic achievement assessments are core components of the statewide accountability system; student performance on the math and ELA assessments are combined into a composite score, which is the most heavily weighted component of the accountability formula. MSDE elected to exclude newcomer students' scores from the accountability system for one year and to include reclassified students in the EL subgroup for up to four years following their reclassification. Otherwise, all EL-designated students are required to take the same academic achievement tests as non-EL-designated students

and count toward their schools' overall scores and subgroup scores. MSDE was also developing their own assessment aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS; Next Generation Science Standards, n.d.), the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA[7]), which was in the pilot- and field-testing stages at the time of plan submission. Although this assessment was not included in the accountability system, it nevertheless contributes to the testing burden on EL-designated students.

ESSA requires that states provide "appropriate accommodations" (Section 1111(2)(B)(vii)(III)) to EL-designated students on assessments of academic achievement, including assessment in languages other than English, if "practicable," as I mentioned above. MSDE states that Spanish is the only language other than English which is "present to a significant extent in the participating student population" according to criteria decided in collaboration with the state's 24 LEAs (either comprising 5% of the state's population or 1,000 persons). PARCC mathematics assessments were available translated into Spanish; language arts or reading assessments must be in English, although PARCC also offered directions for administration in Spanish. MSDE stated that since the MISA was still in development, it was not yet available in Spanish.

2.2.2.3 English Language Proficiency Testing[8]. Maryland already had statewide common entrance and exit assessments and criteria and so was already in compliance with the new mandate in ESSA. In addition, "to ensure that all students who may be ELs are assessed, Maryland has also adopted a common home language survey" (p. 73) which asks what

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[7] The Maryland Integrated Science Assessments (MISA) are aligned to the Maryland Next Generation Science Standards, and administered to all students in fifth grade, eighth grade, and high school (upon completion of a high school life science course).

[8] The full text of this section from the Maryland State Plan is reproduced in Appendix B.

language(s) the student learned first, what language(s) the student uses most often to communicate, and what language(s) is/are spoken in the home. Students who are identified by the survey as potentially in need of language services are then assessed for EL status with WIDA's W-APT screening test (Maryland State Department of Education, n.d.-a). EL-designated students are assessed annually for English language proficiency with WIDA's ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 (henceforward, "ACCESS") computer-based test (or Alt-ACCESS as required for students with certain disabilities[9]). Maryland is part of the WIDA Consortium[10] (MSDE, 2018) and uses WIDA's assessments for compliance with ELP assessment mandates. Previously, students had to obtain a 5.0 composite score on ACCESS to exit from language services, but MSDE updated it to a composite score of 4.5. As "Maryland does not support the use of conjunctive exit criteria" (MSDE, 2018, p. 19), this test score is the sole criterion by which students are judged proficient.

According to the state plan, the "ambitious" goal was that all EL-designated students in Maryland attain a proficiency designation within six years, which includes their first year as a baseline. The plan contained a growth-to-target table to establish students' expected language development (as measured by ACCESS), which is copied below.

The state plan allowed for "accumulative growth targets" to account for fluctuations in growth, "while still holding ELs accountable for staying on the overall English proficiency progress trajectory" (p. 20). That is to say, if a student demonstrates greater-than-expected growth in one year, the "extra" growth can be added to a future year in which they demonstrate lower-than-expected growth, so individual students' performance can vary around the line that

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[9] Issues regarding the education of dually identified students eligible for language services and Individualized Education Programs are significant but outside of the scope of the current paper.

[10] WIDA is a consortium of 40 state education agencies (SEAs) that have adopted the WIDA English Language Development Standards (ELD; WIDA, n.d.).

could be drawn to graphically illustrate the expected growth trend. Current and historical data for Maryland students show that just under 50% of all EL-designated students meet the six-year goal of reclassification, but the plan has set a goal of approximately 75% of students meeting the goal by 2030 (p. 20). MSDE also stated that the anticipated acceleration in language development will "[help] close performance gaps" on academic achievement assessments because more EL-designated students will be attaining proficiency more quickly and so will be able to improve their performance on the other assessments in tandem (pp. 16–17).

Table 2-2. Growth-to-Target Model for ELP

Expected ELP Growth by Years					
Initial Year Proficiency Level (based on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0)	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**	**Year 6**
1.0 – 1.9	1.0	.9	.7	.5	.4
2.0 – 2.9	.9	.7	.5	.4	---
3.0 – 3.9	.7	.5	.3	---	---
4.0 – 4.4	.3	.2	---	---	---
Proficiency Attainment Met	---	---	---	---	---

(From MSDE, 2018, p. 20)

2.2.3 COMAR

The ESSA state plan is not the only source of official policy affecting education for EL-designated students in Maryland. In the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), Title 13A is focused on K–12 education in the state and contains the minutiae of educational policies, including, for example, regulations monitoring the reporting of accountability measures (13A.01.06.05), although it is outside the scope of the current paper to examine the full COMAR title in detail. Rather, I will concentrate on the assessment-related graduation requirements (13A.03.02). I must first mention that education policy in Maryland is changing literally as I write, which is consistent with Johnson and Johnson's (2015) note of caution that "educational language policy often moves fast" (p. 228). The changes in education policy at the time of

writing are due primarily to the landmark *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* legislation, a new assessment program created by MSDE, and continuing fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maryland was formerly in the PARCC Consortium but recently ceased using PARCC assessments, ending with the 2018–2019 school year. The 2019–2020 school year was planned to be the first year in which students were tested under the new Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP). Therefore, explanations in the state plan of how PARCC assessments meet ESSA mandates are already out of date. The shift from PARCC to MCAP has also affected state regulations for graduation requirements for students in public schools. Previously, students were required to take and pass the tenth-grade English language arts course ("English 10") and its corresponding standardized ELA assessment, and to take and pass the Algebra I course and the standardized Algebra I assessment. These requirements were changed for students graduating in 2020, to allow a year's grace period for the new MCAP assessments; students graduating in 2020 were previously required to *take* the English 10 and Algebra I courses and assessments but *pass* only the courses (Salmon, 2019) to graduate. These changes are significant because EL-designated students scored "proficient" or above on the English 10 test almost 40 percentage points lower than the overall average (the average of all students, including EL-designated students) and approximately 25 percentage points lower than the overall average on the Algebra I test (Maryland State Department of Education, 2019). Even though students who fail the standardized tests twice may instead attempt to complete a "bridge project," a standards-based alternative assessment, to meet the graduation requirement (COMAR 13A.03.02.06D), the test-based graduation requirement has surely negatively impacted graduation rates for EL-designated students, which linger around 25 percentage points below overall rates (MSDE, 2018; NCES, 2019).

Plans for the new assessments and revised graduation requirements, however, were upended by the COVID-19 pandemic (declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020). In May of 2020, the Baltimore Sun wrote, “There can be little doubt that in three short months, the coronavirus outbreak has fundamentally altered the public policy landscape of Maryland” (Baltimore Sun Editorial Board, 2020). On March 20, 2020 then-Secretary of Education DeVos announced that states would be offered the opportunity to apply for waivers from ESSA Title I assessment requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2020b), which Karen Salmon, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools at the time, then applied for four days later (Salmon, 2020a), cancelling all planned MCAP and MISA (Maryland Integrated Science Assessment) test administrations for the 2019–2020 school year. Academic content assessments and English language proficiency tests had been planned to be administered on schedule in spring 2021. However, WIDA would not permit remote testing, and ELP testing was also cancelled in Maryland. Ultimately, the Department of Education notified states that they could apply for waivers to academic achievement testing, either by rescheduling it for fall 2020 or shortening the test to reduce testing time. I discuss these changes to scheduled testing for the 2020–2021 school year in greater detail in Chapter 6.

2.2.4 Blueprint for Maryland’s Future

Cancelled testing was hardly the only consequence of coronavirus for education in Maryland, however, because the highly contested and consequential legislation, *Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Implementation* (HB1300/SB1000), was impacted as well. In the 2020 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly was tasked with considering legislation to enact many of the recommendations in the 243-page report from the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence (also known as the Kirwan Commission, named for the head of the

Commission, William Kirwan, former chancellor of the University System of Maryland). The Commission was created in 2016 via legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to "examine whether the state formulas in education are equitable […] and adequate enough to provide students with the tools they need to be ready for college and the workforce" (Wiggins, 2016, para. 1). The report contained five overarching recommendations to radically reform and improve education in Maryland (Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, 2019). Emergency measures due to the pandemic forced the General Assembly to end the legislative session early (Bonessi, 2020), but they nevertheless successfully passed the bill (Broadwater, 2020). Governor Hogan then vetoed the bill, citing the dire economic situation due to the effects of the pandemic (Cox & Wiggins, 2020). Ultimately the Blueprint was passed in 2021 "to transform public education in the state into a world-class education system. The Blueprint will increase education funding by $3.8 billion over the next years, enrich student experiences and accelerate student outcomes, as well as improve the quality of education for all children in Maryland, especially those who have been underserved" (Maryland State Department of Education, n.d.c, para. 1).

2.2.4.1 Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools. The Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools (or English Learners Workgroup) was established through the Blueprint and charged "to study the availability of and access to resources for English learners and their families and make recommendations that will accelerate their academic achievement" (Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools, 2022, p. 4). The Workgroup was assigned to consist of the following members: one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate; one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House; the State Superintendent of Schools, or the State Superintendent's designee; and the

following members, appointed by the State Superintendent: at least one advocate for English language learners; at least one multilingual leader in the education field; at least one expert in education from a diverse area of the State; and any other member that the State Superintendent determines is necessary" (Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation, 2020). The Workgroup was tasked with collecting data on EL-designated students, "reviewing national research and current practices, and making recommendations to improve the education of English learners in the State" (English Learners Workgroup, 2022, p. 5). They met 16 times over the course of 2021–2022, issued an interim report in December 2021, and issued a final report in November 2022, as required by law. I discuss some of the relevant recommendations from the final report in Chapter 7.

2.2.5 Summary

In this section, I gave an overview of the educational language policy landscape in Maryland, using an expansive definition for "educational language policy," to include policies that affect the educational experiences of EL-designated students. Educational language policy relevant to my study is dominated by the Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan and graduation requirements stipulated in regulation (COMAR), and is presently undergoing changes thanks to the Blueprint legislation that is intended to overhaul public education in the state. In the next section, I discuss the major concepts within nexus analysis, the methodology I employed in my study.

2.3 Nexus Analysis

Nexus analysis is an ethnographic and discourse analytic approach to analyzing social action, originally put forward by Scollon and Scollon (2004) and as an extension of Scollon's (2001) theory of mediated discourse analysis. Scollon (2001) introduced the key concepts in

mediated discourse analysis and nexus analysis through the example of buying a drink at Starbucks.

In this example, "correctly" buying an espresso drink in a Starbucks requires not only saying the words to request a latte and paying the required cost, but also knowing how to wait in line, how close to stand to others in the line, where to stand to signal readiness to order, what the sizes are called, the name of the desired drink, why you give your name to the cashier, and so on. That knowledge depends on having some experience with the *nexus of practice*, meaning the multiple, intersecting social actions and practices that all contribute to "buying a coffee at Starbucks"—through having it done it before, having seen it before, or having had it explained by someone more familiar with the nexus of practice. Some of that knowledge translates to novel situations, such as going to an independent neighborhood coffee shop rather than a Starbucks, which may have different names for drink sizes, but follows a similar procedure for ordering and paying. Some knowledge also translates to similar, but novel, situations conducted in other languages or in other countries.

In my own experience, when I traveled to Japan for work, I felt fortunate to have a Starbucks close to my hotel because I did not speak Japanese, but I could draw on my experience of buying lattes in Starbucks. I was able to successfully navigate the process, although my performance was clearly recognized as non-expert by the other participants who observed and interacted with me. Nexus analysis enables the researcher to analyze the component actions (including discourse) that go into successfully buying a coffee and compare those actions across different settings, to theorize why and how I was able to order a latte each morning with greater facility than I was able to order my lunch at the nearby udon shop, for instance.

2.3.1 Nexus of Practice

A nexus is a point of connection, or a link, and a nexus of practice is just that: a point of connecting practices, or a "constellation of practices" (Scollon, 2011[11], p. 40). However, "like practices themselves, [a nexus of practice] is formed one mediated action at a time and is always unfinalized (and unfinalizable)" (Scollon, 2001, p. 5).

Scollon (2011) described a nexus of practice as similar to "a fledgling social group" (p. 41) because practices reside in the social actors who enact those practices via mediated actions. However, although a nexus of practice "contains" actors, in that social actors are necessary and responsible for the enactment of mediated actions upon which a nexus of practice depends, the nexus is not defined according to the individuals involved. Further, while the temporal nature of a mediated action is inextricable from its occurrence and is critical to the researcher's understanding of the action, a nexus of practice does not refer to a specific point in time. Finally, although actions are taken in real places (whether physical or virtual; Norris & Jones, 2005), the nexus of practice does not refer (exclusively) to the place in which actions have occurred. Rather, identifying a nexus of practice depends largely on *recognition* of actions/practices and places as being of a kind with other, known instances of actions/practices and places.

According to Scollon and Scollon (2004), all action is inherently social because "it is only action to the extent it is perceived by others as action" (p. 12). Even actions performed by a single social actor acting alone are social in that they are the products of social interactions, and they have social histories containing the learning and prior instantiations of the action. Therefore, actions are deeply historied and complex, regardless of any superficial appearances of simplicity.

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[11] Page numbers for Scollon (2011) differ from those in the print book because the source was only available to me by download from SAGE with new pagination, pages 1 to 45.

Norris and Jones (2005b) pointed to "this dual focus on social actors and actions taken, including the mediational means through which the actions are performed, [which] allows analysis of the actions in their complexity" (p. 18).

In nexus analysis, *practice* is not an abstract or "mass" noun, but "a countable noun, usually [used] to refer to a single action or set of actions that are so closely linked as to be practically indivisible" (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 98). According to Scollon and Scollon (2004), "practice" is used in "the narrowest sense of a single, recognizable, repeatable action such as the practice of handing an object […] or answering a direct question in an interview" (p. 13). In this way, *action* and *practice* have a sort of recursive, reciprocal relationship, in that repeated social actions become practices (the action of handing an item to another person taken repeatedly becomes the normalized social practice of *handing*), and yet a given social action is also viewed as occurring "at the intersection of several practices in real time" (Scollon, 2011, p. 32), such that the action of, for example, handing back assignments in class is the product of the practice of handing and other practices relating to classroom behavior, such as moving around a classroom, maintaining appropriate distance from others, addressing individuals and groups of people, and so on.

Participants in such nexuses[12] of practice may unthinkingly recognize new situations as belonging to a known nexus, for instance, when successfully navigating the practices of ordering coffee in an unfamiliar shop, while the task for the researcher is necessarily more difficult by

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[12] Scollon (2001), Scollon and Scollon (2004), and Norris and Jones (2005) use "nexus" for both the singular and plural forms; I have chosen to use "nexus" only for the singular and "nexuses" for the plural for easier reading.

virtue of requiring explicit identification of the essential characteristics and practices that constitute the nexus. Nexus analysis provides a framework for analyzing nexuses of practice.

2.3.2 Discourse in Nexus Analysis

Discourse analysis, broadly speaking, investigates how discourse accomplishes things in the world (Schiffrin, 1994). Different types of discourse analysis conceptualize these accomplishments differently. For instance, in speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), speech acts have real force to change the world. For example, when certain types of people in particular circumstances pronounce a pair of unmarried people to be married, those people change from unmarried to married by force of that speech act. Other discourse analytic methods and methodologies variously conceive of the relationship between discourse and action, according to their theoretical underpinnings. In mediated discourse analysis, the theory of discourse associated with nexus analysis, "social action and discourse are inextricably linked" (Scollon, 2001, p. 1), and an understanding of discourse, Discourses (Gee, 2011), and action ought not give "undue weight either to the action without reference to the Discourse or to the Discourse without reference to the actions within which it is appropriated" (Scollon, 2001, p. 3). In nexus analysis, discourse is simply one of many kinds of social actions.

There are various discourses[13] present in any given instance of mediated action, in the speech produced by the interactants, in the multimodal signage on the walls, in the routinized practices enacted by the social actors, in the built environment (which facilitates the characteristic practices), and so on. Those discourses exist in the moment of the action and

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[13] In Section 2.1.4, "Language Practices," I introduced Gee's (2011) distinction between "little d discourse" (a stretch of language in use) and "big D Discourse" (socially accepted ways of acting and using language). While both senses of the word clearly apply to the mediated action at the heart of a nexus analysis, I maintain the use of "little d discourse" in writing, following Scollon and Scollon (2004).

interaction, but they also have histories. Scollon and Scollon (2004) referred to the history of discourse and action as "the discourse cycle"—which also included an aspect of anticipation, not only history—similar to the water cycle (p. 27). Water exists as vapor in the air, falls to the earth as precipitation, and eventually returns to the air. The water changes state, changes position and place, is acted on by other forces, such as heat from the sun, and continues to move through the cycle. According to Hult (2017), "similarly, discourses are expressed, changed in sociohistorical context, and expressed again in potentially altered ways" (p. 94).

Therefore, to examine a nexus of practice, the framework must be able to theorize and provide tools for analyzing all of the discourses that come to bear on the social action at the heart of the nexus. When conducting a nexus analysis, the discourses present in a nexus of practice are categorized as belonging to the *historical body* of the social actors, the *discourses in place*, and the *interaction order* in the nexus of practice, each of which can be conceptualized as a cycle. I describe them here, following Scollon and Scollon (2004) as separate and distinct components, but this is an analytical artifact, since the discursive elements in a nexus of practice interact with one another (for example, Blommaert and Huang, 2009, briefly summarized below, provided a more extended discussion of the interactions between historical body and discourses in place). Figure 2-2 (adapted from Hult, 2017, p. 93, and Scollon and Scollon, 2004, p. 20) shows an illustration of discourse cycles intersecting to produce a social action.

Figure 2-2. Intersecting Discourses in Nexus Analysis – Social Action

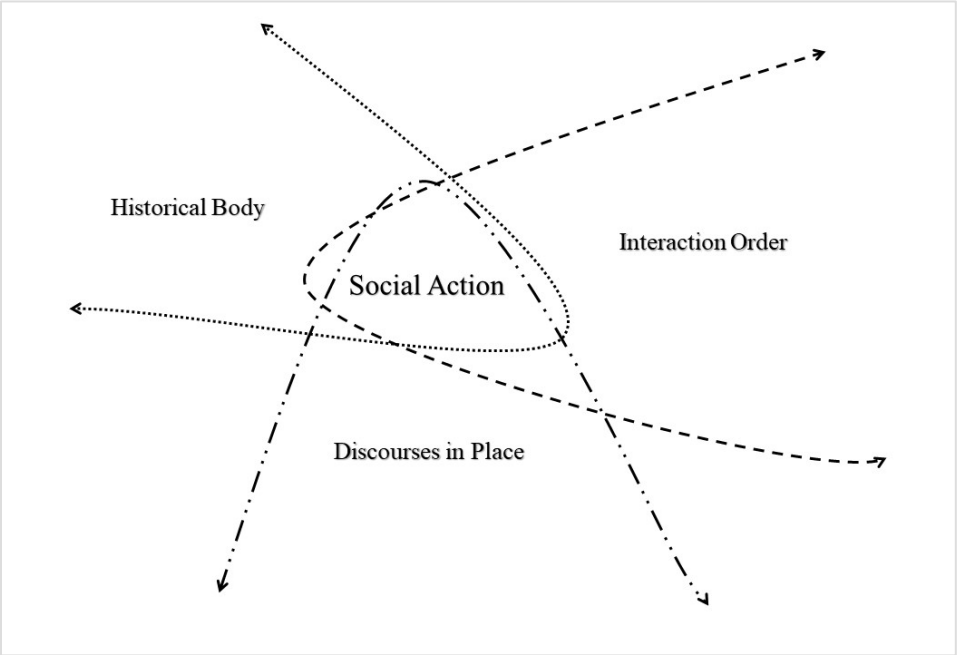

Figure adapted from Hult (2017, p. 93) and Scollon and Scollon (2004, p. 20)

2.3.2.1 Historical Body. Scollon and Scollon (2004) stated that the concept of historical body is similar to Bourdieu's *habitus* (1977, 1990), but they preferred the term historical body (originally coined by the philosopher Nishida, 1958) because it emphasized the body itself as a container and purveyor of lived knowledge[14]. Participants have entire lives that they bring to bear on social actions, but a nexus analysis does not require a full life history of the participants, only the parts of their lived experiences that are relevant to the particular nexus of practice. Scollon and Scollon (2004) advised that researchers maintain their focus on "how the action-practice and the mediational means [that the researcher is] studying came into the historical body of each of the participants" (p. 160).

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[14] Some powerful examples of this concept under other names can be found in *Hunger: A Memoir of My Body*, by Roxane Gay (2017); *Heavy: An American Memoir*, by Kiese Laymon (2018); *Thick, And Other Essays*, by Tressie McMillan Cottom (2019); and "Unsettling Languages, Unruly Bodyminds: Imaging a Crip Linguistics," by Jon Henner and Octavian Robinson (2021).

While an individual's personal experiences, habits, and automatized practices may not on the face seem to be discourse, over time, overt discourses become *submerged* into one's habitual practices, thus contributing to the historical body (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). An individual's historical body, as the product of their experiences, thus shapes their future actions and interactions, which, in turn, are encoded in the individual's body and mind, changing and (re)constituting their historical body. Hult (2017) explained how the historical body discourse cycle "is not just about the individual but about the dialectic between individual and society" (p. 94). When a person acts (performs a mediated action), they not only contribute to the further shaping of their own historical body but also affect other individuals with whom they have contact, even if that contact is indirect or delayed.

2.3.2.2 Discourses in Place. Every place contains many discourses, including the built environment, functional and decorative objects, and more overt discourses, such as written texts, which may or may not be visible. Any of the discourses might be foregrounded or backgrounded, depending on a given participant's purposes for being in that space. For example, in a coffee shop, the structure of the building is encoded in blueprints, a written text made physical through construction; the layout of the tables, chairs, coffee counter, and so on are designed based on experience with other coffee shops, the practices associated with entering a space for a purpose and engaging in social actions and interactions to achieve that purpose. The brand name of the designer espresso machine may be foregrounded for employees or for a coffee aficionado in the shop, while it may be backgrounded for others in the space. Virtual spaces also contain discourses in place and a built environment that mediates a social actor's engagement with the space. For instance, the online communication platform Zoom has a "waiting room" function, a clear adoption of an element from the physical world into the virtual.

Discourses in place also refer to "conceptual manifestations of wider circulating values, beliefs, and ideologies that are co-present in a moment of social action and provide conceptual affordances for individuals' actions" (Ou et al., 2021, p. 157). For instance, if a teacher cites the school handbook to point out a that a student who identifies as a girl has made a dress code infraction, that teacher is drawing on the discourse in place of the school handbook (as a kind of "frozen action," Norris, 2007) as well as a larger social discourse about policing the bodies of women and girls (e.g., Friedman, 2021).

2.3.2.3 Interaction Order. Scollon and Scollon (2004) adopted Goffman's (1983) concept of interaction order, which may be evident in the overt discourses occurring in a given nexus of practice. These discourses are shaped by the "social arrangement by which people come together in social groups (a meeting, a conversation, a chance contact, a queue)" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 19) and the relationships between the social actors. The interaction order will differ depending on whether the interactants are peers or in an asymmetrical relationship within an institutional hierarchy, or whether they are old friends or simply strangers waiting in line, for instance. Interaction order specifically touches on questions of identity and power and the historical relationships that exist between the social actors in the nexus of practice.

Although Scollon and Scollon (2004) claimed that they were simply making use of interaction order as originally put forward by Goffman, Blommaert and Huang (2009) argued that the Scollons' theorizing of nexus analysis actually amended and expanded on interaction order, in that "the interaction order is *an effect* of the dialectics between the historical body and historical space. It is the actual order of communicative conduct that ensues from enskilled bodies in a space inscribed with particular conditions for communication" (p. 277, italics in original). That is to say, the interaction order per se does not exist outside of the space in which

the nexus of practice occurs or separate from the persons participating in the nexus of practice. Blommaert and Huang (2009) also argued that because of the inextricable historical connections between and among the participants' historical bodies, the discourses in place, and the resultant interaction order, the discursive components of the nexus of practice form a single subject for ethnographic-discourse analytic investigation.

2.3.3 Scalar Analysis

Nexus analysis, according to Hult (2017), "directs the researcher to the task of mapping the discourses that emerge on different scales, along with the ways in which they intersect in a moment of action to mediate it" (p. 92). The discourses present in a nexus of practice exist on different scales of time and space, analogously to how the water cycle runs on a different temporal cycle from that of tectonic plate movement, which creates and destroys continents according to geologic time.

As Hult (2017) noted, scales themselves "are discursive constructions" (p. 91). In Section 2.1.5.1, regarding the heuristic of the language policy onion, I wrote that the nexus analysis researcher must determine the scales that are meaningful to the research participants and is also responsible for denoting scales that are analytically important (Hult, 2017). A language policy action (or any social action) takes place at the intersection of multiple discourse cycles circulating on different scales. The temporal cycle for the historical body might be an individual's lifetime. By contrast, among the discourses in place, "ways of thinking (e.g., values, attitudes, ideologies) may be (re)produced over years and decades, if not hundreds of years" (Hult, 2017, p. 97). The cycles also span scales of space, such as school districts, states, nations, and beyond; since political boundaries are also social constructions, spatial scales should be seen as socially constructed as temporal scales are. Therefore, any given policy action "can be seen as

an instance of 'layered simultaneity'" (Hult, 2017, p. 91; cf. Blommaert, 2005), in which the action is a product of the interactions of the various circulating discourses. The action is relevant to the actor's historical body, the discourses in place, and the interaction order, all at once, with each running on its own scales of time and space.

Actions may also "transform a cycle from one kind of action/object or discourse into another" through resemiotization (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 170). Explicit instructions on how to use a particular piece of software expressed orally may be written on a sticky note and posted beside a computer monitor, then ultimately become part of the computer user's historical body through automatization (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). In a language policy context, "de facto language policies emerging from norms (re)produced through the interaction order are taken up in a de jure language policy" (Ou et al., 2021, p. 157). Figure 2-3 below is adapted from Scollon and Scollon (2004, p. 51).

Figure 2-3. Nexus of Practice

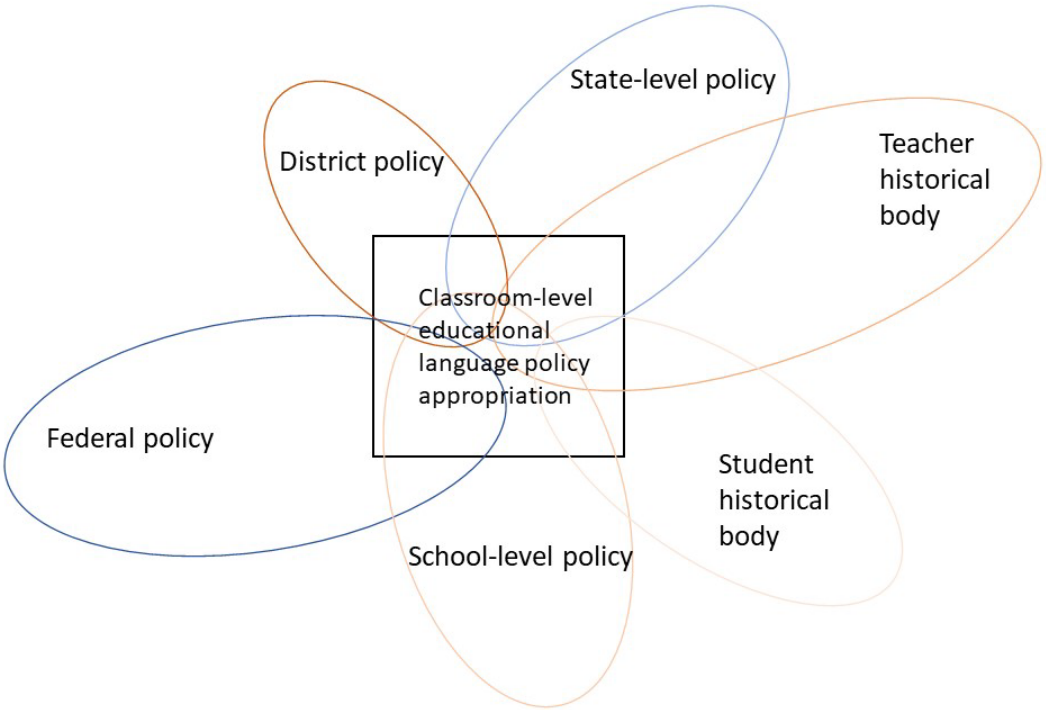

Figure 2-3 shows the nexus of practice of classroom-level educational language policy appropriation and potential discourses that may circulate through the nexus, such as the historical bodies of the teacher and students and policies from the school district, state agency, and federal agency. In this depiction, the various (generic) discourses are analytically undifferentiated and uncategorized.

Figure 2-4. Intersecting Discourses in Nexus Analysis – Policy Action

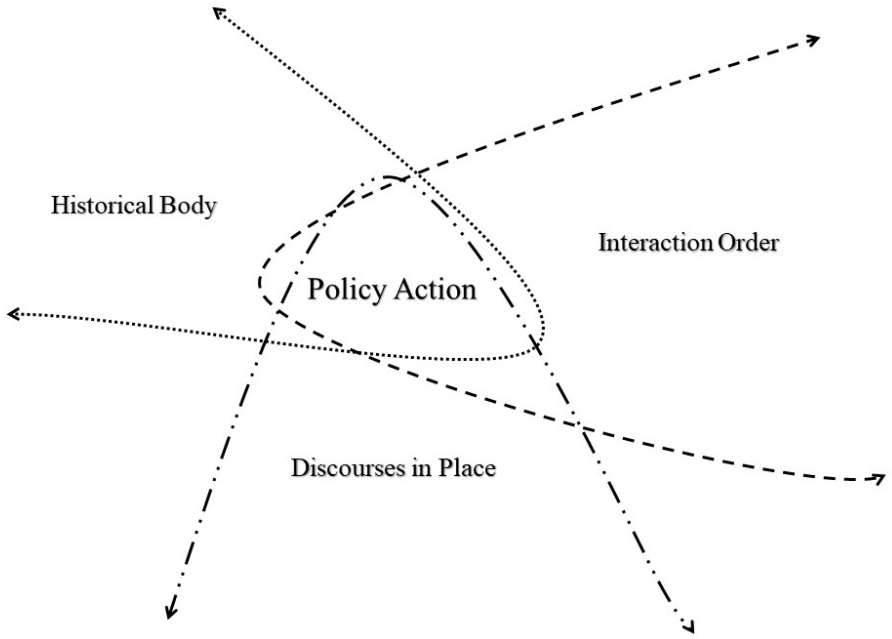

Figure adapted from Hult (2015, p. 224)

Figure 2-4, on the other hand, depicts the categories of discourses that are examined in a nexus analysis, emphasizing the analytical utility of the framework. Just as Figure 2-2 above showed intersecting discourses to produce social action as the focal phenomenon, Figure 2-4 shows the intersecting discourse cycles to produce a *policy* action, in the context of language policy research, adapted from Hult (2015, p. 224). Similarly, the scale of the historical body in Figure 2-4 would that of the individual; for discourses in place, the scales could be institutional, community, national, regional, or global; and for interaction order, the scale could be

interpersonal, community, or institutional, all depending on the relevant discourses circulating through the nexus of practice (Hult, 2015).

2.3.4 Nexus Analysis and Language Policy Research

At its heart, nexus analysis takes an activist stance toward research in that the researcher is necessarily a participant in the nexus of practice, and so the research activities are themselves "transformative of the nexus of practice. In this way, we conceive of discourse analysis itself to be a form of social practice" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 9). As a method of inquiry within a non-positivist orientation, nexus analysis contributes to combating "the false security of authoritative knowledge" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 149). A nexus analysis researcher conducts a nexus analysis not only with the foreknowledge that research inevitably changes the phenomenon under investigation, but with the intention of doing so. The changes do not occur unidirectionally or unilaterally, however, because the researcher does not hold a privileged position. The nexus of practice is changed because of the researcher's presence and activities within the nexus of practice, but also because the other social actors are brought into the analysis. While a researcher enters into a nexus analysis because they are motivated by the desire to understand and ultimately change a social issue, they cannot know at the outset what effect their actions will have. Regardless, since the activities of the nexus analysis promote inquiry and critical thinking, the researcher will effect some form of social change. As Scollon and Scollon (2004) stated, "inquiry is social activism. We now think it is the only effective form of social activism" (p. 149).

Working for social justice is one way to be critical in language policy research (Tollefson, 2006), which is also an aim of nexus analysis. A critical lens is important in a field such as language policy, which was created in the context of post-colonialism and has maintained

asymmetrical institutional power dynamics as a foundational force in its research and application. McCarty (2011) asked what "language policy studies would 'look like' if we investigate[d] policy as a practice of power" (p. 3), which is an essential question in critical language policy research. By considering policy (whether de facto or official) as a practice of power, questions can be raised about the implications of a particular policy for non-dominant groups or individuals who are subject to that policy, about the power various stakeholders have in exercising agency to implement or resist that policy, and about how policies themselves and the policymaking process can be adapted to recognize and increase the power of those who experience the consequences of such policies.

According to Tollefson (2006), critical language policy (CLP) entails two basic assumptions: (1) "that structural categories—particularly class, race, and gender—are central explanatory factors in all social life" and (2) "that a critical examination of epistemology and research methodology is inseparable from ethical standards and political commitments to social justice" (Tollefson, 2006, p. 44). As a general premise, CLP views policies as tools to uphold the status quo, and so language policy researchers must interpret policies with respect to their various causes and consequences, not only their intended outcomes, and the CLP researcher can employ various methodological and conceptual tools in such examinations. Since critical language policy in itself does not prescribe a specific *theory* but, rather, an *orientation* to critique of tradition and promotion of social justice (Tollefson, 2006), CLP can be productively integrated with theories and concepts not necessarily derived from language policy practice or research, such as nexus analysis, especially given its explicit concern with social activism.

Nexus analysis has been fruitfully applied to language policy questions at different levels of policymaking, which I describe below. Hult (2015) acknowledged the challenge in language

planning and policy research of understanding "how policies designed for a country or an institution relate to the language behaviors of individuals" and argued for nexus analysis as a methodology capable of uncovering those connections because it "provides a systematic approach to the principled eclecticism of methods needed to investigate such questions using different kinds of data across multiple settings" (p. 217).

Previous language policy research that has used nexus analysis methodology has examined a wide range of topics across different layers and levels of policymaking. Topics have included identity construction and language shift among minority language communities (Lane, 2009), language ideological debates in mass media (Hult & Pietikäinen, 2014), language choice in higher education (Chopin, 2016; Källkvist & Hult, 2016; Ou et al., 2021) and in society more generally (Hult, 2012), the interaction between special education policy and language education policy (Compton, 2013), and language choice for signage in elementary bilingual education (Dressler, 2015). While some of these topics may seem more "individual," such as language ideology or identity construction, and other topics may appear to be more "structural," such as federal education policies or official university policies, the researchers in all of the cases connected the individual to the structural through the affordances of the tools of nexus analysis. Appendix C contains a list of references for empirical research in language policy conducted via nexus analysis, which I consulted as I designed and carried out my research.

2.4 Review of Empirical Research

To lay the foundation for my study in which I sought to examine the nature of classroom language policy and the influence assessment exerts on it, I conducted a search of the relevant empirical literature. In my literature review, I asked the following question: What role does

assessment play in influencing educational language policy in the school and classroom? I describe my search procedures and findings below.

I searched the following databases: Academic Search Ultimate; Chicano Database; Education Source; ERIC; Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection; PsycINFO; Race Relations Abstracts; SocINDEX with Full Text; Teacher Reference Center; and Urban Studies Abstracts. My final search terms in all text included the following (I use brackets below to more clearly show how I used Boolean search operators): [“language policy” OR “language education policy” OR “language-in-education policy”] AND [“English learners” OR “English language learners” OR “bilinguals”] AND [“assessment” OR “testing” or “test”].

I constrained my searches to peer-reviewed academic journal articles reporting on original, empirical research. Although peer-review is not a guarantee of rigor or quality of research, it is a useful proxy, and excluding books or book chapters allowed me to keep my search results more manageable. I accepted only empirical research (not literature reviews or purely conceptual articles) that was conducted in and focused on U.S., K–12 contexts; that is, no international sites, no post-secondary educational institutions, and no informal education settings (such as museum- or public library-based education). Finally, I excluded all results published prior to 2001. I used 2001 as the cut-off because of its relevance to the impact of assessment on EL-designated students. The No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2001 specifically emphasized assessment, and “since the passage of the *Bilingual Education Act* in 1968, no federal education policy has as greatly impacted English language learners (ELLs) as *No Child Left Behind*” (Menken, 2008, p. 29; italics in original).

After conducting my search according to the above search terms, applying my delimiters and exclusion criteria, and “snowballing” to gather sources from other books’ and articles’

references sections, I had obtained 84 articles to evaluate for relevance to my literature review question. I examined the articles more closely to determine their relevance to my research by reading their abstracts and performing a word search for "test," "testing," "assessment," and the names of potentially relevant tests (e.g., AZELLA, WIDA ACCESS, STAAR, AIMS, Regents, PARCC, and so on) to see the context of use for each hit. For instance, "test" and "testing" might have been used to discuss hypothesis testing, and "assessment" might refer to a researcher's assessment of appropriate instructional technique. Finally, I was left with a small corpus of 27 articles, which I considered to be sufficient and representative, though not comprehensive. The table below contains my final corpus of empirical research articles.

Table 2-3. Empirical Research Corpus

	Empirical Research Corpus References
1.	Babino, A., & Stewart, M. A. (2018). Remodeling dual language programs: Teachers enact agency as critically conscious language policy makers. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *41*(3), 272–297. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2018.1489313
2.	Colón, I., & Heineke, A. J. (2015). Bilingual education in English-only: A qualitative case study of language policy in practice at Lincoln Elementary School. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, *27*(4), 271–295.
3.	Combs, M. C., Evans, C., Fletcher, T., Parra, E., & Jiménez, A. (2005). Bilingualism for the children: Implementing a dual-language program in an English-only state. *Educational Policy*, *19*(5), 701–728. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904805278063
4.	Fitzsimmons-Doolan, S., Palmer, D., & Henderson, K. (2017). Educator language ideologies and a top-down dual language program. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *20*(6), 704–721. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2015.1071776
5.	Fredricks, D. E., & Warriner, D. S. (2016). "We speak English in here and English only!": Teacher and ELL youth perspectives on restrictive language education. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *39*(3–4), 309–323. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2016.1230565
6.	Heineke, A. J. (2015). Negotiating language policy and practice: Teachers of English learners in an Arizona study group. *Educational Policy*, *29*(6), 843–878. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904813518101
7.	Henderson, K. I. (2017). Teacher language ideologies mediating classroom-level language policy in the implementation of dual language bilingual education. *Linguistics and Education*, *42*, 21–33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2017.08.003

Empirical Research Corpus References

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11. Lillie, K. E., Markos, A., & Arias, M. B. (2012). Separate and not equal: The implementation of Structured English Immersion in Arizona's classrooms. *Teachers College Record, 114*, 1–33.

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13. Menken, K. (2006). Teaching to the test: How No Child Left Behind impacts language policy, curriculum, and instruction for English language learners. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *30*(2), 521–546. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2006.10162888

14. Menken, K., & Kleyn, T. (2010). The long-term impact of subtractive schooling in the educational experiences of secondary English language learners. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *13*(4), 399–417. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050903370143

15. Menken, K., & Solorza, C. (2014). No child left bilingual: Accountability and the elimination of bilingual education programs in New York City schools. *Educational Policy*, *28*(1), 96–125. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904812468228

16. Menken, K., & Solorza, C. (2015). Principals as linchpins in bilingual education: The need for prepared school leaders. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *18*(6), 676–697. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2014.937390

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18. Palmer, D. (2011). The discourse of transition: Teachers' language ideologies within transitional bilingual education programs. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, *5*(2), 103–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2011.594019

19. Palmer, D., Henderson, K., Wall, D., Zúñiga, C. E., & Berthelsen, S. (2016). Team teaching among mixed messages: Implementing two-way dual language bilingual

Empirical Research Corpus References

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2.4.1 Characterizing and Evaluating the Literature Base

The number of articles that directly addressed my literature review question was small, but the other articles in my corpus still contained findings that related to the impact of assessment on classroom language policy, although it was not the researchers' intended focus. I read each article, noting the research questions, research context, theoretical and/or conceptual framework, methodology, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and findings. I

entered all of these data into NVivo 12 software as memos and used the software's coding function, "nodes," to categorize the articles more narrowly, for example, according to specific context. I characterize the articles below, including tables with the various categories of sources.

2.4.1.1 Research Context

By far, the most research studies were conducted in elementary settings (Table 2-4), which is unsurprising given the fact that most bilingual education programs are set in elementary schools (Arias & Fee, 2019). I did not set out to examine bilingual education programs, specifically, but rather the education of bilingual children; however, as shown in Table 2-5, bilingual education (in various models) dominated the programmatic contexts. The program types included dual-language education (DLE) models, both one-way (OWDL) and two-way (TWDL); transitional bilingual education (TBE); Structured English Immersion (SEI); sheltered instruction (SI); and English-as-a-second-language (ESL), broadly speaking. Some studies contained multiple research sites that used different program models from one another (e.g., Menken & Solorza, 2014, 2015; Schissel, 2014), while others tracked the changes from one type of program through a transition to another type (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Warhol & Mayer, 2012). Categorizing all the sources was not straightforward, but I attempted to categorize them by which program type seemed dominant (e.g., in terms of time or data collected).

Table 2-4. School Context

School Type	Sources
Elementary (20)	Babino & Stewart (2018); Colón & Heineke (2015); Combs et al. (2005); Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Heineke (2015); Henderson (2017); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Johnson & Johnson (2015); Olson (2009); Palmer (2011); Palmer et al. (2016); Palmer & Henderson (2016); Palmer & Lynch (2008); Palmer & Rangel (2011); Schissel (2014); Stephens & Johnson (2015); Warhol & Mayer (2012); Zúñiga (2016); Zúñiga et al. (2018)

School Type	Sources
Secondary (4)	Koyama & Bartlett (2011); Mackinney (2017) – middle; Menken (2006); Menken & Kleyn (2010)
K–12 (3)	Lillie et al. (2012); Menken & Solorza (2014); Menken & Solorza (2015)

Table 2-5. Programmatic Context

Program Type	Sources
Dual-language education (e.g., OWDL, TWDL) (9)	Babino & Stewart (2018); Fitzsimmons-Doolan & Palmer (2017); Henderson (2017); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Johnson & Johnson (2015); Palmer et al. (2016); Warhol & Mayer (2012); Zúñiga (2016); Zúñiga et al. (2018)
Other bilingual education models (e.g., TBE) (9)	Colón & Heineke (2015); Menken (2006); Menken & Solorza (2015); Olson (2009); Palmer (2011); Palmer & Henderson (2016); Palmer & Lynch (2008); Palmer & Rangel (2011); Warhol & Mayer (2012)
Structured English Immersion (SEI) (5)	Combs et al. (2005); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Heineke (2015); Lillie et al. (2012); Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar (2012)
Other programs / models (4)	Menken & Kleyn (2010); Menken & Solorza (2014); Schissel (2014); Stephens & Johnson (2015)

I also categorized the sources by state in which the research was conducted (Table 2-6). The largest concentrations of publications were in Texas (10), New York (5), and Arizona (5). Texas has the second-highest number and percentage of EL-designated students in K–12 public schools in the country (Migration Policy Institute, 2015; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019) and has official state educational language policy providing for transitional bilingual education in schools that enroll 20 or more students from the same language background (Texas Education Code §29.051-29.064, Bilingual Education and ESL Programs, 1995; as cited by Palmer, 2011). New York is in the top five states for number of EL-designated students in school (Migration Policy Institute, 2015), and New York City (the more precise geographic context for the sources listed) has had the same mandate to provide transitional bilingual education as Texas since the Aspira Consent Decree was issued in 1974 (Reyes, 2006). Arizona notably has the strictest educational language policy in the country since the passage of Proposition 203 in 2000,

which all but eliminated bilingual education in the state and mandated English-only education for EL-designated students (McField, 2014; Moore, 2014). The concentration of locations is also unsurprising, given the skewed distribution of authorship in the corpus (discussed in greater detail below in the limitations section). I was surprised that few studies in the corpus were conducted in California, since the state also adopted a strict educational language policy (Proposition 227) in 1998 (McField, 2014; Parrish et al., 2006; Wiley & Wright, 2004), but a cursory search showed that several articles were published immediately following the policy and were therefore excluded from my corpus because they preceded the 2001 cut-off date. No articles published about a similar English-only policy in Massachusetts (Question 2, 2002) turned up in any of my searches.

Table 2-6. Geographic Context

State	Sources
Arizona (5)	Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Combs et al. (2005); Heineke (2015); Lillie et al. (2012); Mackinney & Rio-Aguilar (2012)
California (1)	Olson (2009)
Connecticut (1)	Warhol & Mayer (2012)
Illinois (1)	Colón & Heineke (2015)
New York (5)	Koyama & Bartlett (2011); Menken (2006); Menken & Kleyn (2010); Menken & Solorza (2014); Menken & Solorza (2015)
Pennsylvania (1)	Schissel (2014)
Texas (10)	Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017); Henderson (2017); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Palmer (2011); Palmer & Henderson (2016); Palmer et al. (2016); Palmer & Lynch (2008); Palmer & Rangel (2011); Zúñiga (2016); Zúñiga et al. (2018)
Washington (2)	Johnson & Johnson (2015); Stephens & Johnson (2015)
Other (1)	Babino & Stewart (2018) – American Southwest

2.4.1.2 Methodology and Methods

The studies in my corpus almost exclusively collected qualitative data and used qualitative analytic methods. However, almost half of all articles did not include an explicit statement or description of methodology employed (Table 2-7). The number of sources for each category do not total to 27 because some authors listed more than one methodology. The

categories I use in the table below reflect the authors' labels for their research, which is why they are not truly discrete categories (for example, "qualitative study" may be attributed to almost all of the sources in the corpus, but only Lillie et al., 2012, used that specific label).

Table 2-7. Methodology Employed

Methodology	Sources
Not stated (12)	Combs et al. (2005); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Menken (2006); Menken & Kleyn (2010); Menken & Solorza (2014, 2015); Palmer (2011); Palmer & Henderson (2016); Palmer & Lynch (2008); Palmer & Rangel (2011); Stephens & Johnson (2015); Zúñiga et al. (2018)
Case study (11)	Babino & Stewart (2018); Colón & Heineke (2015); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Heineke (2015); Henderson (2017); Koyama & Bartlett (2011); Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar (2012); Olson (2009); Schissel (2014); Warhol & Mayer (2012); Zúñiga (2016)
Ethnography of language policy (3)	Johnson & Johnson (2015); Palmer et al. (2016); Stephens & Johnson (2015)
Interpretive policy analysis (1)	Warhol & Mayer (2012)
Mixed methods (1)	Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017)
Qualitative study (1)	Lillie et al. (2012)
Survey (1)	Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017)

Table 2-8 displays the participants included in the studies. Every article included teachers as participants, although they were not always the focal participants. For example, Menken and Solorza (2014, 2015) interviewed principals as their main sources of data but included other perspectives from teachers, vice principals, and instructional coaches for data triangulation. More than half of the corpus also included data from school administrators (e.g., principals), though only a few included district administrators. Several studies also sought the perspectives of students, but few included students' families.

Table 2-8. Participants Included

Participants	Sources
Teachers (27)	Full corpus
School administrators (15)	Babino & Stewart (2018); Colón & Heineke (2015); Combs et al. (2005); Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017); Johnson & Johnson (2015); Koyama & Bartlett (2011); Menken (2006); Menken & Kleyn

Participants	Sources
	(2010); Menken & Solorza (2014, 2015); Olson (2009); Palmer & Henderson (2016); Palmer & Lynch (2008); Schissel (2014); Stephens & Johnson (2015)
Students (6)	Combs et al. (2005); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar (2012); Menken (2006); Menken & Kleyn (2010)
District administrators (3)	Johnson & Johnson (2015); Schissel (2014); Warhol & Mayer (2012)
Families (3)	Combs et al. (2005); Koyama & Bartlett (2011); Warhol & Mayer (2012)
Guidance counselors (1)	Menken (2006)

Table 2-9 shows the data collection methods employed by researchers. Again, the counts for each method do not total to 27 because almost every study used multiple methods of data collection (excepting Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al., 2017, who collected data only via survey). I did not collapse the categories of participant observation and classroom observation, because although all researchers who described using participant observation did so in classrooms, participant observation is nevertheless still distinct in several aspects, such as the nature of fieldnotes and the researcher's status within the community (Merriam, 1998). Document and/or artifact collection includes a wide range of possible materials, ranging from instructional materials and curriculum documents to test score reports and federal and state policy documents.

Table 2-9. Data Collection Methods Used

Data Collection Method	Sources
Interviews (25)	Colón & Heineke (2015); Combs et al. (2005); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Heineke (2015); Henderson (2017); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Johnson & Johnson (2015); Koyama & Bartlett (2011); Lillie et al. (2012); Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar (2012); Menken (2006); Menken & Kleyn (2010); Menken & Solorza (2014, 2015); Olson (2009); Palmer (2011); Palmer & Henderson (2016); Palmer & Lynch (2008); Palmer & Rangel (2011); Palmer et al. (2016); Schissel (2014); Stephens & Johnson (2015); Warhol & Mayer (2012); Zúñiga (2016); Zúñiga et al. (2018)
Classroom observation (10)	Henderson (2017); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Koyama & Bartlett (2011); Lillie et al. (2012); Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar (2012); Menken (2006); Palmer et al. (2016); Schissel (2014); Zúñiga (2016); Zúñiga et al. (2018)

Data Collection Method	Sources
Participant observation (6)	Colón & Heineke (2015); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Olson (2009); Palmer (2011); Stephens & Johnson (2015); Warhol & Mayer (2012)
Document and/or artifact collection (10)	Colón & Heineke (2015); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Heineke (2015); Lillie et al. (2012); Menken (2006); Olson (2009); Schissel (2014); Stephens & Johnson (2015); Warhol & Mayer (2012); Zúñiga et al. (2018)
Survey (6)	Babino & Stewart (2018); Colón & Heineke (2015); Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017); Henderson (2017); Koyama & Bartlett (2011); Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar (2012)
Teacher meeting observation (5)	Henderson & Palmer (2015); Palmer & Henderson (2016); Palmer et al. (2016); Stephens & Johnson (2015); Warhol & Mayer (2012)
Focus group (3)	Babino & Stewart (2018); Heineke (2015); Koyama & Bartlett (2011)

Table 2-10 displays the techniques cited for data analysis. As with the methodologies, I have listed the techniques as named by the authors and grouped them accordingly. Therefore, although constant comparative method and grounded theory are part of the same analytic paradigm (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), I did not combine them into one category. About two-thirds of the corpus used some type of thematic analysis, describing their techniques with varying degrees of specificity. For instance, Fitzsimmons-Doolan and colleagues (2017) described their process simply as "qualitative thematic analysis of responses to open-ended survey questions" (p. 709), whereas Fredricks and Warriner (2016) reported that their "audio recordings were transcribed and thematically coded to help examine the similarities and differences in language use" (p. 313), listed their initial codes based on their research questions, and described their process for coding "unexpected recurrent themes found across the data set" (p. 313).

Discourse analysis was likewise variably described. Johnson and Johnson (2015) described their process as identifying "interdiscursive links and themes across the data" (p. 229). Henderson (2017), on the other hand, explained that she drew on Schiffrin (1994), Gee (2014), and Erickson (2004) to tie her data analysis technique of discourse analysis to her larger theoretical framework, "[examining] the situated meaning of the utterance as well as making

connections to larger societal language ideologies embedded in [the teachers'] explanations […] simultaneously attending to the micro and macro levels of discourse" (p. 23).

Table 2-10. Data Analysis Methods Used

Data Analysis Method	Sources
Thematic analysis (18)	Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Henderson (2017); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Johnson & Johnson (2015); Menken (2006); Menken & Kleyn (2010); Menken & Solorza (2014, 2015); Olson (2009); Palmer (2011); Palmer & Lynch (2008); Palmer & Rangel (2011); Palmer et al. (2016); Schissel (2014); Warhol & Mayer (2012); Zúñiga (2016); Zúñiga et al. (2018)
Discourse analysis (7)	Heineke (2015); Henderson (2017); Henderson & Palmer (2015); Johnson & Johnson (2015); Olson (2009); Palmer (2011); Palmer & Henderson (2016)
Constant comparative method (2)	Lillie et al. (2012); Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar (2012)
Theoretical propositions, logic model (2)	Babino & Stewart (2018); Colón & Heineke (2015)
Quantitative (factor analysis & ANOVA) (2)	Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017); Henderson (2017)
Academic task structure (1)	Olson (2009)
Grounded theory (1)	Combs et al. (2005)
Metaphorical analysis (1)	Koyama & Bartlett (2011)
Not stated (1)	Stephens & Johnson (2015)
Social organization of learning (1)	Olson (2009)
Thick description (1)	Colón & Heineke (2015)

Among the strengths of the literature I reviewed was that many researchers were deeply familiar with their research context. Several had substantial data collection periods, such as Colón and Heineke (2015), who spent two years conducting participant observations in a school, or Warhol and Mayer (2012), who conducted ethnographic research in a school district over three years. Other researchers frequently visited their research sites, such as Fredricks and Warriner (2016), of whom Fredricks visited the school research site three to five times per week for three hours at a time over six months, or Schissel (2014), who visited her school research sites on alternating weeks, spending the entire day in class two to three times per week. In these ways,

researchers gained more of an emic perspective than would have been possible with more cursory data collection. In some cases, the researchers had pre-existing relationships with the participants, such as through having previously taught the participants in a university program (e.g., Palmer, 2011) or through previously engaging in research at the site (e.g., Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar, 2012) and so had already built some degree of rapport and trust. Additionally, more than half of all articles included classroom observation of some sort, and everyone who conducted classroom observations also interviewed participants (although the converse did not hold), seeking multiple perspectives and working to triangulate data. Researchers also coupled surveys with interviews (or at least open-ended comment sections on the survey) to obtain different types of data related to the construct of interest. Overall, many of the articles in the corpus provided good examples of how to approach classroom language policy research.

However, there were several methodological weaknesses, as well. As is clear in Table 2-7, almost half of the articles did not include an explicit statement of methodology used, and so it was difficult to evaluate the appropriateness of the methodology for the research questions and whether the methods of data collection and analysis were appropriate for the methodology. The methodology provides structure for the investigation that the researcher has undertaken, and without a specific methodology, the researcher may lack guidance for how best to conduct the research. Coupled with this issue were generally sparse descriptions of methods of data collection and analysis. As I mentioned above, degree of specificity in describing analytic procedures varied widely, though in general descriptions were vague and unspecific, including the methods by which teams of authors worked together to code and reach consensus (if they did at all).

Some researchers provided their survey instruments or interview protocols (or ways to view the instruments in other locations), descriptions of the questions asked, or the goals of the interviews. However, most did not, even though all the in-person interviews were characterized as semi-structured and so would have some form of protocol. Further, although all researchers who observed classroom instruction also used interviews, not all researchers who interviewed participants also observed their practice. Many of the studies relied on self-reports (whether through interview or survey) and did not triangulate the data through classroom observations. Relatedly, although all the studies sought teachers' points of view, far fewer obtained multiple perspectives through including a wider variety of participants, such as school leaders, district administrators, students, or their families.

Some researchers noted that they would have liked to obtain more multifaceted data but were prevented for various reasons. Warhol and Mayer (2012) investigated the dismantling of a bilingual education program after the fact and so could not observe classrooms, since the program had already been terminated. Palmer and Henderson (2016) could not get consent for classroom observations from one of the participants. Palmer and Lynch (2008) and Palmer and Rangel (2011)—as part of the same, larger research study—had planned on conducting classroom observations but were later prevented because of the school's testing schedule. These examples demonstrate some of the difficulties with classroom research and may yet be instructive examples of classroom research.

These studies highlight the importance of substantial data collection, in terms of duration (ideally a full semester to academic year or more), frequency (multiple observations in a context and multiple interviews of the focal participants), breadth (multiple sites of data collection), and depth (multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon). It would be exceedingly labor-intensive

and time-consuming to attend to them all, especially as an individual researcher working alone, although Menken (2006) accomplished this herculean task in her dissertation research. Other researchers integrated these demands into their studies in a variety of ways, such as surveying a large sample of participants for breadth, combined with interviewing a smaller sample for depth (e.g., Henderson, 2017); or emphasizing depth by interviewing and conducting focus groups with a variety of participants from multiple sites (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018); or maintaining high frequency of observation over a shorter time period (e.g., Fredricks & Warriner, 2016).

2.4.1.3 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The corpus is also highly disparate in terms of theoretical frameworks used. Some authors used "theoretical framework" to describe their study's theoretical underpinnings, while others used "conceptual framework." I follow LeCompte and Preissle (1993) in understanding theories to be "statements about how things are connected" and which are composed of two elements, "the things to be connected and the connection itself. The things to be connected are the concepts" (pp. 118–119). Given this relationship between theory and concept, I do not materially differentiate theoretical frameworks from conceptual frameworks, so I have grouped theoretical and conceptual frameworks together, and hereafter I refer to all as theoretical frameworks. Table 2-11 shows the theoretical frameworks named by the authors. Some authors named several frameworks, and so the counts do not total to 27.

Table 2-11. Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical Framework	Sources
Not stated (8)	Combs et al. (2005); Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017); Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar (2012); Menken (2006); Menken & Kleyn (2010); Menken & Solorza (2014, 2015); Palmer & Lynch (2008)
Language ideology/ies (8)	Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al. (2017); Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Henderson (2017); Henderson & Palmer (2015);

Theoretical Framework	Sources
	Palmer (2011); Warhol & Mayer (2012); Zúñiga (2016); Zúñiga et al. (2018)
SCT (4)	Colón & Heineke (2015); Heineke (2015); Johnson & Johnson (2015); Palmer & Henderson (2016)
• CHAT	Olson (2009)
• Critical SCT	Babino & Stewart (2018)
Language orientations (2)	Fredricks & Warriner (2016); Zúñiga (2016)
Sensemaking (2)	Palmer & Rangel (2011); Palmer et al. (2016)
Critical language policy	Stephens & Johnson (2015)
Cultural models	Heineke (2015)
Dialogue – Bakhtin	Palmer (2011)
Ethnography of language policy	Palmer et al. (2016)
Figured worlds	Colón & Heineke (2015)
Governmentality	Johnson & Johnson (2015)
Historical analysis	Schissel (2014)
Language ecology	Henderson (2017)
Legitimate language – Bourdieu	Palmer (2011)
Policy trajectory	Lillie et al. (2012)
Political spectacle	Koyama & Bartlett (2011)
Positioning theory	Palmer & Henderson (2016)
Power – Bourdieu	Fredricks & Warriner (2016)
Social theory	Henderson & Palmer (2015)
Teacher agency	Zúñiga et al. (2018)

Many authors did not name a theory to frame their empirical investigations. According to Merriam (1998), a researcher's theoretical framework is tied to their disciplinary orientation and is "the structure, the scaffolding, the frame" of a research study (p. 45). Every study has some kind of theoretical orientation, even if the framework is not explicitly noted, because everyone brings their own disciplinary orientation to their work and views the world through that lens (Merriam, 1998, p. 45). Gee (2015) similarly presented theories as means by which individuals arrive at explanations of phenomena. According to Gee, theories "tell us how and where to look for evidence and what counts as evidence" (p. 16); therefore, all scholars approach their research with theories in mind, even if they do not elaborate on them in their publications.

The most frequently cited framework was language ideology/ideologies, although it was often the construct under investigation, rather than the lens through which the researchers viewed

their data. For example, Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Palmer, and Henderson (2017) investigated teachers' language ideologies by distributing a survey with items related to beliefs about language, which they analyzed through exploratory factor analysis, grouping together items that loaded onto the same factor and operationalizing them as different language ideologies, and calculating individuals' factor scores for each identified language ideology; they then conducted several ANOVAs on participants' factor scores to ascertain whether the factor scores were related to teachers' personal characteristics. In this study, language ideologies were the construct of interest, not the means by which they understood some other phenomenon.

However, Henderson (2017) used the concept of language ideologies as the means by which she understood another phenomenon, the implementation of a dual-language bilingual education program. She analyzed teachers' discourse to identify their articulated language ideologies and situate them in the teachers' practice to illuminate their embodied language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2004), to explain the teachers' implementation of classroom language policy. Despite the differences between the two studies, I categorized both as using language ideologies as their theoretical framework.

Several others drew on sociocultural theory (or an affiliated theoretical frame, such as critical SCT or cultural-historical activity theory [CHAT]) to guide their research, some layering other theories as well, such as figured worlds (Colón & Heineke, 2015), cultural models (Heineke, 2015), or positioning theory (Palmer & Henderson, 2016). Palmer and Henderson (2016) in particular achieved a powerful theoretical synthesis by combining SCT with positioning theory to conceptualize student ability and how teachers position students as more or less "able," arguing that "student 'ability' is not a fixed, discrete trait but rather constructed through interaction in different spaces at distinct points in time" (p. 19). Overall, Palmer and

Henderson (2017) offered a strong research study, theoretically well-grounded and clearly tied to their analysis and findings: their sociocultural and social constructivist perspective acted as a thread running through the entire article, from research question to discussion.

However, not all studies included such clear descriptions of theoretical bases, which is evident in and reproduced through a frequent lack of clear definitions for important terms and concepts. For instance, some researchers did not give their definition for "language policy," although elsewhere authors have devoted pages to explaining the various definitions that have been proposed and followed for language planning and policy (see Section 2.1.1, "Definitions"). Further, both articles that used language orientations in their theoretical frameworks also incorporated language ideologies, reflecting the overlap between the two, although Fredricks and Warriner (2016) contained language orientations within language ideologies, whereas Zúñiga (2016) used language orientations to explain language ideologies. Heineke (2015) integrated the theory of cultural models into her framework, defining them as "taken-for-granted assumptions that teachers often unknowingly form and use to oversimplify and make sense of a complex world" (p. 848), which is quite similar to many definitions of ideologies (e.g., Irvine & Gal, 2000; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 2006), but although Heineke also discussed language ideologies, she did not differentiate between the two concepts. These differences in conceptual understandings point to the complex nature of constructs and theories in the field of language policy. Ultimately, the lack of a clearly stated theoretical framework obscured how various studies contributed to theory-building in the field.

In other cases, while defined and described at the beginning of the article, the frameworks did not feature prominently in the findings or discussion. Warhol and Mayer (2012) used interpretive policy analysis (IPA) as their theoretical frame but did not present their findings with

any reference to the elements of IPA (Moore & Wiley, 2015), thus obscuring their study's contributions to the larger IPA literature. Stephens and Johnson (2015) placed their study in the context of critical language policy, expressly focusing on the tension between structure and agency in language policy implementation: "Our approach involves attempting to balance the focus on the power of policy (structure) and the power of policy agents (agency)" (p. 32). However, their findings did not address the question of structure in their research context and instead only focused on the power of teachers, thus limiting their theoretical contribution on the tension between power and structure.

In reviewing this body of literature, I struggled most with understanding researchers' theoretical framings as they were described or how they related to research questions, methods of data collection and analysis, and findings. My struggles were probably due in large part to me being a novice researcher, although the difficulty was perhaps exacerbated by lack of explicit articulation by the researchers in their articles. While many studies used important concepts in (educational) language policy, often making them the central concept under investigation, I was unable to clearly see how the studies' pieces fit together, made theoretical and methodological contributions to the field, and would potentially help provide roadmaps for me as a novice researcher setting out to design a research study in educational language policy.

2.4.2 Findings: What Role Does Assessment Play in Influencing Educational Language Policy in the School and Classroom?

As I described above, I read the articles in my corpus and noted instances in which assessment had an impact on classroom language policy, whether or not that focus was primary or intended by the researchers at all. I labeled and categorized the types of roles played by or impacts from assessment and collapsed related categories, finding that assessments (1) were

responsible for designating (and re-designating) students for services; (2) influenced decisions about language programs; (3) influenced curriculum and instruction; (4) contributed to students' and educators' perceptions of student identity; and (5) contributed to evaluations of schools and teachers. I expand on each of these items below in separate subsections, but in reality they were not discrete and instead interacted and overlapped with one another. Although some of these findings are consistent with more general washback literature (Cheng et al., 2004) and may not appear to pertain more specifically to classroom language policy, as I state above, I nevertheless include them because of the inclusive definitions of educational and classroom language policy that I follow.

2.4.2.1 Designating and Re-Designating Students for Services. Unsurprisingly, assessments were widely used for determining initial student eligibility for language services (Colón & Heineke, 2015; Combs et al., 2005; Fredricks & Warriner, 2016; Heineke, 2015; Lillie et al., 2012; Palmer & Henderson, 2016; Stephens & Johnson, 2015; Zúñiga et al., 2018), tracking progress (Heineke, 2015; Stephens & Johnson, 2015), and determining proficiency, including for re-designating or re-classifying students as no longer eligible for language services (Combs et al., 2005; Fredricks & Warriner, 2016; Henderson, 2017; Lillie et al., 2012; Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar, 2012; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Menken & Solorza, 2014; Palmer, 2011; Warhol & Mayer, 2012). Since these are major purposes for which language proficiency tests are designed, these uses may seem to be appropriate and unproblematic.

However, these tests and their uses must be considered in the light of a unified view of validity (Mahoney, 2017) and use-oriented testing (Schissel, 2019; Shohamy, 2001). According to Mahoney (2017), the unified view of validity "is an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and

appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores (Messick, 1989)" (p. 45). That is to say, traditional conceptions of validity (such as construct, content, face, predictive, concurrent, discriminant, etc.) are insufficient for determining the validity of an assessment, and *consequential* validity is the ultimate determinant of an assessment's validity—there are no valid tests, only valid uses. "Use-oriented testing emphasizes the experiences of the test-takers" (Schissel, 2019, p. 31) in its conceptualization of fair and ethical assessment practices. Both of these concepts are important for understanding how and why current assessment practices for EL-designated students are troubling and can be considered test *misuse* (Mahoney, 2017).

Determination of eligibility for language services is critical for school districts to meet the needs of their language learner students and to comply with statute and regulation. However, depending on the consequences of being found eligible, the assessment practices may not be valid. In Arizona, for example, the consequences of EL-designation included relegation to SEI classrooms and "devastating effects on ELLs' education" (Lillie et al., 2012, p. 26) resulting from what is effectively legal segregation, restricted access to academic content, inadequately trained teachers for their needs, and personal trauma from the rejection of their home languages and knowledge bases.

For more prosaic reasons, attested assessment practices for tracking progress are inappropriate because they make use of summative achievement tests, rather than formative tests: a case of the wrong tool for the job. I do not cite specific articles here because this was simply the practice demanded by NCLB's Annual Measurable Achievement Objective [AMAO] 1[15], which demanded that schools demonstrate progress in their EL-designated students' English

[15] Mahoney, 2017, describes this policy in greater detail.

language proficiency. (This requirement was dropped from ESSA.) The same is true for using formative assessments summatively, as was the case in New York City schools, as reported by Koyama and Bartlett (2011), in which students' bi-monthly benchmark test scores were used to judge the students, their language programs, and their schools.

Determining language proficiency is a fraught question and the full discussion it merits is beyond the scope of this examination. However, in the context of this body of literature, the assessment practices that led to students' reclassification as English-proficient were highly problematic. Warhol and Mayer (2012) reported that students' performance on academic content area tests were also included in considerations of language proficiency, a clear example of test misuse because inferences about test-taker ability are only valid for the abilities that a test was a designed to measure (if then). Conversely, some educators believed that language proficiency was also an indicator of academic readiness. Palmer (2011) described how teachers used proficiency to determine whether students were "ready" to transition to English instruction from Spanish TBE. Combs and colleagues (2005) described the arbitrariness of language proficiency designations. Shortly after the adoption of Proposition 203, districts set their cut-off scores for proficiency higher than necessary out of fear of being perceived as non-compliant with the new law, and the Arizona Department of Education's Superintendent went on to drop the cut-off for the entire state, reclassifying many students as proficient before they were ready for mainstream classes. Some teachers also attempted to get students ready for the test so that they could be eligible for dual language programs (by avoiding placement in SEI settings), which were not entirely outlawed by Proposition 203 but were more easily accessed by parents of native or fluent English speaking children who wished for their children to learn another language, rather

than by parents of EL-designated children, who were required to request a waiver to place their children in bilingual education if certain conditions were met (Combs et al., 2005).

2.4.2.2 Influencing Programmatic Decisions. Assessment also played an outsized role in influencing decisions about program model selection (Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al., 2017; Henderson, 2017; Koyama & Bartlett, 2011; Menken & Solorza, 2014, 2015; Palmer & Henderson, 2016; Palmer & et al., 2016; Warhol & Mayer, 2012) and implementation (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Colón & Heineke, 2015; Heineke, 2015; Henderson, 2017; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar, 2012; Menken, 2006; Palmer et al., 2016; Warhol & Mayer, 2012; Zúñiga et al., 2018), namely by (re)directing the language of instruction (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Colón & Heineke, 2015; Henderson, 2017; Menken, 2006; Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer et al., 2016; Warhol & Mayer, 2012; Zúñiga, 2016; Zúñiga et al., 2018), due in large part to conflict between program goals and the goals of standardized testing (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Fitzsimmons-Doolan & et al., 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar, 2012; Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer et al., 2016; Zúñiga, 2016; Zúñiga et al., 2018). Babino and Stewart (2018) noted that, "While high-stakes testing and socially just learning are not mutually exclusive, DL stakeholders often share how standardized testing practices pervade and usurp the three pillars of DL programs: to create learners who possess bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural competence" (p. 272).

Because of pressures on schools to raise and maintain student test scores, teachers were encouraged, both implicitly and explicitly, to improve students' abilities in the tested language, whatever that language might be (Menken, 2006). High-stakes testing priorities do not permit students the time needed to expand their academic knowledge and abilities and improve their language proficiency to be able to demonstrate their content knowledge, although it may take as

long as 7-11 years for language learner students to perform at the same level as native-language speaking peers on standardized assessments (Levin & Shohamy, 2008). Texas allows for academic content tests to be made available in Spanish or English until sixth grade, and teachers are responsible for selecting the language of assessment for the students (Palmer & Lynch, 2008). Although the goals of dual language education include bilingualism and biliteracy, teachers often felt that they had to sacrifice one of the languages in the program in order to strengthen students' abilities in the language they were to be tested in (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al., 2017; Palmer et al., 2016). The goal of transitional bilingual education—to transition to English—was likewise undermined because teachers often elected to have students tested in their dominant language, Spanish, and then matched their instruction to the assessment, primarily teaching in Spanish, rather than transitioning to English (Palmer & Lynch, 2008). Alternatively, the goal of transition over several years in elementary school was undermined because teachers were pressured to prepare students for inevitable testing in English, so they abruptly switched to English-dominant or English-only instruction (Zúñiga et al., 2018).

Such pressure on teachers to attend to test preparation influenced their implementation of established language program models that schools and districts followed (at least in name) that required specific and strict language allocation, such as the Gómez and Gómez model (Gómez & Gómez, 2015[16], cited by Palmer & Henderson, 2016). In many schools with dual language programs, teachers made a variety of changes to the program model in order to prepare for testing: eliminating bilingual centers (Palmer et al., 2016); prioritizing English literacy over Spanish literacy (Babino & Stewart, 2018); eliminating or severely reducing time in non-tested

[16] The website for the original source cited by Palmer and Henderson (2016) no longer exists.

content areas, resulting in imbalances in planned language allocation (Zúñiga, 2016); mixing languages, rather than maintaining mandated language separation, to provide support for students (Henderson & Palmer, 2015); and changing language allocation for individual students when they were pulled from class for additional test preparation (Henderson, 2017).

On a larger scale, assessments provided the impetus—or the justification—for changing language program types. Henderson and Palmer (2015) described a school district that was in the process of switching to dual language education, rather than transitional bilingual education, in order to raise achievement test scores. However, in the first year of dual language programming in third grade, the first tested grade, the pressure to achieve was too intense and principals and teachers alike believed it was necessary to implement transitional bilingual education, as they had previously been accustomed to doing. Johnson and Johnson (2015) reported on two districts in Washington that employed dual language education programs in some of their schools. One district official was considering dismantling the dual language program because he seemed not to see "the point" of dual language education if schools with the programs were not meeting AYP. This concern had also been crucial in the dissolution of a dual language program at a school in Connecticut that had failed to make AYP for several years in a row and so was forced to undergo comprehensive reform. Although the state required that the school offer bilingual education because of the number of EL-designated students with a shared language background, school administrators and teachers blamed the former language program for the schoolwide troubles with AYP and did not reinstate it following the adoption of the reform program, which district officials willfully ignored. My point here is to emphasize that assessment diverts intended program goals and mandates, and so, regardless of my beliefs or the research on effectiveness or

appropriateness of model type or language allocation practices, I withhold judgment on the benefits or drawbacks to the original models or resultant changes.

2.4.2.3 Influencing Curriculum and Instruction. Additionally, assessment-related pressures influenced curriculum and instruction (beyond language of instruction, as discussed above). Specifically, assessments had impacts on the scheduling of curriculum and instruction to suit testing schedules (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Henderson, 2017; Koyama & Bartlett, 2011; Palmer & Henderson, 2016; Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Palmer et al., 2016; Zúñiga, 2016), narrowing the curriculum to tested content (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Henderson, 2017; Menken, 2006; Olson, 2009; Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Palmer et al., 2016; Zúñiga, 2016), narrowing instruction to test-specific skills (Colón & Heineke, 2015; Henderson, 2017; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar, 2012; Menken, 2006; Olson, 2009; Palmer & Henderson, 2016; Palmer et al., 2016), and selecting materials that reflected the form and content of standardized tests (Heineke, 2015; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Olson, 2009; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Schissel, 2014).

Testing dictated scheduling of curriculum and instruction on small and large scales. Day-to-day instruction was affected because students deemed in need of additional test preparation were pulled from class or kept after school (Henderson, 2017; Menken, 2006; Palmer & Henderson, 2016). Across a semester or year, the curriculum was scheduled to prioritize tested content, as Palmer and Rangel (2011) reported that almost all instruction in science was delayed until after the reading test was completed to make more time for reading instruction. This prioritization in scheduling also clearly affected the curriculum taught to students, which was substantially curtailed (an effect of high-stakes testing attested elsewhere as well, e.g., Valli et al., 2008). Non-tested subjects were reduced, almost to the point of elimination in some cases

(Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Zúñiga, 2016), while tested subjects were altered to emphasize test preparation, such as making ESL more similar to English language arts (Menken, 2006). Classroom instructional techniques were also affected, leading teachers to prioritize test-relevant skills. Olson (2009) described how the focal teacher in her study emphasized "skill and drill practice" (p. 84) because she believed it would raise test scores. Palmer and colleagues (2016) noted a similar emphasis on drill activities, which had replaced bilingual individual and small-group learning centers. Olson (2009) also pointed out that the focal teacher relied heavily on a workbook that helped students "practice the skills assessed on the state test" (p. 85), a phenomenon echoed by Palmer and Rangel (2011). Other teachers selected materials in the language of the assessment, differentiating instruction for students not based on their individual needs as learners but as test-takers (Henderson & Palmer, 2015).

2.4.2.4 Shaping Student Identity. Educators' perceptions of students and students' perceptions of themselves and other students were also mediated by test performance (Heineke, 2015; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Palmer, 2011; Palmer & Henderson, 2016; Palmer et al., 2016; Zúñiga et al., 2018). Educators frequently identified students by their language proficiency level, referring to them as "ones," "twos," and so on (Heineke, 2015; Palmer & Henderson, 2016). They also independently determined students' dominant languages for testing purposes (Henderson & Palmer, 2015), ignoring the realities of (simultaneous) bilingualism, in which language dominance is not necessarily straightforward and depends on the sociocultural context in which a student is using language. Educators also demonstrated a lack of understanding about language acquisition and bilingualism by characterizing students as lacking a "strong foundation" in any language (Combs et al., 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Palmer, 2011; Palmer &

Henderson, 2016; Zúñiga et al., 2018). Palmer and Henderson (2015) observed a similar phenomenon in the positioning of students in the one-way dual language class, versus students in the two-way dual language class, in that students in the two-way program were perceived as high-performing, both academically and linguistically, whereas the one-way group was seen as "lower-ability."

Students also had internalized some of the deficit perspectives encountered in their educational experiences, evident through their characterization of certain classes as "low." Fredricks and Warriner (2016) related how students reclassified as "fluent English proficient" described the four-hour English language development class as the "low" class and feared returning to it. Students also described their own difficulties with test-taking as personal failures, as illustrated by this quote from one high school EL-designated student (Menken and Kleyn, 2010): "So that's why I don't feel that much comfortable in English, you know. Because I'm pretty bad in tests" (p. 411).

2.4.2.5 Contributing to School Evaluation and Staffing Decisions. As I described above, test misuse results when tests are used for purposes for which they were not designed and to make inferences that are not supported by the test design. Test misuse also occurs when using tests designed to measure an individual's knowledge of a subject (student academic achievement tests) to evaluate teachers, principals, and schools as a whole, although this practice was written into law through NCLB (Mahoney, 2017). High-stakes testing, therefore, was also influential via the mechanisms of teacher and school evaluation (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Combs et al., 2005; Colón & Heineke, 2015; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar, 2012; Menken & Solorza, 2014, 2015; Palmer et al., 2016; Palmer & Lynch, 2008) because NCLB required that achievement test scores for EL-designated students be

disaggregated for reporting and tracking AYP. Menken and Solorza (2014, 2015) described how principals, aware that EL-designated students did not perform well on the achievement tests, tried various means of discouraging these students from enrolling in their schools, even when their tactics were against state or city regulation (which mandated bilingual education in schools with 20 or more students with shared language backgrounds). Principals elected to dismantle bilingual education programs in favor of ESL programs or sought unofficial channels to refuse to enroll EL-designated students. Relatedly, but not due to principals' actions, the small schools movement also affected the availability of bilingual education programs, in that high schools that served large populations of EL-designated students were broken up. These high schools formerly "had the numbers of students to allow them to offer high specialized classes" (Menken & Solorza, 2014, p. 114), but could not retain the programs after the break-up into several smaller schools.

Individual teachers also felt the pressure to improve test scores and meet AYP. Henderson and Palmer (2015) reported that, in teacher planning meetings, "test preparation was the single most discussed topic […] All teachers expressed tremendous pressure to achieve high test scores" (p. 88). In one school visited by Palmer and Lynch (2008), all but one teacher of the 16 teachers interviewed "stated that the [standardized test] has changed the way that they teach" (p. 227); the lone teacher who did not teach to the test was asked not to return to the school the next year for failing to prepare children for the test.

In this section I have described the findings I obtained from my review of empirical research. I found that assessments impacted educational policy in the school and classroom in a variety of ways, from the small scale of determining what reading materials students were given, to larger scale effects of closing or overhauling entire language education programs. More

specifically, I categorized the types of impacts of assessment as (1) designating and re-designating students for services; (2) influencing decisions about language programs; (3) influencing curriculum and instruction; (4) shaping student identity; and (5) contributing to evaluations of schools and teachers. Despite my efforts to assemble a representative corpus of original, empirical research, it is nevertheless limited in several important ways.

2.4.3 Limitations of the Literature Review

Although this review of the research literature has illuminated various ways in which high-stakes assessment has influenced classroom language policy, it is nevertheless limited in a number of ways and so should be cautiously interpreted. As I discussed above, the corpus of literature is quite small (27 articles). Had I allowed for the inclusion of books (e.g., Menken, 2008) and book chapters (e.g., from the edited volumes of Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; McCarty, 2011; McField, 2014; Menken & Garcia, 2010; and Moore, 2014), I would certainly have obtained a larger and more comprehensive body of work.

Additionally, the corpus is skewed to a few researchers and their research projects in certain locations. For example, Deborah Palmer was a contributing author on almost a third of all the articles reviewed. Kate Menken was the lead or sole author on four of the included articles. I say this not to critique them as researchers but to point to the extra weight their research carries in the small research sample. Again, had I included more sources of empirical research, their influence would have been diluted, but the limitations I imposed on my search of the research literature necessarily limited the number of studies available and the number of researchers represented.

I may have also used an overly broad conception of "impact on classroom language policy." Many of my findings are consistent with general testing (e.g., Valli et al., 2008) and

language testing washback literature (e.g., Cheng et al., 2004), which could indicate I have not sufficiently constrained the contexts of interest or my operationalization of concepts. For example, I did not distinguish between language proficiency testing and academic content testing, and it is likely that different types and purposes of testing would have different impacts on teachers and students in the classroom. However, I intentionally chose to group all the standardized, high-stakes assessment together because they all contribute to the context and environment in which students, teachers, and administrators act and interact in response to the forces of assessments (Schissel, 2019). In illustration of this interaction of assessment demands, Colón and Heineke (2015) recounted a teacher's description of "juggling" (p. 283) the various tests that she had to prepare students for. Schissel (2019) analyzed the history of testing language-minoritized bilinguals and the effects on them of testing, whatever the articulated purpose of the test, because she employed a use-oriented perspective on testing that considers the "experiences of individuals who not only take the test and need to adapt to the decisions attached to their scores, but also their broader experiences that come into play around how and what kinds of interpretations and decisions are made" (p. 5). I also hold a use-oriented perspective and view testing as a wide-ranging phenomenon that shapes students' educational experiences and teachers' professional lives. Despite the limitations on this body of literature I obtained, the review has been valuable in identifying common research contexts and methods employed in classroom language policy research in U.S. K–12 public schools and exposing areas that merit further research.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I covered the theoretical concepts relevant to Spolsky's (2004) definition of language policy as being (1) language ideologies mediating (2) language management to

influence (3) language practices, as well as concepts pertaining to the subfield of educational language policy. I also described the educational language policy landscape in Maryland, which shapes the educational experiences of students designated as English learners and the professional experiences of their educators. I introduced the methodology of nexus analysis as an ethnographic and discourse analytic approach to the study of language policy. I reviewed a corpus of empirical literature examining the impact of high-stakes testing on classroom language policy. Through my review I found that assessment plays a large role in shaping teachers' policies and practices and students' educational experiences, specifically, in influencing the designation of students for language services, programmatic decisions at the school level, curriculum and instruction within the classroom, and perceptions of student identity, and it contributed to school evaluations and staffing decisions.

I close this chapter by offering the following question from Levinson and Sutton (2001), which I held in mind as I designed and conducted the study I detail in the following chapters: "What would educational policy studies look like if [education researchers] reconceptualized the notion of policy itself as a complex social practice, an on-going process of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse social and institutional contexts?" (p. 1).

Chapter 3: Methods

In this chapter, I document the research plan I carried out, beginning with my research questions, an overview of the research design, description of the research setting, and then details regarding data collection and analysis. I close the chapter with a discussion of standards for quality in qualitative research and a statement about my position as a researcher.

3.1 Research Questions

This qualitative research study examined language-related policies and practices in the classroom and clarified the major influences on those policies and practices, with particular attention to the influence of high-stakes testing. Using nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) to understand the phenomenon, or nexus of practice, of educational language policy appropriation, I explored the following questions:

1. How do educators of EL-designated students manage language in the school and classroom?
2. How do educators of EL-designated students appropriate high-stakes testing policies in the school and classroom?
3. How are the relevant state-level, high-stakes testing policies appropriated by policy agents across time and space(s)?

Research question 1 focuses specifically on *language management* for two reasons. First, I draw a distinction between *language management* as the specific activities occurring in the classroom and school and *educational language policy* as the nexus of practice, which necessarily includes all three research questions and their findings. Although the activities I discuss in Chapter 4 as findings for the first research question could be construed as "educational language policy," given my expansive and inclusive definition for the concept, I labeled them as

"language management" for terminological clarity and for the following reason. I understand language policy to consist of the three components of language ideologies mediating language management activities with the intention of influencing language practices. As I go on to describe in this chapter, I was unable to observe classroom interactions, so I could not see the effects of management on practices; therefore, that component of language policy is less clearly represented in my data.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, I use the term *appropriate* to describe the actions that educators take relative to policy, both to encompass and to go beyond *creation*, *formation*, *development*, *implementation*, *enactment*, and so on (although I use those terms where relevant). I follow Levinson and Sutton (2001) in understanding policy appropriation to be a creative act, in which policy actors "'take in' elements of policy, thereby incorporating these discursive and institutional resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation, and action" (p. 3). My research design was intended to document the policies as educators appropriated them and investigate the discourses that played a role in this "dynamic, interrelated process stretching over time" (Levinson & Sutton, 2001, p. 2).

3.2 Research Design: Nexus Analysis

For this study, I employed nexus analysis, an approach well-suited for use in language policy research to bridge multiple contexts and practices occurring at varying scales of influence (Hult, 2015), which is much-needed in the field (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2013; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Nexus analysis enabled me to investigate the discourses from multiple scales involved in classroom language policy decisions because of its multifocal nature, in that it was designed to "zoom in" on specific, concrete actions and to "pan out" in time and space to follow the trajectories of discourses at play in the moment of action. This capacity to

trace discourses across time and space facilitated connecting federal education policy to state-level policy to school- and classroom-level policy, following the policy discourses across scales; connecting current policies at each layer to previous iterations, following their historical trajectories; and connecting individuals' knowledge, beliefs, and experiences (conceptualized as the historical body) to their present actions.

This research study was composed of two distinct but related sets of data collection sources and methods. The first consisted principally of semi-structured interviews with educators at two public high schools in Maryland, both of which were designed to serve student bodies of exclusively EL-designated students. I also collected school-related documents as part of that component of the study. The second component of the study involved examining meetings of the Maryland State Board of Education through document collection and analysis, both archival (existing prior to commencement of the research) and contemporary. Archival documents chronicled the histories of relevant policies that affect the schools under study and their educators and students, and contemporary documents served to provide another perspective on the events occurring contemporaneously with the interviews. According to Galletta (2013), "the semi-structured interview is sufficiently structured to address specific dimensions of your research question while also leaving space for study participants to offer new meanings to the topic of study" (pp. 1–2) and well-suited to use "in concert with archival study" (p. 9). Although the two components of the study are distinct in terms of types of data collected, methods for collection, participants, and other characteristics, both datasets are part of a shared educational policy context, and I have tried to use my analysis as a bridge between them.

3.2.1 Impact of COVID on Research Design

Prior to my commencing data collection, in-person research activities were suspended by the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, my research design had to accommodate remote data collection only. In addition, given the difficult situation and stressors beyond what is normally expected in teaching, I did not anticipate much success in recruiting participants; despite this, several educators were willing to share their time and experiences with me. Finally, classroom research was complicated by the fact that my intended research sites (and all public schools in the school district) were closed and employing only virtual instruction, and research including classroom observations had been temporarily suspended. Since I was interested in seeing, documenting, and analyzing classroom-level language policy as it was constructed interactively, in seeing how students reacted to efforts to manage their language practices, and in talking with students to understand their perspectives and experiences, the foreclosure of classroom observation necessarily changed the focus of my research. It also complicated certain aspects of nexus analysis, specifically observing the interaction order in action and instances of policy action as part of the nexus of practice. Nonetheless, I worked to accommodate the changing circumstances through my research design.

3.3 Research Setting: Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School

All public schools in Maryland were closed to in-person instruction by order of the State Superintendent of Schools (Salmon, 2020), prior to the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. School districts across the state exercised their autonomy through local control in deciding when and how to reopen for in-person instruction, using the recovery plan issued by the Maryland State Department of Education, *Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education* (MSDE, 2020) for guidance, which provided several possible plans but noted that

"these suggestions are not the only options that may be considered by each LSS" (p. 7). The school district in which my focal schools were located was among the last in the state to reopen for in-person instruction in the spring semester of 2021.

The schools in my study are located in Maryland, in one of the 25 largest school districts in the nation, in which Black or African American students make up 55% of the student population, Hispanic/Latino of any race[17] 36%, White 4%, Asian 3%, Native American or Alaska Native 0.3%, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander 0.2% (as of September 2019). The school district's website contains announcements in English, Spanish, and French, a clear acknowledgement of the multilingualism among the families with children enrolled, although the district's website does not currently provide information on students' languages. In Maryland, most school districts are managed by and coterminous with the county. The county in which the schools are located is in the wealthier 50% of Maryland counties in terms of median income (according to U.S. Census data from 2014-2018) but is in the poorer 50% of counties in terms of per capita income and poverty rate (from the same time period). These discrepant statistics point to unequal distributions of wealth in the county.

Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School are "sister schools," public schools as well as part of the national Multicultural Schools System. Both are new and with small enrollments, each under 500 students. They opened their doors in 2015 with their first respective cohorts of students enrolled in ninth grade. A grade was added every subsequent year, and they had their first graduating classes in 2019. Approximately 80% of students at both schools qualify

[17] Wording is taken verbatim from the school district's website, which I do not cite to maintain anonymity. However, as Rosa (2019) and others have discussed, the racial formations (Omi & Winant, 1994) of the Latino/Latinx category are, at a minimum, complex.

for free or reduced meals. I was unable to obtain a comprehensive list of the languages spoken at the school and the numbers of speakers. However, the educators in my study reported to me that students in the schools speak varieties of Arabic, Dari, Farsi, French, Pashto, Spanish, Tagalog, and Urdu, among others, but Spanish is by far the most dominant language, with over 90% of students at each school speaking Spanish and a greater proportion at Hilltop High School than Riverbend High School.

Dr. Peterson[18] and Dr. Santos were both founding principals at their respective schools, and they were hired before the schools opened to take part in the process of designing the schools, first Dr. Peterson and then Dr. Santos. Dr. Peterson had been employed in the school district central office and participated in a task force that was responsible for examining options for designing high schools for EL-designated students that could serve their particular needs and promote their academic success. Various models were considered before the task force decided to partner with the Multicultural High Schools System, which had several schools across the country, both standalone and contained within existing high schools. Although schools in the Multicultural Schools System are typically designed for newcomer students, Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School were required to be open to all students who were classified as English learners, out of concerns from the school district's legal team that doing otherwise could constitute discrimination against American-born students (Dr. Peterson, Interview 1a, 07/22/2019). During the planning period, the school district experienced budgetary problems, and the two proposed schools obtained grant funding from the Carnegie Foundation's

[18] All participant names are pseudonyms.

Opportunity by Design initiative for mastery-based schools (see Steiner et al., 2020, for the results of the Opportunity by Design study).

The schools are unique, relative to the rest of the district, in different ways beyond their student population. Both schools are "mastery schools," in that students have the opportunity throughout the school year to demonstrate content knowledge cumulatively. For instance, if a student demonstrates knowledge of only 50% of the content taught in the first quarter but in the second quarter successfully demonstrates knowledge of the remaining 50% of content from the first quarter, their first quarter grade (and ultimately their final grade) will reflect their cumulative knowledge, not their academic performance in isolation each quarter. Faculty and many staff members at both schools are employed for twelve months, not for ten, which builds time into the school year for teachers to plan their curriculum and instruction for the coming year, teach mastery camp and summer school, and collaborate. They are also similar to other public schools in the district and state in that, although all teachers of language learners are language teachers, only ESOL teachers are required to have ESOL certification. Non-ESOL content area teachers must hold their relevant certifications or licenses but not necessarily an ESOL endorsement.

I became acquainted with Hilltop High School through my participation in a separate research study I was involved with from 2016-2018. My activities in that research study included observing classes and conducting follow-up interviews with one ninth- and tenth-grade ELA teacher (who did not participate in the present dissertation research, having since left the school) and an ESOL teacher ("Rachel," who later agreed to participate in the present study). During that span of time, I met both Linda and Dr. Santos in passing, but we did not have any substantive conversations.

I started visiting Riverbend High School because of a friendship that I formed with one of its teachers, a former student of mine from a course I taught on assessment in the second-language classroom, as part of a post-baccalaureate program in TESOL for in-service teachers. This teacher invited me to observe her U.S. History classroom, which I did over the course of the spring semester in 2019. I also became acquainted with the school's principal, Dr. Peterson, who generously gave her time to show me around the school and introduce me to many of the teachers. In the fall of 2019, I spent time volunteering in two English language arts (ELA) classes, one ninth grade and one tenth grade (the tenth grade teacher, Carrie," later agreed to participate in the present study), primarily working one-on-one or in small groups with newcomer students.

Over these years of getting to know the schools; their missions and approaches; and some of the teachers, staff and students, I became increasingly convinced that these schools were special and deserved closer attention. The context of these high schools constituted a "critical case" (Patton, 1990). According to Patton (1990), "identification of critical cases depends on recognition of the key dimensions that make for a critical case" (p. 175). The key dimensions of my research were classroom-level enactment of language policies and the effects of high-stakes testing, as the two pertained to EL-designated students. Therefore, a school dedicated to serving such students and integrating language and content instruction would be a prime setting for potential language policy activities. In addition, all public schools are required by federal law to administer an English language proficiency test to all their EL-designated students every year, and results from this test are used to determine student eligibility for English language services and to evaluate the school on the progress of its students to develop proficiency, so I expected that a school where almost the entire student body must take this test would be especially

focused on this test and the testing policies governing its administration. Finally, since all public high schools are required to test almost all their students on reading and language arts at least once and schools are judged on student performance on the test, and in Maryland student eligibility to obtain a diploma was dependent on their test performance, I imagined that schools such as Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School would be particularly attuned (and vulnerable) to these tests and their governing policies.

I sought permission to conduct my research at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School in the summer of 2020, still early days of the pandemic, and obtained permission from the school district in late 2020, which meant I could begin participant recruitment at around the turn of the year.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection for this research consisted of two main sources: (1) interviews with educator participants and (2) documents from meetings of the Maryland State Board of Education. In this section, I introduce my participants through participant profiles, and then I detail my interview-based and document-based data collection methods.

3.4.1 Participants

I began contacting potential participants in January 2021 and sought to recruit faculty and staff at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School who were associated with high-stakes testing at the schools. I enrolled the principal at each school, one ELA teacher at Riverbend High School, one ESOL teacher at Riverbend High School, one ELA teacher at Hilltop High School, and two ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School (see Table 3-1). The ELA teacher at Riverbend High School who was teaching tenth-grade ELA at the time consented to participate but withdrew before our first interview. Another ESOL teacher at Riverbend High School expressed

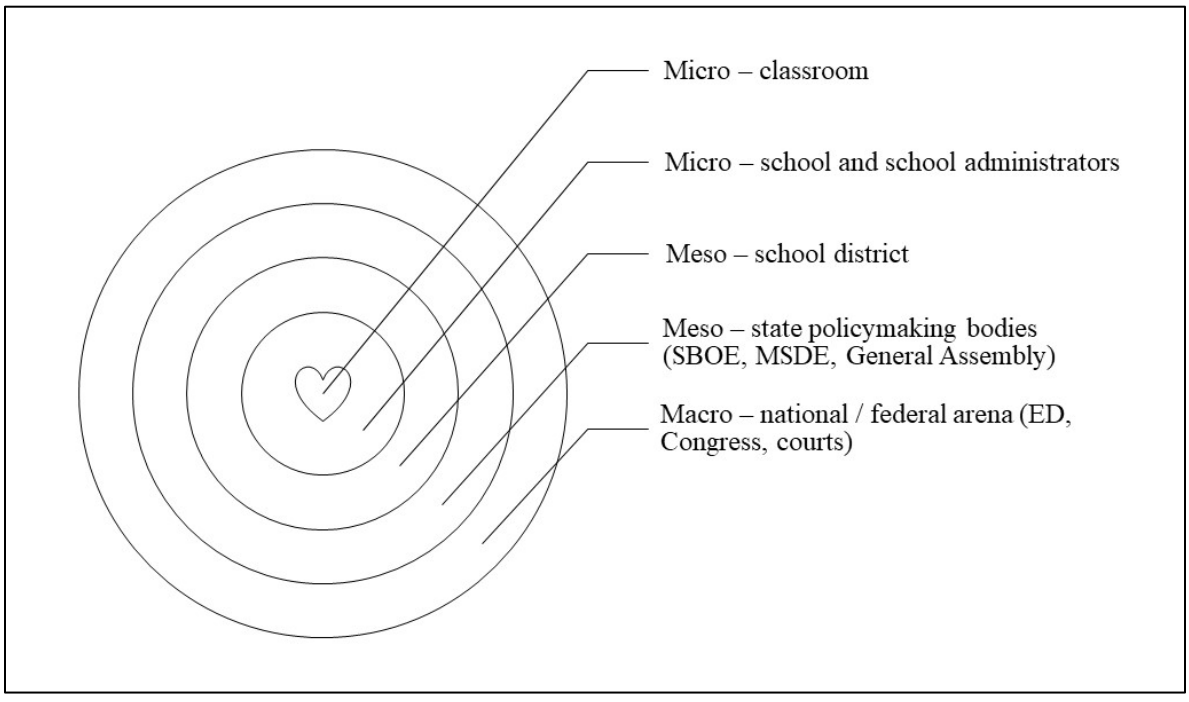
interest in participating but then declined to participate before consenting. No other teachers expressed interest in participating after multiple recruitment attempts.

Table 3-1. List of Participants

School	Role	Name	Content Area
RHS	Principal	Dr. Peterson	--
RHS	Teacher	Carrie Price	ELA (9th Grade)
RHS	Teacher	Dr. Bragg	ESOL (Intermediate & Advanced Mixed)
HHS	Principal	Dr. Santos	--
HHS	Teacher	Alice Bennett	ELA (9th & 10th Grade Mixed)
HHS	Teacher	Linda Elliott	ESOL (Language Lab, 9th Grade ESOL ELA)
HHS	Teacher	Rachel Moreland	ESOL (Language Lab, Newcomer/SLIFE, Beginner)

The participants are social actors in the nexus of practice, interpreting, implementing, and creating policies with respect to the various discourses that pass through the nexus of practice and influence their actions. The teachers were my focal participants, in that they sit in the center of the language policy onion and have extensive direct interaction with students, mediating the

Figure 3-1. Language Policy Onion



students' experiences with testing and managing their language use. The principals are at only a slight remove, having direct contact with students (though not typically in a teaching capacity) and with the teachers. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 3-1, which shows the language policy onion introduced in Chapter 2. As I discussed in Chapter 2, I use the language policy onion to visualize the arenas in which policymaking and other policy processes occur, although the micro-meso-macro distinction depends on one's point of view. My focus is on policy appropriation in the classroom, and so I maintain it as the center of the arenas.

Below are profiles of my participants. All participants' names are pseudonyms, and I have anonymized some details of their lives, although I have tried to use their own words where possible. I have provided first names for only some of my participants; this indicates that when I interviewed them, we were on a first-name basis. With the other participants, I exclusively used their titles and last names.

3.4.1.1 Carrie Price. Carrie is a White, native-English-speaking American woman who, at the time of data collection, was in her third year teaching at Riverbend High School and taught ninth-grade English language arts. Prior to coming to the school, she had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Southeast Asia, where she taught English to schoolchildren in the village where she lived. Before that, she attended a community college for three years and then transferred into a five-year combined bachelor's and master's teacher preparation program in English.

During her preparation program, she completed the required internship for preservice teachers at a nearby high school and became extremely involved at the school (including coaching a varsity sport), to the point she almost burned out before officially entering the profession. Her time in the Peace Corps, however, caused her to "fall back in love" with

teaching, leading her to seek out teaching positions when her service period was ending, and she found a position at Riverbend High School.

When Carrie started at Riverbend High School, she started with a ninth-grade ELA class, and looped with them through tenth grade in her second year. At Riverbend High School in the ELA department, the teacher stays with the same cohort of students beginning in ninth grade and continuing through tenth grade, but they are not a mixed-grades group being taught mixed grades curricula. Rather, the teacher teaches ninth graders the ninth grade curriculum their first year and then continues with the same group the next year and teaches them the tenth grade curriculum, preparing them for the tenth-grade ELA test. However, the test was canceled in Carrie's second year of teaching because of the pandemic, when she was due to be the teacher responsible for the testing tenth graders, and so she had not had direct experience with the test as of the time of my data collection. After tenth grade, students no longer loop with the "lower house" ELA teachers, but proceed to the "upper house" for eleventh and twelfth grade.

Carrie's teacher preparation and prior experience prepared her well for her position, although she recognized that she still has many opportunities for development, which she has sought out from the multicultural schools system, from the public school district, and from the state, in addition to trainings available through Riverbend High School. Her educator preparation program was focused on English language arts instructions, not ESOL instruction, but she recalled that one course during her program focused on teaching EL-designated students and students in special education services. As a Peace Corps volunteer, she received twelve weeks of training before beginning service in her destination country and a field-based learning practicum

experience for teaching English as a foreign[19] language (TEFL). She saw her time in the Peace Corps as the best possible training for her work at Riverbend High School because of the immediate, hands-on nature of teaching students English as a new language.

In addition to attending trainings on teaching EL-designated students where available (through the school district or through Multicultural Schools System), she also conducted workshops on integrating language and content instruction, although she told me she did not consider herself an expert. She availed herself of resources from the school, such as "CLV," which stands for content, language, and vocabulary and refers to Riverbend High School's particular approach to integrating content and language; or the "language functions booklet" produced by teachers at other multicultural schools within the local multi-state region to help her structure lesson plans to teach academic language through academic content. Carrie would then take what she learned, integrate it into her own materials, and then work to apply the same knowledge and skills more broadly, helping revise and update the county curriculum.

Carrie described herself as a very reflective person and teacher, and I found that to be evident in our conversations. She talked about the process of teacher evaluation and how, especially during virtual instruction, she felt that it was not sufficiently focused on teacher development and did not offer opportunities for guided learning. Rather, it seemed only perfunctory, more intended to check a box than genuinely improve teaching. She was clearly dissatisfied with the process, despite receiving high marks on her evaluations and being regarded by students and colleagues as an effective teacher. She recounted a time during her first year of

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[19] English as a foreign language is often contrasted with English as a second language, in which EFL takes place in non-English dominant countries and ESL occurs in English-dominant countries. Both are intended to teach English as an additional language; the major difference is context.

teaching that an administrator helped her learn new reading strategies and implement them in her classroom, and she pointed to this example as a desirable process for and outcome of informal evaluation that truly focused on development, in the service of ultimately better educational experiences for the students.

3.4.1.2 Alice Bennett. Alice teaches ELA at Hilltop High School, in a looped ninth and tenth grade course—at Hilltop High School, looping refers to blending ninth and tenth graders in a single course and keeping them in that same group for both grades and drawing on the ninth and tenth grade curricula across both years so that by the end of their second year, they have completed all the elements of both years' curricula. Alice grew up in the area near Hilltop High School and said she felt a sense of kinship to the school and student body, herself being the child of immigrants. One of her parents is Latinx and one is North African, and she identifies as Latina or multi-ethnic, although she is aware that others may perceive her as White because she is light-skinned, which she feels erases her heritage. She explicitly noted that her pronouns are she/her.

At the time of data collection, she had been teaching at Hilltop High School for three years, where she started teaching after completing an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction with TESOL specialization. Her undergraduate degree was in English Arts and Humanities with a minor in Second Language Acquisition, but her path to teaching was not straightforward. She was a linguist in the Air Force after college, and after leaving the Air Force, she and her husband lived in Asia for several years, where she unofficially taught English to adults, mostly in one-on-one sessions. She enjoyed teaching English and always loved languages, so she decided to pursue those interests professionally and applied to the M.Ed. program. During the program, one of her classes visited Hilltop High School, and she immediately "clicked" with the school.

Like Carrie (and so many other early-career teachers these past two years), Alice did not have a typical development trajectory, since her second year of teaching was cut short by the pandemic and her third year was virtual and hybrid. She was aware of her areas of opportunity for development, but nevertheless had significant language learning and ESOL teaching experience to draw on and a strong knowledge base in SLA and TESOL and was confident in herself and her teaching abilities. Alice also worked with the ESOL team to do intake interviews with incoming students, to assess basic literacy (in any language, theoretically, but practically in the languages they have the ability to assess), numeracy, and speaking proficiency in English.

When I first emailed Alice with my recruitment script, she replied that she thought she was not the kind of participant I was looking for, because I was interested in standardized testing and she was a critic of standardized testing. We talked over email, and I clarified that I was interested in learning about teachers' perceptions of and experiences with testing, not in advocating for testing. After that, she was happy to participate. In our interviews, I asked where she thought her critical perspective on testing came from. She was unsure, saying that she had always been a good student and a good test-taker but had never given much thought to standardized tests and never really thought that they were actually testing her knowledge of anything.

3.4.1.3 Dr. Bragg. Dr. Bragg is an African American/Black man and ESOL teacher at Riverbend High School. At the time of my data collection, he was in his first year of teaching ESOL, although he had been at Riverbend High School since 2015 and had a long teaching career before taking a position at Riverbend High School. He was teaching mixed-grades Intermediate and Advanced ESOL during my data collection and was slated to teach only

Intermediate ESOL the following year (because the school was discontinuing Advanced in favor of expanding lower-proficiency-level offerings).

Prior to teaching at Riverbend High School, he had taught at another high school in the same school district as Riverbend High School for several years and had taught high school in Baltimore City before that. Over the course of his career, he has taught (at least) ESOL, U.S. History, Government, AP Economics, and AP Psychology. He is a National Board Certified Teacher. He also owns and runs a non-profit organization that serves youth in juvenile detention, so on Saturday mornings he teaches chess while a colleague teaches coding.

After high school, he joined the military and "was a cop in the Air Force" and later worked in ministry for five years. He began his undergraduate degree in his late twenties and obtained a B.A. in History. After finishing his degree, he moved from New York City to Maryland, unsure of what to do with a degree in history and began teaching local youth on Saturday mornings and realized he had an aptitude for teaching. He began teaching in Baltimore City on a conditional certification and completed an MAT program at a research university in the area while he was teaching and obtained full certification. He described how his master's degree program was practical, focused on instruction, and he wanted more of a sociological perspective on education, so he began doctoral studies at another university in the area, completing a Ph.D. focused on language, literacy, and culture.

He had been teaching in the school district for several years when he learned about the upcoming plans for Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School and attended an informational session that piqued his interest. He told me that by that time, he was ready for a new challenge, having already recognized that teaching EL-designated students "was an area of weakness" for him and seeing the multicultural schools as an opportunity to grow and improve.

He was also intrigued by the school's twelve-month model and started at Riverbend High School, teaching social studies. After a year, he took the Praxis exam for ESOL and became ESOL certified.

Dr. Bragg is acutely aware of his status as a "minority of minorities," being a Black male teacher, especially holding a doctoral degree. He referred at times to his own upbringing as having been difficult, and he seemed to practice a tough love approach to education, with empathy but perhaps little patience for students whose backgrounds have been similarly troubled. He told me that he began teaching ESOL at the request of the principal, since one full-time ESOL teacher left and he was ESOL-certified and so readily able to step into the position. He was assigned to teach the intermediate and advanced levels, he joked, because the other full-time ESOL teacher is kinder and more willing to accept incremental or slow growth from the students at lower levels of proficiency.

Dr. Bragg did not immediately consent or refuse to participate in my research; rather, he called me (at my contact number listed in the recruitment email) and asked about my research, including research questions and theoretical framework, my perspectives, my reasoning behind contacting him, and more topics. We talked for about thirty minutes, and he asked me to create an argument to persuade him to participate and call him back when I was ready. I called him back about a week later and described my research aims in greater detail, and he consented to participate.

Dr. Bragg highly values bilingualism, having studied and become fluent in French, himself, and having enrolled both his children in French immersion programs when they started school. He also sensed that his French proficiency has decreased from its peak and expressed regret about this perceived loss.

3.4.1.4 Linda Elliott. Linda is a White, American woman and a native English speaker, and she teaches ESOL at Hilltop High School. During the time of my data collection, she was teaching three sections of ESOL Language Lab, a heterogeneous class (in terms of English proficiency levels, according to WIDA ACCESS scores) in which students practiced "using the different domains" of reading, writing, speaking, and listening—that is, they received additional ESOL instruction. She was also teaching two sections of a course she described as an ESOL version of ninth-grade English language arts: one section for newcomer students and one for "very low" beginner-level students but who are not newcomers.

She has substantial and varied teaching experience. Linda began by teaching elementary school in the 1990s and taught for several years before taking some time off and letting her license lapse. She had EL-classified students in her elementary classes and enjoyed working with them. After deciding to renew her license, she did a TESOL certificate program and got certified to teach ESOL. She did not return to elementary teaching but instead taught at the secondary level when a high school in a nearby school district needed an ESOL teacher. She taught at that high school for seven or eight years, co-teaching different science classes. When Hilltop High School was in the process of opening and hiring, she learned about and became interested in the model and so applied at the school. Given her experience with secondary science and ESOL, she was hired on as the founding science teacher, not ESOL teacher, on the condition that she become fully certified to teach science; she studied for and took the Praxis for biology and passed, and taught biology for one year before moving to the ESOL department. At the time of my data collection, she had been teaching for sixteen or seventeen years all together.

Despite her extensive teaching experience, Linda had not planned to be a teacher. She grew up in a family where teaching was essentially "the family business," and she wanted to go

in a different direction. She majored in communications in college, then went on to journalism school, but she ultimately went to a career counselor who found she had strong aptitude for teaching. At that point, she went back to school and got certified to teach elementary school and completed a master's degree.

Not only teaching but simply existing during the pandemic was stressful for Linda, who disclosed to me that she was immunocompromised. While COVID-19 was a real threat to anyone, it clearly posed a much more serious threat to Linda, which she certainly felt, especially as Governor Hogan pressed for teachers to return to school buildings for in-person instruction in the fall of 2021. She worked hard to adapt to virtual instruction and felt proud of what she had learned to do and use to make teaching online as effective as possible for her students. She and her colleague Rachel (also a participant in this study) collaborated in teaching ESOL Language Lab, working together to plan and create or adapt materials, and then on instruction, once school buildings opened for hybrid attendance. Rachel returned to the classroom for in-person instruction, helping Linda's students who returned to use technology to join Linda for virtual instruction, or Rachel taught those students in-person while Linda taught other students online. Linda talked about how she and Rachel had "complete trust" in one another, and how lucky she was to have Rachel as a colleague. It was clear from interacting with both of them how much they valued working with each other and how much they respected one another.

I noticed that Linda always seemed willing to learn new things from her colleague, Rachel, or their interns (pre-service teachers in a master's program at a research university), never apparently put off by differences in status or age. At times during interviews she would seem a bit flustered by my questions, especially if they were direct about her practice, and she would work through her thoughts out loud. She seemed intrigued by and reflective about the

questions, rather than defensive when she seemed to feel unprepared with an answer or that her answer might be unsatisfactory. In all our interactions, I felt her to be genuine and sincere in her desire to help students to the best of her ability, and earnest and willing to help me in my research.

3.4.1.5 Rachel Moreland. Rachel identifies a White woman from the United States, is the Chair of the ESOL Department at Hilltop High School, and was in her fifth year teaching at the time of my data collection. She studied International Studies and Japanese in college, and then was an English teacher in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program (JET Program USA, n.d.) for three years after graduating from college.

Teaching was not originally a goal for Rachel; rather, the JET program was a good way to go back to Japan, which she had first visited in high school and wanted to return to. She had no teaching experience before starting and expressed a wish that she had known then what she has since learned about teaching English. Her experiences in Japan led her to study TESOL in an M.Ed. program at a research university. During her time in the master's program, she became acquainted with a teacher at Hilltop High School, who invited students in the program to visit Hilltop High School. Rachel was immediately interested in the school and applied for a job upon graduating. She "got in and the rest [was] history."

During my data collection, Rachel was teaching several ESOL classes at Hilltop High School: ESOL for newcomers (students classified as ELs who are newly arrived in the U.S.) and SLIFE (students with limited or interrupted formal education), ESOL beginner (for students who are not newcomers but test at lower proficiency scores and benefit from additional language interventions), and ESOL Language Lab, which had ninth- and tenth-grade students at a variety of proficiency levels (according to proficiency test results) and "need the extra push to exit

ESOL." In addition to being Department Chair, Rachel also worked closely with the other full-time member of the ESOL department, Linda. Both teachers talked about how much they valued and depended on the other. The ESOL department works with other departments at the school, alternating between ELA and Science each year to provide more tailored, specific, and direct supports to the content teachers. Although all teachers in the school are teachers of EL-classified students, not all have ESOL certification, and the ESOL department not only teaches ESOL content to students but serves as a resource for other content area teachers to serve the language needs of their students.

Rachel talked about feeling like she had been approaching burn-out prior to the pandemic. She was stretched too thin at Hilltop High School, which is under-resourced in a variety of ways, such as not having enough ESOL staff for demonstrated needs, having subpar facilities, and so on. While the pandemic was stressful for Rachel, for Hilltop High School, and for educators generally, she said it also served as "kind of this wake-up call," which "forced [them] all to stop," reevaluate what they were doing, and respond to current needs within their current capacity. Virtual and hybrid instruction were difficult for teachers and students alike, but she was extremely proud of the virtual instruction she was able to offer and planned to continue using some of the tools she learned how to use over the past year. She said that she no longer felt so close to burning out and planned to stay at the school at least through one more cohort of students, beginning with her advisory group that started with her in their ninth grade in fall 2021 and will stay with her until twelfth grade.

I first became acquainted with Rachel when she was still in her M.Ed. program and she participated in another research project I was involved with. She always welcomed me into her classroom and always seemed comfortable with having her practice observed, questioned, and

reflected on. I have seen her grow in confidence as a teacher, and in our interviews for my dissertation, she spoke with self-assurance, knowledge, and expertise.

3.4.1.6 Dr. Peterson. Dr. Peterson was the founding principal of Riverbend High School; she is a White Jewish American woman and a native English speaker. She had a long history with education in the local area (a total of almost two decades working in the school district). After college, she joined the Peace Corps and taught English to high school students in East Africa. When she returned to the U.S., she began a master's program in ESOL and bilingual education at a university in Washington, D.C., and she began teaching high school ESOL in the school district where Riverbend High School is located. After completing her master's degree, she left the county for several years and worked at different community colleges in various capacities. She "got into working with teacher education and kept telling everyone to go into ESOL." She worked with refugees and other adults learning English as an additional language, later becoming ESOL supervisor at the school district central office, where she remained for several years. She was presented with "an opportunity where [they] could really talk about policy, and looked at where there were some hiccups with high school graduation and the ELL population not graduating," which was followed by joining a task force that examined options for high schools that would "work differently" for EL-designated students and promote their academic success. Through that task force, she learned about the Multicultural Schools System (among other models) and was part of the team that developed a grant to open Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School. While working on this project, she realized that she was called to these schools, so she withdrew from the task force and applied for the position of principal, "and here we are five years later." During this period of time, she also began an Ed.D. program at

a research university in the area, which she completed shortly after Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School opened.

During interviews, Dr. Peterson emphasized that Riverbend High School was a "school of choice," an alternative to the students' boundary school—a choice when EL-classified students so often do not have choices when it comes to their educations. She seemed frustrated at times with being forced to conform to the same policies as other high schools, since Riverbend High School is unique and operates within special circumstances. However, she also recognized some of the flexibility extended to the school by the state and district, such as allowing ESOL courses to count for ELA courses (with the exception of tenth-grade ELA) or building the provision of summer mastery camps into the design of the school.

As the principal of a small school, she intimately knew the details of the school's workings, including which students did not graduate and why. She was familiar with every nook and cranny of her school (literally and figuratively) and knew every student we encountered in the hallways by face and name. She was deeply concerned with the issue of high school graduation for EL-designated students; it was the topic of her dissertation, and it appeared to be the metric she cared most about. She had high expectations for the students at Riverbend High School, noting that they were able to take "regular classes," the same as any average student in the district would take but acknowledged that they need additional supports to access the content and be successful in those classes, such as the teacher offering scaffolds, employing mastery-based grading across the academic year, and offering mastery camp in the summer.

3.4.1.7 Dr. Santos. Dr. Santos is a Latinx/Afro-Latino man and was the founding principal of Hilltop High School. He grew up in New York City and was classified as an English learner in school, his first language being Spanish. He won a competitive scholarship to attend a

prestigious college in New England, which he said was “like night and day” compared to where he grew up. During college, he studied abroad in Spain and had an impactful experience abroad, like many of the educators in my study. He realized during college that he wanted to pursue education professionally, but his undergraduate institution did not have a teacher certification program, so he volunteered at a local high school and pursued an alternate certification route.

He has substantial and varied experience in the field of education. After graduating from college, he became a founding teacher at a high school for EL-classified students, while continuing to take classes at a city university, earning a master’s in Spanish language teacher education. He stayed at the high school for an entire cohort to enter and graduate. Dr. Santos realized that he wanted to stay in education but not as a teacher, and so he enrolled at a research university and completed a second master’s degree, this time in educational leadership. He spent time working in college counseling at a public high school and as an assistant principal in a charter school. He learned of the plans for opening Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School in Maryland, applied for the position of principal at Hilltop High School, was hired, and moved to Maryland. He had already been familiar with the Multicultural Schools System because one of the schools he worked at shared a building with several other schools, including a Multicultural School. After his first year at Hilltop High School, he enrolled in a doctoral studies program at a research university in the area and recently completed his Ed.D.

Dr. Santos was willing to participate in my research and responded quickly to my initial recruiting email. He made time for my interviews, despite being extremely busy and responsible for the many different tasks that fall to principals. He emphasized community building within and outside the school. During “normal” times, pre-pandemic, he would hold weekly in-person circles, “where all of the staff members will circle up, literally, right outside of the cafeteria, and

[they] would do these announcements together just to build community and togetherness," which became Zoom meetings when remote instruction began. In addition, he communicated with the school via daily announcements. He described to me how Hilltop High School is a community school, offering "wraparound," direct services to families and acting as a resource hub for other needs, including food assistance, health and legal services, government assistance, and youth mentoring. When the surrounding area was especially hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Santos found a way to use previously allocated school funds for increased food assistance, offering grocery pick-ups for families.

3.4.2 Interviews

Interviews were the primary method for collecting data from my participants. I used semi-structured interviews, following Galletta's (2013) approach, which is consistent with the interpretive tradition to which nexus analysis belongs, being a branch within sociocultural theory (Scollon, 2001; Scollon & Scollon, 2004, pp. 180–181). According to Galletta (2013), "a key benefit of the semi-structured interview is its attention to lived experience while also addressing theoretically driven variables of interest," (p. 24).

All interviews were conducted over Zoom because of restrictions on in-person research imposed by the IRB at the University of Maryland during this point of the pandemic. For all participants who consented to video recording and who connected with cameras turned on, interviews were both video- and audio-recorded. All interviews were audio-recorded. I kept my camera on at all times for all interviews.

I interviewed Dr. Peterson twice during spring 2021 and retroactively included an interview with her from 2019, Dr. Santos three times, and all five teachers four times over the 2021 spring semester (an abbreviated data collection plan compared to previous plans due to

complications from the pandemic; see "Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research," Section 7.4). Table 3-2 shows the full list of interviews with the educators and the amount and type of data were recorded for each.

Table 3-2. List of Interviews

Participant	School	Date	Data Event	Duration	Audio/Video
Dr. Peterson	RHS	7/22/2019	Interview 1a[20]	00:19:43	Audio
Dr. Peterson	RHS	1/22/2021	Interview 1	00:29:41	Both
Dr. Peterson	RHS	6/14/2021	Interview 3	00:44:34	Audio
Carrie	RHS	1/25/2021	Interview 1	00:44:48	Both
Carrie	RHS	3/3/2021	Interview 2	00:54:22	Both
Carrie	RHS	3/26/2021	Interview 3	00:52:43	Audio
Carrie	RHS	6/16/2021	Interview 4	01:01:01	Both
Dr. Bragg	RHS	3/18/2021	Interview 1	00:58:30	Audio
Dr. Bragg	RHS	3/25/2021	Interview 2	00:51:46	Audio
Dr. Bragg	RHS	4/27/2021	Interview 3	01:03:07	Audio
Dr. Bragg	RHS	6/22/2021	Interview 4	01:22:36	Audio
Dr. Santos	HHS	1/15/2021	Interview 1	00:30:46	Both
Dr. Santos	HHS	2/26/2021	Interview 2	00:28:49	Both
Dr. Santos	HHS	6/14/2021	Interview 3	00:31:42	Both
Rachel	HHS	1/27/2021	Interview 1	00:48:38	Both
Rachel	HHS	3/3/2021	Interview 2	00:48:33	Both
Rachel	HHS	4/14/2021	Interview 3	01:08:54	Both
Rachel	HHS	6/10/2021	Interview 4	01:02:01	Both
Alice	HHS	2/2/2021	Interview 1	00:34:09	Both
Alice	HHS	3/10/2021	Interview 2	00:49:12	Both
Alice	HHS	4/9/2021	Interview 3	00:51:36	Both
Alice	HHS	6/16/2021	Interview 4	00:36:12	Both

[20] To try to maintain ease of comparability across participants' interviews, the data event labels for Dr. Peterson may not be intuitively clear. I called the first interview I ever conducted with her "Interview 1a" so I could retain "Interview 1" for the event that corresponded to Dr. Santos's "Interview 1," both of which were planned as part of the same research design, which is not true of Interview 1a. In addition, I was never successfully able to schedule a mid-semester interview with Dr. Peterson, but because our final interview closely corresponded to Dr. Santos's "Interview 3," I labeled the data event for Dr. Peterson "Interview 3" as well. There was no Interview 2 with Dr. Peterson.

Participant	School	Date	Data Event	Duration	Audio/Video
Linda	HHS	2/3/2021	Interview 1	00:51:49	Both
Linda	HHS	3/10/2021	Interview 2	00:58:28	Both
Linda	HHS	4/28/2021	Interview 3	01:02:40	Both
Linda	HHS	6/9/2021	Interview 4	01:03:27	Both

I set up my interview protocols so that each interview series (the total number varied for different participants) opened with background questions to give participants space to tell their stories about how they came to be doing what they were doing, contained more theoretically driven questions in the middle, and concluded with questions intended to prompt participants to reflect on their past experiences and hypothesize about the short-term future. Of course, all interviews contained some degree of each of these elements, and given the major changes in education policy that took place over the semester, some interviews focused heavily on participants' reactions to the present situation, including increased availability of vaccines, return to in-person instruction, and test cancellations.

Annotated interview protocols are in Appendix D. The interview protocols contain the main questions I intended to ask in each interview with each participant, with some variation across participants. I ended up asking questions not on the protocols because some unanticipated topics arose, prompting new questions, and some questions were omitted when participants addressed the questions or topics without me having to ask.

Personal background questions inquired into educators' educational histories; teaching preparation and experience, especially with language learners; experiences as a language learner; and experiences with testing, primarily as a teacher but also a test-taker. Theoretically driven questions focused on aspects of my theoretical framework, namely Spolsky's (2004) definition of language policy as comprising language ideologies, language management, and language practices. Questions about language ideologies touched on beliefs about language, language

learning, and language teaching. Language management could refer to explicit rules in the classroom or practices that embodied implicit rules, norms, or expectations (practiced policies, according to Bonacina-Pugh, 2012). For language practices, I asked about how the teachers themselves used language(s) to a relatively minor extent, but I conceptualized their actions as generally constituting language management, so I asked more about and focused more heavily on their descriptions of what *students* did in the classroom, in terms of language use. I also asked about the means and vectors of information dissemination to understand how policies are received and passed, from whom and to whom, to learn about discourse trajectories as well as policy interpretation and implementation.

3.4.3 Documents

While interviews were the primary source for collecting data from my participants, I also collected documents that provided background information and/or were part of my data analysis. Some documents were provided by my participants, and some were publicly available online. Documents related to meetings of the State Board of Education are covered in Section 3.4.4 and not included here.

Table 3-3. School-Related Documents

Document	Source	Related to Which School
School Handbook (for SY 2019-2020)	Dr. Peterson	RHS (directly and HHS indirectly due to similar but not identical policies)
Common Concepts	Dr. Peterson	RHS and HHS
Skills Progressions and Grading Skills	Dr. Peterson	RHS and HHS
Language Skills Rubric (in revision process)	Linda	HHS
RHS Report Card (2019)	Reportcard.msde.maryland.gov	RHS
HHS Report Card (2019)	Reportcard.msde.maryland.gov	HHS

I also obtained documents that were publicly available from the federal Department of Education (ED), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Code of Maryland online (COMAR), the Maryland General Assembly, and WIDA. A representative but not exhaustive list of documents and their sources included:

- ED: letters from the Secretary of Education (or designee) to State Education Agencies;
- MSDE: the Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan; Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, & Accommodations Policy Manual; Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards and affiliated frameworks; *A Guide to School for Families of English Learners*; *Final Report* from the Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools;
- COMAR: regulations regarding graduation requirements and standardized testing (13A.03.02.06);
- General Assembly: the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*;
- WIDA: *English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition*; *Interpretive Guide for Score Reports*

3.4.4 Meetings of the State Board of Education

Archival documents from the State Board of Education are available to view and download from MSDE's website, going back to January 2002. From 2002 to 2014, only minutes are available, not public comments, reports, or other materials that were provided during the meetings. From 2015 onward, most meeting materials are available. I downloaded all materials that were available from January 2002 to June 2021 and organized them into folders by date. I then scanned and skimmed the minutes, looking for references to anything of interest, namely

graduation requirements, standardized testing, and EL-designated students. To cast a wide net for meetings with potentially relevant discussions and decisions, I also searched the minutes using the Ctrl+F word-search function for the following terms: graduation; test; testing; assessment; HSA; PARCC; partnership; MCAP; English; language; “common core”; “college and career”; NCLB; “no child left behind”; ESSA; “every student succeeds”; bridge; “academic validation”; Kirwan; blueprint; and the names of Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School. For each meeting that had an occurrence of any of the terms of interest, I noted the date and terms in a spreadsheet, yielding 168 total meetings to examine more closely. The list of meetings and topics is in Appendix F.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data collection ran from January to June 2021. During that period, data processing and preliminary analysis were ongoing. I used otter.ai, an automated transcription service, to create a rough transcript, and then transcribed each interview in full. After each interview, I wrote free-form memos about anything that stood out in the moment and how I felt about the interview. I also noted on the interview protocol which questions were not addressed and should be followed up on in a subsequent interview. Before each interview, I reviewed the previous interview’s transcript, annotated protocol, and memo(s).

3.5.1 Analysis of Discourse Within Nexus Analysis

As I discussed in Chapter 2, nexus analysis takes the view that discourse is social action and may take many forms, including but not limited to spoken, signed, or written words. For the purposes of analysis, there are six forms which discourse may take: (1) “speech of the participants in mediated actions”; (2) “texts used as mediational means”; (3) “images and other semiotic systems used as mediational means”; (4) discourses “submerged in the historical body

of the participants and in the practices in which they engage"; (5) discourses "submerged in the design of the built environment and objects"; and (6) "speech or writing or images of the analysts in conducting the nexus analysis" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 173). Scollon and Scollon (2004) instructed the researcher to ask the question "*How are social power interests produced in this discourse?*" (p. 173, italics in original) of each of the six forms of discourse. Discourse data ought to be situated in their present production with respect to the historical conditions and processes that contributed to their occurrence and to the continued conditions and processes that extend forward in time due in part to the contributions of the production of the text in question. That is, a given example of discourse is part of a larger discourse cycle that can be viewed across multiple timescales, looking backwards and forwards along its trajectory.

The theory of discourse underlying nexus analysis is mediated discourse theory (Norris & Jones, 2005c, p. xii). Mediated discourse analysis (MDA) "provides a way of understanding how all of the objects and all of the language and all of the actions taken with these various mediational means intersect at a *nexus* of multiple social practices and the trajectories of multiple histories and storylines that reproduce social identities and social groups" (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 4).

Documents I collected about the schools and school district and from SBOE meetings fell under the category of "texts used as mediational means" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 173). The realities of conducting research during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that I was unable to observe classroom instruction and interactions, specifically social actions that constituted language policies (or policy actions). Rather, interviews with my participants were primarily designed to prompt them to reflect on what they *had done* or *would do* in class, given certain conditions, and to evoke the discourses "submerged in the historical body of the

participants and in the practices in which they engage" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 173). While it was not feasible to document and analyze all the various forms that discourse can take in the nexus of practice under investigation, I approached analysis of my collected data with the theoretical tenets of MDA in mind.

Also informing my data analysis was the cautionary note sounded by Talmy (2010) regarding taking the "commonsensical conceptualization of the interview as an *interview as research instrument* perspective," versus the "*research interviews as social practice*" orientation (p. 129, italics in original). Talmy (2010) wrote, "In conventional approaches, analysis of interview data often takes form in content or thematic analysis, 'systematically grouping and summarizing the descriptions' of experience produced by respondents by common themes or content categories, such that their 'interpretive activity is subordinated to the substance of what they report'" (p. 132, citing Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 78). As I describe in the following sections, my approach to coding did, in fact, rely heavily on content and thematic analysis. However, through memoing during data collection and analysis, I sought to practice reflexivity to address the "methodological and ethical snags" that I encountered during the research process (Galletta, 2013, p. 76). I was especially challenged during interviews with and while analyzing data from Dr. Bragg, with whom I frequently disagreed and felt that I was put on the back foot. I noted in my memos and earlier drafts of my participant profiles that I often felt more successful in my interviews with my White participants than with my participants of Color. I had easier rapport with the White educators on the whole; while I think part of this was due to the fact I had previously been acquainted with three of them, I must still pay attention to the role that race plays in my positionality and that of my participants, and in the nature of our interactions. This and other considerations were present in my mind during analysis and writing, and I constantly

strove to question my initial (and second, third, fourth) interpretations of participants' words and presentations of self.

3.5.2 First-Cycle Coding

Data analysis began in earnest in fall 2021. I uploaded all transcripts and ancillary documents to NVivo. For the interviews, I read them participant by participant in sequence (Interview 1 through 3 or 4, depending on total number) and coded them in NVivo as I read, using a combination of inductive and deductive codes. Deductive codes were derived from my theoretical framework and phenomena of interest, and included codes such as <language ideologies>[21], <language management>, <language practices>, <historical body>, <interaction order>, <discourses in place>, <MCAP>, and <WIDA ACCESS>. Appendix G contains the initial and final versions of my full list of codes.

To create inductive codes, I employed descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2016) to identify the "topic of a passage of qualitative data" (p. 102). I created new codes as needed, some as parent codes and some as child codes as seemed appropriate at the time. Codes were not always conceptually distinct. For instance, I created both <academic language> and <BICS CALP> as separate codes because different participants used them, and some participants used them both at different times. I waited until after concluding first-cycle coding to condense and combine codes. I applied codes to relevant passages of interviews, regardless of length—coded text might have been only a single word or run to several paragraphs. As I coded, I wrote descriptive and analytical memos about the participants (which I turned into participant profiles), about the codes

[21] I used triangle brackets in my own writing to indicate the name of a code, to set it off from other kinds of text and formatting, such as "direct quotes," emphasis, ACRONYM, or *conceptual term*. I maintain that system here for clarity.

I was using, about the tone and topic of the interviews, and about how I saw my developing analysis relate to my research questions. After I had read and coded all the participant interviews once, I had a substantial list of codes. Some (deductive) codes had not been used at all; many had been used extensively (for a complete list see Appendix G). In my codebook, I created both parent and child codes. For an example of the relationships between codes, the following bulleted list shows one code, its child codes, and some of their child codes:

- <language policy>
    - <de facto language policy>
    - <language ideologies>
        - <monoglossic ideology>
        - <standard language ideology>
    - <language management>
        - <classroom language policies>
    - <language practices>

During fall 2021, I also read and coded minutes and other documents from the meetings of the State Board of Education. As described in Section 3.4.4, I created a subset of meetings to examine more closely by searching meeting minutes with the Ctrl+F word-search function for the terms graduation; test; testing; assessment; HSA; PARCC; partnership; MCAP; English; language; “common core”; “college and career”; NCLB; “no child left behind”; ESSA; “every student succeeds”; bridge; “academic validation”; Kirwan; blueprint; and the names of Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School. (The list of meetings and topics is in Appendix F.) For each of the 168 meetings I had tagged, I read the minutes thoroughly and any associated documents as needed and summarized the information in a single document, which I saved to

NVivo as a memo. I employed descriptive coding for minutes and relevant other materials, creating new codes as needed (for instance, I created the code <EL> which had not previously been necessary, since all the interviews were about EL-designated students, but it served to highlight how often—or seldom—the SBOE discussed them specifically). While reading meeting minutes and creating new codes, I returned to interviews to code or re-code passages when inspired by the meeting minutes. First-cycle coding consisted of multiple coding iterations, as I moved back and forth between minutes and interviews and within interviews; only the first round of coding interviews proceeded in a standalone, linear fashion.

To help me process the immense amount of material contained within the SBOE meeting materials and relevant associated documents such as the Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan and the historical revisions to the COMAR regulations regarding assessment and graduation requirements, I wrote memos framed as "mini-RQs," which asked questions about the materials:

1. What are the history and development of the **English 10 exit exam** and its status as a graduation requirement?
2. What are the history and development of the policies for the **Bridge Project / AVP**?
3. What are the parts of the **MD ESSA plan** that specifically relate to Riverbend High School, Hilltop High School, their faculty / staff, and their students?
4. How were **ELs and their educational experiences** presented and discussed in meetings of the SBOE, when brought up in relation to other topics under discussion (e.g., graduation rates), or specifically as the topic of discussion?
5. How was **testing policy for the WIDA ACCESS test** presented and discussed in meetings of the SBOE?

6. Are there any policies at the state level that could reasonably be interpreted as **educational language policies**?
7. How does it appear that MSDE and/or SBOE anticipate the **Blueprint** will change education for EL-designated students?
8. How were testing policies and changes to testing policies presented and discussed in meetings of the SBOE during the time of and in light of the **COVID-19 pandemic**?

I completed first-cycle coding of all relevant materials (interviews, minutes, and reports or presentations to the SBOE from meetings) and answering my mini-RQs in January 2022. The full codebook I generated within NVivo as of January 10, 2022 is in Appendix G.

3.5.3 Second-Cycle Coding

As I moved from first-cycle to second-cycle coding, I employed code-mapping to begin consolidating codes. I wrote each code on an index card (parent and child codes separately), creating "code cards," and I physically laid them out to visualize how they related to one another, continually reorganizing them as I considered and reconsidered what they consisted of and how they interacted and intersected. During this ongoing process, I consolidated my codebook through pattern coding, which Saldaña (2016) described as "appropriate for: condensing large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units; development of major themes from the data; [and] the search for rules, causes, and explanation in the data" (p. 236) among other analytic purposes.

I used NVivo to generate code reports[22] for every code, which I read thoroughly, giving me a different perspective on my data compared to reading interviews and minutes in their

[22] Code reports contain all pieces of data coded to each "node" in NVivo.

entirety. I summarized the code reports in my codebook as I read through them, rearranged my code cards to test out hypothesized relationships between and among the codes, and considered possible thematic groupings of the codes. I also used visualization functions available in NVivo, such as cluster analysis diagrams, to propose and consider possible grouping. According to NVivo's help page, "cluster analysis diagrams provide a graphical representation of files or nodes[23] to make it easy to see similarities and differences" (QSR International, n.d., para. 1). While I did not use the generated diagrams to determine my coding structure, they were useful for prompting me to think about whether certain pairs of codes were more related than I had expected.

I performed these processes of code reduction four times, distilling my codes into categories, or groups of codes that were more related to the others in each group than to others outside the group, yielding 14 top-level codes, excluding the set of 5 codes that had been applied to only meeting minutes (see Appendix G). I either used one code as the category label for the entire group or created a new category label as needed. I was unable to group some codes in a way that I found theoretically and empirically satisfactory, but I retained them in the codebook. For some, their independence from other codes was reflected in my ultimate analysis—they tended not to factor into my findings because they did not meaningfully connect concepts in my data. For others, such as <COVID>, they were so pervasive, they did not naturally group with one set of codes versus another. I eliminated codes that had not been applied to any data, although some codes listed in the appendix show zero counts because they are non-aggregated parent codes created as new category labels. Figure G-1 in Appendix G is a tree map hierarchical

[23] NVivo uses "node" as the noun and "code" as the verb to describe coding processes, in that the "node" is the "container" that holds material gathered about a topic through coding.

chart generated by NVivo that shows code prominence, in that the size of the nested rectangles reflects the number of references attributed to each code.

3.6 Standards for Quality for Qualitative Research

The qualities of reliability and validity are often cited as indicators of the rigor of research, *reliability* referring to whether the same data analyzed by someone else would yield the same results (Merriam, 1998, p. 205) and *validity* as including internal validity, meaning the congruence between research findings and reality (p. 201), and external validity, meaning "the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (p. 207). Corbin, however, (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) declined to use those terms because they "carry with them too many quantitative implications," preferring instead *credibility*, which "indicates that findings are trustworthy and believable in that they reflect participants', researchers', and readers' experiences with phenomena" (p. 346).

Reliability may not be the most appropriate mark of quality for nexus analysis, in which the researcher plays an active role, adding their own historical body and discourses to the nexus of practice, and in so doing, changes it. If another researcher were to have conducted this exact study that I conducted, they would change it in different ways by virtue of simply being a different person and carrying different practices within their historical body. Further, my perspective shapes my analysis, so another researcher would not analyze the data and reach the same conclusions because they do not share my worldview and lived experiences.

In terms of internal validity, I value making warrantable claims—not over-stepping what my data disclose and theory explains—and pursuing credibility by presenting trustworthy findings that speak truths as my participants and I understand them. I emphasize *truth* over *reality* because I understand reality to be created by each individual's interpretation of events,

filtered through their prior lived experiences, and so "objective" reality is both unknown and unknowable. I emphasize *truths* over *truth* because our interpretations are multiple and context-dependent. Duff (2006) defined internal validity as being "related to the credibility of results and interpretations, as a function of the conceptual foundations and the evidence that is provided," and she named various means by which internal validity is addressed, including "contextualization; thick description; holistic, inductive analysis; triangulation […]; and a recognition of the complex and dynamic interactions that may exist among factors" (p. 73). This need for contextualization and thick description is addressed through the use of semi-structured interviews, which Galletta (2013) described as offering "great potential to attend to the complexity of a story in need of contextualization" (p. 9).

Regarding external validity, or generalizability, the point of my research is not to seek a grand theory (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 135) that can apply to all situations everywhere, but to understand and explain *this* particular nexus of practice, *these* mediated actions of *these* social actors: nexus analysis values particularity over generality (Scollon, 2001). Duff (2006) described the notion of *transferability* as one "commonly replacing generalizability in the qualitative literature" and which "assigns the responsibility to readers to determine whether there is a congruence, fit, or connection between one study context, in all its complexity, and their own context, rather than have the original researchers make that assumption for them" (p. 75). Hornberger (2015) applied the idea to LPP ethnographies, saying "variability across contexts is taken for granted, but if the ethnographer provides enough rich and detailed description and analysis of one local context, it should be possible for the reader familiar with another local context to sort out what findings might or might not transfer" (p. 17).

Merriam (1998) described several techniques used to help ensure internal validity: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, and clarifying researcher's biases (pp. 204–205). Triangulation is a common technique "using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Many of these techniques are "built into" nexus analysis, specifically triangulation and long-term observation. Mapping the nexus of practice involves tracing discourses as they interact and intersect, which also functions to corroborate emerging findings. For instance, I was able to ask teachers about their experiences with the schools' principals, gaining a new perspective on the principals, compared to our direct interactions in the interviews. I compared what the principals said about accountability to their schools' performance on the Maryland School Report Card. Nexus analysis is intended to be ethnographic in terms of both worldview and time in the field. While I was not able to physically be at the schools or conduct data collection for a full academic year as initially planned, my previous time visiting both schools and building relationships with some of the educators helped ground my interpretations in the schools' contexts. Member checks were built into my interviews. As I described in Section 3.4.2, I reviewed the previous interview as I prepared for the next one, following up on specific points the educator had raised, asking related questions to check my understanding of previous answers. Galletta (2013) noted that "engaging for clarification ensures, as much as possible, accuracy in interpretation. It also gives space for further elaboration and depth in terms of the focus of the participant" (p. 78). I ended every interview by asking if they had anything else they would like to say, to offer them the opportunity to freely shape the conversation and intentionally present themselves as they wished, without my hand guiding them. I worked to address my biases in research through practicing reflexivity, "which is the process of examining your influence on the construction of the research

design and in carrying out research activities" (Galletta, 2013, p. 12). I wrote memos in which I reflected on the interviews I had been conducting, the study as a whole, my relationships with participants, and my perceptions of myself as a researcher.

Through my participant profiles in this chapter and the presentation of data excerpts from interviews in Chapters 4–6, chronicles of the historical trajectories of educational policies, and arguments for connections between educators' experiences and their practices, I have attempted to provide enough detailed description and analysis so that readers might judge for themselves if my interpretations are indeed warrantable and if my findings are transferable to other contexts.

3.7 Researcher Positionality

I think about my positionality as a researcher in terms of how I interact with the world and how I approach my research. While identity is not the same as positionality, in the interest of "starting where I am" (Madison, 2019, p. 29), I think about who I am, where I come from, where I've been, and how I got to where I am—me, being a White, middle class, cisgender woman with an able body and a clinical anxiety disorder.

I am from a small town in the American South, and I grew up thinking that it was impolite to talk about, or even acknowledge, race. As a child, I was raised speaking English and no other languages. In high school, I began studying Spanish and found that it came easily to me, and I decided to study abroad after graduating, before entering college. I ended up going to Brazil and living there for almost a year, learning Portuguese naturalistically and through independent study. After I returned to the U.S., I continued and expanded my language studies and completed an undergraduate degree in linguistics. I later completed a master's in applied linguistics and went on to work as a language testing specialist for several years before beginning my Ph.D. program in a college of education. My path through foreign exchange;

formal study of languages, linguistics, and education; and working in the language assessment industry brought me to my interest in the education of students designated as English learners, and that area of research touches on different facets of my identity and positionality.

I taught adult ESL for several years at a school in Washington, D.C. located near Embassy Row, so I have experience working with learners from a wide variety of backgrounds. My students were generally either highly educated embassy staff looking to develop their oral skills, or restaurant workers and manual laborers in the Dupont Circle area with rather proficient oral abilities but low literacy skills in English and limited schooling. The majority of my experience, though, is not in teaching but in assessment, from my time as a language testing specialist. My time creating tests led me to be critical of testing, which is a perspective I have carried with me into teaching assessment courses to practicing and future teachers and into my research.

Some of my experiences share superficial similarities with EL-designated students, although my experiences were under vastly different circumstances. In generalities and in particulars, EL-designated students in the U.S. have very different schooling experiences from what I had an exchange student in Brazil. Among the differences, EL-designated students are racialized in this country and education system, just as they are linguistically marginalized. They may also be marginalized due to their class, immigration status, or national background.

As a researcher, I care about the policies that are created and implemented that affect the lives of these students. I feel drawn to this work in part because this is how I see myself best able to do anti-racism work. In my research, I am drawn to Vaught's (2011) ethics of responsibility, her conception of ethical behavior toward participants. In her critical race ethnography, Vaught (2011) warned against "false empathy" and explained how her use of counterstories acted as

methodological safeguard against such misplaced emotion, in addition to "[containing] important transformative potential" (p. 23). She continued, "Responsibility is the transformational alternative to liberal and oppressive empathy. Critical Race ethnographies should provide analytical possibilities for *responsibility*" (p. 23, italics in original). Although I am not conducting a critical race ethnography, I take the message of responsibility over false empathy to heart. An ethics founded on responsibility demonstrates (1) a recognition of the researcher's obligations to the participants; and (2) regard for the participants in the study as co-equals, capable of meaningfully contributing to the analysis, not simply acting as sources of data.

I am also reminded of Isabel Wilkerson's (2020) words about *radical empathy*, in contrast to *sympathy*:

> Radical empathy, on the other hand, means putting in the work to educate oneself and to listen with a humble heart to understand another's experience from their perspective, not as we imagine we would feel. Radical empathy is not about you and what you think you would do in a situation you have never been in and perhaps never will. It is the kindred connection from a place of deep knowing that opens your spirit to the pain of another as they perceive it. Empathy is no substitute for the experience itself. We don't get to tell a person with a broken leg or a bullet wound that they are not in pain. And people who have hit the caste lottery are not in a position to tell a person who has suffered under the tyranny of caste what is offensive or hurtful or demeaning to those at the bottom. The price of privilege is the moral duty to act when one sees another person treated unfairly. And the least that a person in the dominant caste can do is not make the pain any worse. (p. 386)

According to Madison (2019), “Positionality is vital because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we are denouncing the power structures that surround our interlocutors” (p. 6). I know that while my gender identity can make me vulnerable, my race, class, and status can also protect me. I have substantial social capital, and I cannot overlook my own power and the privileged place that I occupy in inherently unequal social structures as I work to dismantle those same structures. Between my education and professional experiences, this area is where I am able to contribute. Linguists and language policy researchers ought to work to promote justice for minoritized and marginalized people, as Baugh (2018) described and advocated for in the field of linguistics. Ultimately, I think I *can* contribute to dismantling racist and hegemonic policies that currently shape the educational experiences of most students designated as English learners, and I think that I *should* do this work because it is incumbent upon me to leverage the power I have to work for racial and social justice.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the design for my study and explained how the COVID-19 pandemic affected it. I described the settings in which I conducted my research, Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School, and my participants who were educators at the two schools. I detailed my data collection sources and the processes for my data analysis, and then discussed the standards for quality and rigor in qualitative research that I sought to uphold. I concluded with a discussion of my positionality as a researcher, which unavoidably influences how I engage in research.

In the next three chapters, I present my findings about how policy agents *appropriated* educational language policy, referring to how they “take in” policies, “incorporating these discursive and institutional resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation, and action”

(Levinson & Sutton, 2001, p. 3). Research questions 1 and 2 ask how educators appropriated educational language policies and the high-stakes testing policies that were relevant to their practice as educators; research question 3 pans out to investigate the historical trajectories of policies (policy appropriation through time) and trajectories across spaces, from the federal level, state level, and the school and classroom.

In the appropriation of high-stakes testing policies, educators' assessment literacy was the most salient element. Principals appropriated high-stakes testing policies by accepting unavoidable constraints while creating space for success where possible, through their understanding of policies and their consequences. Teachers appropriated high-stakes testing policies through instructional practices that fully embraced the test and its associated policies, practices that minimally complied with the policies, or practices that varied in acceptance of the test and its policies. Finally, federal policy had a strong influence on state-level policy. The impact of *No Child Left Behind* cannot be overstated, and its legacy continues through today.

Chapter 4: Educators' Language Management in the School and Classroom

In this chapter I present my findings for educators' language management activities. My first research question asked, "How do educators of EL-designated students manage language in the school and classroom?" I found that educators' language management activities were mediated by their historical body, as a container and bearer of lived knowledge, of which their preparation in TESOL was the most salient element. In their appropriation of educational language policies, educators (re)produced language ideologies circulating through the nexus of practice as discourses in place. The intersection of these discourses mediated their policy actions, meaning, their language management activities. Their language management primarily took the form of instructional practices that positioned English as the default language of academics and as the predominant, if not sole, language goal.

As language policy agents, principals have the potential to manage language across the school, whether through explicitly setting overt policies or by indicating desired language management more implicitly (e.g., Menken & Solorza, 2015). However, the teachers were my focal participants, since they have the most frequent and sustained contact with students in the school. While principals certainly interact with students and create schoolwide language policies, classroom interactions between teachers and students are more direct and consistent, and thus more impactful. Since the principals were not the primary focus for my research, I did not collect as much data from them as from the teachers. My findings related to them are correspondingly more limited, but they provide an important perspective on how language policies are differentially interpreted by different policy actors, depending on which policies and other discourses are most relevant and salient to them in the nexus of practice.

Figure 4-1. Intersecting Discourses in Nexus Analysis – Policy Action

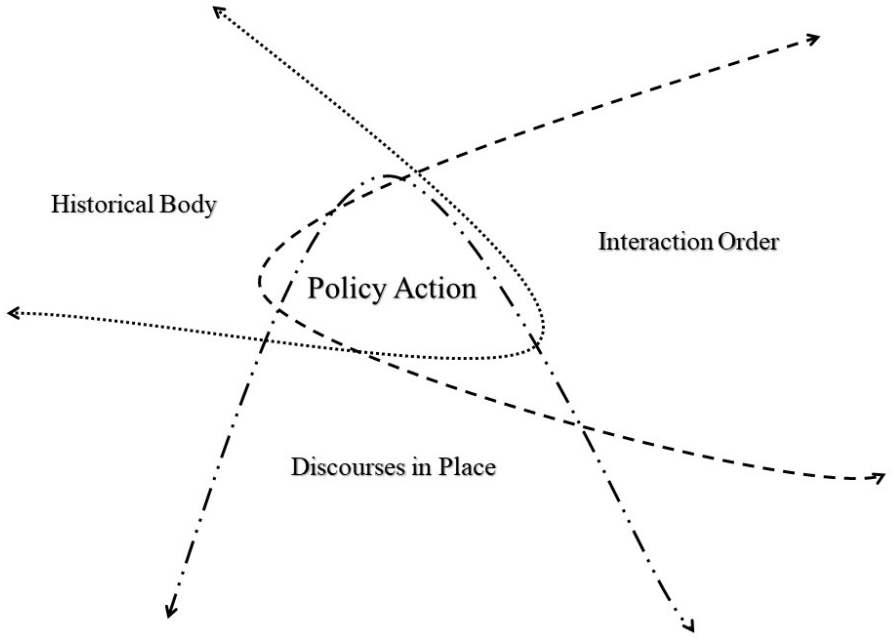

Figure adapted from Hult (2015, p. 224)

Figure 4-1 reproduces Figure 2-4, showing the intersecting discourses in nexus analysis, the historical body, discourses in place, and the interaction order, which mediate the policy action of interest. According to Hult (2015), the elements of the historical body that might be relevant include "beliefs about language(s) and speakers/users, social status/position, education and training, experiences with policy, skills (e.g., teaching, administrative, rhetorical), [and] habits related to policymaking and/or implementation" (p. 224). Aspects of discourses of place that might be relevant include "(Language) ideologies in *de jure* policies and elsewhere, socially and historically situated concepts, shared knowledge (including *de facto* policies), norms of interpretation held by actors, layout of physical spaces, [and] artifacts that mediate policymaking and/or implementation" (p. 224, italics in original).

In this chapter, I first present data excerpts that illustrate the importance of TESOL preparation as an element of the historical body. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the historical body

is a discourse cycle in which an individual's experiences throughout their life relate to their thoughts, feelings, and actions with respect to the mediated action of interest, and those thoughts, feelings, and actions then contribute to the ongoing formation and re-formation of the historical body. I then demonstrate how the educators participated in and (re)produced language ideologies as discourses in place circulating through the nexus of practice—and how those ideologies intersect with and are taken up in the educators' historical bodies. I then present examples of policy actions, that is, the ways that educators (principals and teachers) sought to manage language practices, arguing that their language management contributed to policy (often via instructional practices) that set (1) English as the default language of the school and (2) English acquisition as the overarching/predominant goal for students. Where relevant, I make reference to the contributions of the interaction order, but due to the nature of my data, findings with respect to the interaction order were more limited. I have not dedicated a full subsection to the contributions of the interaction order, but its influence is most marked in section 4.2.2, regarding the language of instruction.

An educator's historical body, in interaction with the discourses in place, contributes to their practices and how they interact with their EL-designated students. However, I do not make a causal claim that *this* particular part of the historical body inevitably leads to *that* particular educational practice. I have focused on participants' preparation in TESOL and the language ideologies they espoused or otherwise gave evidence of holding because they were prominent, relevant, and consistent themes across interviews (obviously due in large part to the design of my interview protocols). I found that educators varied in the extent and type of TESOL preparation they had received and in the language ideologies they reproduced; nevertheless, they sought to manage language in ways that produced essentially English-only policies. Immediately below, I

present excerpts that relate to their preparation in TESOL, and then in 4.1.2 examples of language ideologies circulating through the nexus of practice that they (re)produced. Despite individual variation in these intersecting discourses, all roads ultimately led to English-only language management efforts—or policy actions—which I detail in Section 4.2.

4.1 Intersecting Discourses in Nexus Analysis

As I previously discussed, the discourse cycles of historical body, discourses in place, and interaction order are useful categories to facilitate the mapping of discourses circulating through the nexus of practice. Scollon and Scollon (2004) described discourse cycles as similar to the water cycle, in that the cycle is both historical and anticipatory in perspective, and in that what moves through the cycle is altered by its interactions with other elements in the cycle and alters those elements in turn but is nevertheless still recognizable as the focal element of the cycle. The historical body is composed of an individual's experiences throughout their life, which influence their thoughts, feelings, and actions with respect to the mediated action of interest, and those thoughts, feelings, and actions in turn contribute to the ongoing formation and re-formation of the historical body, through a "discourse-action-practice cycle" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, pp. 18–34). The historical body also changes as it intersects with and takes up discourses from the circulating discourses in place; likewise, the discourses in place that are reproduced by participants are influenced by their historical bodies. Nexus analysis does not require a full life history of the participants, only the parts of their lived experiences that are relevant to the particular nexus of practice (Scollon & Scollon, 2004); the relevant part of the historical body I present here corresponds to educators' TESOL preparation, followed by a discussion of the discourses in place relating to educators' language ideologies.

4.1.1 Historical Body: TESOL Preparation

TESOL preparation was the most salient theme that arose in my interviews with educators as part of their historical bodies. TESOL preparation is valuable (arguably necessary) for teaching EL-designated students, but it is not legally required that non-ESOL teachers in Maryland public schools hold ESOL certification. Because Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School are public schools (although with the specific entrance requirement of eligibility for language services), they are subject to the same laws and regulations as other public schools in the state, so content area teachers must be certified in their content areas, but they need not be ESOL-certified. Nonetheless, all teachers of EL-designated students are also language teachers (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Here, I highlight the variations in type and extent of TESOL preparation among the educators I interviewed and give examples of how this variation was evident in my data. As I detail in Section 4.2, educators tended to manage language in the school and classroom in ways that led to English-only policies, but the differences in their experiences, knowledge, and beliefs encoded in their historical body reveal important nuances in why and how they arrived at those policies.

All of the educators in this study had prior experience teaching EL-designated students and/or students learning English as a foreign language. Brief descriptions of their experience as language teachers—specifically as language teachers, not teaching experience in general—appear in Table 4-1, below; see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, “Participants” for more detail regarding their own histories as language learners, teachers of other areas, and other important life history information.

Table 4-1. Educators' TESOL Experience

Name	Brief Description of TESOL Experience
Dr. Peterson	Peace Corps, taught English to high school students in east Africa; master's in ESOL and bilingual education; taught high school ESOL
Dr. Santos	Certified Spanish language teacher; taught at high school for EL-designated students
Carrie	Peace Corps, taught English in Indonesia; field-based learning TEFL practicum experience; at time of data collection, was in third year at RHS
Alice	English language tutor in Korea; MEd with TESOL specialization and certification; at time of data collection, was in third year at HHS
Dr. Bragg	ESOL-certified via Praxis Content Assessment added to existing Teacher's certificate; at time of data collection, was in sixth year at RHS
Linda	ESOL-certified via ESOL certificate program added to existing Teacher's certificate; ESOL co-teacher in high school science classroom for 7-8 years; science teacher at HHS for 1 year; at time of data collection was in fifth year of teaching ESOL at HHS
Rachel	JET program, taught English to students in Japan; MEd with TESOL specialization and certification; at the time of data collection, was in fifth year at HHS

Of the teachers, Dr. Bragg and Linda had the most overall teaching experience; although I did not get the exact number of years, each of them had been teaching for over a decade, Linda for sixteen or seventeen years (she estimated) at the time of my data collection. Linda had the most ESOL teaching experience of all the teachers, at least twelve years as an ESOL teacher. Alice and Rachel both held M.Ed. degrees with specializations in TESOL; Carrie had completed a TEFL practicum experience as part of her training for Peace Corps service; and Linda had completed a TESOL certificate program to obtain the ESOL endorsement when she was renewing her teacher license after it had lapsed. Dr. Bragg had added an ESOL endorsement onto his existing teaching certificate through passing the Praxis ESOL Content Assessment.

The difference in ESOL-specific preparation seemed to play a role for the ELA teachers, Carrie and Alice, who were both early-career teachers, held master's degrees, and had previous experience working with students learning English in foreign-language contexts. In my first interview with each of them, I asked about whether their school advocated any particular approach for integrating language and content instruction. Carrie replied that her school used a method called "CLV" or content, language, and vocabulary, which teachers were supposed to use in preparing their units and lessons.

Excerpt 4-1

Carrie[24]
Carrie: Yeah. So, one thing we do is we do CLV, so content language vocabulary. And we try to incorporate that. It's supposed to be incorporated into every single lesson we do. So while if you go into like a mainstream classroom you'll see the content-- or you'll see the standard on the board. Yeah, and then you'll see the content objective. And maybe like the agenda for the day. At our school we have, you know, our content objectives and our language objectives and we're supposed to have-- and our vocabulary has to be on the board for that unit, so we have certain bullet points that we have to hit per every lesson. And with the vocabulary, we're really bringing in academic vocabulary and that's really our language integration. […][25] **Karen**: *Is that helpful to you, like do you use it when you're planning and when you're teaching, or is it something you're like, Oh, I just have to do this.* **Carrie:** I think it's so helpful. It's helpful with everything in all planning, because just knowing that, okay, my lesson is going to be so guided, and the writing is going to be focused around this academic vocabulary and these set of words I think it really helps you focus your lesson and not get too broad. I've really noticed especially with going into distance learning [due to the COVID pandemic], it was- it's it's all been too much. It's been too much for the kids to handle. And, so you give them a set of words that they have to use in a certain paragraph to respond to, you know, informational text, and they're doing sequencing words it's really, it's helpful because it's less-is-more almost? And they're getting that practice. So yeah, I think it's really

[24] Transcription conventions and key for formatting are found in Appendix E.

[25] Square brackets with ellipsis indicate that content has been omitted, for the sake of length or clarity, but the meaning of the excerpt is maintained.

Carrie[24]

helpful. I think my first year teaching at [Riverbend High School] it, it wasn't helpful because I was learning. I didn't understand it, and it was too much to wrap my head around.

(Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021)

Carrie explained that CLV was useful for planning her lessons, not only for her purposes but for the students as well because CLV structured how lesson material would be presented to students. She noted that it was not as useful to her when she was in her first year of teaching because she did not yet have sufficient experience, and possibly knowledge, to implement the tool properly. However, as she developed in her teaching and likely automatized more of the practices involved, she was better able to use CLV productively in her lesson planning. This excerpt shows how CLV as mediational means (and discourse in place) intersected with Carrie's historical body to mediate her actions in lesson-planning. Her use of CLV changed over time as her historical body also changed over time, in part through the repeated intersections with the discourse in place of CLV.

By contrast, I had the following exchange with Alice in Excerpt 4-2, in which she was much more vague about Hilltop High School's approach to content and language integration than Carrie had been about Riverbend's, although Alice was still positive about Hilltop having an approach that was beneficial for teachers.

Excerpt 4-2

Alice

Karen:
Does your school or department have a particular approach to integrating language and content instruction?

Alice:
Yes. Actually, part of the Multicultural Schools System is really to, like, support staff all around- a lot of these teachers like don't have TESOL experience, right? So there's tons and tons of PD and constant support. We have the language coach on staff who's amazing, that will meet with teachers one-to-one regularly like every week to continue supporting, like we write

Alice

our own curriculum, that's why we're twelve-month employees, as opposed to ten-month employees because there's such a big emphasis on really really getting language and content instruction, you know, just right for the kids. So it's a big emphasis on that and a lot of training. So, more than I've ever seen at any other school.

Karen:
So, is it, is it helpful for you when you are planning your lessons and structuring your units. Do you feel like you go beyond that or outside of it?

Alice:
Yeah, I definitely say it's helpful, some of it to me because you know I did my master's in TESOL, I was kinda like, "okay I kind of know this," but I still, even with that like learned a lot. I still get a lot of great ideas and second opinions from our language coach. So, even with that experience, you know, there's still always more to learn, and I know I've improved a lot with that extra support. And gotten great ideas for improving like my units and stuff.

(Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021)

Alice's response suggested that she set herself apart from some of the other teachers at Hilltop High School. She noted that "a lot of these teachers, like, don't have TESOL experience" but clarified that she did—in fact, she held a master's in TESOL. Despite having more TESOL preparation than many of her colleagues, she still derived benefit from the available resources and instructional coaching, although she was starting from a higher baseline: the resources were useful for improving her teaching, rather than necessary for simply making her instruction accessible to her students. Alice did not mention a specific approach or method that Hilltop High School encouraged and was vague about how she used available resources to improve her teaching, but she demonstrated clear confidence in her ability to integrate language and content in her instruction as well as learn new instructional techniques through professional development. On the other hand, Carrie immediately produced the exact name of the approach that Riverbend High School used, explained how it should be used, and how she used it in her own teaching, suggesting that she used it as often and thoroughly as she described. While I do

not mean to suggest the only difference between the two teachers was their TESOL preparation, the contrast between their answers was marked.

Although Carrie and Alice had arrived at similar places in their teaching careers, at the time of my data collection, both being early-career high school ELA teachers of EL-designated students, their paths to arriving were quite different. Carrie had more in common with Linda, in that neither one had initially planned to teach in an ESOL context. Carrie had trained to be a mainstream ELA teacher but burned out after her student teaching. She then enlisted in the Peace Corps and taught English in Southeast Asia, where she "fell back in love with teaching." Linda, in fact, had not initially planned to be a teacher at all. In our first interview, she told me that she had not wanted to be a teacher when she was younger, but ultimately teaching, as a career, "stuck," due in large part to working in ESOL, saying, "I love working with ESOL kids, I think, you know, I might have– I don't know if it would have stuck otherwise" (Interview 1, 02-03-2021), comments that resonate with Carrie's description of falling back in love with teaching.

Linda had been a mainstream teacher who sought out TESOL certification after teaching EL-designated students with additional instructional needs she was unprepared to meet. She told me, "when I was trying to get recertified [after letting her teaching license lapse], I decided to go ahead– and I had to take some classes, I decided to also get certified in ESOL since I really enjoyed working with those students," signaling a positive association with teaching EL-designated students. This positivity continued in her description of deciding to apply to work at Hilltop High School, she said, "So I applied just, you know, I enjoyed working with ESOL students, I had been working with ESOL high school students for, you know, a few years and I said, 'Let me see what this is all about'" (Interview 1, 02-03-2021). I view Linda's path to teaching ESOL as an exercise in agency, which is "deeply embedded within society and the

communities of practice which the individual belongs to" (Norris, 2005, p. 195). As a younger person, she did not want to be a teacher and sought out a different career path, exercising her agency with respect to her social history up to that point in her life. Her pursuit of TESOL certification, then, was also an instance of agentive action with respect to her social history, encoded in her historical body which had changed over time and continued changing, partially through interaction with her obtaining TESOL certification and the resulting changes to her own identity construction as an *ESOL* teacher.

Just as Linda had not been prepared for working with EL-designated students in her initial teacher preparation program, she noted that her content area teacher colleagues were also unprepared to work with language learner students, whether in the high school where she worked before going to Hilltop High School (Excerpt 4-19), or at Hilltop High School itself (Excerpt 4-3). In Excerpt 4-19, presented in Section 4.1.2, Linda described instances in which she observed her colleagues misjudging students' language abilities and needs because students presented as more proficient than they were assessed to be. At her previous high school, Linda was the ESOL co-teacher plugging into a science classroom. She explained that, because some EL-designated students did not have a noticeable accent or did not appear to struggle with holding a conversation in English, teachers in the school would forget that they still needed targeted language supports. Students' apparent strengths in English contributed to non-ESOL teachers failing to provide, or even consider the need to provide, linguistic support for the students. By that point in time, however, Linda was trained to deliver such supports, and she was not misled into assuming a degree of proficiency that students did not have because her TESOL training enabled her to distinguish a student's phonological and pragmatic capabilities from other aspects of language ability, such as vocabulary and morphosyntax. In Excerpt 4-3, she described how her

role as an ESOL teacher included not only teaching EL-designated students but also educating non-ESOL certified colleagues about how to teach EL-designated students.

Excerpt 4-3

Linda
So I'm trying so I'm trying to bring awareness, I think, to them. I don't know that everyone's doing that. Or if people even realize that maybe they should, maybe should be doing that with some of these students. A lot of content teachers might not realize that you can– there's lots of different kinds of languages, you can focus on this and this to help them with their, you know, with whatever it is they're presenting to you. So I- that's that's my guess. That's my take, is that, you know, it's they they are perceived as being completely fluent. And then maybe they're not challenged to to try to increase that.
(Linda, Interview 2, 03-10-2021)

In this excerpt, Linda noted that she tried to "bring awareness" to teachers about students' needs and to students about the various aspects of language ability that they would be tested on through ACCESS, so that they could study and work on specific skills and knowledge and improve their chances of exiting language services. She did not think that all the content area teachers at Hilltop High School did the same thing, or even knew that they could or should, even though the teachers at the school were aware of the fact that all their students were EL-designated or recently reclassified. Again, she suspected that students' abilities in some aspects of language use masked their need for instruction tailored for language learners, at least for teachers not sufficiently knowledgeable about TESOL. By contrast, thanks to her preparation for teaching ESOL, she was able to recognize students' language-related instructional needs and meet them, as she had felt unable to do during the first phase of her teaching career. Excerpt 4-3 can be viewed in light of the intersecting discourses in nexus analysis: Linda's achievement of TESOL certification added to and changed her historical body, which also changed the interaction order in her interactions with colleagues (given her TESOL expertise), and changed the way she drew on the discourse in place of ACCESS when engaging with colleagues.

Dr. Bragg was the only teacher who had not participated in a course of study expressly designed for TESOL, and he was the only educator in the study who did not have experience as a language teacher (of English or another language) until he became an ESOL teacher. Dr. Bragg described the major movements in his educational career as times when he saw gaps in his own knowledge that he wished to fill, such as seeking a degree in history because he felt that he lacked knowledge about history that would inform why things are the way they are at present, leading him to enter college at age 28. He became a teacher under a conditional certification and chose to complete an MAT program because he saw it as a comprehensive and coherent program of study, rather than "just [taking] some classes along the way," as he described the other alternative route to certification (Interview 1, 03-18-2021). Later, after he had been teaching for several years, he felt a lack again, leading him to pursue a Ph.D., which he contrasted with his master's degree in teaching, which had been practice-focused, by saying that he wanted to understand the "motives behind teaching" and not "just [go] through the motions of teaching." He described his Ph.D. program and its impact on his teaching in Excerpt 4-4:

Excerpt 4-4

Dr. Bragg
With the Ph.D., I wanted more of a sociology of education. I wanted more of a philosophy doctorate. Right. And the reason why is because with my teaching experience, I was not satisfied with kind of just going through the motions of teaching without knowing about the motives behind teaching. What I mean is that, sociologically, I just saw some things that I felt I needed more clarity about the whys. Like, why are we doing this? Why is school structured in this way? Why? So the language, literacy, and culture really is how does language impact, right, school? How does school impact language, literacy, and culture? And how do they influence education and education policy? And that to me was very stimulating. And so the idea of the sociological bent towards this thing called education was very, very appealing to me at the time. [...] You know, when I- when I started, you know, when I- when I got my history degree. In part, it was because I knew there were some gaps in my understanding of history. So, you know, I

Dr. Bragg

went to the military after high school, and then I was a minister for five years before before I went to school, before I went to college. And so what I noticed during that ten years, right, between high school and college was that I noticed that the gaps that most bothered me in my own development were the gaps in history, like really kind of not understanding why certain things were the way that they were. Right? You know, and so it was the same deal with getting the Ph.D.– the big gap and not really quite understanding, of wanting to put my finger on. And so the sociological, like, understanding of the way the world works is- it was very liberating for me. And it is the reason, I think, that if there's any effectiveness in my teaching and teaching approach, I would, you know, I would attribute it to that understanding, that kind of wide breadth of understanding of how society truly functions.

(Dr. Bragg, Interview 1, 03-18-2021)

In our first interview, Dr. Bragg emphasized his interest in "understanding how society truly functions"—an interest that seemed to be satisfied by his completion of his Ph.D.—and his motivation to fill gaps in his knowledge and understanding. Throughout my interviews with him, he continually returned to concerns about teaching EL-designated students that I interpreted as potentially signaling gaps in his knowledge about TESOL; however, his comments revealed that my interpretation did not coincide with his interpretation of experiences. Below, I explain my interpretation and how it seemed to differ from his.

After several years of teaching in a mainstream high school, Dr. Bragg moved to Riverbend High School because of what he perceived to be another gap: he had felt as though he was not connecting with reclassified ELs (RELs) in his classes. Despite being a well-credentialed and otherwise successful teacher, he found that "just good teaching" was insufficient for his R/EL-designated students (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Therefore, he sought help from the school's ESOL department, to try to improve his instruction. Then, "in 2015, when I had the opportunity to start at this Multicultural School, I jumped on it because I felt like it [teaching ESOL students] was an area of weakness of mine, and I wanted to get stronger with it" (Interview 1, 03-18-2021). After a year at Riverbend High School, he again perceived a gap in his knowledge of

specific preparation in TESOL, which he sought to rectify by obtaining ESOL certification. He studied for and passed the Praxis ESOL assessment, to add an ESOL endorsement onto his existing teaching certificate. Based on our interviews, I understood him to be generally satisfied with the extent of his education and preparation at this point, although he continued to express significant doubts about how best to teach EL-designated students, especially once he moved from the History department to the ESOL department, in response to a request by Dr. Peterson to fill a vacancy.

During my interviews with Dr. Bragg, I noticed that at times he seemed to conflate or construct false equivalencies between L2 development and L1 acquisition and use. Excerpt 4-5 shows one such example, where Dr. Bragg recounted a time in which he contemplated whether and how to manage the language use of a young person he interacted with through his non-profit work of teaching chess to young people currently in juvenile detention. This youth had used the word "gay" as a slur to express frustration, and Dr. Bragg corrected him and instructed him not to use the word that way anymore.

Excerpt 4-5

Dr. Bragg
I was with– you know what I, in my nonprofit. I teach kids chess– […] You know, I'm preparing the kids also for a tournament that they're going to have in July, the first ever tournament in the Department of Juvenile Services. So, do I allow them to curse? Do they curse at a tournament? Do they, do they say this, right, as we said a few weeks ago with this one kid, he said it around four or five times and I had to get with him online in front of everybody, 'Yo, that's gay, that's gay, yo that's gay.' I was like, 'Can you explain to me what's gay about the fact that he just moved his knight, right, in front of your rook?' 'Nah, it's just gay.' 'Okay, so you got to help me understand what's gay about it. I don't understand, bro.' Right. So I challenged him. And I thought, 'should I challenge him, should I not challenge him?' But I challenged him. I was like, 'All right, bro, here's the deal.' And then the next week when we prayed, I said– played– I said, 'All right, who's got white, who's got black,' 'Ah, I got white,' 'I got black.' I was like, 'Okay, cool, you guys understand, you know, blah blah

Dr. Bragg

blah, here's your piece, at the end of this time whoever wins,' I said, 'and[26] no gay today.' And he didn't, he didn't use it. Yeah, so now I'm sure someone might argue they heard me coming from the outside, you know, 'Yo, come on man, just let the kids play, and you know he's expressing, it's the first time he's ever played chess in his life and' blah blah blah. It's like 'Nn nn. He needs to stop using the word gay.' So at what point do we say, 'He need to stop saying, "Hola" to me, and he needs to start saying "Hello."' At what point? At what point do you say, 'He needs to start saying, "May I use the restroom?" Instead of just saying one word, which is "bathroom,"' right. At the point? And we don't know the answer to that, Karen.

(Dr. Bragg, Interview 3, 04-27-2021)

Dr. Bragg gave this concrete example of language use and correction, then moved immediately to a hypothetical or generic example of a student who used Spanish instead of English in class. He drew an equivalency between these examples, of one young person engaging in talk that perpetuates homophobia and another using a language other than English to engage in meaningful communication. For an individual such as the chess player in Excerpt 4-5, who is old enough to be beyond the early stages of L1 acquisition, use of one word versus another in a social interaction could possibly be a function of vocabulary knowledge. However, I believe it is more likely that the chess player was doing identity work (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) through his word choice, signaling that he is the kind of person (whatever kind of person that might be) who uses the word "gay" in association with negative qualities. On the other hand, the hypothetical student who used Spanish to say hello or used a single word of English to ask to be excused from class, rather than a phrase that the teacher would find more pragmatically appropriate, might very well not yet know how to engage in those interactions in a language and form that the teacher would deem acceptable. I consider Dr. Bragg to hold misunderstandings about language use and

[26] Underlined text indicates emphatic stress.

development, due in part to his somewhat limited preparation to be a language teacher, which potentially mediated his pedagogy and interactions with students.

The response that an educator might take in either instance should differ depending on *why* the young person produced language seen as inappropriate, whether it was due to a genuine lack of knowledge or other, more socio-pragmatic, reasons. Because Dr. Bragg equated the language used by the chess player and the hypothetical student, lumping them both in the category of "inappropriate," he also equated the responses to each. This implied that he saw an instance of verbal hygiene (Cameron, 1995) in the first example as essentially equivalent to basic second language instruction. Further, his asking when a teacher should start that basic second language instruction implied that he did not know the answer. He then answered his own question by saying, "We don't know to the answer to that," using "we" rather than "I" as the subject, suggesting that the answer was unknowable, rather than simply unknown to him.

Throughout my interviews with him, Dr. Bragg frequently returned to this question and expressed doubts about how best to "balance" the amount of L1 students should be permitted to use in the classroom, a concern that no other teacher brought up. Based on our conversations, it seemed that he had previously encouraged students to use any language they preferred in his classroom, at least under certain circumstances. In Excerpt 4-6, he recounted one particular instance in which he was holding a Socratic-style seminar in his history class and allowed students to use their preferred language to discuss the selected topic. This excerpt provides an important example of how I perceived Dr. Bragg to understand and approach his instruction of EL-designated students.

Excerpt 4-6

Dr. Bragg

So I'm doing this Socratic seminar, and my policy was, I don't care if you say it in English, Spanish, (xxx)[27], it doesn't matter. […] So just communicate. I want you to get it out because the topic was, was the (xxx). So students are going back and forth, oh my goodness it was spicy. It was great and then people were like, "Yo, so you should go see Dr. Bragg's class, Dr. Bragg's class is having the, you know, the Socratic seminars. Look what he's doing with his first-year ELL students blah blah blah." So, Hispanic person, good woman, friend of mine came through. And she, she came and saw my Socratic seminar towards the end of the year. And she said to me this, afterwards, "I really liked it, dah dah dah dah dah." And she goes, "I think you're letting them use their Spanish a little bit too much." Karen, that meant a lot. In many ways. One, I was confused, really confused. I was like, "What are you talking about?" Like I felt like I was doing something liberatory, right. I felt like I was like Paulo Freire, right. I'm like, you know what I mean-- I felt like I was doing something really, really good. However, she-- and I have to respect the fact that she's from the same, at least linguistic, you know, history, as these students and she says, "You're letting them use English-- or Spanish, too much." She saw that by allowing them to speak freely, even in their own language, that that wasn't helpful. And I didn't know where to go from there. So I went to the principal and I was like, "Yo, so. Ol' girl whom I respect and like said this. So I need to know, like what's the continuum? Like, where should they be at month ten? Should they be speaking 50%? 75? 25? 33? I need to know. I know it's more of an art, not a science, but help me with that art. I want to know, because even artists have structures, right." I never got an answer. And still to this day, I haven't gotten an answer. Right. And so, so, that's the thing that's challenging.

And so let me veer off into another category that's dealing directly with this. What I noticed-- and hopefully you won't take offense to this ((Karen laughs))-- but what I've noticed is that it's easier for, and I'll say specifically White liberals, to want to afford many, many opportunities, graces, accommodations, right, than Hispanic people in those same positions. I got an example for you. Dr. Santos over at Hilltop High School, his expectation for his students, is here ((gestures above his head)). When I say high. I mean really high. Yet, White female, right, with some Jewish roots, over here at Riverbend High School, expectations are much different. They even consider themselves, you know, jokingly as the yin and the yang of each other, right. I've seen Dr. Santos, like, expect from his kids so much more, they have introduced a, you know, they had AP, before we had AP, right, AP like Spanish before we did. What I'm saying is, I don't know the balance, but what I do know, is it needs to be a mixture, and that mixture I don't quite know yet. Right.

Now I'm not suggesting that Joe Clark [28], right, and his ilk should be running Black schools because Black folks know best for Black kids, and Hispanic folks know best for Hispanic

[27] (xxx) indicates untranscribable speech.

[28] Joe Louis Clark (1938–2020) was a Black former Army drill sergeant turned educator; as principal at Eastside High School in New Jersey in the 1980s, he was notorious for his harsh disciplinary practices (Sandomir, 2020).

Dr. Bragg

folks. Not suggesting that at all, but what I'm suggesting is that it's interesting that a Hispanic woman came in and saw what I was doing as not as good as the White folks that came in and saw it. They were fired up. "Oh my goodness, this kid is talking, you know, he's fired up about this topic." But what she saw was that the kid was fired up, but speaking in Spanish. And she, I don't wanna give out too much information, but she's, she's a heavy hitter, and she's, she's well-credentialed so I don't, I don't know, Karen.

(Dr. Bragg, Interview 2, 03-25-2021)

In this excerpt, Dr. Bragg described an approach to teaching in which he prioritized active participation by students over the language in which they participated, which students seemed to enjoy and which was largely well-regarded by his colleagues. His description of the class discussion as a Socratic seminar suggested an interaction order in which expectations about social roles or positions differed markedly from the "sage on the stage" style of lecture-based teaching that emphasized the teacher's role as knower of information and holder of the floor. Further, he had relinquished the power to manage students' language practices regarding their selection of language to use; his primary (or sole) dictate was that the discussion be content-relevant. One teacher, though, later told him that she thought he allowed his students to use too much Spanish. Her judgment of his teaching cast him into a state of doubt and led him to question how much L1 use in the classroom is too much—potentially including *any* L1 use. This experience seemed especially impactful to his teaching practice because his prior approach was judged as wanting by a colleague whom he respected and whose opinion carried greater weight because she was, herself, Hispanic, as I interpreted his comments. He asserted that did not believe that race/ethnicity was the deciding factor for determining how minoritized students should be educated, but he nevertheless drew a distinction between how White educators and how Hispanic educators approached educating EL-designated students (specifically including Dr. Peterson and Dr. Santos). His reference to Joe Clark was an overt nod to discourses in place

regarding race and teaching (e.g., explored by Delpit, 1995), and race and language teaching, in particular, in which race is one aspect for judging the legitimacy of pedagogical decisions.

Following the interaction with his Hispanic colleague, he sought the advice of Dr. Peterson, who holds master's and doctoral degrees focused on ESOL and bilingual education and has years of relevant teaching experience. As Dr. Bragg recounted the story, his comments and questions to Dr. Peterson showed that he believed language to develop linearly and consistently, that students "at month ten" should be expected to speak English some specified proportion of the time (perhaps ranging from 25% to 75% of the time), and that this amount would be roughly the same for all students. He also indicated that teaching language, or perhaps teaching language learners, is "more of an art, not a science," showing either a disregard for or lack of knowledge about the substantial research base in applied linguistics and SLA. He stated that he did not receive an answer from Dr. Peterson about the "correct" proportion of English to other languages students should be using in the classroom, and that "still to this day," he has not received an answer. However, setting some specific proportion of time or volume to be produced in one language or another is a *political* decision—a question of policy—and not simply or solely a pedagogical decision. Thus, these comments from Dr. Bragg help to illustrate how differences in pedagogical approaches to the education of EL-designated students are potentially related to TESOL preparation. Both Linda and Dr. Bragg had been mainstream teachers before they obtained ESOL certification out of a desire to better serve their language learner students. However, they took different routes to obtain that certification, and I interpreted their different approaches to instructions as reflective of those different routes. Linda completed a certificate program, not a full master's degree, as Alice and Rachel did, but it was a coherent course of study designed to prepare teachers to work with EL-designated students. Carrie had initially been

prepared to be a mainstream ELA teacher but then underwent an in-person training course and TEFL field-based practicum for her service in the Peace Corps. Dr. Bragg studied individually and passed the Praxis ESOL assessment to obtain his certification. I believe the individual nature of his test preparation and the fact that it was not part of an intentionally designed program of study explicitly connected to practice to be significant factors in this part of his historical body.

Dr. Bragg also connected a pedagogical approach that used what he called "opportunities, graces, [and] accommodations" (Interview 2, 03-25-2021) to student dissatisfaction. He reported that some students had left Riverbend High School because they felt they were not sufficiently pushed to learn English because they were given too many scaffolds, too much language support, and too many "allowances" to use their L1:

Excerpt 4-7

Dr. Bragg
We've heard this. "I'm leaving because I can learn more English at another school that does not cater to English language learners, because I have to." That is a very powerful response. Coming from coming from a school where our goal is to make sure that we help you transition into the culture, not only of the language but also the culture of academia, right, the culture of, you know, digital social culture. And you're saying that you would rather be thrown in the deep end, because you learn more. So many, many scaffolds, in some ways it's considered a hindrance to some. And when you talk to some students they say, "I learned more at School A because I had to. Here, when everybody is allowing me to use my language, giving me allowances, giving me allowances, what happens is, I use my language. Those times when I'm using my language, I'm not using English. So that kid over at High School A that doesn't have this program of integration, you know, then, I'm learning less than the student, and therefore I'm less competitive than this student." And those are from some of our high achievers. We get a lot of flak from some of our high achievers in terms of the allowances that we make for students in their, in their language acquisition, in their pace, in their rate, in how much we allow.
(Dr. Bragg, Interview 2, 03-25-2021)

In Excerpt 4-7, Dr. Bragg gave accounts of students who had expressed a preference for a "sink or swim" approach to learning English, so they had left Riverbend High School for other schools that did not provide such extensive language supports. He noted that at Riverbend, there

are “so many, many scaffolds, in some ways it’s considered a hindrance to some,” conveying the idea that ESOL-specific pedagogy might actually hinder language learning while not attributing the idea to himself or anyone in particular through his use of the passive voice (“it’s considered”). However, he did not seem to consider that students are not necessarily the best judges of how to teach, whatever the content might be. Their perspective is valuable and should be an important part of their educational experiences, but it should not be the defining criterion for evaluating success. In addition, an essential part of scaffolding is the removal of scaffolds as student ability develops, which Dr. Bragg did not appear to consider. By contrast, Carrie described scaffolding as she practiced it in her classroom and as she believed it was practiced throughout the school (especially in the English department). In Excerpt 4-8, Carrie explained Riverbend High School’s scaffolding cycle to me, paying attention to the provision as well as the removal of supports.

Excerpt 4-8

Carrie
We follow this scaffolding cycle, and it’s, it’s like a four-tiered scaffolding cycle, gosh, and I would have to look it up to say it directly, but basically it’s like it, we use the analogy of like, you know, a kid with training wheels on a bike and you slowly let them come off of the training wheels until they’re on their own. And in the English department especially, and I know that you working with the kids saw, we have to in ninth and tenth grade classes we have to scaffold for three different levels. So the newcomers and beginners, intermediate level and advanced, and that looks different with every lesson. But essentially, if you’re thinking of like using sentence starters for help, it’s those newcomers and beginners really need the sentence frames, before they need that topic sentence and then maybe they can fill in the blanks. And then you move to the beginners and maybe the beginners, it depends on whether they’re in the higher lower end but they might still need some of that newcomer work, or they might be more towards the intermediate where it’s, ‘okay I just need the sentence starter.’ And then the advanced is like ‘okay maybe I still just need these boxes to help organize but I, or I could have a list I could go get the language function book and look up the words I need to use.’ So it’s like gradually releasing them.
(Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021)

Here, Carrie indicated that scaffolding is intentional and personalized, designed for "gradual release" as students' proficiency develops and they are increasingly able to complete assignments without additional language supports. Given this description of scaffolding, I found it hard to imagine it being a hindrance to students' language development. Carrie had not been at Riverbend High School for as long as Dr. Bragg, but the discrepancies in their accounts that led me to wonder whether Dr. Bragg simply did not believe in the value of scaffolding as Carrie had described it or if he did not know about Riverbend High School's method. Beyond the issue of removing scaffolds, another notable difference between their descriptions of scaffolding was that L1 use was not one of the supports or means for differentiation that Carrie named. As I mentioned above, the question of allowing the "right amount" of student L1 use in the classroom was not a concern voiced by any other teachers than Dr. Bragg. I present findings related to this in much greater detail in Section 4.2, "Language Management: English as Default, English as Goal," but, in brief, this issue did not seem to be a concern to the other teachers largely because they simply did not do it. That is, they rarely or never permitted students to use their L1s on assignments (whether spoken or written) and rarely or never attempted to manage students' non-English language use otherwise. It did not seem to be a question or concern to them, which presented a stark divide between them and Dr. Bragg, who brought it up at least once in each interview.

As I discussed above, I perceived Dr. Bragg to stand apart from the other teachers in terms of TESOL preparation, although there was wide variation in the extent and nature of preparation across the entire group of educators. The fact that his TESOL preparation substantively differed from that of the other educators may also have resulted in or interacted with how he appeared to weigh the value of others' TESOL preparation. In Excerpt 4-6, above,

he emphasized differences in pedagogical approaches according to someone's race/ethnicity, not their experience, qualifications, or other characteristics, which I took to indicate that he found race/ethnicity to be as important as other characteristics. The aspect of the *body* in the historical body is powerful, as Scollon and Scollon (2004) wrote. Dr. Bragg, himself, emphasized to me more than once that, as a Black man, especially with a Ph.D., he was in the minority of the minority in the teaching profession. He was the only Black teacher I interviewed (although not the only one I tried to recruit, and while Alice was also a person of Color, she acknowledged—with frustration—that people often perceive her as White), and he was aware of and sensitive to the fact that race and language played a role in how he taught, how he was perceived, and how he would be heard and respected. He believed that his students would also be perceived by others with the power to shape their lives and careers, and that he had a responsibility to ensure their language, at least, would not be perceived in a way that would be detrimental to their futures. He said, outright, "Let's face it, when it comes to language, don't we also have impressions of education? Isn't our, isn't our use of language– doesn't that also blend into people's perceptions of education?" (Interview 3, 04-27-2021)

Dr. Bragg's concern was not limited to his students; he also told me about one of his children using a word, "obliserate," by accidentally combining "obliterate" and "eviscerate." He felt a duty to correct him, not only as a father, but also as a Black man who moved through the world and knew that others would judge his Black son especially harshly for inadvertently coining a word, whereas he believed his son would be rewarded for speaking "the Queen's English" (Interview 3, 04-27-2021). Dr. Bragg's experiences in the various spheres of his life, as Black male educator, as a father, as a Black man earning a Ph.D., and others, have contributed to an understandable concern about how the language practices of racialized, minoritized students

may be perceived by others and the effects those perceptions might have on those students. However, that concern was expressed as a desire to shape students' language practices because he was unable to shape others' perceptions, despite the fact that the language practices of minoritized communities are and will be the subjects of critique within a hegemonic social structure, regardless of how indistinguishable they may be from those of the dominant social group (Flores & Rosa, 2015). In addition to this concern about others' perceptions, Dr. Bragg was sensitive to the politics of educating "other people's children" (Delpit, 1995), because he had previously experienced being an insider to a community largely educated by people he perceived to be outsiders, such as when he taught in Baltimore City; he had classes that were entirely made up of Black students, while many of his colleagues were White. He appeared to be less sure of his own footing once he was the outsider, which may have contributed to him weighing the opinions of Hispanic educators more heavily than White educators, out of deference to those he perceived to be community insiders.

4.1.1.1 Summary of Historical Body. Delving into the historical body is important because it illuminates one of the discourse cycles that mediates the social or policy action of interest. In this research, better understanding the educators' historical bodies provides insight into understanding the reasoning they employed to reach the language policies they enacted in the school and classroom, policies that I detail in Section 4.2. I found that educators varied in the extent and nature of their TESOL preparation. In particular, among the teachers, some held master's degrees in ESOL, while others had completed shorter, formal training programs or none at all, instead obtaining ESOL certification through passing the required Praxis ESOL assessment. Teachers' formal training for teaching language learners played an important role in their teaching practice (their practices are detailed further below in Section 4.2). The historical

body, as only one of the discourse cycles illuminated through nexus analysis, intersects with the other discourse cycles, including the discourses in place. I describe salient discourses in place below, in Section 4.1.2.

4.1.2 Discourses in Place: Bilingualism, BICS/CALP, and "Academic Language"

As I elaborated on in Chapter 3, Kroskrity (2004) defined language ideologies as "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds" (p. 498), meaning that language ideologies structure and reproduce beliefs about language in the world to benefit a particular social group. The most prevalent language ideologies that I observed in the educators' interviews related to their varying perspectives on bilingualism, including the BICS/CALP dichotomy and "academic language" more generally. These sets of concepts constitute language ideologies under Kroskrity's (2004) definition because they reflect educators' beliefs and feelings about language use in social actions (interactions, test-taking, and other social actions), and these beliefs and feelings are consistent with larger, related discourses that privilege or demean the language practices of particular social groups. Thus, I characterize them as primary discourses in place in the nexus of practice, since discourses in place consist of "conceptual manifestations of wider circulating values, beliefs, and ideologies that are co-present in a moment of social action and provide conceptual affordances for individuals' actions" (Ou et al., 2021, p. 157).

Educators evinced varying language ideologies with respect to bilingualism, which I characterized as tending more toward an asset-focused or deficit-focused orientation. A common perspective on bilingualism is the "monolingual view of bilingualism," which asserts that bilinguals should be able to "pass" as monolinguals in either (or all) of their respective language communities (Grosjean, 2010, p. 20). Within a monolingual view of bilingualism, the only people who count as "real" bilinguals are those who are "the 'balanced,' the "perfect' bilinguals"

(Grosjean, 2010, p. 20). He referred to the monolingual, or "balanced," view of bilingualism as a myth because such individuals are so rare and the experience of living bilingually for most bilinguals is substantially and qualitatively different from such a conceptualization. Because the standard of balanced bilingualism is all-but-impossible to achieve, particularly when children are not given the opportunity to be educated in all of their languages, students cannot hope to measure up, and assessments (whether formal or informal) of their proficiency will simply serve to highlight areas in which they fall short. The monolingual view of bilingualism is especially problematic in education because if bilingual students do not demonstrate language abilities on par with monolingual students in both (or all) of their languages, the students may be perceived as lacking in one or both of their languages by educators, potentially leading to the application of "misleading and deficit-oriented labels to describe students" (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 10). For these reasons, I consider the balanced bilingualism perspective to have a deficit orientation toward language users.

In my own understanding of bilingualism, I use the term more broadly, following Grosjean (2010) to take a functionalist perspective on bilingualism, which emphasizes one's *use* of language in different contexts, rather than their *abilities* in different languages. He defined bilingual individuals as "those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives" (Grosjean, 2010, p. 4) and noted that such a definition significantly expands the category of individuals who can be considered bilingual. I consider a functional view of bilingualism to be asset-oriented, because it recognizes what language users can do in multiple languages and contexts, regardless of measured proficiency.

The ideological perspectives espoused by educators could also be characterized as different language orientations, as described in Section 2.1.2.1, "Orientations to Language in

Planning and Policy." Altogether, the educators largely held positions consistent with a language as resource orientation, less often a language as problem orientation, and seldom a language as right orientation. An educator at times might voice utterances consistent with language as resource and at other times voice utterances consistent with language as problem, revealing nuance and perhaps tension in how individuals viewed languages and language users. Above, I discussed different perspectives on who "counts" as bilingual, ranging from the restrictive, balanced bilingual viewpoint to the more expansive and inclusive functionalist perspective. The orientations to language, however, are more relevant to the question of the *uses* of bilingualism—what bilingual individuals can accomplish in society; how multiple languages can work to serve different purposes on individual, community, or societal levels; and what the consequences are resulting from the presence of multiple languages (and the presence of users of multiple languages). A given perspective on bilingualism does not necessarily predict or preclude an orientation taken by an educator on the use of language or bilingualism in society. For instance, a balanced bilingual perspective narrowly defines who is bilingual according to whether the language user has equally high linguistic abilities in all their languages, but the perspective could align with a language as resource orientation in which an individual highly values the extrinsic uses for language in the areas of "national security, diplomacy, military action, espionage, [and/or] business" (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 33). Indeed, such uses arguably require extremely advanced skills in multiple languages, given the high stakes of the potential outcomes from language-based work in these areas. Therefore, I draw on both sets of discourses (perspectives on individuals' bilingualism and orientations to language) to describe educators' ideological positions regarding language.

One way that educators described language learners' developing English proficiency is through invoking the discourse in place (DiP) of the BICS/CALP dichotomy. The notion of BICS/CALP ("Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills" and "Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency") was put forward by Cummins (1979) to describe the apparent distinction in language abilities for students who demonstrated "conversational fluency" but not "academic language proficiency" in an additional language (Cummins, 2013). Cummins (2013) argued that students may relatively quickly acquire conversational fluency in the language they are learning and be able "to carry on a conversation in familiar everyday situations" but take several years longer to develop "the specialized vocabulary, functions, and registers of language that are characteristic of the social institution of schooling" (p. 10) on par with native-speaker peers. The BICS/CALP dichotomy has since been thoroughly refuted for its linguistic inaccuracies and its contributions to deficit perspectives on minority language students (e.g., Edelsky et al., 1983; Faltis, 2013; Gee, 2014; MacSwan, 2000; MacSwan & Rolstad, 2010; Rolstad, 2017; Wiley & Rolstad, 2014). The theory is nevertheless so widely accepted that it has been resemiotized to be included on the *Praxis* Study Companion (ETS, 2022), for which the affiliated test is used in the certification of ESOL teachers in Maryland, among other states. Thus, it is hardly remarkable that in interviews, some educators referred to the BICS/CALP DiP by name or with more general terms, such as "conversational language," "conversational English," "academic language," or "academic English," which I present in excerpts further below. I found that principals expressed differing perspectives on bilingualism, which may have affected certain school policies. They did not set overt, restrictive language policies in terms of distribution or use of one language versus another, and they expressed clear support for bilingualism, generally, and dedication to promoting success for their multilingual students. Despite their support for bilingualism in

general, their perspectives on bilingualism for their students were somewhat instrumentalist or utilitarian in nature, in that a student's L1 was simply a tool to be used for developing their English language skills. In this way, their perspective contributed to what I saw as the broader, school-wide tolerance-oriented language policy manifested in the themes "English-as-default" and "English-as-goal" that I found to be consistent across my interviews with participants. (I expand on these themes in Section 4.2, "Language Management.")

Both principals expressed support for students' bilingualism, although they differed in their emphasis. When asked if bilingualism or biliteracy were goals Dr. Peterson had for students at Riverbend High School, she replied,

Excerpt 4-9

Dr. Peterson
Yeah, we definitely celebrate it. We have our world language teacher does a great job with that bi- biliteracy seal, and making students aware of it and what they would need to do for it. It's often easy for students who are bilingual in Spanish, and that they can– they're in the Spanish class and they can often apply for it, and even encouraging all of them to take Advanced Placement Spanish. We have others who are in like Italian class and that can be Spanish speakers or other languages as well. But there are opportunities for them also to do the bilinguals literacy seal and there's different exams for that, and she talks to every single one of them, lets them know this is an important thing, this is an honor to have on your diploma. So we talk about it, we need to probably do a better job just even talking about it at the ninth and tenth grade level, because it's often a conversation we have at the eleventh and twelfth, but we do celebrate, knowing your b– you know, bilingual skills and talking to students about how important it is to maintain it and to be proud of it. And so really taking pride in that. But that seal has been just a really great thing that the state has provided an opportunity to celebrate the power of bilingualism.
(Dr. Peterson, Interview 1, 01-22-2021).

However, celebrating someone's bilingualism is different from materially supporting it. Dr. Peterson's response indicated that she saw students as already bilingual and implied that all they needed was recognition for it, such as through earning the Seal of Biliteracy on their diploma. I interpreted her response to imply that the school does not have a further role in

actively helping students maintain their oral skills or develop their literacy skills in their L1. Indeed, it seemed that the school's responsibility even for encouraging participation in the Seal of Biliteracy was limited, given Dr. Peterson's acknowledgment that advertisement of the program to students was occurring in eleventh and twelfth grades but should begin sooner.

In contrast, when I asked Dr. Santos if bilingualism and biliteracy were goals he had for students at Hilltop High School, he clearly affirmed that bilingualism and biliteracy were indeed important goals, and achieving them required active support and intervention by educators. In fact, he interrupted my question to reply,

Excerpt 4-10

Dr. Santos
Yes, absolutely. Yes, without a doubt, like, I won't even let you finish that question. Our school is composed over ninety percent of students speak Spanish as a first language, and so you know inherently, we do Spanish as a graduation requirement. And we used to have Spanish be a part of the eleventh and twelfth grade experience, and we moved it to the ninth and tenth grade so that it could work concurrently with them learning English. And so, teaching some of those skills to reinforce them in Spanish. Because there is something about reinforcing what they're learning in English, in their Spanish classes from a literacy perspective that you know when you have those transferable skills, it's really helpful for kids.
(Dr. Santos, Interview 1, 01-15-2021)

There is a visible difference in emphasis in the principals' descriptions of their schools' approaches. Dr. Peterson described students' bilingualism as something to be "celebrated" through advertising the Seal the Biliteracy, whereas Dr. Santos seemed to view it as so foundational to student learning that course schedules are developed to specifically support language and biliteracy development. Dr. Peterson appeared to take students' language abilities for granted, in describing the process of obtaining the Seal as "often easy," and to shift responsibility for maintaining their language and taking pride in it to the students. Dr. Santos, on the other hand, acknowledged the need to provide structured support for students' L1s, especially

literacy in their L1, which, in turn, facilitated literacy and language learning in English. Both approaches are consistent with expediency-oriented policies, as described by Wiley (2012), in that they demonstrate "a pragmatic use of minority languages" (p. 71), whether to obtain an honor on a diploma or to assist in English language and literacy development. Both principals expressed viewpoints consistent with a language as resource orientation in that students' L1s had extrinsic value, whether for qualifying students for an additional credential or for supporting their acquisition of an additional language.

Among the teachers, I found a variety of conceptions of bilingualism, ranging from functional bilingualism (Alice, Linda, and Dr. Bragg) to a more restrictive understanding of bilingualism consistent with "balanced bilingualism" (Rachel). Interestingly, Carrie expressed both perspectives on bilingualism at different points during the semester. In Interview 2 in March of 2021, she was discussing standardized testing for EL-designated students, and in her comments she said,

Excerpt 4-11

Carrie
So, I mean, you can have a kid that's born in the United States that speaks English but speaks also another language in their household. And so they're bilingual, which is amazing. But, it's still the capacity of well, have they perfected both languages? (Carrie, Interview 2, 03-03-2021)

In this excerpt, Carrie positioned a given child born in the U.S. and growing up speaking both English and another language in their home as bilingual, but she then undermined this positioning. By asking whether the child has "perfected both languages," she demonstrated a "balanced bilingualism" perspective, in that she indicated it is not only possible to "perfect" multiple languages but perhaps necessary for being truly bilingual. However, in Interview 3 later that same month, I asked her directly how she would define bilingualism, to which she replied,

Excerpt 4-12

Carrie
That's an interesting question. Because I would say, my first instinct is to say every kid at our school I would quali- or classify them as bilingual, right, and that's without having mastered a language, but I think, you know, the ability to move through a society that speaks a different language than you, and you can still adapt and understand what's going on and get through and move through life, like, even if you can't produce most of the language. I mean, could that still be considered bilingual and that's, that's one thing that I think language is just this huge, big like spectrum, right. So, I mean, I don't know how I would necessarily define it, but I guess like, you know, I might say like bi- bilingualism is like, you know, growing up, speaking- or with your native language, or whatever is spoken in the home and then being able to adapt to an environment that maybe doesn't speak that same language but you can still move through it. And that that goes against like actually like mastering two languages, right, and I know that if you're thinking of career- like careers in bilingualism means a different thing, like you're proficient in the language. And, you know, you speak like a quote, native speaker, which is a term that is kind of a problematic in my, my mind. But, yeah, I think probably that, I don't know. I've never really thought about it, because I just like I said I just see all of our students as being bilingual or trilingual or multilingual, because they all speak so many languages. Yeah, it it it really hit for me, you know, White American, only growing up speaking one language, and it really hit for me when I was put into a position like my students. You know, I moved to Indonesia and of course that was like, because I wanted to. But when I did Peace Corps, you know, not knowing a language, and then having to fully adapt and coming out being able to teach in Indonesian and being able to- like my students in Indonesia- and being able to speak with my host family and moved through society, order, order food, you know what I'm saying so. It's just, I think what most people would think it is is just being fluent in more than one language, But I don't necessarily see it that way.
(Carrie, Interview 3, 03-26-2021)

While she still brought up the idea of "mastering" two languages, in Excerpt 4-12 Carrie revealed a more nuanced perspective on bilingualism than previously, that bilingualism could refer to one's ability to move through the world using an additional language to the one they grew up using, even if they have not "perfected" their additional language. If all students in the school could be classified as bilingual by virtue of their abilities to function linguistically in a variety of circumstances and contexts, regardless of having potentially very low assessed proficiency in English, then bilingualism would necessarily be a much more expansive and flexible quality than she previously described. With Riverbend High School being a mastery

school, the use of "mastery" to describe competence or ability likely came easily and naturally for Carrie, and was similarly used by her principal, Dr. Peterson, in our first interview in 2019, in which she said, "Being bilingual is mastering two languages" (Interview 1a, 07-22-2019). In both of these cases, I do not interpret it to be synonymous with "perfecting" a language, as in Excerpt 4-11, but more akin to demonstrating sufficient functional competence.

During our interviews, Carrie told me that she liked to take advantage of professional development or other training experiences whenever possible, and given the differences in her two responses, I find it possible that something occurred in the time between interviews to prompt her apparent change in perspective—although I did not ask at the time. In such a case, a professional development experience could lead to a change the historical body, which could also change the discourses in place invoked, as new experiences and knowledge are added to an individual's ever-changing historical body. Beyond this hypothesized possibility, Carrie's prior experience as a language learner in a second language context, which she recognized was similar to and different from the experiences of her students in important ways, gave her a better understanding of the functional bilingualism her students possess. In Excerpt 4-11, Carrie expressed a language as resource orientation by pointing to the ways that an additional language had intrinsic value and could be used for the personal benefits of engaging with people and getting to know a new culture. Multilingualism also had extrinsic benefits for those who were sufficiently proficient, in that it could open up new career possibilities.

In Excerpt 4-13, Alice expressed a functionalist understanding of bilingualism as consisting of "communicating meaningfully and making things work," that is, language use rather than proficiency, similar to Carrie's comments in Excerpt 4-12. She excepted brand-new newcomers from the category of bilinguals but implied that after a short period of time, even

those students would qualify as bilingual, once they have "[wrapped] their head around what's going on" and can at least minimally function and interact in contexts that require English.

Excerpt 4-13

Alice
Alice: Just someone who feels that they can express themselves appropriately in different languages and communicate with others meaningfully. **Karen:** *Would you say that your students are bilingual, or multilingual or that you have* [**Alice:** Oh! Yeah.] *some?* **Alice:** Definitely. Absolutely. For sure. Without question. **Karen:** *All of them?* **Alice:** I mean, I would say, with the exception of maybe the newcomer who's been here for a week ((laughs))[29] who, you know, they're- they're just trying to kind of wrap their head around what's going on. I would say, yeah, all of them are at the very least, bilingual. Even the ones who are still developing language acquisition, like they're still showing that, you know, they're living in an English-speaking society, their teachers are not really speaking to them in their L1 for the most part, and they're they're communicating meaningfully and making things work. And I do have many students who are multilingual come in speaking, four or five languages fluently and then now they're adding English to the list. So, I would say for sure.
(Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021)

Alice, therefore, demonstrated an understanding of bilingualism consistent with an assets-based approach to TESOL. Her comments revealed a perception that students at varying stages of second language acquisition may be classified as bilingual because they meaningfully engage with the world and the people in it through the use of multiple languages, regardless of external

[29] Double parentheses indicate paralinguistic content.

judgments of proficiency. Therefore, their newly acquired language functioned as a resource for them to help them move through the world.

Linda also exhibited a functionalist view of bilingualism, characterizing "many" to "most" of her students as bilingual, excepting newcomer students as Alice did. In a somewhat more nuanced definition of bilingualism than Carrie's or Alice's, Linda distinguished between receptive and productive skills, pointing to the fact that students who are not yet able to produce much in English are still developing knowledge of English and capable of using that knowledge.

Excerpt 4-14

Linda
Karen: *Would you say that your students are bilingual?* **Linda:** Many of them are. I mean, as I said, we do have some newcomers. And, I mean, to some degree, I think they I mean I guess it depends what you're saying. I mean, a lot of them can can hear it and understand it, they just can't produce it. […] Just like, if I, if I just think don't think of it too much, I'd say most of them are, and some of them are not. I mean some of, I would say some of them, you know, they just started school in this country like two months ago. They might know a couple of words but probably not a whole lot. (Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021)

Linda's description of students who could understand spoken English but not yet produce it as being bilingual implied an inclusive and assets-based definition of bilingualism that recognized language learners' abilities rather than emphasizing what they lacked. Rachel, on the other hand, evidenced a stricter conception of bilingualism, consistent with balanced bilingualism, and which included far fewer students and specifically referred to knowledge of "school-related topics" in students' L1 and English (Excerpt 4-15). In her Interview 1, Rachel recounted her experiences teaching English in Japan and described the unsuccessful language learning she observed there, in which Japanese students would "study almost their entire school

career and then they can't speak it, they can maybe read and write" (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021). This limitation that Rachel drew around bilingualism, in which students who could function in two domains (reading and writing) but not in speaking were not bilingual, stands in marked contrast to the definition Linda employed in which students who could listen but not speak productively were bilingual.

Excerpt 4-15

Rachel
Karen: *Do you– would you say that your students are bilingual, like your personal students or students in the school, more generally?* **Rachel:** No, most students– There's some students who maybe fall in the category of being bilingual. Most students have like– maybe not most. There's a high percentage of our students have a limited or have a what do you call, like it have an interrupted education in their first language, so there's– or there's gaps of their understanding of Spanish or Arabic or Farsi– what else do we have? Pashto– they, there's gaps in that language? And then we have for like our long term learners the shift, where they've forgotten their first language and they really only know more academic things in English, so they struggle, like they couldn't really explain math to their peer who they're trying to maybe help us explain something to a new student, they don't know what those words are in Spanish anymore. So, some of our students who had a really good formal education in their home country are still really strong Spanish speakers so we do have some students that I would say it's like a small, small population of students who could do that, who could really switch between the two between their first language and English. Yeah. **Karen:** *So what is, what is your definition for bilingual?* **Rachel:** Would be, I guess to have a working like working knowledge of aca– I guess school-related topics, in both in Spanish and in English. But I guess I would say our students can function as interpreters for their parents in– or like in situations- social situations they can function in English and Spanish for parents but I guess like formally no, or if they were going to– I guess this is kind of my– I have– some of my seniors are applying for college and so (they have to give)[30] a good estimate, I was like, 'No, I wouldn't– not quite bilingual,' like not bilingual in

[30] Single parentheses indicate transcriber's best guess for transcription.

Rachel
the sense that the college application is asking them are they bilingual. But yes, I guess our students can, can get between the– go between the two languages. Yeah. In social situations. (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

Overall, Rachel characterized language ability that did not include reading, writing, speaking, and listening and academic knowledge equally distributed across multiple languages as less than bilingual. I interpret Rachel's understanding of bilingualism to stem from her experience with WIDA's suite of materials, including the ACCESS test, Standards, Can Do descriptors, and others. ACCESS is used to measure students' language proficiency to qualify them for continuing to receive or to exit from language services, and its tested language construct is academic language in the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Rachel has had extensive experience with ACCESS, and I believe the test had a direct and substantial influence on her definition of bilingualism. I saw Rachel's definition of bilingualism as being dependent on "academic language" proficiency in both a student's L1 and in English as discursively linked to WIDA's materials. The definition of proficiency embedded in the materials was resemiotized into Rachel's historical body through the intersection with WIDA as a discourse in place.

Students who were not "balanced bilinguals" did not seem to count as bilingual at all, according to Rachel's description in Excerpt 4-15. Despite the fact that she said that students "can function as interpreters" for their parents, Rachel did not see them as fully bilingual because they were only bilingual in social situations, not academic or formal ones. That is to say, she perceived students to be proficient in social or conversational language, but not in academic language. While she recognized that bilingualism could be a resource for individuals, such as in standing out in the college admissions process for their bilingualism, her restricted perspective

on who qualified as bilingual thus also restricted the extent of the benefits incurred by individuals. Despite her perception that her students could not avail themselves of the benefits of bilingualism in an institutional context, these same students nevertheless demonstrated the value of bilingualism through their abilities to translate for their parents or negotiate other social situations in multiple languages. Their languages were resources to them and their communities, regardless of whether they were recognized as such.

A marked difference between Rachel's characterization of bilingualism and that of the other teachers was that she also evaluated the role students' L1s in their linguistic repertoires. Whether it was due to interrupted educational experiences (e.g., SIFE students), low L1 literacy, or simply context-specific knowledge that resulted from being educated exclusively in English (e.g., LTEL-designated students), many students lacked academic knowledge or skills in their L1s. However, academic content knowledge, literacy, and language ability are all separate phenomena, and while they intersect, they are not identical. The students that Rachel teaches are all native speakers of their L1s, and therefore, no evaluation is needed to determine L1 proficiency. I interpret Rachel's comments to mean that she extended WIDA's definition of proficiency in English (as an additional language) to language proficiency writ large, including L1 proficiency.

When I asked Dr. Bragg about whether any of his students were bilingual, his response began with what I interpreted as a somewhat functionalist perspective on bilingualism, similar to Carrie, Alice, and Linda: "Yeah, big time. Big time. Yeah, I mean there are different, there are different, like levels. Like, and so, yes. So the straight answer is yes. You know, the more complexified answer is they're at different levels of bilingualism, right" (Dr. Bragg, Interview 3,

04-27-2021). I followed up and asked about those different levels of bilingualism, and as he continued, his response focused more on academic language, similarly to Rachel in 4-15.

Excerpt 4-16

Dr. Bragg
Karen: *What are what are like the different components, or, you know, how do you determine the level of bilingualism, for someone?* **Dr. Bragg:** Yeah, it's just kind of like it goes to register, right, formalism right, how much you're able to, right, kick it, so to speak. When I went to Canada, of course, like I said, I needed crutches, you know, linguistically. I was doing well in some areas and in certain areas I would hit a full stop, [**Karen:** Yeah.][31] right. Some might, you know, say I'm intermediate when it comes to the same deal with the kids. They're able to, you know, basic interpersonal communication, they can say certain things. When it comes to academic language, some of them are just, they're, they're stilted. Right. And then we go, "okay, well, you know what- at what level?" You can be completely (fluent) when it comes to, you know, basic interpersonal communication, but then not so fluent when it comes to academic, right, language. (Dr. Bragg, Interview 3, 04-27-2021)

In this excerpt, Dr. Bragg named the context in which language was used as relevant to characterizing bilingualism, describing that when he was in a French environment, he "was doing well in some areas and in certain areas [he] would hit a full stop." It is notable that in his response, Dr. Bragg referred specifically to the context of Francophone Canada. While he could have used English exclusively, as he told me that when he "hit a full stop," his interlocutor would shift to English, he preferred to use French as much as he was able. In this way, he subtly indicated that he valued societal and personal multilingualism, consistent with a language as resource orientation. However, as I describe above in Section 4.1.1 and further below in Section

[31] Square brackets with other's speech indicate backchanneling, or signs of discursive cooperation, including "interjections such as, 'O.K.,' 'right,' 'aha,' or nods or other body movements" (Gumperz, 1982, p. 163).

4.2, he also voiced positions consistent with a language as problem orientation, in which the presence of multiple languages was seen as disruptive and even that "speaking a minority language [was] a communicative disability to be overcome" (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 33). These two orientations to language seemed to be frequently in tension in my interviews with Dr. Bragg.

In Excerpt 4-16, Dr. Bragg drew an equivalency between this example and his students' language abilities, saying that some students may be fluent in "basic interpersonal communication, but then not so fluent" in academic language. By responding to a question about the "levels" of bilingualism with reference to the BICS/CALP discourse in place, Dr. Bragg implied that he saw CALP as at a higher level than BICS, rather than simply being a different register[32], which would not connote a sense of being more or less advanced. In excerpt 4-16, he succinctly highlighted the importance of the BICS/CALP dichotomy discourse in educators' understandings of students' linguistic and academic skills.

Almost all the educators I interviewed talked about the importance of mastering CALP or academic language, in addition to BICS or conversational language. For instance, Dr. Peterson described to me a pair of students at her school, a brother and sister, "who just came this year, and within a few months he'd mastered BICS, and he's– one would not know that he is a newcomer," contrasting him with his sister, who was not progressing as quickly (Dr. Peterson, Interview 1a, 07-22-2019). While she was pointing to the brother's language development as an achievement, she was relying on the BICS/CALP framework to understand and characterize his

[32] "Registers are language varieties associated with a particular combination of situational characteristics and communicative purposes, which in turn typically exhibit linguistic similarities" (Goulart et al., 2020).

developing bilingualism. As I introduce above (and discuss in greater detail in Chapter 7), the BICS/CALP dichotomy is not a linguistically accurate theory for describing language development for EL-designated students, but it is a widely invoked discourse in place among educators. Educators' reliance on BICS/CALP for informing their understanding of bilingualism and their students' developing language skills was reflected in their instructional practices and language management efforts that I document in Section 4.2. That is to say, BICS/CALP as part of the discourses in place in the nexus of practice mediated the educators' policy actions.

"Academic language" as a concept has substantial overlap with BICS/CALP. Although they have different provenances and are not identical, I connect them here because of their conceptual similarities and interchangeable use by educators in our interviews. Academic language has been variably defined in research literature (see, e.g., Anstrom et al., 2010), and I go into it in more detail in Chapter 7, Section 7.2.2. WIDA's 2012 Amplification of The English Language Development Standards: Kindergarten-Grade 12[33] defined academic language as "the oral and written text required to succeed in school that entails deep understanding and communication of the language of content within a classroom environment; revolves around meaningful application of specific criteria related to Linguistic Complexity at the discourse dimension, Language Forms and Conventions at the sentence dimension, and Vocabulary Usage at the word/phrase dimension within the particular context in which communication occurs"

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[33] WIDA released a revised standards framework in 2020. I refer to both the 2012 and 2020 editions because the ACCESS test in circulation was most likely designed according to the 2012 edition, given the long timeline of test development. In addition, educators familiar with the WIDA standards and affiliated materials were likely first introduced to the 2012, or possibly 2007, edition of the standards.

(WIDA, 2012, p. 110). The school handbook for Riverbend High School[34] stated, "The concept academic language simultaneously refers to academic words, concepts, and processes within each content area." These sets of documents are important textual discourses in place that intersected with other discourses invoked by the educators. The teachers did not overtly refer to the school handbook in our interviews (regarding academic language or other topics), but given that school handbooks are themselves policy documents (Corson, 1999), the handbook is an important material component of discourses in place with respect to educators' policy actions.

Academic language was a predominant discourse in place in the educator interviews, especially for the ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School (Rachel and Linda), but both ELA teachers (Alice and Carrie) also discussed it. Teachers often referred to academic language, how they taught it, and whether or not students were adequately learning it. Given its prevalence in interviews, importance to teachers, and the wide set of possible definitions, I wanted to know what academic language meant to teachers, and I received a range of definitions and characteristics. Both ELA teachers, Alice and Carrie, and both ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School, Linda and Rachel, included vocabulary as a significant element of academic language. These teachers all also either named or described language functions (e.g., compare/contrast, persuade, inform, sequence, identify, categorize) as another element of academic language. In the following excerpt, I asked Alice to define academic language and talk about how she understood it.

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[34] I was only able to obtain a school handbook for RHS, but Dr. Peterson, Dr. Bragg, and Alice told me how similar RHS and HHS are, since they were designed jointly as "sister schools" and based on common values and practices. I do not provide a citation for direct quotes from the school handbook to maintain anonymity.

Excerpt 4-17

Alice

Karen:
What- what do you think counts as academic language, like what would you define that to be?

Alice:
I guess academic language would be content-specific language that kids use in that space, um more likely than they would use outside of that space, whether that's socially or even within another class. So the sci- academic language they have in science would be like their tier two and three vocabulary that's specific to whatever the content area or subject is at that point. Does that answer the question? ((laughs))

[…]

Karen:
Is it more than vocabulary?

Alice:
I mean, they have to understand the concept behind it, to understand the vocabulary. You can't just throw out a term like mitosis and not know anything else about it. So I think when I look at the WIDA rubrics and stuff like that, because we do look at those to help assess students', you know, progress in general, it does for the most part feel that the academic language is in the vocabulary, you know, band there of the writing and speaking rubric. I guess you could say the academic part can also be in the like linguistic complexity if you're looking at like their English and things like that, to see, you know, how well are they organizing their writing and things like that, that's maybe a more broad sense of looking at academic language, if you're trying to see if they can use things like higher level transition words or, you know, use the right type of tone or something like that. Or the register, you know, for the higher level, like, you know, tenth grade, eleventh grade kids who are taking WIDA, seeing if they can write in a more– like when it's asking to write a report versus a narrative or something like that. But I think in general, the WIDA rubric looks (at) academic language within the vocabulary band.

Karen:
So like a report versus a narrative, it gets a little bit into like language functions a little bit or an argument– or argumentative essay or a persuasive essay versus–

Alice:
Yup. And they'd have to know some of the language to be able to communicate that it is a persuasive essay versus an informative essay or something.

(Alice, Interview 2, 03-10-2021)

In her description of academic language, Alice explicitly named "the WIDA rubrics" and used language that echoed the 2012 WIDA standards framework, such as referring to "linguistic

complexity" and even producing a rough paraphrase of English Language Development Standard 4, "The language of science" in her first turn in Excerpt 4-17: "English language learners **communicate** information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Science**" (p. 4; boldface text in original). Naming and echoing language from WIDA to define academic language shows the interdiscursive connections between Alice's information about the concept (contained within her historical body) and WIDA's materials as the source of the information, as material and conceptual content within the circulating discourses in place. This example accentuates WIDA's role in the education of EL-designated students at Hilltop High School. Beyond its connection to her preparation in TESOL, Alice's response shows a thoughtful perspective on the concept of academic language. She contextualized academic language within a particular discipline and space in which language would be used, and she included technical vocabulary and genre-specific conventions in her definition. Alice's definition of academic language was nuanced and technical, but it still implied some degree of hierarchy between academic language and conversational language in that academic language (as assessed by the WIDA rubrics) would be better organized and have "higher level transition words." The intersecting discourses of nexus analysis are visible in Excerpt 4-17: Alice's experiences with WIDA's materials were encoded in her historical body, such that she discursively reproduced their content (in paraphrase) regarding the concept of academic language, all of which mediated the policy action of her pedagogical decision-making. The decisions themselves are not visible, but the indication that her understanding of academic language would influence her pedagogy (e.g., encouraging the use of "higher level transition words" to signal more advanced academic language) gives evidence of the policy action mediated by the intersecting discourses.

Linda differed from Alice in her response to the same question in that Linda did not have a ready answer, although she included some elements of academic language that were consistent with what Alice included, such as vocabulary, transition words, and discourse-level linguistic complexity. Excerpt 4-18 shows how Linda talked through her thoughts to answer my question.

Excerpt 4-18

Linda
Karen: *But would you talk more about– because WIDA says it's testing academic language, right. Like, whatever that is. So so what what is that like? Like, to you, what do you think?* **Linda:** So for me, it's it's– I think it has to do with, like, the depth of of the of the conversation or the- of the writing. And for me, I almost like providing. Can you provide details? Can you, can you kind of sound like you know what you're you're talking about here instead of just glossing over it? So then that gets into also how we organize our thoughts. Which I'm not doing a very good job of here. ((Karen laughs)) But so then, you know, so then we talk a little bit about some of those, like connecting kinds of words that that that we want to see. And then that also and then and we talk about– that's hard to find. I mean, because there's of course, there's like the tier three vocabulary that we want to see as well. But I, to me, it's sort of like if I knew a topic, how would I, as a native speaker, explain it? You know, how how many words would I put into it that are very specific to it? And just how much how much could I go into it? You know, and when students are starting out, it's very short discourse and very, very general kinds of words. And sometimes it's like, I don't even know what you're talking about, even when- because it's so vague. And then it's just kind of as a while- after a while you can see the development. And I think having those academic words and some of the (cons-)[35], you know, the formation of the sentences, it shows the development, and it and it is more academic and it shows the development because I don't have to, my brain doesn't have to focus so much on the basics. And now I can really get into details and describe my thoughts or describe a process, or whatever it is, and it's to, I mean– and it's really so that you can do that on a job or if you want to go to college. That's what that's the level you have to be at. Your teachers will be expecting in your discussion section or, you know, when you have to write that paper. So it's I mean, it is all kind of getting them ready for for that. So that's I think why why the emphasis is on the academics. But I mean, you you want to sound like, you know what you're talking about. In general, I think so. You know, you can't always have simple sentences or just words and phrases to to to

[35] Single parentheses indicate transcriber's best guess for transcription; Linda may have been beginning to say the word "construction."

Linda

do that. So. I don't know. Yeah, it's diff– it's– I don't know, because if you're teaching adults, that's that's not what they're saying. It's more like in this, I feel like– I mean, I haven't done a whole lot of adult teaching, but I feel like it's– like in this situation, these are the phrases you need to know and these are the words that you need to know. And let's practice saying some of those things so that you can just say it. But I mean, students here are required to do, you know, they have the same graduation requirements that every other student has. So they need to be able to do some of these things. And then we do want them going on to to things bigger and better than than high school. So we want them to be ready. So I think that's why there is that emphasis. At least that's why WIDA has that emphasis. ((whispers)) I don't know. ((normal volume)) I don't know. No one's ever asked me that. So it's like yes, like it's good, like questioning. Why? Why are we doing this? Why did we buy into this? Yeah. Because that is the one test that I do I do like.

(Linda, Interview 2, 03-10-2021)

In this excerpt, Linda touched on various aspects of academic language, such as using precise and specific vocabulary, providing supporting details, speaking or writing with an authoritative tone, organizing and making connections between ideas, employing complex syntax, and building a repertoire of chunks to automatize language use. She ranged over multiple topics in her response, including the dynamic interplay between language development and academic content knowledge—that as students' language develops, they are more able to focus on academic content, rather than "[having] to focus so much on the basics," and as their content knowledge grows, they are increasingly able to "get into details and describe [their] thoughts or describe a process."

While speaking, Linda reflected on the fact that this was the first time she had ever really given thought to what academic language was or why it was so important for her students to learn and use it, even though almost all the educators that I interviewed emphasized its importance. Linda's asking "Why are we doing this? Why did we buy into this?" was especially notable because it was the only occurrence in my entire data set in which an educator questioned their allegiance to "the one test" that was otherwise universally regarded as a good test. Linda

remarked on how she had not previously considered what academic language meant, and in her response I do not believe she ultimately arrived at a definition she was entirely satisfied with. However, I found her response to be the most thoughtful and thought-provoking of all the responses I received to my questions about academic language because she seemed to seriously contemplate the question and its implications—in my interpretation, precisely because she did not already have a pat answer.

I believe that academic language as a concept is often used to reinforce ideologies that position the language used by EL-designated students (and other language-minority speakers) as inherently inferior to that of dominant-group speakers, so I was struck by Linda's questioning of the premise of a concept I saw as taken for granted by other educators. According to Rolstad (2017), "dichotomies of language proficiency," such as BICS/CALP or academic language versus conversational language, "[represent] linguistic differences as linguistically different ability levels" and have been used by practitioners and researchers in education and psychology "to explain school failure among children in disadvantaged communities" (Rolstad, 2017, p. 3). That is to say, linguistic *differences* have been framed as *deficits* and positioned as the reasons that language-minority students do not succeed academically at equal rates as dominant-group students. In Chapter 7, Section 7.2.2, I go into greater depth regarding the implications of the concepts of academic language and BICS/CALP. Despite the fraught implications and history of academic language, the ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School used their "language rubric," adapted from WIDA's materials, to teach and assess academic language, thereby empowering students in their own language development, which I show in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1.

As I quoted above, Dr. Bragg, Dr. Peterson, Alice, Rachel, and Linda drew on discourses in place of academic language and/or the BICS/CALP dichotomy in our interviews. As is evident

in educators' comments above, such as Rachel's in Excerpt 4-15 or Dr. Bragg's in Excerpt 4-16, of educators' reproductions of discourses in place regarding ideologies about bilingualism (whether tending more toward a functionalist or balanced bilingualism understanding of who qualifies as bilingual) intersected with discourses in place regarding the value of bilingualism in and for society (that is, language orientations). These intersections produced a nuanced application of the language as resource orientation, in which language—specifically bilingualism—was a resource only in constrained instances for limited groups of individuals. If a student was not sufficiently bilingual according to the educator's understanding of language development, such as through having developed both conversational and academic language in English (and potentially in their L1 as well), then their languages were not, in fact, resources, but rather problems to be solved. The ESOL teachers (Dr. Bragg, Rachel, and Linda), in particular, seemed to see it as a goal to advance students from conversational language (BICS) to academic language (CALP). Both Linda and Rachel described how a student's lack of progress in developing academic language resulted in prolonged EL status and LTEL designation (Excerpts 4-19, 4-20, 4-21), signaling the importance of academic language to their teaching practice. In Excerpt 4-19, Linda described how, rather than being an achievement, strong or fluent conversational English functioned almost as a trap for many students because it led teachers to misjudge students' actual language abilities.

Excerpt 4-19

Linda
Karen: *What do you think causes a student to become a long term English learner? Why do some take longer while others sort of progress on their timeline?* **Linda:** Yeah, I you know, everybody has their own story. But part of it– maybe, maybe. So a lot of my long terms ELLs, their their conversational English is very strong I think. And a lot of people

Linda
wouldn't even know, you know, if you're talking about general things that, that they're still, that this is their second language. My guess is and this is more from my old school I used to work at, I'd often have to remind a lot of the content teachers that certain students were English language learners because they would have just a conversation with the students about "how's your day going?" Or, you know, "oh, I like what you're wearing" or, you know, "did you watch that game last night" or whatever it was, it was general. They could have a conversation with them. And then they thought, "oh, well, then they understand everything that I'm giving to them.' And I'd have to remind them that when you're using some of these terms or you're asking them to do some of this writing, they're going to need some supports, that that's why I'm in this classroom, because I was like co-teaching. But they would often forget some of these students. (Linda, Interview 2, 03-10-2021)

Linda described how some students appeared to be more proficient in English than they really were because they could carry on normal conversations about mundane topics with teachers, and this apparent proficiency via fluency in BICS contributed to teachers' complacency regarding the students' needs. Inaccurate perceptions of students' proficiency then caused teachers to fail to provide necessary language supports, meaning, the influence of the BICS/CALP discourse in place mediated the teacher's actions (or, possibly, lack of action), which then had long-term ramifications for the students. Because students in Maryland can only shed their EL designation through passing the WIDA ACCESS test (earning an overall level of 4.5 or higher) and ACCESS purportedly assesses academic English, an inability to develop or demonstrate knowledge of academic English results in students retaining their EL status and eventually becoming long-term ELs. This distinction between conversational English and academic English was key for the ESOL teachers I interviewed to how they understood the phenomenon of students entering LTEL status. Students whom they judged to be proficient but who did not test out of ESOL services were thus responsible for their own status because they personally failed to demonstrate academic English on ACCESS.

In Excerpt 4-20, Linda gave an example of a particular student who was classified as an LTEL, and she ascribed his receiving LTEL status and then being reclassified out of LTEL (and EL) status to his own personal agency.

Excerpt 4-20

Linda
I've had some long-term- I had this long-term EL comes to mind. And, oh my gosh, getting him to say anything than a basic simple sentence, it's like pulling teeth. And I've told him– and this is this is what I see in class, but he knows, I mean, he understands, he should have tested out years ago. Like this is what I'm looking for. so I guess he was listening. He does tell me he is a lazy student. He uses those words to define himself. I'm like, "Okay." So I guess on test day, he had been listening and he really did everything that that he needed to do and he tested out. I was like, "Good." Because I still have him. Because I have RELs[36], and he's still giving me like little nothing, I'm like, "How did you test out? This is like a level two. How did you do this?" I know I guess he's capable of it. Sometimes he didn't want to.
(Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021)

In this excerpt, Linda described a student who retained his EL status for several years beyond attaining proficiency, in Linda's estimation. She noted that he referred to himself as "lazy," and she described his behavior as a student in ways that could be seen as lazy, that he would not "say anything [longer] than a basic simple sentence." He tested out of language services because, in Linda's view, he finally "[wanted] to," though he had been capable of doing so for years. In Excerpt 4-21, Rachel gave a similar example of an LTEL-designated student who did not exit language services for years because he did not try hard enough on the test.

Excerpt 4-21

Rachel
[…] a lot of the students who are long-term, it's like they have like really strong colloquial English, and they don't have a Spanish accent or a French accent or whatever. But they, they don't have strong academic vocabulary or critical thinking skills to be able to produce more,

[36] REL stands for Reclassified English Learner. RELs do not receive language services but are monitored (in terms of performance on state academic achievement tests) for two years following reclassification.

Rachel

which is what you need to do at high school level to pass the test. And an example of a long-term student who it took him finally exited- he just graduated last year- he finally exited, he was in the United States his entire life. He finally exited his ju- what is it, his senior- yeah, last year, last year's test, he finally exited before graduate- graduating high school. And he'd actually had decreasing data, like he almost exited, you know, at that elementary school. And then he- his scores went down for a while or he'd have a jump. It was like eighth grade, he was back at like a 3.5. And then he took it with us as freshman year and totally tanked. But he, he didn't do- because he just- he admitted, like, "Oh, I just clicked, randomly clicked." And then his sophomore year, I was administering the speaking test. And then I heard him, you know, I could hear his answering to the computer. And it was asking a, like a question about comparing and contrasting like, you know, it gives you this whole spiel about pros and cons of something, and then you have to say it? And he was like- it was like school day or something. And he's like, "Oh, yeah, I think I like short classes." Click. That was his answer to this, you know, the question was something probably asking him to, like, explain why this would be better than this. And, you know, using evidence from the screen or the t- or the article, or whatever. And he just, "Yeah, that's cool." Click. Or, you know– and using very casual and non-academic language of like, "Yeah, it's no fun to sit in ninety-minute classes." Click. You know. Like, I was just like, and then sure enough, he didn't- he placed at the A– or no, actually, we had actually had to do a tier override for him. So it was like, he, it means he like clicked through on the reading and writing, he got placed into Tier A, and so we overrode it so he would get the higher speaking test. And then what he answered and he got a score decrease, and then we finally had this, like, "what are you doing? You have to take this test seriously." So then, by eleventh grade, he was really trying really hard. He got close to exiting, like a 4.3. And then finally, the second try senior year, he could exit. So. That's some anecdotal experience with a long-term student.

(Rachel, Interview 3, 04-14-2021)

In this excerpt, Rachel began by explaining that many students classified as LTELS have "really strong colloquial English" and lack an accent—so perhaps are perceived as "native speakers"—but "they don't have strong academic vocabulary or critical thinking skills," which she believed were necessary for truly being proficient in English. She went on to give the example of a student who retained his LTEL status longer than he should have because he did not try hard enough on the ACCESS test: he "randomly clicked" through the test or answered with "very casual and non-academic language." Thus, his continuing LTEL status was the result of his own actions, rather than other causes that would lead to a student who had been "in the United

States his entire life," most likely in English-only schooling throughout his education, to be classified as an English learner until twelfth grade.

Alice also saw how students could get "stuck" in ESOL services, but she told a different story about what she thought the trap was. In Excerpt 4-22, she gave her account of the assessment-classification-instruction-assessment cycle that produced LTEL-designated students.

Excerpt 4-22

Alice
Karen: You mentioned long-term ELLs, which I think is really interesting. *Why- why do you think some students end up in a long-term ELL category?* **Alice:** Oh, my God. ((Karen laughs)) OK. It's a whole thing. So when- when I did my teacher prep program, the MCERT, I- […] I bring this up because one of the most insightful things I got from that was we did E- the ESOL screening in kindergarten and, basically, if the kid didn't speak English at home or was born somewhere else or something like that, like automatically screened for ESOL. Any type of anomaly– I don't even want to say an anomaly– but the errors that were made, you know, like "Oh! Put him in ESOL," and it just felt very like- this doesn't seem right. You know, it's a kindergartner. Like they're going to make mistakes and, either way, what I I kind of took away, because I did a fourth and fifth grade when I was there, was these kids kind of got quickly funneled into ESOL and then they couldn't get out. And then because they couldn't get out of ESOL, they would be pulled from their general class to receive ESOL instruction and be missing the reading instruction. And they were already, you know, their speaking and listening was just like their peers, native speaker, but it seems like they were either just struggling readers like any other native English speaking kid, or, B, they were struggling to learn how to read because they were missing the reading instruction to do the ESOL instruction, which they did didn't really need. And that- then they get stuck because they can't exit through the WIDA ACCESS test. And then they just stay and they stay and they stay and– for some kids, we noticed, like maybe they arrived early middle school and then they're still in the ESOL program when they arrived in tenth or ninth grade. So they're long term ELLs. […] Some of them, it feels like they've also kind of just lost motivation or interest, you know, because they're not being adequately challenged in middle school, because they're still being pulled into ESOL and, you know, whatever, they don't have to try very hard to get a good grade in ESOL because their English had developed so much. But again, same problem. They're not developing their reading as much as their peers, so they can't get out of- they can't exit ESOL. So I feel like it's a problem with identification and it kind of self-perpetuates with the reading part. Because if you look at the scores, it's always like listening, they're like native speakers, like the first thing that they get out of. Speaking is up in the air because they just get so nervous about that damn microphone. ((laughs)) And then even the reading, you know, they'll they'll do OK. But like writing, you know, usually knocks it down pretty fast, that

Alice
production part. So I think that's one of the biggest issues, honestly, with why we have these like long term ELLs. (Alice, Interview 2, 03-10-2021)

Alice spoke favorably about ACCESS and expressed no problems with the concept of academic language, whether as the test construct or as something to teach and assess in the classroom. She did not criticize the test for producing LTEL-designated students, nor the students themselves, but instead critiqued the system that produced them. Rather than attributing LTEL status to students' failure to demonstrate academic English, Alice instead saw multiple causes that intersected to contribute to low ACCESS scores: low writing scores due to (often unnecessary) ESOL instruction instead of grade-level literacy instruction; lack of student motivation due to already possessing strong English skills (which other teachers might characterize as BICS), and testing-specific issues related to the speaking section of the test. Given that half of the overall score on ACCESS is from the writing subtest (35%) and the speaking subtest (15%), student struggles on those sections could have substantial impacts on their measured proficiency level, which determines their continuation in ESOL services. I do not suggest that Alice possesses some kind of privileged insight into the causes behind student performance on ACCESS. Rather, I find it notable that she and the ESOL teachers all have plausible explanations for why students do not test out of language services, which overlap in many ways but differently situate the locus of responsibility.

Alice grew up speaking multiple languages at home and learned English primarily once she arrived at school. To her knowledge, she was never considered for English language services, and she believed that was a good thing because she did not need the services and was successful without them. She compared EL status to special education, in that both are "sticky" labels—

difficult to shed once obtained, even if the associated services or interventions are no longer needed by the student.

4.1.2.1 Summary of Discourses in Place. Educators varied in the language ideologies they expressed. I observed that educators held views about bilingualism that ranged from an assets-based functionalist perspective on bilingual language use to a more restrictive perspective consistent with balanced bilingualism that limited characterizing someone as bilingual only if they were equally competent in multiple languages and all spheres of life—or sometimes they held both views. Most of the educators believed that their students needed to work on developing their academic language skills although they might be highly proficient in conversational English, which reflected an understanding of language development consistent with the BICS/CALP dichotomy, even if they did not refer to BICS/CALP specifically. Additionally, they demonstrated different orientations to the value of bilingualism and language diversity, both personally or in society. Their views on language, its use, and its development were integral elements in their practices as educators of language learners. These ideologies connect to educators' instructional practices, which I present in Section 4.2. Although the educators sought to manage language in ways that led to English-only policies, the reasoning behind such policies differed because no two people share the same set of experiences, knowledge, and beliefs. Everyone took a different path though they arrived at the same destination. Ultimately, if the destination is to change, if the policies are to altered, then the means by which that is achieved cannot be assumed to be the same for all educators, given the wide range of experiences encoded in each's historical body.

4.2 Language Management: English as Default, English as Goal

In the previous section, I showed how educators' preparation in TESOL was an important part of their historical body—their lived, embodied experiences that are brought to bear on the social practice of educational language policy appropriation—and language ideologies served as important discourses in place that educators drew on in their enactment of social (or policy) practices. As I stated above, understanding educators' prior experiences helps to contextualize their practices as pieces in the ongoing, continuously forming and reforming historical body. I do not wish to claim too strong a link between the themes I presented regarding language ideologies and TESOL preparation, and I cannot demonstrate causation from one to the other. However, in the data obtained through extensive educator interviews, I observed the following examples of relationships between elements of the historical body, discourses in place, and apparent reasoning behind policy actions, which I cast as language management practices (although this is not to say it is an exhaustive set of relationships).

Subscription to a functionalist perspective on bilingualism appeared to align with a belief that students were already bilingual, and thus there was no need for institutional support of students' L1s. In this instance, an ideological perspective seemingly characterized by a language as resource orientation contributed to policies consistent with a language as problem orientation, in which minority language maintenance is not seen as necessary. On the other hand, a somewhat more deficit-based view of bilingualism seemed to coincide with a belief that students were not bilingual because their English proficiency was too low (and/or they have only acquired BICS and need to develop CALP), and so English must be prioritized above the L1, which is also consistent with a language as problem orientation in which "language education aims at transition to the dominant majority language" (Hult & Hornberger, 2016, p. 33). For TESOL

preparation, I observed the relationship between a greater degree of preparation and the belief that there was no use for students' L1s as a scaffold because other scaffolds were employed. Less preparation, however, I saw connected to a belief that "too much" L1 use would stagnate and hinder students' acquisition of English and that the "appropriate amount" of L1 use was unable to be ascertained, due to a perceived lack of scientific basis for the field. These few examples show how despite variability in the experiences brought to the practice of teaching EL-designated students, any experience may be reasonably connected to the employment of English-only policies.

Here, I detail the ways in which educators sought to manage language practices in Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School. In both schools, there was no explicit, school-level language policy that specified English versus non-English use, although the school handbook contained *other* educational policies (such as the requirement for teachers to post language objectives, as discussed above in Section 4.1.1). I found that in the language classroom or classroom of language-learner students, given the absence of externally set, explicit language policies, language management took the form of pedagogical or instructional *practices* (similar to Bonacina-Pugh's policy-as-practice conceptualization, or "practiced language policy" [2012], or what Valdiviezo termed "ground-up policy" [2010, p. 75]).

Teachers' pedagogical goals stemmed from their respective testing mandates, curricula, and personal philosophies. Goals that were specifically derived from testing mandates were influenced by their assessment literacy (as I describe, below, in Section 5.3, "Teachers' Appropriation of High-Stakes Testing Policies"). Their goals influenced their instructional practices. These pedagogical goals and instructional practices contributed to an educational context in which English was positioned as the *default language* for academic or otherwise

school-related communication, and English language development was a major learning goal and the primary *language goal* for students, as I detail below. This is not to say that English language development was the goal for all instruction or for the school at large; certainly, content area teachers cared about teaching their content, and principals cared about student success overall. However, the primary language goal, as I interpreted it from the data obtained through interviews with educators from each school setting and some school-related documents, was that students develop English language proficiency according to externally determined timelines and as a higher priority compared to developing or maintaining any languages they already spoke or learning new languages other than English. This high priority for English language proficiency was attested in Excerpts 4-9 and 4-10, in which Dr. Peterson described bilingualism as something to be celebrated—although not materially supported—and Dr. Santos claimed that bilingualism and biliteracy were such important goals that he "wouldn't even let [me] finish that question," but his reasoning focused on bilingualism and biliteracy as means to promoting English language and literacy development, not as ends in themselves. This major goal in combination with the positioning of English as the language of academics, served to create an overall *tolerance orientation* to language in both Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School, at the school-level and classroom-level, with occasional exceptions in the form of an *expediency orientation* (see Section 2.1.3.1). These policy orientations contributed to institutionalizing times and spaces for English monolingualism amid the multilingualism of both schools.

At the school level, I found that in school-issued materials that were available to me, English was the default mode of communication. The schools' websites are predominantly in English, with some text in Spanish (in particular on pages directed at families and for community services), and very little text in other languages (one instance of French for Riverbend High

School, in district-produced materials about ADHD, and one instance of Filipino for Hilltop High School, in the school's motto). However, many family- and student-focused materials were not accessible to me because they were on a part of the website that was password-protected, or they were issued directly to students and families, and I cannot assume their contents.

4.2.1 Curriculum and Materials

Local control in Maryland permits school districts and schools power over their curricula, and educators at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School write their own curricula, working to ensure they are appropriate for their student bodies and aligned with the school district's curriculum documents and the Maryland College and Career Readiness (MCCR) standards. Many educators at both schools are employed for twelve months rather than ten months out of the year, in part so that they can work on curriculum development over the summer, as Alice told me (Interview 1, 02-02-2021). The handbook for Riverbend High School also explicitly stated that their curricula are aligned with the district and "MSDE Content Standards" (referring to the MCCRS) and its grading system is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Given the previously stated similarities between the two schools, I imagine that the handbook for Hilltop High School contains similar language regarding standards. I was not provided with the ELA standards used at either school, and so I have made use of the MCCR Standards (MCCRS), which are available on the website of the Maryland State Department of Education (Maryland State Department of Education, 2023a).

The MCCR Standards are in English, and the MSDE website links to "MCCRS Content Standards Spanish," which leads to the website "COMMON CORE en Español: State Standards Translation Project" (San Diego County Office of Education, 2023) and contains a full Spanish translation of the Common Core Standards, to which the MCCR Standards are identical. The

standards are not confined to knowledge and skills in general language arts content and literacy, but specifically reference knowledge of certain aspects of English. For instance, the cluster "Contents of Standard English" includes the items "Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking" and "Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing" (p. 18). Given the fact that the MCCRS focus so heavily and explicitly on the English language, it is hardly surprising that teachers would do so as well in their instruction. Teachers nevertheless had some flexibility in how they enacted and taught the standards. In Excerpt 4-23, Alice talked about how she was able to make use of the Common Core standards in her teaching and felt that the standards were "broad enough that [she] can work within them," meaning, she could meet the standards while exercising substantial discretion in how and what she taught her students.

Excerpt 4-23

Alice
I feel sometimes that the standards are broad enough that I can work within them, to meet the like variety of like like the spectrum of where my students are at, so that's something I appreciate, I guess, about them. I will say sometimes, I know like, like the curriculum for many teachers is based on the standards and then they look at, you know, certain like, 'Oh, you need to be teaching these texts in this grade,' or something like that. And, like, that I kind of tend to try to stay away from just because I think that's so far, disconnected from what students can do. But in general I would say like the Common Core standards, I don't really have too many issues with it just because it is so broad, like one of the standards is about just, you know, reading texts from, like, you know, diverse authors or something like, I think that's totally within reason and manageable to do in the classroom. Or even the ones that get a little bit more specific still have so much leeway. Like, you know, we just did poetry, and some of the stands out like oh you know, using figurative language and metaphors and similes and things, and like, that's appropriate and that works and it lets me incorporate all, you know, different types of stuff, but I don't need to go over like a list of like the thirty most like popular used figurative language forms. So, I'd say I'm okay with Common Core.
(Alice, Interview 3, 04-09-2021)

Alice said she did not feel constrained by the Standards as she supposed other teachers did, whose Common Core-aligned curricula required teaching specific texts. She clearly

recognized the flexibility in the standards and had the confidence to be able negotiate her implementation of the standards-aligned curriculum in the way she thought best for teaching her students. Excerpts further below in Section 4.2.2 reveal Alice's preference for using English, herself, in class and only accepting English from students. Therefore, Excerpt 4-23 shows Alice's awareness of the school-level policy to align her instruction with academic standards, which she seemed to find acceptable, given her view that the Common Core standards were broad and flexible. However, I did not see evidence that Alice might see potential for flexibility in the language to be used in teaching the curriculum, despite the availability of the MCCR Standards in Spanish through the MSDE website.

Based on my interviews with Carrie, I understood the ELA department at Riverbend High School to treat the Common Core flexibly in their curriculum design, similar to what Alice described at Hilltop High School. Carrie gave some detail about the texts she used in class and described some of her thoughts about and experiences with selecting materials during curriculum redesign, in which she and her colleagues struggled to keep up with all the various considerations for selecting appropriate materials (Excerpt 4-24).

Excerpt 4-24

Carrie
[…] it's just like, what are we teaching kids? Do they see their selfs in what we're teaching? Is the literature (we're) choosing something that they're going to understand? I mean, it's it's very interesting. Are we teaching at a predominantly Black school and teaching all White authors? Or like my students, mainly Spanish speaking students, am I integrating Spanish speaking authors. And then on the other sense, my minority of minority students, right? My Asian students or, you know, my students from the Middle East, am I even, are they getting a chance to see themselves in the curriculum? Which I think, everything's just so behind. So we've we've talked about this a little bit in our English department meetings where I think I told you I was able to help rewrite just the ninth grade English curriculum over the summer? And we really focused on incorporating more voices. But what we even see, and this is what I wrote one of my Fulbright essays about, it's just that we're now catching up. We're constantly playing catch up. So we started out with a whitewashed kind of White curriculum. And then we start incorporating, OK, let's incorporate the real Black history. Let's incorporate Black

Carrie

authors. And we're still trying to do that, still. But then it's like, OK, but we're not incorporating all of these other voices, too. So it's constantly just playing catch up. Like, I know the Upper House teachers were like the whole curriculum is just mainly Black authors, now, with some White authors in there, like, well, all of our students are Spanish speaking. When are they going to start incorporating, like Latino/Latina authors, Hispanic authors, or Asian authors? And so it's just like a constant cycle. And I think about also when I'm- like The House on Mango Street, when we're reading that and there's all of these references to Mexican culture and Spanish phrases embedded in the text or things that are really common in like Latino or Hispanic culture. And my other students are like, what does this mean? You know, that aren't Spanish speaking. It's just, it's constant catch up. So if that's what we're teaching, of course, like students are not going to be performing high- at high rates when they don't understand what they're reading. We just recently finished some excerpts from George Takei's graphic novel, They Called Us Enemy. [Karen: Oh cool!] Yeah! And the kids loved it. But we had to do a whole day of just talking about what is World War II. And there were internment camps, prison camps for Japanese Americans. What is this similar to? OK, it's similar to like detention centers, to concentration camps, to prisons. Right? So it was a lot of background knowledge building.

(Carrie, Interview 2, 03-03-2021)

In this excerpt, Carrie described some of the considerations she and her colleagues weighed as they selected texts for the ninth grade ELA curriculum at Riverbend High School and "focused on incorporating more voices" (Interview 2, 03-03-2021). Carrie demonstrated an understanding of the importance of offering students materials that were relevant to and reflective of students' own lives and experiences (akin to principles of culturally relevant pedagogy; Ladson-Billings, 1994) and materials from a diversity of authors and backgrounds, not simply a "whitewashed kind of White curriculum," discursively connecting to discourses in place about the Black Lives Matter movement and the growing pushback against the literary canon (German, 2021; Jewett, 2017). However, in seeking to add more Black authors to the curriculum, the department overlooked the need to add more Latinx authors, but Carrie pointed out that in adding more Latinx authors, they were overlooking the needs of the "minority of the minority," meaning students from non-Latinx backgrounds, hence the feeling of always needing to "catch up." She recognized that using a book such as *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros,

1984) perhaps functioned to exclude some of her students, since it contained untranslated portions in Spanish, which some of her students did not know, but that did not lead her to drop it from her teaching. Rather, she constantly tried to think of other ways to find materials that would be relevant, inclusive, and engaging to all her students.

In one such example, she said that "the kids loved" *They Called Us Enemy* (Takei et al., 2019), a graphic[37] autobiography that told and depicted the story of actor George Takei and his family being forcibly relocated from their home to internment camps for Japanese Americans during World War II. None of her students were Japanese, but the specific cultural background of the protagonist was not the only aspect that drew students in. Carrie spent class time teaching the historical context in which the autobiography was set and then connecting major elements of the book to historical and present-day topics that the students were already familiar with, such as detention centers and prisons. Later in the interview, she described how that day in class provided an especially fruitful discussion because one of the students knew information about World War II that Carrie did not know, and it gave the student an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and be a voice of authority in the classroom. This sample instructional interaction is more consistent with culturally relevant or sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012) than her previous descriptions of trying to incorporate more diverse views into the curriculum, and I see it as an example of how Carrie tried to push her pedagogy beyond simply teaching the curriculum or MCCR Standards. This example shows that course materials need not

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[37] "Graphic" as in "graphic novel"; however, the book is George Takei's autobiography (co-written with Justin Eisinger and Steven Scott and illustrated by Harmony Becker) and is therefore not a graphic *novel*.

reflect students' exact identities or experiences to be potential avenues for meaningful connection and that effective teaching is key to making that connection.

Carrie went on to talk about how she would continually reflect on her teaching, in particular focusing on questions of selecting and making course texts relevant to students of different races/ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, in Excerpt 4-25:

Excerpt 4-25

Carrie
Yeah, well, and you really have to have teacher buy-in, right? Especially for, I know I'm constantly talking about race, but it's true. Like you have, I mean, we have a lot of White teachers at our school who are teaching students that don't look like them. And even, you know, if they do look like them because we have like White students, the culture is not the same or the language is not the same. So there's still those barriers. So it's really also about like teacher buy-in and really, ((sighs)) we we've done a lot of, like bias training and stuff this past year, last year, and it's really about being, you know, culturally competent and you have to work at that, you know. ((laughs)) You have to work to, like, change your- the way you're teaching or your own curriculum or start to look deeper at like, oh, are the kids going to need some background information on this? Are they-- should I even teach this? Like, what is this worth to what teaching this like? I've come to the conclusion that, and I love Shakespeare, but in my head I'm like, OK, we're just teaching this -- it's the fourth quarter -- we're just teaching this because the county is telling us to. Like, what is this going to actually add to my students' lives is in learning Shakespeare, which, you know, there's really good themes and and things you can focus on in Shakespeare, but at the end of the day, it's like it just come to so many more struggles of the language piece.
(Carrie, Interview 2, 03-03-2021)

Carrie thought through how differences in race/ethnicity between teachers and their students could create barriers to students finding meaningful connection with course materials and barriers to teachers employing culturally relevant pedagogy (although she did not use the term). She told me that after a lot of consideration, she concluded that teaching Shakespeare as originally written, merely to meet an external requirement, was not right for her students, regardless of how much she, personally, enjoyed it. Instead, she used the No Fear Shakespeare

(SparkNotes, 2023) editions to teach the required content in a more linguistically approachable way—employing the mediational means as part of the social practice of teaching.

Carrie's discussion of the various questions under consideration for selecting materials (cultural relevance, linguistic accessibility, and applicability to curriculum or standards) showed how her pedagogy challenged some dominant cultural forces, such as a perceived need to teach the "literary canon." Another way that Carrie could potentially further challenge dominant cultural forces would be to seek to provide bilingual materials to students, where available. For instance, Shakespeare's works overall have been translated into more than 100 languages (Estill & Johnson, 2015) and could offer another alternative, beyond the No Fear Shakespeare editions. Given her thoughtful and reflective consideration of other characteristics of texts, the absence of consideration of bilingual materials suggested to me that the possibility had not occurred to Carrie. The "taken-for-grantedness" of offering materials primarily or exclusively in English I saw as consistent with English hegemony, which "it obscures and erases other ways of doing, thinking, and being" (Tollefson, 1991, p. 12); thus, I interpreted Carrie to be operating within an English-as-default paradigm.

Of all my participants, Carrie was the most obviously reflective as a practitioner, as evidenced in my data. Excerpts 4-24 and 4-25 illustrate examples of intersecting discourses, leading to recursive changes. Carrie's engagement with circulating discourses about race in education and in the broader society intersected with her historical body, influencing her changing pedagogical practices relating to materials selection and interaction order, such as when she gave a student the floor during class, recognizing them as a knower of valuable knowledge and capable of sharing that knowledge. Her predisposition to be reflective—part of her identity

construction—also contributed to her willingness to engage with such discourses in place and take them in.

4.2.2 Language of Instruction and Assignments

As I stated in the introduction to this subsection of Finding 1, 4.2, English language development is a major learning goal in general and the primary language goal for the students of Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School. For instance, in the school handbook, language-related policies included a requirement that teachers post language objectives along with content objectives, and guidance on assessing and scoring language development (specifically, language may be scored by content teachers, but language scores should not impact a student's course grade). In Excerpt 4-26, Carrie affirmed this policy and expanded on it, describing how she incorporated it into her practice.

Excerpt 4-26

Carrie
At our school we have, you know, our content objectives and our language objectives and we're supposed to have-- and our vocabulary has to be on the board for that unit, so we have certain bullet points that we have to hit per every lesson. And with the vocabulary, we're really bringing in academic vocabulary and that's really our language integration. So we use this, um and maybe you've seen it before, I usually have them on my desk, it's a language functions booklet. So, it has different sets of like subsets of academic vocabulary that the students will use in, in every assignment that they do. And at least with the English department, what we try to do is really teach those language functions and how they work within our content.
(Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021)

In this excerpt, Carrie described the practicalities of implementing the discourse in place of CLV (the content, language, vocabulary method) she presented in Excerpt 4-1 as the prescribed approach to language and content integration at Riverbend High School, illustrating the relationship between her pedagogical practice of "language integration" (as the policy action), the historical body (in which previously repeated practices of using the mediational

means have been submerged into the historical body as lived experiences), and the discourses in place, including CLV, the academic language booklet (as a mediational means), and school policy of posting language and content objectives. Similar to Excerpt 4-8 in which Carrie described Riverbend's prescribed scaffolding cycle, the potential use of L1 as a means to teach English and/or academic content is omitted from the potential means described in Excerpt 4-26.

Even though using languages other than English as part of teaching English is so commonplace as to be unremarkable, the teachers I interviewed resisted using non-English languages or accepting non-English languages on assignments or in academic interactions. (I described at length above, in Section 4.1, how Dr. Bragg struggled with whether to permit use of non-English languages in the classroom at all.) At the classroom level, English is the default language of instruction for all teachers, for several reasons. Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School are not bilingual schools: there is no advertised expectation of bilingual education. Not all the teachers have sufficient proficiency in another language spoken by their students to teach academic content in it. However, based on my interviews, I observed that although the schools were sites of substantial linguistic diversity, English became the only acceptable language for classroom use, whether by the teacher or the students (with a few exceptions: see Section 4.2.3). This resistance to non-English use in academic interactions (and complementary expectation of English use for academic purposes) falls within the interaction order discourse cycle of nexus analysis, which includes interactional norms and the social roles or positions of interactants who might have variable power or authority to set (or resist) those norms.

Although not all of the teachers had sufficient proficiency in another language to be able to teach in it, Alice spoke Spanish fluently (as Spanish was one of her L1s) and could have taught and graded student work in Spanish. However, she did not accept student work in Spanish

because she felt that it would not be fair to other students with non-Spanish L1s since she believed she could not accept work in other languages that she did not know and thus could not grade, as she explained in Excerpt 4-27.

Excerpt 4-27

Alice
In their first languages, I would say I don't do too much of that because I really try to keep most of my instructions that I assess with them, at least, in English, because, like I said, it's really– I try to keep it fair and it's not really fair for me to be able to assess a Spanish speaker if I don't know what the Amharic speaker is saying. I just don't think that's fair to them. And I think setting that same expectation for everyone helps my Spanish speakers to develop their speaking more, instead of getting too comfortable with just Spanish. (Alice, Interview 2, 03-10-2021)

Alice acknowledged that while she could give instructions and assess in Spanish, she could not do that with other languages spoken by students in her classes, such as Amharic. She explained that, therefore, she did not "do too much" with students' L1s and requested students use English, "setting that same expectation for everyone." Setting communicative expectations clearly falls within the interaction order discourse cycle, and Alice appeared confident that she, as the teacher, had the power to set that expectation and have it respected. She believed that an English-only approach helped push her Spanish-speaking students to develop their English and also helped her treat all her students equally, out of concern for fairness. This perception of English-only as the fairest policy was also seen in English & Varghese (2010), in which a school district employed a restrictive language policy out of concerns for fairness and "equality": "There is no feasible way to ensure that all ESL students will receive primary language support; therefore, it is seen as unfair for any student to receive this support" (p. 111). All students in Alice's classes and in the district referred to by English and Varghese (2010) thus received the

equal treatment of an English-only language policy out of concern for unfairly advantaging or disadvantaging students from certain language backgrounds.

I connected this concern for fairness to another reason that Alice voiced in an interview, that it was unnecessary for students to use a language other than English in her classes, which she explained in Excerpt 4-28:

Excerpt 4-28

Alice
I differentiate my assignments enough so that they are able to access the content and complete the work with English, and for like a newcomer, you know, maybe there's more visuals on the assignment, or something like that. I try my best to not be accepting languages other than English because it's so scaffolded down, it has so many visuals, only because I do think that would be a little bit unfair for my like Ethiopian students who speak Amharic and I am just not able to equally be able to give them a grade because I just don't know what it says. So, like, with that said, you know, like, I don't get frustrated or anything like that, but I do differentiate my work enough so that maybe there's just simple words and lots of visuals or something like that so that regardless of what your L1 is if you're really new, you know you should still be able to demonstrate mastery of the skill in that assignment.
(Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021)

Alice's comments in Excerpt 4-28 suggested that she thought if she did her job properly, students would not need to use a language other than English in her class. To treat all students equally as a means to benefit them all equally, Alice used scaffolds to differentiate instruction and content but refrained from using students' L1s in any way as a potential scaffold. Thanks to her extensive use of differentiation, Alice believed that even newcomers could meaningfully interact with and demonstrate their skills and knowledge on assignments that were entirely in English. Excerpts 4-27 and 4-28 provide example of policy actions (requesting only English be used in class and enacting differentiated instruction, respectively) being mediated by the interaction order (described just above), TESOL preparation as part of the historical body (helping Spanish speakers "develop their speaking" in 4-27 being reminiscent of Swain's [1985,

2000] output hypothesis theory, and scaffolds clearly part of TESOL preparation), and discourses in place related to monolingualism and equal opportunity to learn.

Like Alice, Carrie set an expectation for students to use English on assignments and in academic interactions, which she expressed as a reasonable expectation for "English class," as she explained in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 4-29

Carrie
Karen: *In your classroom, specifically, like, how do you feel about students using their home languages or any languages other than English?* **Carrie:** So, I, I think it's encouraged in my class, especially to help one another. But it's funny because every, every year, or at least this one student, she– I think I told you before, she was like, she'll like call me out and I'm like no, like, there's a difference between telling you to say something in English, as opposed to being like, "you need to speak English only, because, you know, Spanish isn't good, " which I'm not saying. Cause she's- you know, when kids are like learning new phrases, she's like, "you're being racist, " or something, and I'm just like no, I'm asking you to say something in English in English class. Like, I'm not telling you to not speak in Spanish, I'm telling you to like respond in English. So like, I will tell the kids, like, I need you to try, like, try, like, when they're answering. (Carrie, Interview 3, 03-26-2021)

In Excerpt 4-29, I asked Carrie how she felt about students using languages other English in class, and she replied with phrasing that I interpreted as creating distance between her response and herself as an agent. Although I asked about her feelings, she replied, "I think it's [using non-English languages] encouraged." Her use of "I think" created a sense of doubt about whether languages other than English were indeed permitted in class. In addition, the use of passive voice indicated that she did not, perhaps, feel that she could positively assert that she did encourage it, although it begs the question of who would be encouraging it, if not her, the teacher. Carrie also drew an interesting distinction between prohibiting other languages and

requesting—or requiring—English, saying that she did not tell students "to not speak in Spanish" but rather to "respond in English." In response to her language management efforts, Carrie encountered pushback from a student who saw the request to use English as "racist," which seemed to caused her some consternation, as Carrie clearly perceived the idea of using English in English class, in particular since the obvious language goal was to learn English, as completely reasonable. I think that Carrie felt the accusation of racism especially acutely because, as I discussed above, she was "constantly talking about race" (Carrie, Interview 2, 03-03-2021). Within a setting in which English is the unquestioned goal and default language for academic content (which is how I believe Carrie viewed the school setting), requesting students to use English would seem reasonable. However, assumptions regarding the status of English as the language of academic content and the goal of developing "academic language" as being paramount served to prevent her taking the student's challenge on good faith and fully considering the impact of her request that students "respond in English" (Carrie, Interview 3, 03-26-2021). Therefore, although Carrie seemed to believe she had created a classroom space in which students are encouraged to help each other in any language, her insistence on English as the language of ELA might ultimately belie the construction of that classroom space.

Excerpt 4-29 provides an interesting example of intersecting discourses mediating a policy action. In this instance, the policy action was Carrie's instructional practice of telling students to "try" to respond in English in class. Carrie positioned herself as possessing the authority to set interactional expectations in the classroom regarding language use, but one of her students contested this authority through contesting the expectation. Further, the conflict about interactional expectations also intersected with Carrie's identity construction, in that she seemed not to view herself as racist but was being seen as performing a racist action. The interaction

order and historical body also intersected with discourses in place regarding language learning as well as systemic racism and xenophobia.

The teachers in the ESOL department at Hilltop High School gave more nuanced replies about whether they permitted non-English use in class or on assignments, although they both tried to limit use of languages other than English. In Excerpt 4-30, Linda explicitly said that they do not ban students' first languages from the classroom, especially because of the role they play in supporting English language development, which is consistent with the utilitarian perspective on bilingualism voiced by the principals (Excerpts 4-9 and 4-10). She also expressed a strong preference for students using any knowledge they might have to complete their assignments before resorting to Google Translate, which both she and Rachel objected to students using. Because the dedicated goal for ESOL was English language development—and specifically academic English—she far preferred that students produce even minimal "pushed output" (Swain, 1985) than turn in more accurate or a greater volume of English produced by machine translation. Linda's preference for student participation in English without the use of machine translation is consistent with research in SLA that prioritizes meaningful communication for language development (e.g., Long, 2006; Swain, 1985, 2000; see Ortega, 2009). Google Translate can be a useful tool for facilitating communication, and, in fact, Linda described how she used it for communicating with students. However, Linda (and Rachel) objected to *how* students would use Google Translate in their classes, as a way to quickly produce a response in English, when the real goal of an assignment would be the process of producing a response, not the product of the response itself. In those cases, Google Translate would provide a shortcut and undermine the learning process. For this reason, Rachel told me in an interview that she and Linda preferred that students use dictionaries instead of Google Translate because dictionaries

were still an assistive tool when students did not know a word, but they were much more limited in the scope of their assistance. In these ways, Linda and Rachel produced interaction orders in which they, as the teachers, constrained students' use of mediational means within the classroom.

Excerpt 4-30

Linda

Karen:
With language in the classroom, do you- in any of the classes you teach- do you have any rules about language use?

Linda:
I mean, I guess my biggest rule is, please try not to use Google Translate. ((Karen laughs)) I like, I would rather have two words that you wrote by yourself, instead of like a beautiful paragraph that was translated from from Google Translate. But like in terms of not using their first language or anything like that I actually, you know I- 'It's okay, it's okay like when we go into breakout rooms or, like if you all want to talk about this, if you all speak the same language, go ahead, you know you're, you're thinking about English and you're gonna write out what your responses are in English, and help each other but you can use that first language,' or, like we were talking about vocabulary a couple weeks ago and and I'm- we're talking about cognates I'm like, it's telling them, you know, knowing that first language can help you to learn the English, so we you know we don't ban it, and and and we tried to encourage them to continue to use their first language and develop it, but also it can be a tool to help them with their second language acquisition.

[…]

Karen:
Do you let students write in languages other than English on assignments or anything?

Linda:
I try to encourage them to write in English, but if they can't figure out the word and I don't want them using Google Translate, it's okay. I mean, that's where they are, that's where they are in their language development and that's, that's okay. So, um, usually, usually, they can, they can write at least a few words in English and, and, you know, and then I can look at them and see what the rest of it is, and I can use Google Translate, or I can figure out the Spanish, at least they get what they're what they're thinking, you know, maybe you can give them a couple suggestions for like 'this word means this,' or– for the next time.

(Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021)

In different ways in this excerpt, Linda illustrated that the goal of her class was that students learn English, because they would be "thinking about English," writing their responses

in English, using their first language to help them learn English, and so on, which is understandable for an ESOL class. She expressed a preference for students to use English in class, but she seemed much more accepting of the idea that students' L1s could support English language development than Alice and Carrie seemed to be, based on their comments. Overall, Linda was much less forceful in setting English as the only acceptable means for participating in class; as a teacher of ESOL classes, she reinforced the themes of English-as-default and English-as-goal but not militantly so.

Rachel described an approach more consistent with that of Alice (Excerpt 4-28), in which she sought to differentiate her assignments and materials enough that students should not need to use English to participate meaningfully (Excerpt 4-31).

Excerpt 4-31

Rachel

Karen:
What about on like assignments, can students use other languages on the assignments they do?

Rachel:
It depends on the task. So for most of the time, for me, I would say no or, it depends on what I'm grading on. If it's a language task, usually, I'm grading them on the like language rubric, like for WIDA. And it would be a lower score if they did it in Spanish. So, sometimes for the activity, like a background building activity? So for example if we were doing something with compare and contrast, and I was grading compare and contrast, it would be okay, like I wouldn't mind. But in that situation for my lowest students I would give them sentence stems. So (I'm just thinking) if I were to give them compare and contrast, they would probably need to do it in Spanish, but I would give them like the pre-written strips that already say like, you know, blue and green, and then they would just divide it that way so they weren't actually writing they'd have the stem to try to– and they'd regurgitate back the English. So in my class, no, but I would say maybe some of the content teachers who have like eleventh and twelfth grade social studies and science I know some of those teachers that are fluent in Spanish will accept some Spanish responses to try to know that they understand the content.

(Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

Rachel explained to me that, generally, she did not allow students to complete assignments using languages other than English, but she could think of reasons that it might be

permitted. She did not express a hard-and-fast rule regarding language use in the classroom, but she created ways to try to steer students toward English and away from other languages through her use of differentiated instruction. Rachel distinguished between the instructional objective of the task and the language required to achieve that objective, so that if the objective was not specifically language-related (e.g., a background-building activity prior to writing), use of multiple languages would be more permissible than if the objective was to practice particular language forms. In general, though, since her classes are expressly designed to teach English as an additional language, not a separate content area, she attempted to obviate the need for non-English use as much as possible. She believed that other teachers in the school who spoke Spanish fluently would allow students to respond in Spanish to demonstrate their content knowledge, and her easy, non-judgmental inclusion of this example indicated that she did not view it as a problem that teachers would potentially allow L1 use in the classroom for that purpose. Although Rachel and Linda had clear preferences for students to use primarily, if not only, English in their classes, their comments added shades of difference in the overall picture of English-only policies provided by the other teachers.

4.2.3 Permitted Deviations from English

Whatever their reasons for requesting students to use English, all the teachers at some point nevertheless voiced the idea that students' L1s were "a strength" (Alice) or "an asset, not a deficit" (Dr. Bragg) and were "encouraged" (Carrie, Linda, Rachel) in the classroom. In my interviews with the teachers, I found that they did, indeed, permit deviations from the more general tendency toward English-only, although the descriptions of deviations were often in conjunction with references to more restrictive language management efforts. As with setting the expectation for English-only use, carrying out policy actions to permit non-English use also falls

within the interaction order. A common instance of permitted deviation from English-only policies was in small-group work, especially in service of preparing for or completing an assignment in English, as Linda mentioned in Excerpt 4-30, Carrie in Excerpt 4-32, Alice in Excerpt 4-33, and Rachel in Excerpt 4-36.

Excerpt 4-32

Carrie
I do encourage them using their native language– as I'm saying native language. ((both laugh)) So yeah, do- their, their L1, right? I encourage that, if they're in small groups, and to under- help understand the content and help break it down for each other but I am I, I really try to have a balance of, like, 'Hey, you really need to practice.' So, you know, it's a balance of trying to incorporate both types of (things) into the classroom.
(Carrie, Interview 3, 03-26-2021)

In Excerpt 4-32, Carrie clearly stated "I do encourage them" to use languages other than English in her class, signaling a more definitive perspective on non-English use in class than she expressed in Excerpt 4-29 (above, in Section 4.2.2). However, this overt claim of encouragement was quickly followed by a "but" and mild admonition that students "really need to practice" their English.

There was also a general acceptance among the teachers of the fact that preventing the students from using non-English languages with each other "would be really hairy" (Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021), especially in breakout rooms in Zoom during virtual instruction (Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021). Alice laughed at the idea of successfully preventing students from using their L1s in small groups and told me that instead of fighting a losing battle, she tried to reframe using English as being "strength-building and positive" so it would feel more possible for students to attempt, as she described in Excerpt 4-33.

Excerpt 4-33

Alice

Karen:
How do you feel about students using languages other than English in the classroom?

Alice:
Oh, it's encouraged all the time. I can't imagine trying to get them to only speak English in the classroom ((laughs)), that would be really hairy. I mean, yeah, it's just how- I don't know- understand what that would even look like, to have them try to only speak English. Well, what I try to do- I'm a native Spanish speaker, and sometimes they're really tempted to only speak Spanish to me right, but I want to encourage that confidence of using English, so I try all the language I frame around English to kind of be more like strength-building and positive, like, they give me the right answer, but they say it in Spanish, and I'm like, 'Okay, great. Now let's try that in English,' you know and like let's help out like, and work together, and you know I give them lots of small group work and it's fine that they're all speaking their L1s together because they're probably putting it all together in English, or something, so I have no issue whatsoever. Their L1 is a strength, as far as I'm concerned.

(Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021)

Alice might have accepted that preventing students using their L1s in small group work would be unimaginable, but she nevertheless maintained her insistence on students using only English with her. Excerpts 4-27, 4-28, and 4-33 showcase the tension between her desire to maintain an English-only environment while acknowledging that it is impossible to do so, thereby providing interesting insights into Alice's approach to language management in the classroom. She told me that she has "no issue whatsoever" with students using their L1s together, although she also described multiple tactics she employed to prevent them using other languages and encourage English use instead. Excerpts 4-29, 4-32, and 4-34 similarly offer insights into the tensions within Carrie's approaches to language management. Although Carrie asserted that she encouraged students to use their L1s in class as needed, she also seemed to be constantly trying to tack against students' use of L1s in the classroom. She emphasized their need to practice English and the reasonableness of using English in English class. In addition, not only did Carrie push students towards English for academic interactions, but she also wished that they would use

English more often in social interaction. In pursuit of this wish, she urged students who were more proficient in English to be leaders or influencers for other, lower-proficiency students, to encourage them to try to use English more. She believed that lower-proficiency students felt nervous or embarrassed about speaking in English in front of other students, and she wanted other students to model English use in and out of the classroom, which she discussed in Excerpt 4-34. In this same vein, Alice also recognized a need for students to develop their "confidence of using English" (Excerpt 4-33, above).

Excerpt 4-34

Carrie

Karen:
In your classroom, specifically, like, how do you feel about students using their home languages or any languages other than English?

Carrie:
[…] you know, I'll have a group of kids that are proficient in English at a very high level who will be talking, you know, to each other in Spanish and I'm like, 'Hey, why don't you guys like talk to each other in English? You can, you know like, be a change in the school like where people will see you as leaders. You start speaking English, more kids are gonna start speaking English.' Because what I find is if there's a big separation in the classroom between kids that are really high-level and then kids that are on the lower end, the kids that are on the lower end, don't want to sound a specific way to the kids that are more proficient in English.

(Carrie, Interview 3, 03-26-2021)

In Excerpt 4-34, Carrie pointed to the need she saw for students who were more proficient in English to model English use for less proficient students in a variety of situations, not only for engaging in academic interactions. Students using their L1s together in social interactions was also viewed with frustration by Dr. Bragg. Below, in Excerpt 4-35, Dr. Bragg described a student whom he characterized as unable to converse in English, despite having graduated after attending Riverbend High School for four years. Although Dr. Bragg was most bothered by teachers in the school giving the student "allowances" to use Spanish in school, he

was also frustrated by the fact that the student only used Spanish socially, as well, because he believe it hindered the student in learning English.

Excerpt 4-35

Dr. Bragg
He looks at someone else for a translation [when I speak to him]. Because, Karen, when he leaves the school he talks in Spanish, or speaks in Spanish, when he's at the cafeteria he speaks in Spanish, when he's hanging out with his friends he speaks Spanish, when he goes home, he speaks in Spanish, right. But at the school, we give allowances for him to speak in Spanish. (Dr. Bragg, Interview 2, 03-25-2021)

Dr. Bragg did not report overtly attempting to manage this student's language use in social interactions, but he seemed to feel that someone should be managing it differently from how he observed it in use. Despite Dr. Bragg's and Carrie's apparent beliefs that students should be encouraged to use English socially, as well as in instructional interactions at school, no teachers reported actually trying to alter students' language practices outside of academic-specific interactions in class.

While the "permitted deviations" from English-only language management efforts illustrated in the excerpts above from Alice, Carrie, and Dr. Bragg were not straightforwardly permitted, but rather somewhat grudgingly accepted, there were times that teachers described using other languages themselves or specifically asking students to use other languages in class, offering clearer examples of permissions for non-English use. Such instances included asking students to translate certain content to students with lower proficiency in English, such as in Excerpt 4-36, below, as Rachel described doing.

Excerpt 4-36

Rachel
Karen: *Do you, do you allow them to use their first language in the classroom?*

Rachel

Rachel:
Yeah, we encourage it a lot. I often have– for more complicated topics or things, I'll have some of the translation or I'll have the students go through the exercise of translating and (give them two) different dictionaries that they can use, besides Google Translate, so there's a few online dictionaries that will give them– learners dictionaries that will give them a sentence so they can pick the word in context they can read like five different sentences in English and Spanish and figure out which one is the Spanish word that they're looking for, or the Arabic word or. So, yeah, we'll use that a lot and then I'll ask the kids– I sort of say mumbly things in Spanish sometimes for, to make sure that they understand, especially the low level students. I have student interpreter you know in class I'll be like, 'Can somebody help me translate this to another student,' especially with the virtual learning where it's like trying to navigate, like 'click here, no, the left side of your screen, the left side,' and having a student help say that in Spanish or in Arabic because I don't know, like, 'no, your left, my right,' that kind of stuff. So I leverage that. Yeah, we don't ever like say no, no Spanish or anything like that, or I'll say, when I do break breakout rooms or in the classroom in a small group, I would say, 'it's okay to talk about it in Spanish,' or Spanish as long as they obviously all spoke the same language– and I say Spanish a lot because the majority of our students are Spanish speakers. So I'll say, 'Okay, you guys talk about it first and then see if you can figure out like the task in English, but it's okay to have your discussion first in your language.'

(Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

Rachel explained that some concepts or topics were more effectively taught through providing translations, having some students translate for others, or through having students perform translation practice for themselves, with the aid of dictionaries. While she described those techniques as appropriate for "more complicated topics," she also requested that some students help interpret for topics that were not necessarily complicated but were difficult to convey virtually, especially during emergency remote instruction, such as how to navigate online platforms. Both ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School, Rachel and Linda, reported on the difficulties of implementing fully virtual instruction with students at the lowest proficiency levels in English. For students who were not familiar with the technology used to access instruction (Google Classroom and Zoom), who were possibly not computer literate, who were possibly low-literacy in English or any language, and who had low proficiency in English, the processes of connecting to their virtual instruction and participating were likely daunting at best. Having

another student who could explain how to navigate the system and facilitate other students' participation was crucial for making their educational experience as accessible as possible under the exceedingly difficult circumstances of remote teaching during the pandemic. In such cases, using languages other than English was not only permitted, but it was also essential.

Finally, students were encouraged to use their L1 and develop their language and literacy skills in it, in order to promote transfer of literacy skills, which Dr. Santos also mentioned in Excerpt 4-10. As a teacher at Hilltop High School, working under Dr. Santos's leadership, Rachel corroborated this approach in Excerpt 4-37.

Excerpt 4-37

Rachel
A lot of our students have gaps in literacy in their first language too. And we, we don't actively– we encourage it but we haven't built anything to actively help support them in reading in their first language. But what we do have in our school for our Spanish speakers, we do have Spanish for native speakers. So our Spanish students– our Spanish-speaking students do take a class which they focus on trying to teach it from the perspective of like a literature class in Spanish, which is really helpful, we have noticed that. But I have some students who are very against reading in Spanish, so I'll try to encourage reading in Spanish. I taught a literacy class last year. And I would try to encourage Spanish a lot, a lot of the programs have Spanish and they, 'No, no I'm not reading, I don't wanna practice in Spanish I'm like– a waste of my time, I'm trying– I'm here to learn English,' that kind of thing. So, yeah, it's really important that they keep reading and writing in English– in first language.
(Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

In this excerpt, Rachel described how beneficial it is for students to improve their literacy in the L1 because it helps support literacy and language development in English. While the school does not have the staff or other resources to support literacy development in the L1s for all students at Hilltop High School, they do offer Spanish for native speakers, or effectively, Spanish language arts. However, she noted that some Spanish-speaking students were unwilling to spend class time on Spanish because they felt it was a waste of time, which in fact runs counter to research that has demonstrated the links between L1 literacy, English language

proficiency, and academic achievement for students learning English as an additional language (MacSwan et al., 2017). Despite the pushback from some students, Rachel emphasized how important it was for students to "keep reading and writing" in their first languages, to facilitate their English language and literacy development.

On the whole, the teachers promoted a general tolerance-oriented language policy in their classes but a more restrictive English-only policy for academic interactions, that is, for completing assignments (whether written or spoken) and for communicating with the teacher. I found the most notable aspect of this to be the fact that their policies were largely unquestioned in their own minds—the utter reasonableness of "asking students to speak English in English class." In fact, the only teacher who questioned L1 versus English use was not really questioning the *why* behind permitting or even promoting the use of one language versus another but the *how* of best teaching academic content and advancing English proficiency. While the teachers have created classroom spaces (whether virtual or in-person) that are welcoming for their multilingual learners, that same welcome does not appear to be similarly extended to their multiple languages, despite claims of "encouragement."

4.3 Conclusion: Educators' Educational Language Appropriation

In answer to my first research question, I found that educators managed language use (including their own, as "self-management"; Spolsky, 2019) in and through practice, and their management activities were mediated by the language ideologies they invoked as discourses in place and their TESOL preparation, as part of their historical bodies. Principals expressed support for their student's bilingualism but did not enact policies to institutionalize that support. Teachers claimed that they did not implement "language rules" in their classrooms, other than, for instance, "Be respectful," (Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021) or "Don't use Google Translate"

(Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021). However, I argue that they did, in fact, construct language policies interactionally, via their instructional practices, although the teachers did not necessarily see their actions in this way. I view their actions as constituting language policies, not simply as norms for language use, because they were ideologically driven, goal-oriented steps deliberately taken to manage others' language practices. The teachers might view their actions purely as pedagogy, but according to my understanding of language policy, following Spolsky (2004), such actions meet the definition I expounded in Chapter 2. The only teacher who did not seem to enact a consistent language policy was Dr. Bragg, who expressed a desire to set a more official policy encouraging English use, to the exclusion of students' L1s, but he felt unable to do so because he was treading unfamiliar ground as an ESOL teacher. Overall, I observed the teachers to have engaged in language management efforts, which I referred to as English-as-goal and English-as-default, that led to the enactment of English-only policies in their classrooms. Although the educators varied in the language ideologies they (re)produced and the preparation they had received in TESOL, they were nevertheless relatively consistent in their language management. To be clear, I am not opposed to educators setting rules for language use in the school and classroom. In fact, I think schools should have an explicit—and language-inclusive—language policy (Corson, 1999), as I discuss further in Chapter 7. In Chapter 5, I present my findings regarding educators' appropriation of high-stakes testing policies. While I treat research questions 1 and 2, and their respective findings, as distinct, they undoubtedly overlap and intersect, just as discourse cycles do.

Chapter 5: Educators' Appropriation of High-Stakes Testing Policies

In this chapter, I present and discuss the ways that educators appropriated high-stakes testing policies in their specific contexts: principals, content area teachers, and ESOL teachers. I found that appropriation of high-stakes testing policies by teachers was quite different from that by principals. As I mentioned previously, the data I collected from the principals was much more limited than the data collected from teachers, so my findings were correspondingly more limited for principals and more extensive for teachers. High-stakes testing policies affected principals differently from teachers in my study because of the differential demands put on them from the accountability system, the Maryland School Report Card. The principals were acutely aware of accountability pressures, whereas accountability-based testing did not, in fact, seem to exert excessive force on the teachers. But the nature of policy appropriation was also substantially different due to the fact that teachers interact directly with students.

In the nexus of practice of high-stakes testing policy appropriation, educators' practices were mediated by intersecting discourses in the historical body, discourses in place, and interaction order. I found that educators' assessment literacy was a predominant influence in the nexus of practice and largely fell within the historical body, although it also intersected with salient discourses in place, in particular the relevant tests themselves, and the interaction order. Nevertheless, Section 5.1 focuses primarily on the historical body, as it relates to educators' assessment literacy, given that Hult (2015) listed relevant aspects of the historical body to include "beliefs about language(s) and speakers/users, social status/position, **education and training**, **skills** (e.g., teaching, administrative, rhetorical), [and] **habits related to policymaking and/or implementation**," (p. 224, emphasis mine), of which the aspects in boldface are most pertinent to my findings below.

Then in Section 5.2, I describe how principals appropriated high-stakes testing policies, focusing particularly on the ELA MCAP and ACCESS, and then how teachers appropriated high-stakes testing policies, detailing the means by which they demonstrated (1) *full* acceptance and integration of testing policies, (2) *minimal* acceptance and cooperation, or (3) variable policy appropriation. This section most clearly relates to the discourses in place, namely the testing policies themselves, although there is clearly also intersection with the other discourse cycles.

5.1 Testing Policy Appropriation and the Historical Body: Assessment Literacy

Educators' instructional practices related to high-stakes testing were mediated by their historical body, namely their experiences and knowledge that produced their *assessment literacy*. As I stated just above in the introduction to the present chapter, educators' education and training, skills, and habits related to policy implementation (or, in this case, prior experiences with testing) all contributed to their assessment literacy. Educators' assessment literacy (AL) mediated their appropriation of testing polices, in that their AL affected how they weighed the burden of testing and the value of data obtained from testing, and how they sought a balance between the two.

Assessment literacy has been "traditionally defined as a basic understanding of educational assessment and related skills to apply such knowledge to various measures of student achievement" (Xu & Brown, 2016). What is encompassed by such an understanding and application of skills is variably defined in the literature (which I expand on in Chapter 7). In this section, I will focus on three sets of related concepts that were particularly salient in the interviews: validity and reliability; methods of assessment; and test purpose and use.

5.1.1 Validity and Reliability

According to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, "Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores for proposed uses of tests" (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014, p. 11). Alice's definition of validity was consistent with the meaning generally understood by the teachers, which she succinctly put as whether a test is "accurately measuring what it is intending to measure," (Alice, Interview 3, 04-09-2021). This definition is more a combination between construct validity (in that "*Construct* is the concept we are attempting to measure," Mahoney, 2017, p. 41) and reliability than a description of validity as used by the assessment community.

Validity and reliability in assessment are related but separate ideas, though the teachers generally referred to the concepts jointly. While they generally had basic understandings of validity (as an aspect of test quality), they were not as clear on the exact nature of reliability. Conceptually speaking, reliability "has been used in a more general sense, to refer to the consistency of scores across replications of a testing procedure, regardless of how this consistency is reported," (AERA et al., 2014, p. 33). The more technical meaning of reliability is that it is a measure of error present in a test score (whether a single test item or an entire test) and is reported as a coefficient reflecting how precise a test is in measuring test-taker knowledge. All tests inherently have error and a reliability coefficient is an estimate of how much error is in the reported test score (Mahoney, 2017, p. 130).

Generally, the teachers tended to discuss validity in terms of threats to test validity and reliability, including cultural bias in test items, compromised test security, or the language of assessment—all factors that introduce construct-irrelevant variance (CIV), although teachers did not use the term itself. The unified view of validity (Messick, 1989) emphasizes valid test *use*

over other elements of test validity, and while many of the teachers critiqued the use of testing and test scores in various ways, they did not appear to consider it as part of validity; rather, they seemed to conceive of validity as a part of the quality of a test, and the appropriateness of the use of the test was a related but separate consideration. I go into the implications of these inconsistencies in teacher assessment literacy in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Alice touched on several relevant points in Excerpt 5-1, including a conceptual—if limited—understanding of reliability, construct validity, the inherent limitations of standardized (multiple choice) tests, and the impact of the pandemic on test administration.

Excerpt 5-1

Alice
[…] reliability would be like the same student taking the test again, right. But for me validity is does the test to show, is it accurately measuring what it is intending to measure. So, if a test is trying to tell me if a student is performing at grade level with regards to their writing and meeting whatever the expectations are and the standards, if a test is not really testing for that, right, and– or the way that they're getting that information is not really getting at what the student can do, that to me that means it's not a very valid test. And if– yeah it's just– there's too much overlap between validity and reliability, because you have two completely opposite testing environments, and other factors that influence how kids are taking the test. For me there's issues with testing validity, even if they were all in the same controlled environment. Students are– it's just there's– standardized tests look at one specific way that a student can demonstrate their learning of something. So testing validity, the test might be I guess somewhat reliable during a regular year but not so much valid, whereas now this year it's like well now it's neither reliable nor valid so what are we doing? ((laughs))
(Alice, Interview 3, 04-09-2021)

In Excerpt 5-1, Alice explained her understanding of reliability and validity. Her brief description of reliability as "like the same student taking the test again" I took as an allusion to the idea that reliability measures seek to approximate the degree of consistency between test scores if one student could take a test, have their memory of the test erased, and then take the exact same test again. This thought experiment is useful for capturing a conceptual basis for reliability. She also referred to test environment in her response, with respect to its effect on test

reliability, suggesting that if students took the same test "in the same controlled environment," the test would be more reliable than if they were to take the test with different groups of students in "two completely opposite testing environments." Alice was contrasting these situations to refer to typical high-stakes testing at school, pre-pandemic (former situation), and the proposal for conducting high-stakes testing with some students at school in person and others testing remotely from home, which was being considered at the time of the interview (latter situation). She recognized that differences in testing environment introduced new error into scoring and interpreted an increase in error as a decrease in reliability. Alice understood validity in terms of construct validity, that is, "is it [the test] accurately measuring what it is intending to measure," such as grade-level writing, and if the test "is not really testing for that," or is not designed to assess grade-level writing skills, then "that means it's not a very valid test." During our interviews, she voiced general criticism of standardized testing, in particular for her students, viewing the system as producing invalid measures of student abilities, which, in concert with what she viewed as decreased reliability for testing during the pandemic, completely undermined the use of high-stakes testing.

Similar to Alice's description in 5-1, Linda understood test validity to mean that a test accurately measured what it purported to measure. She used the example of the language of the test potentially being a source of construct irrelevant variance (CIV), thus threatening test validity (Excerpt 5-2):

Excerpt 5-2

Linda
[…] like sometimes we give a <u>math</u> test, and it has like a paragraph or captions that go with something, and then they have to answer it. They might be able to do the math, but they don't understand what the question is so, then that's not really measuring their math ability, so that's when I would say that a test like that wouldn't be valid, and I think for a lot of the tests– from what I know a lot of the tests that we give, you need to have, you need to be like at least

Linda
((pause)) maybe, I think it was fourth grade level for reading in English and understanding in English, to be able to access the test, and understand the questions and if you are not there yet, then, you know, people might be guessing or just, you know, I don't know, not– or attempting but not understanding what what it is that they're doing, and you can't really, you know– is– what is this measuring? Is this measuring how much English they know, or is this measuring whatever the content is? So so that's, that's, I guess what I, what I think about for, for, you know, valid tests. (Linda, Interview 4, 06-09-2021)

In Excerpt 5-2, Linda explained that the language used on a math test could interfere with the test-taker's ability to answer questions accurately, even if they could do the math required, which meant that the test did not accurately measure test-takers' math ability, thus diminishing the validity of the test. She theorized that many of the tests her students had to take required a level of English proficiency and literacy her students might not have, which would impair their ability to perform on the tests. Altogether, Linda made a compelling argument that standardized testing designed for English-proficient students could not be validly used for students not yet proficient in English.

When I asked her about the difference between reliability and validity, she mused over several different ideas related to potential sources of CIV, such as problems in the testing environment or looking at another student's answers, but she struggled to answer in a way she found satisfactory, saying, "I don't know if I answered that right" (Linda, Interview 4, 06-09-2021). Our entire exchange related to her understanding of reliability and validity was strained, and Linda seemed unsettled by the questions and her difficulty in answering. However, although she could not answer as clearly as she wanted to when asked directly, she had demonstrated understanding of related issues more obliquely at other times in the interviews, revealing that she had implicit knowledge of the concepts, even though she could not articulate it fully as explicit knowledge.

Carrie raised the issue of bias in testing during my interviews with her as another source of CIV, noting that test items might use words or concepts that are unfamiliar to students who are learning English as an additional language, or who may be from other countries or cultures, regardless of their language proficiency (Excerpt 5-3).

Excerpt 5-3

Carrie
I always tune in to like educational things, and one person said, I think it was like it was either podcast or a video, and they were talking about how there was one question in a standardized test that was talking about hockey. And it was for it was for math, and it was something like– I don't even know anything about hockey myself but it was something about the times– if– I don't know, I'm just gonna say quarters, like different quarters of the game. If this time ran out to this much– you know, a math problem, which I'm not good at. But it was talking about hockey and it was like, I didn't even know that, and then to expect my students to know that. And then you just think about like hockey's not something that's widely known by everyone. So that is something where the kids don't even have the background information. And it's the same. I mean, you think about it, for just immigrant refugee students, English language learners, English speakers of other languages. You think about how much stuff is in that test, in all of the tests, historical things– if the background knowledge is not there, that's setting that student up to fail. (Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021)

In Excerpt 5-3, Carrie gave the example of students having to answer a math problem which required students to have culturally specific knowledge to be able to answer, namely how time is divided in hockey game (into three 20-minute periods, not quarters, as Carrie guessed, illustrating her point that the information is not widely known enough to be used on a test item). In this case, it is not language proficiency that could interfere with a student being able to accurately demonstrate their knowledge and skills, like in Linda's example, but knowledge of cultural references that are independent of the tested material of a math problem. Carrie argued that immigrants, refugees, or any EL-designated student would be less likely to know these kinds of cultural references that appear on tests designed for dominant group, English-proficient students, and so the tests put them at a disadvantage.

In one interview, Rachel made the same point as Carrie in Excerpt 5-3, about tests using culturally specific information. She gave the example of a math problem asking students to solve a word problem involving a certain number of tea cozies, "And they're like, you know, they don't have any– they have no idea what that is. So that's where I would say it's not valid or it's not culturally relevant, and you're gonna– maybe what makes the test unreliable? So […] some things you might see in a student's score might not be accurate to their ability" (Rachel, Interview 3, 04-14-2021).

Linda, Carrie, and Rachel all made similar points that the language used on a test can create CIV and make test scores less accurate for EL-designated students, and they all used examples of math tests. It is rather straightforward to see how language can interfere with assessing mathematics knowledge, while it may be more difficult to see how it interacts with an English language arts or English language proficiency assessment. The ELA teachers, Alice and Carrie, and the ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School, Linda and Rachel, characterized their classes as "English class," which might point to an area of oversight in understanding the role of language-related CIV on an ELA or ELP assessment.

Almost all the educators drew on ACCESS as a discourse in place, singling it out as more valid than other tests, or the only good test, or "the one test that I do, I do like" (Linda, Interview 2, 03-10-2021) that students at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School have to take. For instance, in Excerpt 5-4, Alice presented ACCESS as being "generally more valid than other tests," in that she believed it relatively accurately measured what it purported to measure, which was how Alice defined validity (e.g., in Excerpt 5-1).

Excerpt 5-4

Alice
I think it's generally more valid than other tests, I would say. Like, I mean there's always room for improvement, right. I guess what I like about it is it does actually ask students to, you know, read and write and listen, and it does a pretty good job of obviously taking, for our students, their language needs into account, so like the directions are not too text heavy, if they're doing a listening activity and things like that. So I think it does a pretty good job of getting to the core of what it wants to do. Also because WIDA is assessing a student's language level as opposed to something like MCAP, which is trying to see if their, you know, English literacy is on, you know, on grade level or whatever that means, right, like I think WIDA does a better job of assessing what it wants to assess. It's just more straightforward to me than these other tests where there's too many other factors at play. [**Karen:** Yeah, that makes sense.] But I mean, everything has its issues right like, you know, there's obviously kids we see their scores and I'm like, 'This doesn't seem right, like this kid definitely either can do a lot better,' or 'How did that kid get that score? That's clearly not right either.' So it's not perfect, but out of all this tests that scores that I do see and deal with I'd say that's so far been a better one to get a snapshot of a kid's ability.
(Alice, Interview 3, 04-09-2021)

Because Alice used the term "validity" to signify something along the lines of construct validity, she viewed ACCESS more favorably than the ELA MCAP, another powerful discourse in place, claiming that "WIDA does a better job of assessing what it wants to assess" than the ELA MCAP, which had "too many factors at play" and was not as "straightforward" as ACCESS (Alice, Interview 3, 04-09-2021). She also contrasted ELA MCAP with ACCESS in terms of the test constructs themselves, saying that ACCESS "is assessing a student's language level," whereas the MCAP is intended to assess if students' "English literacy is on [...] grade level or whatever that means," although that is not precisely the ELA MCAP's test construct. Alice conceded that ACCESS is not perfect, and she has seen students who scored too high or too low according to her estimation of their proficiency, but that it is better than the other tests students have to take.

Linda also characterized ACCESS as "fairly valid, unless the student is copying from somebody else or, you know, the environment, there's something not quite right, I feel pretty

confident with those results" (Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021). Thanks to Linda's significant teaching experience over more than fifteen years, she had the benefit of being able to compare ACCESS with a previously used test (LAS Links), and she described ACCESS as "a lot better" (Linda, Interview 4, 06-09-2021). Not only was LAS Links a relevant discourse in place, it had also become encoded in Linda's historical body through her repeated experiences with it. When LAS Links was used at a school where she used to work, she remembered that there were only two forms of the test, so students would be retested with the same form over multiple years, thus compromising test results. Since both Linda and Rachel described ACCESS favorably, I asked them whether they had experienced instances in which they were surprised by a student's score, either too high or too low, compared to their own estimation of the student's proficiency. Linda responded by alluding to the possibility that a student might get an unexpectedly high score, but she dismissed the chance of cheating because "the kids take [the test] so seriously at our school" (Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021). All of the other potential circumstances in which a student would receive an unexpected score on ACCESS were due to test anxiety, or the fact that the test increases in difficulty in high school compared to middle school, or some other student-related reason for poor performance resulting in a lower-than-expected score, not because the test itself was flawed in some way, as Linda described in Excerpt 5-5.

Excerpt 5-5

Linda
And, you know, so I don't know sometimes kids surprise me, but it's usually not like a huge jump like the one who's a newcomer who got like a five. It might be a little more and, and the kids– but you know I'm usually not questioning it too much because the kids take this so seriously at our school. They know why we're taking it, they know– they've set goals at the beginning of the year they're trying to keep, so they're really trying to do their best, and and so sometimes the scores really jump up a lot and and that's always nice to see. It's just a little disappointing I guess sometimes when a few of them, stayed the same or they went down and, and I kind of think maybe, you know, it was like test anxiety perhaps just maybe the students just doesn't test well because the school work, it looks really solid and I would have given it a

Linda

higher sc– the schoolwork I give a higher score but it just didn't pan out for them this year. So, I don't know, […] we try to look at the scale score to see if there's– (I'm trying to remember) the three digit one that you know that goes up and it doesn't matter which bandwidth, grade bandwidth they're on to show if there's continuing growth. And usually there is even if the, the number stays the same, it could have been that they came from middle school and now they're at ninth grade so they, you know, they they didn't do more, or they did a little more but not enough for what a high schooler [**Karen:** Right.] should be expected to do at that, at that level so it's like it's looks like it's the same but we always try to find areas where they have shown growth to encourage them to, to keep going.

(Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021)

For Linda, the accuracy of the ACCESS test seemed to be so unassailable that she did not think to include it as a possible reason for students receiving an unexpected test score (whether too high or too low). Instead, she considered a variety of student-related possibilities, such as test anxiety, generally bad test-taking, or failing to perform at the high school level because of higher expectations compared to the test in middle school.

In our first interview, Rachel expressed a similar sentiment to Alice's in Excerpt 5-4, that ACCESS is "the most accurate," for apparently two main reasons: students are tested annually, so they are able to compare their performance each year to their prior performance; and their scores are reported as absolute scores, not as percentiles (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021; Excerpt 5-6). In both of these ways, ACCESS was more personally meaningful to individual students, which was what Rachel meant by "accurate," rather than "valid" in the sense employed by Alice and Linda. Rachel also discussed the fact that students received score reports for MCAPs that included their percentile rank, which she found or imagined that the students found difficult to interpret and which was not as relevant to them as a comparison to their own past performance. In addition, because she did not know about the performance levels and descriptors for the MCAPs, she did not find them as meaningful as the ACCESS levels. Rachel contrasted the MCAPs with ACCESS in Excerpt 5-6:

Excerpt 5-6

Rachel
I do think the test is the most accurate– so, of all the tests they take so this is the one test where they get the results back, and it's like, truly about them and how they did, so it's kind of the most accurate thing of like, 'Oh, this is where I actually am.' I can't think of all the different acronyms now but our students basically take the same, the Maryland state assessments, there's the math, science, they keep changing the names, so now I can't remember, like the MCAPs? Anyway, they, they're just different names for the same thing, so it's like a math, there's like nine-ten– ninth grade and tenth grade English and biology and government and stuff so they take those but then they get back the results that tell them how they're doing in a percentile, of students in the county and that's really hard to know what that means, like 'Oh, I'm a two out of'– Usually they want to get like a three, I think it's like a scale of one to five and they see, they get these printed reports that say you're, you're so-and-so compared to the whole county or whatever, so it's like okay, well, what does that really mean, or what does that really mean to me. But for the WIDA test the kids can truly compare like each year's data and see the growth and see the language growth.
(Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

Rachel was not well versed in the MCAP series of tests, but she was extremely familiar with ACCESS and WIDA's associated materials. In this way, the MCAPs were relevant discourses in place for Rachel's testing policy appropriation because she was aware of their importance, but she lacked crucial knowledge about them, and so the intersection between the discourses in place and her historical body mediated her policy appropriation for ACCESS that would likely have been different if the MCAPs did not serve as a ready counterpoint to ACCESS. As I describe further below in Section 5.3.1, Rachel carried out policy actions I characterized as "full acceptance and integration," due in large part to her favorable impressions of ACCESS, which I think benefited from her more negative impressions of MCAPs.

In that same interview, she told me about her experiences in graduate school participating in key checks for test items on ACCESS, which entails taking the test, or potentially several tests to cover the multiple grade bands, and verifying that the correct answer, or "key," entered into the computer scoring system is, in fact, the correct answer. In part through this process, she

gained a better understanding of test development in general and ACCESS in particular, so she felt confident in saying that the test is "as good as it can get" and has "been edited and vetted over and over again" for quality assurance (Excerpt 5-7). Despite the good aspects of the test the teachers perceived, it was imperfect—it had "its issues," according to Alice. Rachel pointed to the speaking subtest as the one part of the assessment she would want to change, which she told me about in Excerpt 5-7.

Excerpt 5-7

Rachel
Yeah, so, I think, the WIDA test is like, it's like as good as it can be for trying to measure, trying to push out electronic tests to all these students. The– yeah, the biggest thing with– the main one we'd want to change is– but I don't know how you'd do it because– they used to do it in person, before– is the speaking. So that's where you notice that kids have the hardest part– have the biggest problem with, because they're speaking to a computer, so they're not really, they're not really speaking. And there's no like back and forth or visual signals or things like that to kind of prompt the student to keep talking or to, can't ask a follow up question. […] But yeah, I think of all the tests that WIDA test is like, kind of as good as it can get, and I know that just how much it's been edited and vetted over and over again.
(Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

According to Rachel, the ACCESS test is "as good as it can be," indicating that she has largely accepted what she saw as its flaws, namely the speaking section of the test[38]. Rachel attributed students' difficulties with the speaking subtest to the artificiality of speaking to a computer, without any paralinguistic cues or the normal ebb and flow of a conversation. Similar to Linda in Excerpt 5-5, Rachel did not overtly critique the test, even after complaining about the speaking section, conceding that she didn't know how the test could be changed to address the problem, and again emphasizing that the test is "as good as it can get."

[38] To see sample test items that show what students see, including for the speaking subtest, go to https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access/preparing-students/practice and then click on the link for "ACCESS Online Sample Items"; note that this link must be opened in the Chrome browser.

The WIDA ACCESS test is computer-based (with some exceptions for students to use a paper-based version), including the speaking section, which is designed to approximate a conversation between the student test-taker and the simulated test administrator, who reads aloud the instructions and test prompts. Rachel, Linda, and Dr. Peterson all described the difficulties students have with the speaking subtest, whether due to confusion with the mechanics of test-taking, not producing enough language to earn a high score, the issues mentioned by Rachel related to the artificiality of the testing context for speaking, or due to discomfort with speaking into a microphone: in Excerpt 5-26, further below in Section 5.2.2, Dr. Peterson related, "And you know one year it was, we didn't make speaking[39] just because we didn't use proper microphones and students were ((whispers)) speaking like this and it's picked up by the computer and so they were too shy, ((speaking at normal volume)) and so we've learned to like test better" (Dr. Peterson, Interview 1, 01-22-2021).

Just as Linda reported instances in which students received unexpected scores on ACCESS (Excerpt 5-5), Rachel also told me that she had often seen mismatches between students' scores on ACCESS and how she would rate their proficiency, saying, "We have it a lot [of the time] where it doesn't match" (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021). She went on to explain that they have to teach students about the test and "train" them for taking it:

Excerpt 5-8

Rachel
We have to teach them about the test because it's just like any other test– like you have to know how to do it, you have to practice the test-taking, kinda– in order to kind of beat the test. And part of it is because it's looking for specific things that a student might not realize. So it's looking for academic language, you know, it's looking for vocabulary words, you know, it wants you to– so it wants you to type back or say back the words that it told you in the prompt.

[39] Meaning that one year, Riverbend High School did not meet schoolwide goals for scores on the speaking subtest.

Rachel
If it's just talking about the solar system, you need to try to use the vocabulary in there, and your tier, you know, higher-level vocabulary and students might just not know that and that's where you get the mismatch. (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

Although Rachel described the ACCESS test as accurate (even "the most accurate"), she still believed that students needed to be taught how to take and "beat" the test. Although she had faith in the test as a generally sound measure of student language proficiency, she also had a realistic perspective of the test, in that "you have to know how to do it"—that all tests require an understanding of test-taking, no matter how valid she perceived them to be. Rachel explained that students did not understand that the test was looking for them to answer in specific ways, to use "academic language" and particular vocabulary, so part of the test-taking process was learning how to test. I detail her perspective and the washback effects of ACCESS on her teaching and that of Linda in 5.3.1, "Policy Appropriation Through Full Acceptance and Integration."

5.1.2 Methods of Assessment

Rachel noted that "the assessment is only as good as, like, the information you get from it," which approaches an approximation of the unified view of validity (Rachel, Interview 4, 06-10-2021). This qualification for assessments also connects to the appropriateness (or lack thereof) of using particular methods of assessment with the student population at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School.

As I discussed just above in 5.1.1, "Validity and Reliability," the educators largely looked favorably upon ACCESS, with the minor exception of the speaking subtest. Dr. Peterson went so far as to say that, due to test cancellations and delays during the pandemic, "If I had to say I miss any tests, I miss the WIDA ones that measure language and growth" (Dr. Peterson, Interview 3,

06-14-2021). In this section, when I or the educators refer to "standardized testing," it refers to standardized testing generally or the ELA MCAP in particular, unless otherwise noted.

There was an almost universally expressed belief that (non-ACCESS) standardized testing, which is largely multiple choice on the tests of concern to these teachers, is the wrong method to use with the students at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School. Many of their complaints about and arguments against standardized testing are echoed in the arguments of the Opt-Out Movement (Fair Test, 2018; New York Times, 2015; Pizmony-Levy, 2018; Strauss, 2016), although none of the educators referenced it directly. Thus, although they may not have drawn on the movement consciously, they nevertheless contributed the discourse in place of a growing push against standardized testing. In Excerpt 5-9, Dr. Peterson described her concern with standardized tests as being too narrow in their scope and eliding important differences in students' backgrounds and experiences.

Excerpt 5-9

Dr. Peterson
I think that's my biggest concern of that, we're all– everyone's expected to be on the same level, but everyone's coming at a different continuum. We're coming in from a variety of students from interrupted to education to highly educated who might not have the language. [**Karen:** Yeah.] And um ((pause)) standardized tests do not always capture everything that's going on.
(Dr. Peterson, Interview 3, 06-14-2021)

Dr. Peterson seemed to view standardized tests as overly blunt instruments because they were universally applied without regard for the differences between test-takers, not just EL-designated and non-EL-designated, but even within the group of students in ESOL as some might have had interrupted education while others were possibly well-educated in their previous countries but were still in the process of learning English. Those differences matter in how students are prepared for the system and engage with standardized testing.

Carrie was vociferously opposed to the use of standardized testing in general, for several reasons, including what she perceived to be an artificiality or extreme distance between what testing required of students and what real-life contexts require of individuals, which she talked about in Excerpt 5-10.

Excerpt 5-10

Carrie
Karen: *What, what would you change if you could, in terms of the testing?* Like— **Carrie:** I, I would get rid of it. […] Testing in general, I think we need to normalize like kids using notes for tests, and that's the real world stuff. I mean, that's—they need to know how to use the information you're giving them and like, be able to find it and then take it, synthesize it, write about it, but to, like, not let them prep for it? I mean to give them a brand new thing that they've never seen, whether that be a text or a question. It's just not fair, because that's not what we do, like any job- jobs don't test you. I mean, maybe you'll have a test like a server test if you're going into a restaurant. I worked at restaurants for like eight years, which, yeah, is about memorization right? But like in the real world that's not what we want them to do, we want them to critically think. So it's all just, it's, there's, it's so multi layered in why I don't agree with testing that—yeah I don't, I probably like talk about different layers on it for a long time. (Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021)

Carrie believed testing as currently practiced is unfair to students, in large part due to the artificiality of being assessed on comprehension of brand-new content, rather than assessed on skills that are relevant to the work students will go on to do in the "real world." She pointed out that the tests do not reflect the tasks associated with jobs and careers, even though the standards to which the ELA curriculum is aligned are "College *and Career* Readiness Standards."

Alice also found the ELA MCAP and the requirement for students to take it after completing tenth-grade English to be "not a reasonable expectation" (Excerpt 5-11):

Excerpt 5-11

Alice

Alice:
So I teach English 9 and 10 together but in English, at the end of English 10, in the state, of course, they all have to take what's now called the MCAP, it used to be the PARCC. I have actually not given my students the MCAP yet because of COVID. I proctored the test once with, like, eleventh graders who had to retake it, but that's all I've done with it so far. I haven't really had any preparation for, you know, getting my kids to understand- for me to understand what the kids are going to have on the MCAP and stuff like that apart from proctoring, which, you know, I don't think I can discuss a lot of those details [Karen: Right.] because of the test stuff but um, I mean, it's a very difficult, and, in my opinion, like unreasonable expectations on the kids. So, within the context of my own class, I might get a kid who's a newcomer in ninth grade. And then literally before they finish their second year, they have to take a test and demonstrate that they are pr- grade-level proficient at reading and writing in English, which is not a reasonable expectation by any stretch, to say the least.

[…]

Karen:
How w-, if you could change the way your students are assessed, what would you change?

Alice:
So, in an ideal world, I think it would be really nice if we had a portfolio type system that students can do. I understand that, you know, that may be pie in the sky, really difficult to standardize. So, like we've talked about this with staff. I think a more realistic approach would be that if a student is an ESOL student in the system, that perhaps instead of requiring them to do the MCAP for English, having them meet their growth-to-target for the reading and writing portions of WIDA would be a much more like realistic, attainable, and like satisfactory goal I think. And then if they don't (meet) their growth-to-target, then perhaps you know they look at doing these other like AVP Bridge Projects or whatever alternative. But I just think that that recognizes more where the student is coming from. What's really uniquely, maybe irritating or strange to me is that, for example, the Algebra MCAP, students have the option of taking that in Spanish because, you know, they're aware, 'Hey language is a huge factor in how students perform on this test,' but you can't really do that on the English MCAP. So, and just handing them a dictionary and going, 'Hey you got an extra 45 minutes, have at it! Like you know, you know, Charles Dickens right?' It's not, it's not fair.

(Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021)

Alice's experience with teaching at Hilltop High School showed her the ways that the MCAP testing requirement was not reasonable for all test-takers. She gave the example of a newcomer student, arriving at school with very low English proficiency, who would have only

the time of ninth and tenth grade to develop grade-level English proficiency and learn grade-level English language arts content before being assessed with a test designed for English-proficient, mainstream students. Although the student would learn academic content and progress in their English proficiency, Alice argued that the use of the standardized test was not fair, and that other methods of assessment, such as portfolios, would be better suited to showcasing the student's learning and development.

5.1.2.1 Accommodations. Not only did Alice find the ELA MCAP to be inappropriate for her students but also unfair, in part because of the inadequacy of test accommodations for EL-designated students. Accommodations for EL-designated students are spelled out in the *Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, and Accommodations Policy Manual* (Maryland State Department of Education, 2017), which states that,

> Effective accommodations for ELs: reduce the linguistic load necessary to access the content of the curriculum or assessment; address the unique linguistic and sociocultural needs of the student by reducing barriers caused by language rather than by the content being assessed, which will help ensure that instruction and assessment are more likely to focus on the content being taught and assessed rather than on English language proficiency; and do not alter the content being assessed. In large-scale assessment, accommodated scores should be sufficiently equivalent in scale so that they can be pooled with unaccommodated scores. (p. 5–6).

Despite these stated characteristics of effective accommodations for EL-designated students, the available accommodations appear to fall short. According to the manual, the accommodations for EL-designated students that are permitted on ELA state content assessments include extended time, word-to-word dictionary (English/native language), general

administration directions read aloud and repeated in student's native language (by test administrator), and general administration directions clarified as needed in student's native language (by test administrator). Accommodations for EL-designated students that are permitted on other state content assessments include all of those in the preceding list, as well as speech-to-text and human scribe (for mathematics, science, and social studies response); online transadaptation[40] of the mathematics assessment in Spanish; paper-based edition of the mathematics assessment in Spanish; large print edition of the mathematics assessment in Spanish; text-to-speech for the mathematics assessments in Spanish; and human reader for the mathematics assessments in Spanish (pp. 6-2–6-8). It is clear from these lists of options that the accommodations available to EL-designated students, especially for use on the ELA MCAP, are limited in both number and effectiveness.

According to Abedi et al. (2004), "extra time is the most commonly permitted accommodation," but "it may not always be effective" (p. 12). Indeed, in limited studies cited by Abedi and colleagues, non-EL-designated students also benefited from extra time, which is an indicator that the accommodation actually changes the construct being assessed. The use of a customized dictionary or glossary was found to be a potentially promising accommodation (Abedi et al., 2004, pp. 13–14), but, as both Alice and Rachel pointed out, there are also challenges to implementing such a strategy. In order for a student to use a dictionary, a dictionary must be available in a student's L1—not only are word-to-word dictionaries not available in every possible language spoken by EL-designated students in the U.S. or even just in Maryland,

[40] Transadaptation refers to adapting tests so that they are not only simply translated from one language to another but also ensuring that the transadapted version "is comparable in content and difficulty level to the original version of the test" (AERA et al., 2014, p. 60).

but not all languages spoken by EL-designated students have standardized orthographies, facilitating the creation of a dictionary. In addition, students are not all literate in their L1, even if the language is written. Finally, an assessment-specific word-to-word dictionary or glossary (rather than a commercially available dictionary) must be created as part of the test development process, a process that is already long, complex, and expensive, and no test development company could expect a return on the expense invested for a language used by a small fraction of the potential test-takers. Extended time, word-to-word dictionaries, and repetition or clarification of instructions would hardly seem to fall under the description of "effective accommodations for ELs" contained in the *Accommodations Policy Manual*. As Alice put it, "just handing them a dictionary and going, 'Hey, you got an extra 45 minutes, have at it! Like, you know, you know, Charles Dickens right?' It's not, it's not fair" (Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021). The accommodations manual was a textual discourse in place that Alice drew on. Even if she did not reference it explicitly, she accurately named the only two accommodations available to EL-designated students taking the ELA MCAP that were not confined to only the test directions.

5.1.2.2 Alternative Methods of Assessment. Given the issues with standardized testing that the ELA teachers perceived, specifically the ELA MCAP, they described various other methods of assessment they would prefer over the currently used method. In Excerpt 5-11, Alice suggested that a portfolio-based assessment would be ideal, although she recognized it would be difficult to standardize—however, the New York Performance Standards Consortium (New York Performance Standards Consortium, 2023) has demonstrated the possibility of implementing standardized performance-based assessment (including portfolios) in place of the well-known Regents exams (see Menken, 2008, for a detailed investigation into the effects of the Regents exams on the education of EL-designated students in the wake of NCLB).

In Excerpt 5-12, Dr. Peterson also brought up portfolio assessments, referring to New York as an exemplar case for standardized alternative assessments:

Excerpt 5-12

Dr. Peterson
Yes, we have talked about portfolios, and we've talked about it– other ways to have students demonstrate it and really making it meaningful because, you know, in a portfolio you learn to self-assess and you learn to critique, and you learn to really look at where you've made growth and how you're growing, and we've seen it be successful in New York, where I believe they have a portfolio and everything except one test, and I can't remember English or math, and they're able to do the portfolio in lieu of the assessments and their graduation rate is tremendous because of it, and. And you see a difference, you watch the students who stand up and have to present, and we're not– a portfolio when done right, can be such a valuable skill that you can take with you into next things that you do and skills that you learn, as opposed to the intense skill and drill of tests that that might not apply as much for life, for some of our students. Many go on to college, but not all do. (Dr. Peterson, Interview 1, 01-22-2021)

In this excerpt, Dr. Peterson described the advantages of portfolio as a method of assessment, especially compared to standardized testing, which she named as especially inappropriate for EL-designated students, such as those at Riverbend High School (Excerpt 5-9). She emphasized the benefits of the process of creating a portfolio and formally presenting it as being particularly relevant to non-college post-graduation paths, a point that was akin to Carrie's argument that standardized testing was not relevant to the "real world" (Excerpt 5-10). In Excerpt 5-13, from our third interview, Carrie again emphasized the importance of these "real world" skills and contexts as she did in our first interview.

Excerpt 5-13

Carrie
So many more things that kids could do that are more like college and career ready type of move. It's like, instead of an exit exam, okay let's do senior exit interviews. Let's do senior showcases. Let's do like senior, you know, you know what I'm saying? Like, why not do something that one day they're probably going to have to do, regardless of if they are, you know, a crew member of the, you know, like construction site or a foreman or, you know, someone that a CEO and a business, like you always have to know how to speak in front of

Carrie
people and, and at some point in your life like probably lead something. So like I don't, I don't understand– or, like, show what you've done and that seems more realistic to me but again, that's just one teacher talking and it'll probably never be a thing. ((both laugh)) (Carrie, Interview 3, 03-26-2021)

In this excerpt, Carrie argued that if academic standards were intended to get students to be college- and career-ready, the assessments aligned with those standards should better reflect skills that would be used in college and careers, such as presentation skills and demonstrated leadership. In Excerpt 5-10, above, she also pointed to skills that are more useful than what she perceived to be the tested skill of memorization—it would be more useful to test students on their ability to take and use notes, find and synthesize information, and critically analyze the information they found.

Dr. Santos similarly advocated for the use of alternative methods of assessment rather than standardized testing. He drew on his experience as a teacher and administrator in New York City schools in his suggestion of bilingual assessment (in concert with transitional bilingual education) or a project- and presentation-based assessment:

Excerpt 5-14

Dr. Santos
One of the things that I love about New York, and having worked in a school for English language learners as a teacher was that, you know, we use the transitional bilingual model, and basically that meant that, you know, you start teaching fifty/fifty, then you go seventy-five/ twenty-five in their native language and English. And so then you get to test in your native language, like kids have the option of testing in their native language in New York and that's one of the things that I like have really fought for in terms of kids being able to to test. So, I would have multiple pathways. It would be 'both and'– like, assessments that are in multiple language, and also the ability to, to not just be a standardized test. I would develop project-based rigorous examinations where kids would have to prove things, and write their behinds off– you know, like, not bubble in a response, because that could be a guess, right. And so I think that the PARCC and MCAP examinations have gotten partly there because it's a combination of open-ended questions and multiple choice, but I'm thinking more like projects. It could be a four year long thing that you're working on and then you have to do this authentic presentation. Or it could be a year-long project based on a course that you then get to present.

Dr. Santos
Again, options that English language learners have in New York City. So, yeah, I would totally vouch for equity in that perspective because some of us are not good test takers, and talk about myself here as well like, sometimes, multiple choice tests are difficult for people, so. (Dr. Santos, Interview 1, 01-15-2021)

In Excerpt 5-14, Dr. Santos described how he would prefer to offer students "multiple pathways" to be able to demonstrate their learning, not only through taking standardized tests in English. Having been an educator in New York City, he saw firsthand that there are a variety of ways to rigorously assess EL-designated students that are more appropriate to their language abilities than what Maryland currently offers.

A common thread in all of these responses is that standardized tests, specifically multiple choice tests, are limited in the knowledge and skills they can assess. Alice described them as "such a narrow, narrow way of trying to assess a student, it gets such a small snapshot of student ability" (Alice, Interview 3, 04-09-2021). However, not all teachers were in favor of moving toward alternative forms of assessment. Dr. Bragg discussed some of his reservations about portfolios and projects in Excerpt 5-15.

Excerpt 5-15

Dr. Bragg
Yeah, so portfolios are great, right. And, you know, research-based slash project-based learning, right, is a big thing. PBLs are huge. I like those. The challenge with those, of course, is, you know, do you have the manpower, right, to really grade them and stuff. But I do think that they're awesome. I do think, and I will say this as a counter to the concept of portfolios, and, and, not so much a counter. So I believe that each thing has its merit. Each thing has its merit. It just does. Like, you have to know certain things, right, and I'm not an essentialist. But there's certain things you have to know about a particular subject in order to say that you have passed this subject, so to speak. There are other things you have to understand about that subject. Now, when it starts getting into analysis, right, then I do question whether, you know we're pushing them too far, at the secondary level. And maybe we should wait for them to, right, graduate, be going to college if they want to really analyze that topic, right. But when it comes to applications, specifically in science and in math, and in, you know, in all the subjects, I think that there's things you need to know and the things you need to understand. And here's the reason why I say that in response to your question about portfolios. The way I've seen

Dr. Bragg

portfolios done, a student can generally elude knowing and true comprehension and put something together for folks that's really kind of like a collage of things that they think about, but were you to ask that student a question about the topic, right, a fundamental question, not just a gotcha question, right, but a fundamental question, many of the students that I've seen do portfolios, would not fare as well. So then you have to ask whether that portfolio is really kind of like an escape, right.

(Dr. Bragg, Interview 2, 03-25-2021)

Dr. Bragg expressed the only real critiques of portfolios that arose in all my interviews, including the possibility that the construct being assessed could drift from its original intention. That is to say, if a portfolio is intended as a summative assessment, documenting student knowledge and abilities, that is a distinct and separate construct from measuring student growth. Portfolios can certainly be used to accomplish both or either objective, but they require substantial and careful guidance through the process. Because Dr. Bragg had seen portfolios and project-based assessments poorly executed in the past, he seemed more reserved than other educators about the possibilities for using them for high-stakes purposes. However, just prior to these comments in Interview 2, he had explained that the standardized tests he had had experience with (the Government HSA and several AP exams) were not designed to assess categories of Bloom's Taxonomy above "knowledge and understanding" ("understand" and "remember," according to the Revised Taxonomy; Armstrong, 2010), and possibly "some application slash analysis" (Dr. Bragg, Interview 2, 03-25-2021). He went on to critique "the intensity" of high-stakes standardized testing that triggered students' test anxiety and to argue that tests in general were not relevant enough "to different students' experiences" (Dr. Bragg, Interview 2, 03-25-2021). This concern about test anxiety was echoed by every educator I interviewed, in at least one interview each. Despite his critiques of testing, Dr. Bragg was generally favorable toward standardized testing and less well-disposed toward alternative

assessments, at least for high-stakes purposes, at one point citing "Campbell's Law" with reference to Bridge Projects, saying that, "anything that is measured […] you will find corruption and cheating." The distinction he drew, if tacitly, between different kinds of uses (e.g., high-stakes versus low-stakes) for different methods of assessment is key to assessment literacy. In Excerpt 5-15, Dr. Bragg also acknowledged that alternative assessments required significant time and staff to grade, a point that Carrie made as well, in Excerpt 5-16, which she saw as a reason for standardized testing being so widespread: specialized assessment methods that are tailored to each student's individual needs and strengths are too onerous for people who "don't want to do all the extra work."

Excerpt 5-16

Carrie
I'm like, well, that's what the kids with IEPs are, specialized students, like, they have different requirements but if we're looking at all students, all students should have a requirement that is for their needs. And. But that's impossible. Right. And that's why we have the standardized test because people don't want to do all the extra work.
(Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021)

In this excerpt, Carrie was arguing for the idea that all students deserve individualized educational experiences, essentially that all students need something like an IEP, but that this ideal is out of reach because of the time, effort, and staff entailed to implement it. Carrie drew on IEPs as a relevant discourse in place as embodying the "different requirements" for the needs of "specialized students." Carrie and Dr. Bragg both recognized that standardized testing is more efficient in terms of time, but the tone of their comments differed. Dr. Bragg, in Excerpt 5-15, seemed to be implying that the staff hours needed to grade portfolios and projects might be under-estimated by proponents of those methods. Carrie, on the other hand, seemed closer to

indicting the people who focus on the time needed to do "the extra work" as an argument against providing what she saw as better, more appropriate assessments than standardized tests.

5.1.3 Test Purpose and Use

Mahoney (2017) emphasized the important difference between test purpose and use. The test purpose is determined by what the test is designed to measure (e.g., "to measure oral language, to measure achievement, or to measure ELP development in content-based instruction," pp. 14–15). According to Mahoney, within a unified view of validity, "use of data is *the most important question to address*" and refers to how test results will be used for decision-making (p. 15, italics in original).

The purpose of ACCESS is to measure academic English language proficiency in the domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and the results are used to determine continued student eligibility for language services and to judge schools on the percentage of their students making annual progress in developing English language proficiency, as part of a larger determination of need for targeted or comprehensive support. The purpose of the ELA MCAP is to measure student knowledge of the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards. The results are used to determine student eligibility for a high school diploma and to judge schools on student performance, as part of a larger determination of need for targeted or comprehensive support. Public schools are scored on earned points out of possible points, up to 100 possible points. Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School were not scored on their graduation rates due to insufficient data, so those 15 possible points were not included in their score. They were thus scored out of 85 possible points, so students' performance on the ELA MCAP actually counted for a larger portion of the total score for Riverbend High School and Hilltop High

School than it did for other schools that were scored out of 100 points. I go into the School Report Card in greater detail in Section 5.2 below.

In Excerpt 5-11, Alice put forward the idea of exempting EL-designated students from MCAP testing and instead allowing them to meet requirements with their literacy scores on ACCESS (the reading and writing subtests), which she characterized as a goal more "realistic, attainable, and, like, satisfactory" for this particular population of students. However, as we continued to talk, I pointed out that ACCESS is not designed to measure language arts content, despite the fact that one of the standards refers to the language of language arts, and she recognized that she had overlooked the *purpose* of the test in trying to find an acceptable alternative that would meet the intended *use*, as she perceived it.

Carrie questioned the entire premise underlying the relationship between the ELA MCAP's purpose of measuring student knowledge and use of determining student eligibility for graduation, arguing that "just a basic, like, passing all of the classes, is a fine enough requirement. I mean, why do we have classes and kids are taking tests along the way in those class, and then you require them to take another test? It doesn't make sense" (Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021). In drawing on the discourse in place of Maryland's high school course-taking graduation requirements (which are encoded in regulation), Carrie created a counterpoint to the need for standardized testing graduation requirements. Rather, she believed that "testing has always been for, not necessarily are the students getting taught, but are the teachers teaching what they want us to teach," that is, as a means of monitoring teachers (Carrie, Interview 2, 03-03-2021). This perspective, that testing was a check on teachers, invoked a discourse in place relating to a lack of confidence in teachers, which can be traced back to *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), if not earlier. Dr. Bragg also expressed

the perspective that testing served to monitor teachers but not with a negative connotation (Excerpt 5-17). Early in his teaching career, he taught U.S. History, which did not have an accountability-based assessment attached to it. He believed that he approached his teaching with too much laxity or self-indulgence at times, and that teaching U.S. Government would give him "self-accountability" beyond the government-mandated accountability system.

Excerpt 5-17

Dr. Bragg
And the one class that I wanted to teach was government. And the reason why is because there was a test attached to it at the end of the year. And I felt that it would be something that was, you know, independently verifiable of my abilities as a teacher. Whereas since history did not have a test- a test attached to it, I thought, well, you know, I can sometimes, you know, I'll be honest, you know, if I'm really being honest, sometimes I rolled out of bed and went to class and was like, 'All right, guys, what are we learning today? So let's talk about–' because, you know, anybody with a bachelor's degree in history, I can talk about whatever. [**Karen:** Yeah.] And so there's no test at the end, who's really, right, monitoring, right, whether I'm really teaching history or not. And so I thought Government will do that. So it's kind of like a self-accountability. 'Come on, man, let's kick it into gear, teach something with a test attached to it at the end.' And so. So that's kind of what did it for me on that end.
(Dr. Bragg, Interview 1, 03-18-2021)

From Dr. Bragg's perspective, standardized testing served the purpose of motivating him to be a better teacher and to teach content that was potentially more important or relevant to the students, rather than whatever topic he felt inclined to teach that day. He thought he needed his students to have a high-stakes test at the end of his course as a way to verify his "abilities as a teacher," an idea that would be anathema to Carrie, given her comments above.

The COVID-19 pandemic added another layer of considerations to the question of standardized testing. In March 2020, the federal Department of Education issued a fact sheet that offered states the chance to request a waiver for accountability-based assessments, determinations of schools in need of support, and the accountability components of requiring a 95% rate of participation in assessments and reporting chronic absenteeism in school

accountability systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2020a). In response, the Maryland State Board of Education requested an ESEA accountability waiver, thus cancelling all statewide assessments (SBOE, 3/24/2020). Carrie and Alice both commented on how the pandemic meant that the ELA MCAP was cancelled the year they were supposed to administer it. When I began conducting interviews in the spring of 2021 (all but one first interviews were completed by February 3, 2021), the educators seemed to think the question of whether statewide accountability testing would go forward was still undecided, despite the fact that Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos had issued a letter in September of 2020, warning states not to expect further offers of waivers (DeVos, 2020). They may have been unaware of the letter, or perhaps they did not place confidence in its message.

A State Board of Education meeting took place on February 23, 2021, shortly before my second interview with Carrie. In that meeting, the Board voted to approve MSDE's proposal to administer statewide tests that spring, but only in math and ELA, shortened to reduce testing time, and "temporarily delinked" from accountability. MSDE argued that "the data is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, monitor student progress, identify learning gaps, and make data-informed decisions" (Minutes from SBOE, 2/23/2021). Another meeting was held on March 4, 2021, a few days before my second interview with Alice, and in that meeting, the Board voted to approve a new proposal from MSDE, which would postpone statewide tests (which were still abbreviated) until the fall, as permitted by guidance from ED. I took this information to my interviews and asked the teachers how they felt about this proposed need for test results. In Excerpt 5-18, I raised this question with Carrie, and she replied with evident frustration at what she perceived to be shortsightedness on the part of policymakers.

Excerpt 5-18

Carrie

Karen:
One of the things that I heard people saying, like with the school board meeting and all of that, is that they're like, oh, it's so important for us to test this year to find out how- how the pandemic has affected students. What, like, what do you think about that? What would you say?

Carrie:
Like in what sense? You know? That's- that's initially-- I think people just sometimes before they say things, they just don't think. Like, one, I've seen so much stuff, right, online and you can get trapped into holes of other people's opinions. But when I see things-- because I've I've heard stuff like that, but I've also heard like, oh, we're going to really focus on mental health, bringing it back into schools. Well, we've been asking for that for years. And like, what makes it different now that we're in a pandemic as opposed to the kids who have been in shooting situations at schools? You know, like why is it more important now? Like, we know that kids are struggling. You can see the data, the data is there of just gr- pass fail rates. And you can see like. I think I talked a little bit about it before where like people are talking about kids falling behind, like falling behind who, what? Falling behind what, falling behind this arbitrary set of standards that someone came up with. So it's it's like I, I don't know. I don't necessarily know how I feel about it, but I just think it's like there's data already out there that shows I mean, kids are struggling mentally from not being in contact with humans. Kids are struggling with working from home. Some are not able to keep up with tasks. I mean, it's, I think the data's already there. I don't I don't think we need testing to show any of this stuff.

(Carrie, Interview 2, 03-03-2021)

Although Carrie was teaching ninth grade again at the time and so would not have to administer the ELA MCAP, she nevertheless cared about the decisions. She pushed back strongly against the idea that students needed to be tested so that educators, administrators, families, policymakers, etc., could see how they were doing, because, she argued, that information was already visible through student grades—"we know that kids are struggling" (Carrie, Interview 2, 03-03-2021). In addition, she did not give weight to the narrative that students were "falling behind" because she did not subscribe to the idea that "this arbitrary set of standards" necessarily constituted success or achievement. She firmly believed that success, for her students as well as for herself, was based in personal growth, not ultimate achievement of some end goal. She

described herself as a reflective practitioner and person and tried to foster reflective practices among her students as well, to set them up to be lifelong learners who also sought growth as their goal. Therefore, not only did she question the motives behind obtaining the data the SBOE wanted but also the proposed use for it. In Excerpt 5-19, Alice also raised objections to some of the underlying assumptions for using the ELA MCAP as MSDE had proposed and the SBOE had approved.

Excerpt 5-19

Alice
Karen: […] *this thing that they've been saying that I've been hearing from a lot of different places, like webinars I've been watching, where it's like, we need to know how this pandemic has affected students. It's like we need the tests to know how they've been affected. And it's just like, what do you– what would you say to that?* **Alice:** So to that, I'm– I also ask, how do we know testing is the best way to measure that? How do we know tests that– I mean, teachers have been trying to make this year work. If we– This test is not being developed in mind with what teachers have been teaching for the past year. You know, at the very, very bare minimum, like with things like the MCAP and stuff, maybe maybe not MCAP because it's a new test. But the PARCC, like, if you know, you're going to have the PARCC at the end of the year and you're teaching to the test or something, it's a possibility at that point that you can say the PARCC measures how well students learned a teacher teaching to the test. But for this, it's like you're developing a test after all of the instruction has been administered. So, what are you really measuring at this point? And that's not even to get into the discussion of how standardized testing is like such a narrow form of assessment in general. So yeah, that would be my response, I wouldn't be so confident that tests are even– and this is going assuming that they're in equal testing environment in the fall. I still wouldn't be that confident that they really show what kids have learned because everyone's been teaching something different, I feel, this whole past year. Teachers have just been trying to survive and make it work with the populations that they have and the tools that they've been given by (each) district to make it work. (Alice, Interview 2, 03-10-2021)

Compared to Carrie's general frustration about the apparent prioritization of testing above all other concerns, Alice made a more focused argument about the appropriateness of testing for the purpose and use proposed; she explicitly connected the presumed purpose of measuring

student learning over the past year with the use of determining "how this pandemic has affected students" with respect to COVID-related learning loss. She first asked the straightforward question of whether "testing is the best way to measure that," which I found to be an extremely important question but not often asked or addressed in the SBOE meetings I had watched. Alice suggested that a given test is only useful for assessing knowledge that has been taught specifically for that test, essentially proposing that washback effects of teaching to the test are actually necessary for the test to be accurate or to yield informative results. Since teachers had not been teaching to any particular test, no test could accurately measure what they had taught, thus could not measure what students had learned. This understanding of testing is more akin to a classroom assessment in which the assessment is created based on what had been taught, rather than to large-scale, criterion-referenced standardized testing, which only contains a sample of all possible topics that might be included in instruction. It would be impractical to include test items for every possible topic, so test developers must aim for a representative sample of content to be assessed, with the assumption that standards-aligned teaching will also align with standards-aligned testing. However, this paradigm for test design differs substantively from typical, teacher-designed classroom assessments.

Alice recognized that all teachers had been teaching different content for the past year because, justifiably, "teachers have just been trying to survive and make it work with the populations that they have and the tools that they've been given by (each) district to make it work" (Alice, Interview 2, 03-10-2021). Not only did she doubt that any test would align with what all teachers had been teaching for the past year, she argued that the ELA MCAP was especially poorly positioned to assess teaching and learning, which she discussed in Excerpt 5-20.

Excerpt 5-20

Alice
And I remember this now, because to me it seems insane to use the English-10 MCAP as a way to see where kids are because we've never administered it before. ((laughs)) So, we have nothing to compare it to. It's a new test. ((Karen laughs)) Do you know? Like– [Karen: Uh-huh.] ((Karen laughs)) So, yeah. It seems like an emphasis on testing for the sake of testing. And if you were really interested in the data you would not be doing this. This is a very poor way to collect data. (Alice, Interview 4, 06-16-2021)

In Excerpt 5-20, Alice questioned the true purpose for administering the MCAP because she believed the data obtained from testing would be useless. Because the ELA MCAP was a completely new assessment (although based on the previously used PARCC assessment), Alice argued that data from a 2021 administration could not be compared to previous test administrations, thus precluding the stated purpose of measuring student ELA content knowledge and what she assumed to be the intended use of comparing performance to that of past cohorts. However, it would still be possible for the test to measure student knowledge relative to the Maryland CCR standards and compare performance across the state, which was the actual, stated goal from ED. Some states, such as Michigan, sought permission to use district-level benchmark assessments to assess student learning, especially because districts would be administering those tests, regardless, but ED did not permit such assessments be used in place of statewide, summative tests (Cwiek, 2021; Gordan, 2021; Rosenblum, 2021). While some national groups, such as the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association voiced positions in agreement with Carrie and Alice, that is, against administering the statewide assessments (American Federation of Teachers, 2021; Becky Pringle [@BeckyPringle], 2021), ED's position was also supported by powerful national voices. The leaders of the National Urban League and UnidosUS co-authored an opinion piece in the Washington Post in support of the

standardized testing requirements (Morial & Murguía, 2021). These discourses circulating through the spring semester of 2021 (and later in the year, although my data collection ended in June 2021) served as various instantiations of discourses in place relating to educational failure and the question of the necessity for data and documentation as part of the remedy.

5.1.4 Summary

In this section, I have provided excerpts from my interviews with educators to illustrate essential elements of their assessment literacy, namely, the concepts of validity and reliability, methods of assessment, and test purpose and use. Assessment literacy is crucial to how educators engage with standardized testing and systems of assessment more broadly; it pertains to how they evaluate the worth of assessments and the value of the data obtained through their administration. As part of the historical body, it mediates their ongoing and future experiences with assessment practices, thus continually forming and reforming this part of the historical body. In the following sections, I present the ways that educators appropriated policies related to high-stakes testing, arguing that their policy appropriation was affected by their assessment literacy—their knowledge and beliefs about the assessments themselves, focusing on the MCAP and WIDA ACCESS tests—in interaction with the policies that governed them as textual discourses in place: appropriation by principals in Section 5.2 and appropriation by teachers in Section 5.3.

5.2 Principals' Appropriation of High-Stakes Testing Policies

In seeking to understand and characterize the ways in which principals appropriated testing policies, I found that principals accepted unavoidable constraints and created space for success where it was possible, through their understanding of policies and consequences. Both principals displayed substantial knowledge (historical body) about policies governing mandated

testing (text-based discourses in place) and their role in navigating those policies (interaction order) to find ways to best serve their students and schools (policy actions). The primary textual discourses in place were the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) and the Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan, which contained the specifications for the school accountability system, the Maryland School Report Card, including the state's education goals, formulas for measuring progress to the goals, and penalties for failing to meet goals. The principals' roles in navigating policies were affected by the fact that they had (some) freedom in the policy actions they took, such as course offerings, as mentioned below, but also by the fact that they bore substantial responsibility for their actions and the consequences of those actions, as both described the possibility of scoring badly on the Maryland School Report Card with some trepidation.

5.2.1 Appropriation of MCAP Testing Policy

As I described in Chapter 2, at the time of my data collection, state-level policy dictated that all students in Maryland "shall take the requisite Maryland Comprehensive Assessment during its next regular administration if the student received credit for taking, by the methods in Regulations .03 and .04 of this chapter, any of the following courses aligned with the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment: (1) Algebra; (2) Science; (3) English; or (4) Government" (COMAR 13A.03.02.06). To earn a diploma, students must take the MCAP associated with the course they completed, and they must either pass the test or successfully complete a Bridge Project in the relevant assessment areas. However, they may not submit a Bridge Project for credit until they have taken the MCAP twice and failed it twice, although they may begin the Bridge Project after the first time taking and failing the MCAP.

High schools are judged on student MCAP performance through the "Academic Achievement" portion of the Maryland State Report Card: the percent of students who score

"proficient" or higher on mathematics and English accounts for 15 possible points (7.5 points each) and the average performance level in mathematics and English accounts for 15 possible points (7.5 points each). The principals know that the MCAPs are high hurdles for their students, as they described to me in our interviews, so Bridge Projects provide a path to success and graduation for students who are unable to pass the MCAPs, as Dr. Peterson and Dr. Santos explained in Excerpts 5-21 and 5-22, respectively.

Excerpt 5-21

Dr. Peterson
It's an area where we always have room to improve. A large number of our students have not mastered that exam. And after multiple attempts, it has been bridge projects that have made our students successful. And that– Yeah. Yes, it– standardized testing has been a big challenge, but again, because we have the, what they call the bridge or the AVP projects, our students are able to demonstrate in different ways that they are– they have an understanding and have mastered those skills, because they often do not do well on the algebra or English test, especially some of our students who have first come in and students who have interrupted education really struggle on those. (Dr. Peterson, Interview 1, 01-22-2021)

Here, Dr. Peterson noted that students at Riverbend High School have struggled with standardized testing, particularly the MCAP tests, but that the option of completing a Bridge Project has enabled students to demonstrate their knowledge and be successful. Like Dr. Peterson, Dr. Santos also emphasized the importance of Bridge Projects for student success at Hilltop High School, although, dissimilar to Dr. Peterson's comments, he downplayed the gravity of standardized testing, saying "standardized testing for us, yes, it's a requirement to graduate, but we're more concerned about what does each need to be able to graduate and be successful."

Excerpt 5-22

Dr. Santos
You know, a lot of it is, there's been a lot of transition in terms of standardized testing, we went from from HSA to MCAP, I mean to PARCC and then MCAP, and so part of it is like you can't do any data analysis when you're giving an exam for a first year. And so some of our

Dr. Santos

kids have gotten lucky that way. But in other respects, I think a lot of it comes down to like kids, completing those bridge projects if they don't pass the assessments, which is what we prefer anyways because it's more project-based, and so we, in our school, advocate for project-based learning. And so, we more or less directly, just automatically aim for the project-based testing, and so the bridge projects, that's just a reality for our population, and you know when you put kids into a space where they have to learn both content and language at the same time that's really difficult to do. And, you know, research says it takes around seven years to like solidly learn a new language. A lot of our kids are newcomers when they arrive to our school and, you know, […] that's difficult, like that's a tough ask of students, but some of those kids are also kids that are college-bound material. And so, you know, we try every pathway, every route, we've designed personalized pathways for all of our kids to make sure that they are successful at this thing called high school, and that they're ready for life after high school. So you know standardized testing for us, yes it's a requirement to graduate, but we're more concerned about what does each kid need to be able to graduate and be successful. Yeah. And so yeah, standardized testing is a part of it, but you know there are alternate routes to graduation.

(Dr. Santos, Interview 1, 01-15-2021)

Dr. Santos mentioned that the Bridge Projects were a necessity for his students to get to graduation, but that he would prefer for students to complete them, anyway, because they are more similar to project-based learning, which the school advocated. Dr. Santos said that at the school, they "try every pathway, every route" to support students, which was a theme that I observed throughout his interviews, whether it was employing multiple pathways to student success via Bridge Projects and standardized testing, or whether it was multiple approaches to success at the school level through deftly navigating the School Report Card accountability system.

For the 2018–2019 school year, the only year for which data are available on the Maryland School Report Card (Maryland State Department of Education, 2023b), approximately 12% of students at Riverbend High School and approximately 10% of students at Hilltop High School scored at level "proficient" or higher, earning 0.9 and 0.8 points for the schools, respectively. The principals recognized that most of the student body would not pass the MCAP

tests, especially not on their first try—no matter how tactfully they phrased it. Given this reality, they appropriated the policies mentioned above (regarding MCAP testing requirements for graduation and accountability purposes) in ways that were intended to promote student success despite the challenges posed by standardized testing.

Broadly speaking, the looping structures implemented at both schools were designed to support students and promote success, though not specifically for standardized testing or Bridge Projects. At both Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School, the eleventh and twelfth grade ELA curricula have been structured to build in time for students to work on Bridge Projects (according to Carrie and Alice). Dr. Santos also mentioned how, since COMAR regulations require that students take a world language as part of their graduation requirements for course-taking, most students at Hilltop High School take Spanish to fulfill their requirement. He described the decision to move those Spanish courses to students' ninth and tenth grade years, to provide earlier L1 language arts and literacy supports to facilitate learning English language arts and English literacy (Excerpt 4-10, above, in Section 4.1.2). In particular, this decision helped students develop the relevant knowledge and skills farther in advance of them needing to complete an ELA Bridge Project in their junior or senior year. In this way, he sought to structure students' high school experiences in such a way to facilitate their completion of the state requirements.

When I asked the principals in our individual interviews about their opinions of the Maryland School Report Card, I got responses that showed their awareness of the need for finding and creating flexibility within a rigid framework. Dr. Peterson told me about the various ways they had been able to navigate and even negotiate certain policies when they were first designing and opening the schools (Excerpt 5-23).

Excerpt 5-23

Dr. Peterson

Karen:
Could you talk a little bit about the school report card, and this system that Maryland uses to evaluate schools, your impression of it?

Dr. Peterson:
We were able to talk early on with the different leadership at Maryland State, when we were first doing the mastery, we had talked about with English language learners, we were going to be having students taking, if you would, regular classes, right. Classes that any ninth grader, on average would be taking in the district, but providing the supports for it. And we also knew early on that you have expected requirements, right. You're to complete your English class, and your math class, and your science, and your social studies class, um within that first year. Some of our students are struggling with the language and struggling with other issues beyond the school walls, and we were given the A-okay with mastery that we can– not have an open report card, that doesn't sound right, but we have the ability like to have like the holding pattern, if you will, right, like, the, the ability that our students can do what they call mast– summer mastery. And so we have a policy in place where a student who has not passed English nine, and when the semester ends is able to take an intense support time called mastery camp in July, to work on a grade, and to demonstrate mastery, and to work on assignments and to attempt projects again, and get the help they need, and be able to then get a grade by the end of the summer. And it might just be a D, but that's still a passing grade, versus not being able to pass at all. And so they've given us the leniency.

We still have to work within the parameters of the graduation requirements for the state, which is twenty-one credits. It's four English credits. It's three math required, a fourth one you have to be attempting. Two world language, some, um three science, three social studies, an art class, a technology class, some electives. But there's also flexibility, where English class could be an ESOL English class. And so that, and that exists across the county– um, across the state. But we've been able to be flexible in the way that we can individualize schedules for students so that a student who might have really struggled with the language and maybe didn't pass that English class can do a double English class, and being able to do– create those opportunities that really support our students who again often have hit walls and in many schools get frustrated and leave. And our goal is to create pathways that will help them along the way, and so that independent– that individualized opportunity and creating those classes– again, summer school, if it's not mastery, we also have original credit opportunities for our students, and it's been free to our students all along the way. It's been free to everybody this last year which is great and we're hoping the district will do that for everyone, but we were kind of excited, we were sort of ahead of game, if you will, and being able to do those things.

(Dr. Peterson, Interview 1, 01-22-2021)

In Excerpt 5-23, Dr. Peterson described how they had successfully designed the schools around a mastery model, in which students had potentially a full year to demonstrate their

knowledge and skills and obtain course credit. From its inception, the school was intended to provide flexibility to students to better enable them to complete their high school graduation requirements. For example, some of their English credits could be ESOL credits; only tenth-grade English is required to be English Language Arts, to meet course-taking graduation requirements. The mastery model itself as implemented at Riverbend High School was designed for flexibility and student support, with grading each quarter essentially in a "holding pattern" so the student could have a full year, potentially into the summer, to demonstrate mastery of academic content. Her response, while not entirely on-topic, was student-focused, and she primarily attended to how the school could best help students meet their graduation requirements—which should be considered in light of the fact that graduation rates at Riverbend High School are far higher than the state average or national average for EL-designated students, shown in Table 5-2 (Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools, 2022).

In Excerpt 5-24, Dr. Santos replied more directly to the question about the accountability system and its relevance to the school and his work. In his response, Dr. Santos demonstrated a savvy understanding of the Maryland School Report Card system, recognizing that his school could easily be scored low on it due to generally poor performance on the MCAPs, and feeling pressure to avoid that potential outcome (Excerpt 5-24).

Excerpt 5-24

Dr. Santos
Like, you don't want to be seen publicly as a one- or two-star school right? And so it's about, honestly, manipulating the other calculations that don't involve the standardized test scores, like how many kids are getting threes, fours, and fives on those AP exams and so you know in our first year, about fifty percent of our first class graduated with at least one three and an– on an AP exam. And, you know, albeit it was, you know, the Spanish AP that we had a lot of them sit for, but that counts. [**Karen:** Yeah.] And so it was, it was about giving them access to the AP courses. So like that first class when they were juniors, all of them took an AP course, one hundred percent of them. No matter what their background was, whether they were SIFE or not, one hundred percent of them took an AP course, and we based it off of, you know, do we

Dr. Santos

think that you could do, stronger, more rigorous college-level content while you're in high school, versus okay we think you have enough capacity to pass the AP Spanish exam and train them for it, and in that– those first two years I was doing all of the AP training for the kids. So I would do like one week, two week period where I would just take them out of advisory, and I would just say, this is component one of the test, and this is what it's going to ask you, and this is how you answer the questions. Yeah, so that's part of it. Attendance is sort of give and take, you know, like you can't really control that, but you can work around by, you know, holding people accountable and keeping up with where kids are at, and so it's about making sure that the non- standardized test areas are covered really well so that you don't end up in that one, two-star, and being identified as a school in need of support.

(Dr. Santos, Interview 1, 01-15-2021)

In Excerpt 5-24, Dr. Santos accepted that due to the inherent flaws of the standardized tests administered to students at Hilltop High School, the scores registered on the Report Card will inevitably be low. However, he recognized opportunities to boost scores elsewhere on the Report Card, thus avoiding the possibility of being labeled a one- or two-star school and being identified as a school in need of support. He named access to AP tests as a critical element to helping raise scores on the Maryland Report Card and noted that having all students sit for AP tests also sent a message to the students that they were capable of rigorous, demanding, college-level work. Above, in Excerpt 4-6, Dr. Bragg also remarked on Hilltop High School offering AP classes before Riverbend High School, thus showing that it sent a message beyond just the Hilltop schoolhouse. In Excerpt 5-24, Dr. Santos also mentioned monitoring attendance, which "you can't really control," but still got attention from faculty and staff in "holding people accountable and keeping up with where kids are at." Table 5-1, below, shows that his attempts to "manipulate" the school's overall score through impactful decision-making in other areas were ultimately successful (although I do not claim a causal relationship, given my necessarily limited evidence).

Table 5-1. 2019 Maryland School Report Card Results for Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School

Indicator	Riverbend High School		Hilltop High School		Possible Points
	Results	Earned Points	Results	Earned Points	
Academic Achievement	--	8.2	**--**	**8.3**	30.0
• Percent Proficient Mathematics	**8.1%**	**0.6**	5.9%	0.4	7.5
• Percent Proficient ELA	**12.3%**	**0.9**	10.%	0.8	7.5
• Average Performance Level Mathematics	2.3	3.4	**2.5**	**3.8**	7.5
• Average Performance Level ELA	2.1	3.2	**2.2**	**3.3**	7.5
Graduation Rate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency	52%	5.2	**56.5%**	**5.7**	10.0
Readiness for Post-Secondary Success	**--**	**5.6**	--	5.2	10.0
• Credit for Well Rounded Curriculum	25.7%	1	**48.5%**	1	5.0
• On track in ninth grade for graduation	**92.6%**	**4.6**	84.9%	4.2	5.0
School Quality and Student Success	--	14.4	**--**	**23.3**	35.0
• Students not chronically absent	68%	4.5	**73.7%**	**6.5**	15.0
• School Survey – Student	5.4	3.8	**6.8**	**4.8**	7.0
• School Survey – Educator	6.6	2	**8.1**	**2.4**	3.0
• Access to Well Rounded Curriculum	41.9%	4.2	**95.6%**	**9.6**	10.0
Total Points:	--	33.4	**--**	**42.4**	85.0
Total Earned Percent:	--	39%	**--**	**49%**	--
Star Rating:		**2**		**3**	**5**

Due to the pandemic, 2019 is the only year for which the School Report Card is available for the schools (since they are new schools and only opened in 2015). Their final scores are not substantially different; Riverbend High School earned nine raw points (ten percentage points) less than Hilltop High School. However, Hilltop High School was rated as a three-star school, whereas Riverbend High School missed the 45% cut-off and was rated as a two-star school.

Hilltop High School did not score higher than Riverbend High School in every area, but the differences between the two schools were largest on the School Quality and Student Success indicator. Hilltop High School scored higher on chronic absenteeism (meaning they had fewer students absent 10 percent or more school days during the year), and Dr. Santos had specifically mentioned attendance in that "you can't really control that, but you can work around by, you know, holding people accountable and keeping up with where kids are at" (Dr. Santos, Interview 1, 01-15-2021). Hilltop High School earned almost full points possible (9.6/10) on "Access to Well Rounded Curriculum," an especially esoteric measure and distinct from "Credit for Well Rounded Curriculum." "Access to a well-rounded curriculum" is a measure applied to schools at all levels, and for high school it refers to:

> Percent of students graduating or exiting with a certificate of program completion: **enrolled in an Advanced Placement (AP)** or International Baccalaureate (IB) course; participated in dual enrollment; or enrolled in an MSDE-approved Career and Technical Education program at the CTE concentrator level or higher. For students pursuing a certificate of program completion, percent of students enrolled in a general education core academic and/or elective course. The calculation for this measure is by grade span and student group and is the percent of students enrolled in the identified courses out of all students enrolled in each school, LEA and State for the full academic year. The calculations will be assigned a score. "Assigned scores" means that points will be allocated by a standard-setting process that accounts for the distribution of current and historical data, applicable research, and stakeholder input. (Maryland State Department of Education, 2018, p. 28; emphasis mine)

It is notable that "Access to a well-rounded curriculum" was the measure on which Hilltop High School scored so highly, and it includes the percent of students graduating who had enrolled in an AP course (but not taking into account their score on the AP exam, which is part of "Credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum"), which is precisely what Dr. Santos mentioned in Excerpt 5-24 as a way to affect non-MCAP scores on the School Report Card.

On the other hand, the only similar such program mentioned by Dr. Peterson was the Seal of Biliteracy (Excerpt 4-9): "But there are opportunities for them also to do the bilinguals literacy seal and there's different exams for that, and she talks to every single one of them, lets them know this is an important thing, this is an honor to have on your diploma. So we talk about it, we need to probably do a better job just even talking about it at the ninth and tenth grade level, because it's often a conversation we have at the eleventh and twelfth" (Dr. Peterson, Interview 1, 01-22-2021). Dr. Peterson noted that conversations with students about earning the Seal of Biliteracy should begin much earlier in high school, presumably so that students would be able to plan for taking the tests that would qualify them for the Seal. However, obtaining the Seal of Biliteracy would fall under the measure "Credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum," which is not worth as many points as "Access to a well-rounded curriculum." In addition, those points are more difficult to earn. As with "Access to a well-rounded curriculum," the allocation of points is based on assigned scores. Riverbend High School earned one point for having 25.7% of students get "credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum," while Hilltop High School also earned only one point for having 48.5% of students get "credit" because the assigned scores are allocated as follows: the bucket of 0–60% of students receives 1 point, the bucket of 96%–100% receives 5 points, and the other buckets are evenly spaced in between those ends (SBOE Meeting, 6/20/2018). I do not mean to suggest that Dr. Peterson would encourage students to

work for the Seal of Biliteracy specifically because of the benefit the school would incur. Rather, I wish to contrast the school-level effects of the programs the principals made special note of. The programs or other efforts to promote student success singled out by Dr. Santos had greater impacts on the School Report Card than the efforts mentioned by Dr. Peterson. When time, staff, and all resources are limited, school personnel must selectively allocate their resources to the various priorities, and the priorities that Dr. Santos named had greater corresponding benefits at the school level on the Report Card than those named by Dr. Peterson.

Dr. Peterson focused her efforts especially on student graduation; she named "the ELL population not graduating" as one of the motivating forces behind the formation of a task force to consider how to "design some high schools different for English language learners," which directly led to the creation of Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School (Dr. Peterson, Interview 1a, 07-22-2019). When we talked about the school's 2019 graduation rate, her passion was almost palpable, and she became more animated then than at any other time in the interview (Excerpt 5-25):

Excerpt 5-25

Dr. Peterson
We were so excited to see that eighty-four percent. I mean, that was made– we could tell you where every single one of those– it's almost like a hundred kids right, so it's like we knew where the other sixteen have gone, I can tell you a story of why, right. I can tell you one came as a mom and then became a mom a year later, and just, it was too much. I can tell you another one who, who had an issue and had document– you know it's like, we're like, wait, if we were there only there were like exceptions, you could explain that remaining other sixteen, but we– We know them, but at the end of day we're excited.
(Dr. Peterson, Interview 1, 01-22-2021)

In her response, Dr. Peterson explained that of their graduating class of 100 students, 84 graduated, and she knew the reasons for every single student who did not graduate that year, all of them facing trying circumstances that interfered with their education, such as one student who

was also a parent and ultimately could not handle the workload along with raising children. Dr. Peterson made it clear that graduating was not only the goal at Riverbend High School but was also the norm, and that she and the school positioned all students as capable of graduating.

Table 5-2 shows the four-year adjusted graduation rates for the state, the school district, and both schools from SY 2018–2019 to SY 2020–2021. Although the data are available on the website for the Maryland School Report Card, they are not to be used for accountability. For SY 2018–2019, there is insufficient data for Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School to be included on the Report Card, and data for SY 2019–2020 and SY 2020–2021 will not be counted due to the impact of the pandemic. I think it is nevertheless worth looking at how the schools fared for those periods of time, compared to the district and the state. At all points in time, both schools exceeded the graduation rates for EL-designated students in the state and district. Each year, Riverbend High School outperformed the district's graduation rate for all students and even approached the state's rate for all students.

Table 5-2. Graduation Rates for Riverbend High School, Hilltop High School, the School District, and the State

Locale	SY 2018-2019		SY 2019-2020		SY 2020-2021	
	All	EL	All	EL	All	EL
State	87%	54%	87%	56%	87%	61%
School District	79%	59%	76%	57%	78%	58%
RHS	84%		78%		81%	
HHS	79%		75%		63%	

(Note: Graduation rates have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Data are from reportcard.msde.maryland.gov. Data for years beyond 2019 are not listed on the Maryland School Report Card and are not to be used for accountability purposes.)

Although the data may not be used for accountability, the contrast between Riverbend High School's performance on the Report Card and their graduation rates paints a more complex picture of how the school serves its students.

5.2.2 Appropriation of ACCESS Testing Policy.

The principals also took actions influenced by policy requirements for English language proficiency testing. The Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan laid out the expectations for student progress on English language development, which would be measured by annual testing via WIDA ACCESS and would be tracked on the Maryland State Report Card.

The test and its related policies are impactful for individual students, in that they are the ones who undergo the testing each year, which takes several hours in administration periods spanning several days, and they receive their personal scores. However, they are not overtly penalized for the scores they receive. If they do not test out of ESOL services, they will have an opportunity the following year. If they have exceeded the maximum timeline to proficiency (in Maryland, six years), they will be classified as long-term English learners, but that label does not carry penalties for individual students, despite the language in the Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan that the growth targets "still [hold] ELs accountable for staying on the overall English proficiency progress trajectory" (MSDE, 2018, p. 21). However, the test is consequential for schools in that they are awarded points on the Maryland School Report Card for the percent of EL-designated students who make progress along the Growth-to-Target Model for ELP (reproduced in Table 5-3, below):

> Multiple year aggregation is used to calculate growth. For instance, if a student has not met the growth target shared in the Growth-to-Target Model for ELP table in the current year, the growth of the current year will be combined with the prior year. Accumulative growth targets are used to take into consideration fluctuations in years with particularly high or low growth while still holding ELs accountable for staying on the overall English proficiency progress trajectory. A school is not penalized if the student reaches

proficiency within the expected time frame. If an EL does not meet the annual measurement of interim progress in an individual year or using his/her accumulative growth, the student is not considered as to have met the annual measurement of interim progress. (MSDE, 2018, p. 21)

Table 5-3. Growth-to-Target Model for ELP

Expected ELP Growth by Years					
Initial Year Proficiency Level (based on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0)	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**	**Year 6**
1.0 – 1.9	1.0	.9	.7	.5	.4
2.0 – 2.9	.9	.7	.5	.4	—
3.0 – 3.9	.7	.5	.3	—	—
4.0 – 4.4	.3	.2	—	—	—
Proficiency Attainment Met	—	—	—	—	—

(Reproduced from Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan, 2018, p. 21)

Not only is it important to the school that students make annual progress in their scores on ACCESS, but that they do so according to a prespecified timeline which assumes regular, if not linear growth. Students who do not make the expected growth in a given year may have their scores over multiple years aggregated, if a prior year's progress is sufficient to make up for a deficit in the current year. Dr. Peterson knew that ACCESS was important for her students and school, and she made it a schoolwide priority that students be pushed to improve their speaking and writing skills, thus, their scores on the sections of the test where they were historically lowest. She described the school's response to receiving ACCESS scores in Excerpt 5-26.

Excerpt 5-26

Dr. Peterson
We look at our WIDA reports as soon as they come in, normally in about May or June. And we do a real intense data dive, both at the administration level and then we look at look at it amongst staff, and they take a look at their grade level, looking often at the students that they just worked with and the students they're about to work with. And we really try to individualize it and take a look and see– We do both like, right, we look at it from multiple la-layers as a whole. Did we make the mark with writing and speaking, especially, those are the two big ones that are really challenging to get especially with high school. Yeah. And you

Dr. Peterson

know one year it was, we didn't make speaking just because we didn't use proper microphones and students were ((whispers)) speaking like this and it's picked up by the computer and so they were too shy, ((speaking at normal volume)) and so we've learned to like test better. And I'm sure it was more than that, but that you know it's like, that– we've made some big sweeping changes as a result. But we, we really have looked at where do we have our gaps, and where do we create goals to support them. So we often do just a school-wide, one is like knowing we need to focus on reading and writing and speaking and how each department is going to tackle that.

(Dr. Peterson, Interview 1, 01-22-2021)

In this excerpt, Dr. Peterson explained how the administration and the teachers processed ACCESS test results when they came in at the end of the school year, analyzing scores within grade levels and within test section, across grades. Based on those test results, teachers and the administration determined the direction for any schoolwide response, setting specific goals and plans for each department to work to meet those goals.

Dr. Santos did not specify any of the exact activities done at Hilltop High School to support ACCESS testing, but Rachel did. She noted that improving ACCESS scores overall and on the speaking and writing sections were part of the school's strategic planning goals, and she described some of the schoolwide activities, including a "pep rally before WIDA testing" and assistance from teachers across the school during advisory periods, all of which had the support of the principal (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021). Rachel also described Dr. Santos as a hands-on principal who "encourages us to make sure – he accepts, and he's actually even in the data, he's like looking, he's like, 'What do you think about this student, do you think this student needs a tier override, what's going on here?'" (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021). Although Dr. Santos himself did not call attention to these activities, he was nevertheless clearly attentive to the students' and school's performance on ACCESS, and he pointed to the success they had experienced on the test (Excerpt 5-27):

Excerpt 5-27

Dr. Santos
It was last year, we had the highest number of students exit language services at the high school level. I think it was thirty-something students exited via the WIDA ACCESS exam, which in a small school like ours, you know, that's like seventeen percent of the students that are considered English language learners. (Dr. Santos, Interview 1, 01-15-2021)

In Excerpt 5-27, Dr. Santos noted that Hilltop High School had had approximately 30 students perform well enough on ACCESS the previous year to exit from language services, which accounted for a substantial proportion of students at such a small school. He clearly was well versed in the school's data to have the rough number at his fingertips, indicating the importance of ACCESS for the school.

5.2.3 Summary

Both principals were concerned with the high-stakes tests their students were required to take to fulfill their graduation requirements and for the schools to meet their accountability mandates, as laid out in the Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan. The principals believed their students needed multiple pathways, not a one-size-fits-all approach, to be successful. Therefore, they appropriated the testing policies in a variety of ways, always seeking flexibility in an inflexible system. They negotiated policies where they were able to, by creating mastery-based schools with unique methods for grading, for instance. They took advantage of existing flexibility, such as the permission for students to meet their English course-taking graduation requirement with ESOL courses. They recognized when certain policies were inflexible, and they responded by building structures into the school to meet the needs rendered by such inflexible policies, such as intentionally designing the eleventh and twelfth grade ELA curricula with time

for students to complete Bridge Projects as needed, after taking and failing the ELA MCAP twice, as required by COMAR regulations.

While comparisons are almost inevitable between Dr. Peterson and Dr. Santos or Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School when data are presented in the way I have done in this section, I emphasize that both principals made decisions to benefit their students and schools on the whole, and they both experienced successes and challenges. It was not my goal to compare the schools or their leadership, one to the other. Rather, I sought to understand how the principals navigated common policy pressures. In some ways, Hilltop High School has appeared to be more successful than Riverbend High School on certain metrics, but it is a truism that not everything that counts can be counted. Dr. Santos often displayed a savviness in how he navigated the system, and he worked to position the school well in terms of its Report Card and reputation—during his tenure, the school was ranked by U.S. News and World Report within the top half of all high schools in the U.S. Nevertheless, Riverbend High School, Hilltop High School, and their respective principals have helped their students find success in a system in which many of their peers have not been as successful. This section has demonstrated some of the ways in which Dr. Peterson and Dr. Santos accomplished such work.

5.3 Teachers' Appropriation of High-Stakes Testing Policies

As with the appropriation of educational language policies, teachers' appropriation of high-stakes testing policies was visible in how they discussed their pedagogical approaches and instructional practices; their teaching constituted the ways in which they "took in" the policies mandating high-stakes testing and made them their own (Levinson & Sutton, 2001, p. 3). That is to say, their pedagogical approaches and instructional practices also constituted policy actions within the nexus of practice, and those policy actions were mediated by their historical body

(assessment literacy), discourses in place (policies governing mandated testing and the tests themselves), and interaction order (their roles in navigating the policies). Just as was the case for the principals, the primary textual discourses in place for the teachers were the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) and the Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan. In navigating the relevant policies, due to their role, teachers had less power and freedom than principals to effect major changes; their sphere of control was effectively limited to their own classroom, and even that was subject to the principal's authority. However, teachers also faced less severe potential consequences than principals, especially because student performance on standardized tests is no longer tied to teacher evaluation in the way it was under No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top (Mahoney, 2017). These differences in authority and responsibility are functions of the educators' roles, thus, part of the interaction order.

Policy appropriation by teachers tended to fall along content area lines, for the most part: in one camp were the ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School, and in the other camp were the ELA teachers from both schools. The teachers in each camp tended to express similar beliefs about and describe similar approaches to the tests most relevant to their work. Dr. Bragg, however, did not fit clearly into either camp. Rather, he had experiences with a variety of tests and test policies and appropriated testing policy variably across contexts. The rough categories of appropriation I observed by the teachers were full acceptance and integration (5.3.1); minimal acceptance and cooperation (5.3.2); and variable policy appropriation (5.3.3).

5.3.1 Policy Appropriation Through Full Acceptance and Integration

The ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School, Rachel and Linda, both voiced their approval for ACCESS, the test that all their students had to take annually. They expressed that the test was valid and as good as it could possibly be, given necessary constraints, such as the electronic

speaking subtest. Because they had faith in the test and it was such a dominating force in the school and their classes, they built their classes and curriculum entirely around the test—an extreme form of washback, or "the influence of language testing on teaching and learning" (Cheng et al., 2004, p. xiii).

The explicit learning and language goal that Rachel and Linda had for their students was for them to increase their scores on ACCESS, as they described in Excerpts 5-28 and 5-29, respectively.

Excerpt 5-28

Rachel
Well, the goal is for students to improve on their WIDA score, their WIDA ACCESS score, that's always the measure, but so I want students to make movement up the chart. At least like at least by point-five, but overall I want students to be more competent at speaking so I want them to improve in all those things. I want them to speak using more vocabulary, I want them to speak using complete sentences and, like, to like to speak and read and write independently, on, like, on their own. We do a lot exercises of like pushing the ownership over their learning onto the students, if that makes sense, so like they know why like, this is like you can't just answer with like, 'Yeah, the rotation,' if like there's a question on like, I don't know, the rotation of the Sun, like, 'The sun is hot,' like, you can't just the answer with that, like you know that's not an academic answer to a question. So, yeah, I guess, overall language growth? (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

Rachel clearly articulated exactly how she wanted students to progress on ACCESS and how she measured success, namely by students increasing their score each year by at least half a proficiency level overall. She also named improvement on the speaking section as an important goal and listed several ways that students should achieve that, through "using more vocabulary," "using complete sentences," and providing elaborate, academic answers to questions. Linda gave a similar response in Excerpt 5-29.

Excerpt 5-29

Linda
We're trying to get, we say, get the students to level up in their proficiency in- in the vocab- in vocabulary and, you know, language forms and language and linguistic complexity so I'm always like in my language lab class it's, you know, whatever the topic is it's just a vehicle for them to practice speaking or writing, but then trying to focus on– you know, like right now we just were talking about tiers of vocabulary and how can we, how can we level up. You know, if you're just using these tiers, then this is where you are with WIDA. So we kind of use that to guide us but I focus on that sometimes– So, you know my focus is trying to get them to to use more to develop more in those areas. (Linda, Interview 1, 02-03-2021)

In this excerpt, Linda also expressed the goal she had for her students as getting them "to level up in their proficiency," in terms of their vocabulary, language forms, and linguistic complexity. She said that a main focus in class is for students to practice speaking and writing, which had been singled out as areas for schoolwide improvement at both Hilltop High School and Riverbend High School.

The goal of increasing WIDA ACCESS scores was so clear for both teachers because they understood the expectations of their students under the stated testing policy and possessed thorough knowledge of the policy text, especially Rachel, who was the department chair at Hilltop High School. In Excerpt 5-30, Rachel described the Maryland School Report card accountability system and the role of ESOL within it.

Excerpt 5-30

Rachel
Oh, and the, I guess the important thing is that now, there's the Maryland blue... Wait, the Maryland report card? Since the past like two or three years, so we did not qualify, we were a new school so it was like last year was our first year where we got our actual grade or rating. But ESOL now counts as part of that rating, it's ten points of that rating so not just in our school but statewide and countywide it's now, like a principals or administrators who might not have cared about the ACCESS test before do now really care cause it's like, "Oh, stagnant scores are gonna bring us down,' so it's like ten points of your, your school report card and your percentage of exited– of growth-to-target students who met their growth goal every year gets you your number of points. So like we have sixty... sixty-seven percent last year so that

Rachel
gave us– it rounds up, so it gave us seven points towards our Maryland report card, it was like really good for a high school score. And I have mixed feelings about how like being judged on our– on judging ESOL students on their (gains) but, you know, it gets– at least gets principals in the county level to pay attention to ESOL students. (Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

Rachel accurately reported the language policy from the Maryland ESSA Consolidated State Plan, that ESOL counts for ten points toward schools' ratings on the Maryland School Report Card. She specified the rating is for the percent of students who meet their growth-to-target goals, not the percent of students who exit from ESOL services, as she almost said but corrected herself. She also presented a nuanced view on the benefits of drawing administrators' attention to the performance of EL-designated students and the potential conflict with judging students on their performance for the schools' purposes, rather than for students' own advantage. Rachel and Linda stood out from the rest of the teachers due to the clarity and specificity with which they drew on the policies relating to the ACCESS test and how the policies pertained to their practice. Because of the importance of students making measurable growth, Rachel and Linda structured their curriculum and teaching specifically around preparing students for ACCESS, as shown above in Excerpt 5-8 and below in Excerpt 5-31.

Excerpt 5-31

Linda
Our curriculum is sort of centered on it, in terms of– we, we, we, we think that most of those scores are, are valid and we use it to, um ((pause)) to assign work to students and to tell them what they should work on <u>next</u> to level up. And we spend time- we spend time during the year, usually before the test, we'll spend a good month, practicing, just, just only some of these skills, just to make sure the students completely understand what, what's expected of them so that they can <u>show</u> what we know that they can do. (Linda, Interview 4, 06-09-2021)

Linda described the ESOL curriculum at Hilltop High School as being "centered on" preparing students for ACCESS. She specifically made the connection that because she and Rachel see the scores as accurate representations of students' abilities, the scores play a vital role in their instruction, in assigning work and setting specific language targets for students. Linda said that they will take "a good month" of class time for dedicated test preparation, signaling the extreme importance of the test.

Over the course of my interviews with both teachers, they talked about the different ways they used students' ACCESS scores, including having students enter their data into language portfolios and set personal goals for the year; for grouping students into short-term and long-term groups in classes; for creating and providing scaffolds as part of differentiated instruction; for providing tailored feedback, assessing student work, and having students self-assess on assignments via the language rubric; for teachers' own self-evaluation of their teaching effectiveness; placing students in the appropriate ESOL class; and the essential use of building cohorts and class schedules. The test was clearly integral to their teaching practice and the functioning of their classes. In Excerpt 5-32, Rachel gave an example of one of the main roles played by ACCESS scores in ESOL classes at Hilltop High School, as a central component of the language portfolio.

Excerpt 5-32

Rachel
We did a lot of work to have motivation and buy-in and all that stuff and we found that it- it started to really work. We've seen a huge growth in our, in our WIDA data, and the students and the students caring about it and talking about it. And we do language portfolios, now this year we've finally switched it to digital, they're Google Sites, but for the past three years we've taught kids how to make bar graphs, and so the kids basically have a running- in their Google Drive, they can continue to add to their bar graphs, so the kids can actually see, like, the growth that they're making.
(Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

As Rachel described, the language portfolio served an important role in the ESOL classroom at Hilltop High School. They moved from paper portfolios to Google Sites, where students can enter their test scores to see their proficiency level and what it means for their language use across domains, track their own growth over time, document their abilities by uploading writing and speaking samples they felt proud of, set goals for their language development over the coming year, and reflect on their progress over the past year. Rachel emphasized that the language portfolio was a tool to motivate and empower students.

Beyond the language portfolio, the other major use for ACCESS scores and associated WIDA materials that the ESOL department at Hilltop High School developed was the language skills rubric (or "language rubric," or simply "the rubric"), a tool that they had been using, refining, and revising for several years. It was based on publicly available materials from WIDA, apparently the speaking rubric, writing rubric, and the performance level descriptors; all of these materials have also been revised by WIDA over the years in conjunction with revisions to and new releases of their standards framework (2007, 2012, and 2020). The rubric was discussed by the ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School in every interview, sometimes at great length, as they told me about the progress they were making with the current round of revisions they were making to it.

The rubric was central to their instruction because it provided a common framework with shared language and understandings for students, the ESOL teachers, and the content area teachers regarding expectations for performance at every proficiency level. Linda gave an example of how she used the language rubric with a student who she described as having fluent conversational English but who had not performed well on ACCESS thus far (Excerpt 5-33).

Excerpt 5-33

Linda
There's one girl right now that I've been working with who you wouldn't know that, you know, she was from anywhere except here, and I don't know, I think it was like it was always like, I know what you mean, or there's like an assumption that they know what they're– what's going on. And I don't know if they would- if people would just give them a free pass or let it slide. So, like, when when when this student who's very fluent does any writing for me, it's very general, very basic. And then I have to remind her, I said, let's take a look at the- at at what you need, (xxx) like, 'You want to test out. Right.' Like, 'Yes. I really want to test out this year.' Like, 'All right, let's let's take a look at this rubric. OK. So look at the vocabulary.' And then we talked about different types of vocabulary. 'Now, let's let's look at what you gave to me. All right. This was all like very basic general vocabulary. I didn't see any technical terms.' And, you know, we, we, you know. So I'm trying so I'm trying to bring awareness, I think, to them. (Linda, Interview 2, 03-10-2021)

In this excerpt, Linda described a student who had advanced oral proficiency but seemed to struggle to produce grade-level writing. Linda and the student would sit together with a piece of writing the student had produced and they would use the rubric to score the writing as if it were for the writing subtest on ACCESS, and Linda would point out the areas where the student scored low and give her concrete feedback on how to improve her score, e.g., by using more technical vocabulary. In one interview I had with Rachel, she described how students would follow a similar process to use the rubric to score each other's work and to self-assess their own assignments. These examples highlight the usefulness of the language rubric for a variety of tasks in the ESOL classroom at Hilltop High School. Rachel and Linda wanted to expand its use beyond just the ESOL department and have content area teachers throughout school implement it in their classes.

As the department chair, Rachel was responsible for the majority of the work in revising the language rubric in 2021, a process that involved the entire ESOL department, content area teachers, the ESOL instructional coach, and students. Based on her description, the revision

process was particularly empowering for students, who took part in focus groups to use, analyze, annotate, and give feedback on the rubric throughout its stages of revision during the school year. Then in the summer, she expected to run similar focus groups with some content area teachers as well, all with the goal of making the rubric as useful and user-friendly as possible, to increase its uptake across the school and promote individualized language instruction and feedback beyond the ESOL classroom.

As I discussed above, under "Validity and Reliability," that while Linda and Rachel found ACCESS to be a valid test, they had experienced times that a student's score did not match with their own determination of the student's proficiency; one potential reason they hypothesized for this mismatch was that the student had not answered test questions with "academic language," as the test required (Section 4.1.2). If the student should continue in this track over several years, they might fail to earn the minimum overall proficiency level of 4.5 to exit from language services and become a long-term English learner. The test is structured so that students first take either the reading or the listening subtest, which is automatically scored; based on their score for that subtest, they are assigned a speaking subtest at a higher or lower targeted proficiency level, or "tier." Students tested with a lower tier do not have the opportunity to earn a 4.5 on the test overall, so the teachers monitor which tier the students placed into, to ensure higher-proficiency students are placed into the higher tier so they are not precluded from testing out. In Excerpt 5-34, Rachel described the process for obtaining an ACCESS tier override to me, which is a policy stemming from WIDA, not from Maryland government, and is the means by which she and Linda have options to try to push students to perform at a higher level on the test.

Excerpt 5-34

Rachel

Karen:
Have you ever had the experience, like, looking at the student's data, where you're like, this doesn't seem to match, or do you feel like it does typically match, like, the student's performance with how you interpret their proficiency or their abilities?

Rachel:
We have it a lot where it doesn't match. So we actually with the– so with the WIDA test, that's interesting, so there's a when the students take this test, they start with listening and reading, and they get, uh they get put into a tier. So it's like A, A/B, C, and you can only exit or get a 4.5, if you're able to take that tier C test for speaking– for speaking and writing. So if you basically bomb your first, you know, you just click through on the listening or something, you could get put into tier A or tier B for your next test and not have the opportunity to get a high enough score. You could– the student could still show growth, but they wouldn't get a hard enough test, basically, is like kind of how it works. So luckily, though, the WIDA consortium is like aware that this can happen, so if a student is having a bad day on the reading test or listening or the fire alarm goes off, or, you know, just bad test anxiety whatever, we can do a tier override. So basically it's a form that you fill out, where we as the ESOL team, we can look and determine, and like a teacher, that kind of like a mini- a mini SIT or mini EL committee and go, 'Yeah, this senior who was a WIDA 3.5 last year should not be taking the Tier A speaking test, like that's not their level.' We fill out the form, they– that's all you need is to say, as the teacher like you kind of just say that, like, 'This student placed in this score last year, they're a senior taking AP English 12, like I think they should take the– (I think),' or 'This student is a SpEd student, and they've had stagnant WIDA growth for x y number of years, they have trouble sitting through the long test, like, I think they can try to take the harder one.' And our school, we're adamant about doing those forms, it's kind of like an opportunity that a lot of schools or big schools may not know about, but we, we sit down and we do it and every year we may end up doing anywhere from like 20 to 30 of these forms to switch the tier for the kids that it just doesn't align, it doesn't make sense, because, yeah, that happens a lot, where we're like, what, what happened, like what's going on. And luckily we get that data immediately after the meeting, and after the reading and listening, we get the Tier report, you can see A or B/C and we're like, 'Oh, nope, what happened here, why are you–' Or Pre-A, actually, there's Pre-A, sometimes that will happen, we'll get this long-term EL, I'm like, 'How did you test into Pre-A, what is happening?' So we'll get them switched, so their score in that listening domain might still be low, but they had a chance to increase their overall score by getting a 4 in speaking or something like that. So we have a whole committee to like basically cure, cure WIDA tests, which I know a lot of schools don't necessarily have the luxury or the staffing or like the support. We have admin support to take time to do that as the ESOL team. And the principal encourages us to make sure– he accepts, and he's actually even in the data, he's like looking, he's like, 'What do you think about this student, do you think this student needs a tier override, what's going on here?' So like, yeah.

(Rachel, Interview 1, 01-27-2021)

Rachel explained the process by which she and other teachers reviewed student test data during the testing period to check on what tiers students were being placed into based on their listening and reading section scores. If a teacher noticed that a student seemed to have performed significantly worse than anticipated and was placed in a low tier for speaking and writing, they could convene a "mini SIT or mini EL committee" to review the student's data more closely and make a recommendation for a tier override as appropriate. She recognized that while this process was widely available, not restricted to Hilltop High School, it was still rather unique because not all schools had enough staff allocated to go through this time-consuming process. Not only did Rachel display deep knowledge of the test itself and how the design of the test interacted with the policies that manage its administration and use, but she also demonstrated how tightly it is woven into the fabric of her classroom and the entire school. She recognized that not all schools can go through such a labor-intensive process, nor do they all have such a knowledgeable and involved principal. She and I later talked about how not all ESOL teachers know about the option to conduct tier overrides, and she described meeting with other ESOL department chairs in the school district to tell them about the process and help with departmental capacity-building across the district.

What was clearly one of the most important, if not the most important use for ACCESS scores was unfortunately disrupted by the pandemic-related test cancellations: building new student cohorts, as Linda explained in Excerpt 5-35.

Excerpt 5-35

Linda
The meeting I was just at before this though is for this intake process that our school does. So we were talking about how we don't have that, we're not going to have that data point this year, and so what we're doing- what we do in this interview intake process is going to be probably about all we're gonna ma- well, the main, the main piece of data to build out our cohort. So our cohorts, we try to make them heterogeneous, and place, place into 8 cohorts 100

Linda

new ninth graders and then in some of the cohorts they're blended with the tenth graders too, so we always really, we looked at the WIDA, we always did– so in part of this intake process we, we do a sample of their L1 writing, a bit of English writing, and then we were talking to them for like an hour or so and trying t- we talked about this year how we'll use that as a, as a data point as well. Like (as) speaking samples, how well did they, can we communicate with them, how well did they understand us. And we'll use that we'll use the writing sample, we are going to get a couple of like annotations from their eighth grade teachers that we can, we can look at as well, and just, you know, we'll just do the best that we can, putting that together. Yeah, and I think it'll be a lot of observing the first couple of weeks to see if those were accurate, in terms of, you know, if we differentiate work and things like that. So I think, you know we have we have a plan but it's, you know, part of me is like, 'Oh man,' you know, because we used we use this rely- relied on that data so much.

(Linda, Interview 3, 04-28-2021)

Linda told me about how ACCESS scores were typically used to build their new student cohorts of incoming ninth graders (with some blending with tenth grade), carefully and intentionally placing 100 new students into 8 heterogeneous cohorts. However, cancelled ACCESS testing in 2021 meant that the most recent scores they would have for students in fall of 2021 would be from January 2020, and that there was no way to know how much students had progressed in the meantime, if any. Both schools had involved and informative intake processes, so they would be able to supplement the old ACCESS scores with more recent data of other types, and they would observe students over the first few weeks of school to assess the general fit of students in their cohorts and readjust as needed. The teachers nevertheless regretted the lack of recent test scores—a sentiment also voiced by Alice, who assisted Hilltop's ESOL department with intake over the summer, and by Dr. Bragg, referring to his own school context.

In addition to directly instructional purposes, Linda mentioned that they also used the ACCESS test scores as informal gauges of their teaching quality: "And we do measure ourselves off of these tests– We say, you know, for me, the WIDA test really, I do measure a lot of how effective we were based on that" (Linda, Interview 2, 03-10-2021). In this and in numerous other

ways I have described, ACCESS scores were deeply integrated into the curriculum and practices in the ESOL department at Hilltop High School.

5.3.2 Policy Appropriation Through Minimal Acceptance and Cooperation

As well-disposed as Hilltop High School's ESOL teachers were to ACCESS, so ill-disposed were the ELA teachers to the ELA MCAP. I described above in 5.1, "Testing Policy Appropriation and the Historical Body: Assessment Literacy," that Alice and Carrie viewed the ELA MCAP as not being a valid or reliable tool for measuring student knowledge. They were clear on the fact that they saw no value in the MCAP, and so they incorporated test preparation (in terms of content and mechanics) as little as possible into their teaching. They also had no use for the data obtained from MCAP testing: in a normal year, students would be tested in the spring and results would not be returned in time for their current teachers to use them in any meaningful way, and the test, being a summative assessment, was not designed for the results to be used pedagogically.

Both Alice and Carrie perceived the MCAP to be a "burden" on the students, both "sad" and "discouraging" (Excerpts 5-36, 5-37). In Excerpt 5-36, Alice reported that she tried to avoid discussing the test overmuch during the year to avoid putting additional stress on the students and because it would be lost instructional time to prepare extensively for a bad test that the students would most likely not pass.

Excerpt 5-36

Alice
Karen: *How do you think it affects the kids, having to take these tests?* **Alice:** I think- Yeah, I mean, I don't talk about the test a lot throughout the year, because I think it's an unnecessary burden. I don't think it reflects all the growth that they've made throughout the year, so I feel like it would be really, really, like, it would discourage them a lot. We talk about

Alice
and use the WIDA scores a lot, not just in my class but throughout all classes, we use that to kind of differentiate work and have them see how much they're improving each year and things like that. They're aware of that. But when it comes to the MCAP, I'll mention at the beginning of the year a couple times, 'Hey there's a test at the end of tenth grade you know,' but I don't make a big deal of it. Right before we take the test, I do a little bit of test prep, in the sense of like, 'Hey, this is the practice site, this is where the buttons are,' more kind of deal than anything else. But that's, that's kind of about it. I get them to know the basics of what they need to know but I do not- I- they get discouraged when they get the results. That's for sure. You know, because they are like, 'I thought I was doing well, I have a good grade in this class, my WIDA score jumped all this, but I failed. And I'm gonna have to do this project now.' So it's discouraging for them, but we try to at least not have it be an added stressor in their lives for the year leading up to this.
(Alice, Interview, 1, 02-02-2021)

Alice noted that she avoided mentioning the MCAP in class except when necessary, to let students know to anticipate the test, but without making "a big deal of it," and to do the minimal test preparation so that students could understand the mechanics of taking the test. She believed that students would likely get discouraged by their test results, which would not align with their course grade, their ACCESS test score, or their own evaluation of their knowledge and progress. Because of the negative effect she expected it to have on students and the lack of value she saw in the test itself, she did not bring it into her teaching practice any more than the bare minimum she considered necessary.

In Excerpt 5-37, Carrie called attention to the burden of time and effort disproportionately placed on EL-designated students because they would likely not pass the MCAP, whether on the first or second attempt, so they would have to spend time taking the test twice and completing a Bridge Project. She also described instances in which students who had previously failed the MCAP and begun working on Bridge Projects then passed the MCAP on their second time taking it. She reported that the students were frustrated with having spent time on the project when it was ultimately unnecessary. However, members of the State Board of

Education would likely see this outcome as favorable, given the dual purpose of the Bridge Projects, to function as both remediation and alternative assessment (SBOE Meeting, 2/27/2018).

Excerpt 5-37

Carrie
Yeah. Honestly, it's, it's sad. So they take it. If they fail it then they're able to take it again their eleventh grade year. And I think, I'm not sure if they could take it a third time twelfth grade year, because I'm not sure if the scores would be back in time. But what kind of has happened in the past is kids are waiting on their scores while they're doing the AVP project. So it's like both things that they've had to do. And some kids are working on the project and then their scores come back and they've passed. So they're like, What? I just did this for! Yeah, and the whole county does that. So, it's not just you know English language learners, but you know I think the project is, I think it's a great supplement and I wish we could just kind of let the kids do that, in my own opinion.
(Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021)

In this excerpt, Carrie voiced her support of the Bridge Projects and expressed a wish that students be allowed to bypass the MCAP tests entirely and go directly to working on Bridge Projects, which would spare them significant time and the emotional burden of taking the test.

The ELA teachers did not approve of the MCAP in large part because they did not agree with the given definition of success or the method by which to measure it. Carrie and Alice talked about the importance, even primacy, of student growth to their teaching and their conceptions of success. Carrie especially emphasized growth as central to her teaching and as a core personal and pedagogical value. However, the ELA MCAP was not designed to measure growth, and even the district-mandated benchmark tests that could potentially reflect student progress over the year are inappropriate to the student population at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School; thus, student growth effectively goes unnoticed outside of the classroom. In Excerpt 5-38, Carrie enthused about seeing her students make progress and demonstrate growth.

Excerpt 5-38

Carrie
I mean, because teachers see the growth. We see the growth. And especially, you know, I talked to you before about how, you know, I loop with the kids. So from ninth to tenth grade year, I mean, it's crazy to see the growth in the kids, but, you know, maybe they're still at the point where they're just writing a summary, and they can't write an argumentative essay. And so they write a summary for their essay question. And it's like, whoa, you, that's amazing, right?! Because I'm your teacher and I know you couldn't do that before, but the county is like, 'Zero. You didn't answer the question.' So I don't know. Does it actually show their growth? No. Is it really to kind of see if the teachers are teaching them what they want us to? Yeah. (Carrie, Interview 2, 03-03-2021)

The looping structure built into both Riverbend and Hilltop High School enabled the teachers to work with students and see their growth over two years. In this excerpt, Carrie talked about how exciting it was to see students progress from the time they entered the school, from being unable to write a summary, then developing to the point of being able to do so. However, if an assessment required students to write an argumentative essay, they would not receive credit for a simple summary, which she found unfair because the scoring on the assessment did not capture student growth, which was the most important measure of success for her.

As I discussed above regarding assessment literacy, Carrie expressed doubt about the logic underlying the entire system of standardized testing (e.g., Excerpt 5-18), calling into question the notion that a student who exhibited learning could truly be considered to have failed. Her objection was reminiscent of one raised by Schwab (2001) regarding the "failure" of Australian Aboriginal children; drawing on McDermott and Varenne's (1995) disability framework, Schwab argued the students were "not 'failing,' they [had] been 'acquired by failure'" (p. 258):

> Skills, abilities, and the lack thereof are 'made consequential' in the school—they have no inherent meaning until they are placed in some specific context and made

> consequential. If there is a pervasive sense that Aboriginal children are failing, one must wonder what is being identified as consequential, under what conditions, in what ways, and for what reasons. (Schwab, 2001, p. 258)

Carrie, more than any other educator participating in this research, questioned what the broader educational system identified as consequential, for whom, and for what purpose. Given her doubts about the system as a whole and the ELA MCAP in particular, her disinclination to incorporate any kind of test preparation was obvious and understandable.

Both ELA teachers, Carrie and Alice, were relatively new and had not previously dealt with their students undergoing ELA MCAP testing; they would have done so in spring of 2020, but all accountability-based testing had been cancelled due to the pandemic. They provided differing accounts of the pressure they felt as first-time teachers of a tested grade level before the tests were cancelled, Carrie in Excerpt 5-39 and Alice in Excerpt 5-40.

Excerpt 5-39

Carrie
Karen: *Yeah, d- do you feel like it is different, doing ninth grade versus tenth grade in terms of like any test preparation you had to do or any pressure you felt about the test or anything like that?* **Carrie:** Yeah, so, interesting enough is last year was my first year teaching tenth grade on our school, and I did feel a lot of pressure to have the kids perform well which is like, look at, I mean, look at all of this data we have on our students and look at the fact that they're still struggling in these areas because you know it's some of the kids' first years or second years in the country, and stop putting pressure on me. Like, they're gonna do how they do and that's just how it's gonna be. That's how I feel, but it was a lot of pressure. It was a lot of 'Are you keeping up with the curriculum, are you teaching everything in the curriculum? Are you staying on pace, are you going to do test prep? Do this test prep, go to this meeting for testing,' and I was just like, just in my head I'm like 'I just want to teach my kids, and see their little growth.' **Karen:** Yeah.

Carrie

Carrie:
So, that from ninth to tenth grade was pretty challenging, but then, interesting enough, like the pandemic happened? And we didn't have testing. [Karen: Right, right.] And then I didn't feel that pressure, because we were on, we are virtual teaching, and we were able to just teach content. And, you know, coming back to ninth grade, I don't feel that pressure again, because I'm trying to teach my kids the basics. I'm and, of course, you always have some kids that are higher language proficiency, exited out of ESOL, are working on level, but it's still like trying to teach, little things to help just elevate them just like, you know, from that point scale, like a one to a two or a two to three or something. But I know the tenth grade teacher has felt a bit of pressure. But again, we're not testing this year. Unless the kids go back from what I've heard? Which doesn't make sense because they haven't been in school. Yeah, so I don't know, I really don't know what's happening with it. But yeah, the pressure is definitely there in the tested years. And my first year, my mentor teacher, the tenth grade teacher that year, who really kept me afloat that whole first year, she felt the pressure that year. Yeah. So, it's the tested grade levels I think overall feel pressure. A lot of it from administration.

(Carrie, Interview 1, 01-25-2021)

In this excerpt, Carrie conceded that in 2020, her first year teaching tenth grade, she had felt pressure for her students to perform well on the ELA MCAP. She expressed frustration with the pressure being placed on her because of what she perceived to be an unreasonable expectation that students who had been in the country for potentially only a couple years would perform on par with mainstream, English-proficient students. Again, she emphasized wanting to teach her students and see their growth. Carrie also contrasted the mood at Riverbend High School earlier in the 2019-2020 school year with that after the pandemic was declared and all testing was cancelled. While emergency remote teaching during a pandemic carried its own particular stressors, Carrie noted that at least testing-related pressure was gone once testing had been cancelled and they "were able to just teach content." She also remarked that pressure was less for her when she was teaching ninth grade again and that "it's the tested grade levels" that are subjected to the greatest pressure.

Alice, however, reported a somewhat different experience related to pressure from standardized testing at Hilltop High School (Excerpt 5-40).

Excerpt 5-40

Alice

Karen:
Do you, do you feel any sort of pressure or obligation to prepare your students specifically for the test? Outside of your, you know, day-to-day instruction really–

Alice:
Um, my principal is really aware of the situation, right? So he– I don't feel pressure from my admin, in a very direct sense, like you know they don't talk to me about like, 'Hey, like what's going on with the MCAP or the PARCC?' or anything like that. Because they're aware of the challenge it poses to English language learners. With that said, like, within our English department, we kind of had to structure our cur- our vertical alignment for curriculum around the MCAP. So, you know, in lower house, 9 and 10, we spend the time just trying to get their language developed, get some basics down, with the understanding that you know like a lot of these kids are probably just going to fail the MCAP because it's not realistic that they're going to pass it with the expectation of the test. So then within the curriculum for eleventh and twelfth grade– eleventh grade actually, they already embed doing the AVP project in class. Just because so many kids are likely to fail, that they're going to need all this extra support to do the project to satisfy the graduation requirements for the MCAP. So in a sense, it's kind of pressure in that way, like making sure kids get what they need to graduate, but I don't feel like admin is breathing down my neck for, you know, these test scores.

(Alice, Interview 1, 02-02-2021)

Although Alice did not feel testing-related pressure directly from her administration, she did still feel a sense of pressure to "[make] sure kids get what they need to graduate," which necessarily involves taking the ELA MCAP. That pressure was not focused only Alice, though; it was schoolwide and so there was a school-level plan to address it, namely, embedding the Bridge Projects in the eleventh and twelfth grade curriculum.

Both teachers felt pressure and recognized that others felt pressure related to the MCAP and to students' graduation requirements, more broadly. Although Carrie at first mentioned "administration" as the source of pressure (Excerpt 5-39), when I inquired further about the nature of the pressure, she would not name and appeared reluctant to or directly attribute such pressure to a specific person or people. But given how aware the principals were of the importance of test performance on the Maryland School Report Card and the possible

consequences of low scores overall, it would be understandable for the school administrators to feel the burden imposed by MCAP testing and pass it along to teachers of tested grades and content areas. Because of external circumstances, that pressure did not ultimately have a significant impact on the teachers' classroom practice, beyond what they would have done instructionally anyway.

5.3.3 Variable Policy Appropriation

Dr. Bragg's appropriation of testing policy did not fit neatly into either category just presented. Although he had been teaching at Riverbend High School since its founding, he had been a content area teacher (History and Government) until the 2020–2021 school year, at which time he began teaching Intermediate and Advanced ESOL, to help fill a vacant position in the ESOL department. He was thus still relatively unfamiliar with the particulars of ACCESS, as a test, and the polices that mandated its annual administration, which was visible in his understanding of the goal for his students, reported in Excerpt 5-41:

Excerpt 5-41

Dr. Bragg
And so my goal, I would say, it's part of the teaching mandate, the goal is to get the students to really pass the WIDA exam. Right? It is like their final because they have (to) exit ESOL– that's the objective, right. Getting as many students exit ESOL as we can.
(Dr. Bragg, Interview 1, 03-18-2021)

In this excerpt, Dr. Bragg told me that his instructional goal or "teaching mandate" was to get as many students as possible to "exit ESOL," which was not the understanding held by the ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School, nor was it the stated policy. Students themselves did not suffer overt or official penalties by not testing out of language services (which he asked me about directly in the final interview), nor were schools judged on whether students tested out. Rather, schools were judged on whether students made their annual growth-to-target goals. This

misunderstanding was reasonable, though, especially in light of his previous teaching experience, which was largely test-driven. As he recounted in Excerpt 5-17, he had wanted to teach a course with an accountability-based assessment attached to it. Beyond that, he had extensive experience with Advanced Placement (AP) courses, all of which also had standardized tests attached to them as well.

Dr. Bragg was generally in favor of standardized testing as a means of assessment, although with caveats—he believed that standardized tests were not good instruments for assessing students' analytical skills, but were more appropriate for simple recall or comprehension. He also recounted an instance in which he abstained from administering a district-mandated periodic benchmark test for one of his AP courses because he thought the test was "ridiculous." He called it ridiculous because the district had no oversight over AP courses, since teachers submitted their curricula to the College Board, not the district, and because he found it to be poorly written (Dr. Bragg, Interview 2, 03-25-2021). He recounted this experience in Excerpt 5-42.

Excerpt 5-42

Dr. Bragg
And so the next time the exam came around, I didn't give it. And I emailed, I emailed the AP coordinator in the building and I said, 'Here's the deal.' I said, 'This is not against you, I know you have a job to do, but I'm not giving this exam. This exam is ridiculous. And so if anybody has a problem, just, just send them to me, but you don't have to fend for me. You send them to me.' And he was, you know, like, 'Okay, we will.' I will say, happily, in one sense and sadly in another, no one ever approached me about not administering that exam. No one, they never approached me. So, I don't know whether they just never even looked at the exam, which would be horrible. Or if they knew that it was not worth the fight. Right? I don't know, I don't know, which is a problem in public education, you know the whole lack of communication. So anyway, so that's that. So that, that's the story and I just want to let you know that. So I don't think that exams in and of themselves, right, are on some level, that we all need to genuflect to those exams. [**Karen:** Right.] Right. But, so you asked the question about stuff that could change, like, so that exam I didn't just change it, I scrapped it.
(Dr. Bragg, Interview 2, 03-25-2021)

In response to being told to administer the "ridiculous" benchmark assessment, Dr. Bragg told the AP coordinator at the school where he was working at the time (not Riverbend High School) that he would not continue administering the test. He was willing to deal with the consequences of this decision, not foisting them on the AP coordinator, and told the coordinator that if there were any issues with his decision, to take them to him, but Dr. Bragg never heard anything about that benchmark assessment again, and he suffered no ill effects. However, it must be noted that this assessment was hardly high-stakes. For tests that were more consequential for his students, such as AP tests, he was much more invested in preparing students for the tests and for monitoring their results. He reported that when he took over teaching AP Psychology at a prior school, the historical pass rate had been 33% and he raised it to 70%, which persisted for several years while he taught the course, telling me, "I don't know if 70 percent has, you know, been replicated since I've left, but I really figured out, like, how to communicate this topic to the students in a way that's friendly, that's user friendly, that's exciting, that's stimulating, that's relevant to them" (Dr. Bragg, Interview 1, 03-18-2021). He derived satisfaction from engaging the students in the material, but he also used the test results as a form of self-evaluation, as Linda also reported doing for ACCESS, and similarly to his use of students' Government HSA test results as a form of "self-accountability," demonstrating his general investment in standardized testing.

5.4 Conclusion: Educators' Appropriation of High-Stakes Testing Policies

In this chapter, I set out to answer my second research question, "How do educators of EL-designated students appropriate high-stakes testing policies in the school and classroom?" I found that their assessment literacy (as part of the historical body) depended on their understanding of the concepts of validity and reliability, knowledge about various methods of

assessment, and the importance of test purpose and use. Their historical body intersected with discourses in place (primarily, the tests themselves and the policies mandating their administration) and the interaction order relating to their roles in navigating the policies (which differed between principals and teachers, and within the group of teachers), to mediate the policy actions taken by the educators.

For teachers in particular, assessment literacy was a key component in how they interacted with their area's associated test, in that their assessment literacy affected how they judged whether the test was a "good value," or whether the burden that accompanied the test was outweighed by the benefits of obtaining the data. I documented the ways that principals appropriated high-stakes testing policies, to seek out scoring flexibility amidst the rigidity of the Maryland School Report Card, and how teachers, in their instruction, embraced or barely endured preparing students for the high-stakes tests they would have to take, depending on how favorably they viewed the tests, as mediated by their assessment literacy.

Chapter 6: Policy Appropriation Across Scales of Time and Space: No Child Left Behind in Action and Legacy

My third research question asked, "How are the relevant state-level, high-stakes testing policies appropriated by policy agents across time and space(s)?" This chapter, thus, takes a wider perspective on the nexus of practice, expanding the scope backwards and outwards through scales of time and space. I will explain and show the histories of relevant policies related to high-stakes testing discussed above because, even when educators are not necessarily aware of the details of those histories, they still touch the nexus of practice and bear on classroom-level policy appropriation.

According to Ball (1993), "Policies do not normally tell you what to do; they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed. A response must still be put together, constructed in context, off-set against other expectations" (p. 12). Policies are thus statements of intended impact, not how-to guides. Policy appropriation is complex, consisting of many different and connected parts, and therein lies the difficulty in drawing a line between policies as articulated by policymakers more distant from the locus of intended effect and the policy actions carried out by policy actors more proximal to the intended site and targets of the policy. Policies, being statements of goals or intended impact, are taken up as discourses by policy actors working on varying scales of influence. This "taking up" of discourses and potential implementation through policy actions both fall within the term I employ, policy appropriation. Policy actors "put together" their responses within their particular contexts and with respect to the various discourses that are relevant to them, and those responses can narrow or change the range of possible responses available to policy actors elsewhere in the system, although individuals nevertheless can agentively act to resist or embrace discourses from

other scales, potentially in unexpected or novel ways. As I show below, federal education law is interpreted by state-level policy actors, and their responses shape the possible responses available to principals and teachers for their response, or policy appropriation.

6.1 Policy Appropriation Across Scales of Time: The Exit Exam

High-stakes testing was introduced in Maryland in 2002, following the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, tying the Maryland High School Assessments (HSAs) to school and state accountability. At the first meeting of the 2002 calendar year, the State Board of Education approved changes to COMAR to state that students who take high school-level courses would be required to take the associated High School Assessment (HSA) in English I, Algebra/Data Analysis, Geometry, Government, and Biology (SBOE Minutes, 1/29/2002)—the tests were essentially end-of-course assessments. At that point, students were required to take the English HSA to graduate, but they were not required to pass it. Passing scores for each HSA were not set until August of 2003.

In December of 2003, the State Board of Education heard arguments to link high school graduation with passing HSAs and voted to move forward with the regulatory process to authorize such a change. The State Superintendent of Schools at the time, Dr. Nancy Grasmick, assured the State Board that the HSA would not be the sole factor in determining eligibility for graduation, since students would have to take and pass the course. If they did not pass an HSA the first time, they would have ten opportunities to take the test (for each subject), since the HSA was attached to a ninth-grade course and test administrations were offered several times a year. At that same meeting, the Executive Director of The Education Trust, Kati Haycock, argued for linking the HSAs to graduation. The minutes from that meeting stated that Ms. Haycock proposed that “teachers are more likely to change their practice if they know there are

consequences for their students" (SBOE Minutes, 12/2/2003). In May 2004, the Board also heard arguments in favor of designating HSAs as exit exams from Achieve, Inc., the third-party consultant that had previously been hired by the State Board to assist in meeting NCLB requirements. The minutes from the meeting stated that Achieve, Inc., had been working with states to "restore value to the high school diploma," including through the implementation of exit exams (SBOE Minutes, 5/25/2004). In the following meeting of the State Board of Education, members passed the proposed regulations to link high school graduation with taking *and passing* the HSAs (SBOE Minutes, 6/25/2004).

NCLB required that the state administer a high school reading assessment that met certain criteria (e.g., alignment to standards, scoring into three proficiency levels, data disaggregation and reporting, etc.), which the HSA as initially designed did not meet. Therefore, the State employed a tenth-grade reading assessment that met NCLB mandates until the State Board of Education voted to authorize MSDE to revise the high school assessments, "merging the English Grade 9 High School Assessment and the Reading Grade 10 NCLB tests to make a single test – an English Grade 10 High School Assessment [which] would meet the High School Assessment Reading test requirement associated with the Federal NCLB Act of 2001 and would fulfill the English assessment requirement as identified in COMAR" (SBOE Minutes, 8/24/2004). Through this move, the same test became high-stakes for both students (as an exit exam) and for schools (as part of accountability) by the time of test administration in May 2005.

6.1.1 The Bridge Project

Meanwhile, the State Board had also heard from stakeholders who "were concerned that students with disabilities and other student[s] with special needs may have difficulty demonstrating their knowledge in a traditional test setting, such as with the High School

Assessments" (SBOE Minutes, 3/30/2004). They therefore authorized the formation of a task force to investigate options for an alternative, but comparable, assessment to the HSAs.

In the September 2005 meeting, the task force reported on its progress but felt it was "too early to make a recommendation to the Board" on a specific path forward for a comparable assessment and instead proposed continuing to work and issuing a final report in August of the following year (SBOE Minutes, 9/26/2005). The task force included Dr. Karen Salmon, then-Superintendent of Talbot County Schools, who would later serve as State Superintendent of Schools from 2016 to 2021. The task force presented on its final report in October 2006, at which time they hypothesized that "a very small number of students" would be eligible to complete the proposed alternative assessment, "most likely, less than 100 students statewide," (SBOE Minutes, 10/24/2006). Members of the State Board voiced concern that too many students would use the alternative assessment instead of passing the HSA, that eligibility for the assessment would not be sufficiently restricted, and it would become a "catch-all for failing students" (SBOE Minutes, 9/25/2007). At this meeting, the draft plan for the alternative assessments was named the "Bridge Plan for Academic Validation," also referred to as Bridge Projects or AVP. This concern, that too many students would use Bridge Projects to meet graduation requirements, was raised several times over the years. At the August 2007 meeting, MSDE staff stated that they expected almost all students to pass HSAs by 2009 (i.e., not need to complete Bridge Projects); in September 2007, the Board was reassured that LSSs would be "urged" to continually decrease the numbers of students participating in the program; in 2008, a Board member hypothesized that Bridge Projects would eventually become unnecessary; and in 2014, the State Superintendent at the time, Dr. Lillian Lowery, stated that the program would be eliminated in SY 2017–2018. However, at a meeting in March 2016, MSDE reported that of

graduating students, both absolute numbers and percentages of students who successfully completed Bridge Project rose steadily from 2010 to 2015 (from 5,012 to 6,470, and from 8.6% to 11.2%).

Over the years, there was ongoing debate about whether students were taking the "easy way out" with Bridge Projects (SBOE Minutes, 10/30/2007), which indicated suspicion that some students should not be permitted to complete Bridge Projects. The conversation about the suitability of the Bridge Plan for certain populations of students began in 2004 with the first mention of a comparable, alternative assessment intended for students with disabilities or other "special needs," although EL-designated students were not mentioned explicitly at that time. In October 2006, Board members "urged" the Task Force on Comparable Testing Methods to provide "a description of the students who would qualify for this program" and to "define the target audience" out of concerns that some individuals might exploit their discretionary power to determine adequate performance (Mr. David Tufaro[41] and Dr. Edward Root, respectively, SBOE Minutes, 10/24/2006). At the August 2007 meeting, Dr. Grasmick stated that she was specifically requesting input from the Task Force on English Language Learners, Students with 504 Plans, and Special Education Students on the alternative assessments, demonstrating clear attention to subgroups at that time in developing the Bridge Plan.

At the October 2008 meeting of the State Board, the Superintendent for Montgomery County Public Schools criticized the HSAs for "not accommodating the large numbers of English language learners in Montgomery County," and MSDE reported that "the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation is being used to successfully address the needs of special education and

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[41] Members of the State Board of Education, as public officials, are named in citations where appropriate and as available in meeting minutes.

English language learners (ELLs) and those with test anxiety" (SBOE Minutes, 10/28/2008). At the December meeting of that year, MSDE presented the "Bridge Plan for Academic Validation: Update for State Board of Education," explaining that the results on Bridge Projects "for special education and ELL students mirror results for all students" (SBOE Meeting, 12/17/2008). In 2016, MSDE presented updates on the Bridge Plan and quoted students' favorable opinions of the projects, including an EL-designated student. Over the years that the Bridge Plan has been in existence, its use by and appropriateness for EL-designated students has been clear.

The true purpose of the Bridge Plan has been less clear. The September 2007 meeting contained the first recorded appearance of a member of the State Board asserting that the projects "should not teach the students the content but rather demonstrate the students' knowledge of the content" (Dr. Mary Kay Finan, SBOE Minutes, 9/25/2007). This point, whether the projects should be solely intended as alternative assessments, or if they should be remedial in nature, would be questioned several times over the next several years. Ultimately, the State Board resolved (and reaffirmed over the years) that Bridge Projects should be both remediation and assessment, which also served to reinforce the policy that students should have to take and fail the test twice, because they are given another "opportunity" to pass it after receiving remediation, which included working on a Bridge Project after their first time failing the test. For instance, in 2010, the Director of the Bridge Plan described the Bridge Projects as "a great intervention since many of the students who complete a bridge project often then pass the required HSA" (SBOE Minutes, 3/23/2010).

6.1.2 The "Fail Twice" Policy

The first appearance of the policy that students take and fail the HSA twice before being permitted to complete "a substantive and rigorous project to reflect their mastery in the subject

matter" occurred at the August 2007 meeting of the State Board, which was presented as a recommendation from the Task Force on Comparable Assessments and the Task Force on English Language Learners (SBOE Minutes, 8/28/2007). The "fail twice" requirement has been informally reaffirmed by the Board several times over the following years (e.g., 12/17/2008, 3/23/2010, 4/23/2013, 4/26/2016) and has never been officially proposed for removal from COMAR.

HSAs were administered several times over the year, so students would have multiple chances to take the test after receiving targeted remediation. Despite the questionable logic that the same instrument should be used for such disparate purposes (remediation and summative assessment) the re-testing situation for students was vastly different between 2004, when the English I HSA was still administered and students could have potentially nine more test attempts after one failure, and 2014, when PARCC assessments were adopted and administered only one to two times per year. Carrie nodded to the timeline of testing, saying how students would test in tenth grade, test again in eleventh grade, and complete the Bridge Project in twelfth grade, but if they wanted to test again, they would likely not have time before graduation. Dr. Santos described a situation in which some students failed the MCAP and their first attempt at a Bridge Project, thus delaying or even potentially derailing their graduation.

6.1.3 Making the Test "Count"

Records of the meetings of the State Board of Education are available dating back to January 2002. Over that period of time, various presenters and stakeholders in the meetings voiced concerns about students not caring about the tests they had to take for accountability purposes, and there was frequent discussion about how to make them care. This concern underlaid the reasoning for initially creating the exit exam policy.

Members of and presenters to the State Board made the case several times over the years that "when the test counts, students perform better" (Dr. Grasmick, SBOE Minutes, 2/27/2007), or that, as a high school English teacher attested, "students are taking classes more seriously because of the accountability required by the testing process" (SBOE Minutes, 10/30/2007). During the transition from HSAs to PARCC assessments, students were required to take the tests but not to pass them in order to graduate, and members of the Board expressed concern about "how to convince students to do their best even though their scores won't count" (SBOE Minutes, 8/27/2013). There were also claims that testing improved instruction (e.g., 12/2/2003, 3/27/2007, 10/30/2007, 9/23/2008, 3/21/2016) and worries that if essay questions were removed from the HSA, students would no longer be taught how to write (SBOE Minutes, 3/24/2009).

Such claims about teaching quality improving under accountability-based testing carry a possible implication that testing is necessary to improve teaching, or even that teaching without high-stakes testing is inadequate or simply subject to the teacher's whims, as Dr. Bragg implied about his experiences teaching history compared to teaching government. Carrie's suspicions that accountability-based testing was, in actuality, intended to monitor what teachers taught, seem plausible in light of such comments from state-level policymakers. Her suspicions cannot realistically be confirmed or refuted, but they nevertheless point to the fact that the repeated arguments for making a test high-stakes for the student test-takers centered on the idea that students would not otherwise take the class or test seriously betray a lack of confidence in those students, their teachers, and their schools. However, given the extreme consequences for schools and districts if students did not perform well on accountability-based testing under No Child Left Behind, it is perhaps understandable that policymakers tried to up the ante for students, as one of many approaches to increasing test scores.

6.1.4 Policy Appropriation in the Classroom: ELA MCAP

Here I present a vignette of ELA MCAP policy appropriation in the classroom context. Although the teacher-level data fell within the timeline of ESSA, not NCLB, I have placed this account here because of its relevance to the exit exam and associated policies. As I discussed in Section 5.3.2, the ELA teachers whom I interviewed appropriated high-stakes testing policy through minimal acceptance and cooperation into their teaching. I viewed their classroom language policies as being more obviously mediated by their invocation of discourses in place relating to language ideologies, while the relationship between high-stakes testing policies and their instructional practices and language policies was rather murky.

Although Alice and Carrie, the ELA teachers, did not ascribe much value to the ELA MCAP or discuss the fact that the Bridge Projects most of their students would complete are in English, they nevertheless taught their classes *in* and *for* English. The ELA MCAP affected the teachers and their practice, even if they did not explicitly teach to the test, because of the various policies attached to it and because it loomed in their future, the next time they would be teaching a tested year and content area. In Section 5.3.2, Carrie acknowledged the pressure exerted on teachers of tested grades at Riverbend High School to try to prepare students as much as possible for the MCAP, despite their low likelihood of passing. She described the pressure as being related to covering all of the curriculum, doing explicit test preparation in class, and attending meetings about testing. None of those concerns specifically related to language use, which I consider to be unsurprising, because there would be no conflict between those messages and Carrie's existing classroom language policies. Because her language management was already consistent with the themes of English-as-default and English-as-goal, there would be no need to redirect classroom language use towards the English curriculum and test. While Alice did not

feel test-related pressure from her school administrators, she nevertheless felt pressure to prepare the students for meeting their graduation requirements, of which taking the MCAP and likely completing a Bridge Project would be a part.

As I discussed in Section 5.2.1, the ELA MCAP is high-stakes for the student test-takers and their schools: it functions as an exit exam for students, in that they must pass the test to graduate from high school[42], and schools are judged on their students' performance on the test, via the school accountability system, the Maryland School Report Card. If a student does not pass the ELA MCAP, they may begin working on a Bridge Project, which they can submit as an alternative assessment to the MCAP, after taking the test a second time and failing it again.

The ELA teachers, Carrie and Alice, and principals, Dr. Peterson and Dr. Santos, mentioned this particular requirement, to take the test and fail it *twice* before being permitted to submit a Bridge Project, as conspicuously cruel to their students. It is worth looking at the history of this policy (as I did in Section 6.1.2) because it did not arise in a vacuum; it dates back almost two decades and continues to affect educators and students to the time of my data collection and writing. Just as educators' personal histories bear on the nexus of practice, the histories of the relevant policies also play a role, although they are below the surface, hidden from view. While the ELA MCAP is no longer an exit exam, at the time of my writing, the policies regarding the Bridge Project are unchanged (see COMAR 13A.03.02.06).

Both teachers, Alice and Carrie, were nominally in favor of multilingualism, whether for themselves or for society, and both expressed an understanding of multilingualism that was

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[42] This specific policy, that of the MCAP acting as exit exam, was changed in 2021. I discussed the proposed policy changes with the ELA teachers and principals during data collection, but the changes were not finalized until June 14, 2021, and did not affect the school year in which I collected data.

functional in nature, not a "monolingual" understanding of multilingualism (such as the perception of "balanced bilingualism" as being the pinnacle of multiple language acquisition or development). Despite their declared support, they nevertheless employed classroom-level language policies that walled off time and space between English and non-English use by students, and maintained English-only usage themselves. I characterized the educators' educational language policy appropriation on the whole as "English as default, English as goal" (Section 4.2), because even when other languages were permitted in the classroom, English was positioned as the default language of academics (for the teacher to speak to students, for students to communicate with the teacher, as the predominant language of instructional materials, and for students to use on assignments), and English language development was the primary language goal for students at both schools.

Reasonable explanations exist for teaching in English in a multilingual classroom. Alice returned to the question of fairness in her pedagogical approach. She believed that using Spanish with her Spanish-speaking students would be unfair to students who did not speak Spanish and with whom she did not share a language other than English—she positioned English as a leveling force in the classroom, enabling her to provide equal educational opportunities to all her students. Carrie presented the question of language use in the classroom as one of common sense, that it is perfectly reasonable to ask students "to say something in English in English class" (Carrie, Interview 3, 03-26-2021). She also perceived the tension between the issue of fairness brought up by Alice and the use of culturally relevant pedagogical approaches that employed materials containing languages other than English to tell stories reflective of students' experiences, since those languages were not equally accessible to all students in the class. The teachers, therefore, took pragmatic approaches to language policies that they believed were more

fair than the alternatives they could imagine (Alice) and suited to the curriculum and available materials (Carrie).

The implicit questions of how to manage multiple languages in the classroom fairly and justly, especially when one language is as dominant as Spanish is in the schools, or how to practice language inclusion if the teacher does not share a language other than English with their students are legitimate questions. Given the absence of policies that could propel them toward language inclusion and infrastructure that would enable it, the ELA teachers understandably appropriated language policies that created English-only times and spaces within a multilingual context. However, such policies are not the only possible responses to their contexts, and had the teachers been provided with alternative policies and infrastructure, they could plausibly have chosen differently. I go into possibilities for alternative policies and infrastructure in Chapter 7, but they could include, for example, multilingual curricula and materials in a variety of languages, in addition to Spanish; professional development focused on translanguaging pedagogies (e.g., García & Kleyn, 2016); and the use of critical shared governance in the classroom, in which students are empowered to co-create language policies, with guidance from the teacher to guard against replicating linguistic hegemony in the classroom that they experience outside the school.

6.2 ESSA

All of these policies that I just presented—linking a content assessment with high school graduation, permitting the use of an alternative assessment, and requiring that test-takers fail the content assessment twice before being permitted to use the alternative assessment—all have their own histories, and those histories impact their current instantiations, which principals and teachers interact with. The discourse trajectories pass through the nexus of practice of

educational language policymaking for EL-designated students at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School. If their historical trajectories had taken slightly different directions, the policies would have different impacts on the teachers and their classrooms now.

The overriding emphasis on test performance as the outcome and sole measure of success for schools, districts, and the state meant that the HSAs, first, then followed by PARCC and then MCAP, were of paramount importance to the State Board of Education. All but a very small fraction of students in public high schools in Maryland were shunted to taking the HSAs, and because that was the only measure of success that "counted," the options available to students who struggled with the tests continually returned them to the testing track. Students who were not yet sufficiently proficient in English to access the tested content were nevertheless required to take the same tests as all other students because NCLB mandated their inclusion in academic achievement testing. However, as was demonstrated by the fact that the Bridge Plan was created and made available to all students who did not pass the content tests, MSDE could have amended their NCLB Consolidated State Plan, if the State Board of Education had authorized it. It is outside of the scope of the current report to investigate the possibilities for alternative assessments as a first option to certain students within the confines of NCLB, but, regardless, the will to do so would have been lacking, given the documentary evidence from years of meetings of the State Board. It is worth considering how current practice in ELA classes at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School might look different today if students were allowed to complete Bridge Projects as their first route to demonstrating content knowledge mastery, instead of as a last resort—not to mention even more innovative and inclusive assessment options. Put another way, if the powerful discourse in place relating to testing as the supreme mark of success

were supplanted by different discourses in place, "the interaction order of pedagogy and assessment might look different" as well (F.M. Hult, personal communication, April 9, 2023).

Clearly, NCLB had a significant and long-lasting impact on education in Maryland, in particular for EL-designated students. Although NCLB has since been replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, and ESSA differs from NCLB in many substantive ways, it nevertheless carries forward an emphasis on English language development through high-stakes testing *in* and *of* English. NCLB's legacy in Maryland educational policy has persisted in part through regulations that are essentially unchanged from the time of NCLB as well as regulations created to comply with ESSA. The emphasis on English language development in federal legislation led to the same emphasis in state-level law; this emphasis can also be viewed as a policy orientation.

ESSA requires states to have academic standards for mathematics, reading or language arts, and science, and for states to assess students' knowledge of those standards. The same standards apply to EL-designated students, and their test performance must be reported and monitored along with other subgroups of students. Section 1111, paragraph 2 deals with the required, standards-aligned assessments, stating that the assessments shall[43]:

- "be used for purposes for which such assessments are valid and reliable, consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical testing standards, objectively

[43] According to the Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN), which is "an unfunded working group of federal employees from different agencies and specialties who support the use of clear communication in government writing" (Plain Language Action and Information Network, n.d.), "shall" is ambiguous, and "must" should instead be used to indicate obligation. Despite this, the text of the legislation uses "shall," which I interpret to indicate obligation and "may" to indicate optionality.

measure academic achievement, knowledge, and skills, and be tests that do not evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs and attitudes" (Sec. 1111(b)(2)(B)(iii));

- and provide for "the inclusion of English learners, who shall be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided appropriate accommodations on assessments administered to such students under this paragraph, including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what such students know and can do in academic content areas, until such students have achieved English language proficiency, as determined under subparagraph (G)" (Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii)(III));
- but "notwithstanding clause (vii)(III), **provide for assessments (using tests in English) of reading or language arts of any student who has attended school in the United States** (not including the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico) for 3 or more consecutive school years, except that if the local educational agency determines, on a case-by-case individual basis, that academic assessments in another language or form would likely yield more accurate and reliable information on what such student knows and can do, the local educational agency may make a determination to assess such students in the appropriate language other than English for a period that does not exceed 2 additional consecutive years, provided that such student has not yet reached a level of English language proficiency sufficient to yield valid and reliable information on what such student knows and can do on tests (written in English) of reading or language arts" (Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(ix); emphasis mine).

I call attention to several salient points in the quoted text above. In the first bullet point, the legislation stipulates that assessments must be used for purposes which are valid and reliable. As seen in the second bullet point, ESSA requires that EL-designated students be included in

statewide standards-based testing, and that they be assessed in a "valid and reliable manner." Given that standardized tests often lack sufficiently representative norming samples, and in particular, they lack sufficient numbers of EL-designated students, test scores are generally less reliable for EL-designated students than for non-EL-designated (Abedi et al., 2004). Less reliable scores undermine the validity of the uses to which such test results are put (Mahoney, 2017). EL-designated students must be provided with accommodations until they have demonstrated English language proficiency, but as I discussed in Section 5.1.2, "Methods of Assessment," accommodations for these students are often ineffective for reducing the language burden. In fact, MSDE found that only after students reach a level 4.5 on ACCESS do they have an "equi-probable likelihood of achieving proficiency on PARCC when compared to performance of English-only peers," which was given as reason for setting 4.5 as the attainment goal for students to test out of language services (MSDE, "ESSA Update," presentation to the SBOE, 4/28/2018). Therefore, before students obtain a 4.5 overall score on ACCESS, their proficiency in English is a significant impediment to their performance on academic achievement tests.

Despite the fact that the language of the assessment creates construct-irrelevant variance, (as I discussed with respect to educators' assessment literacy in Section 5.1), ESSA nevertheless requires that EL-designated students be assessed on reading or language arts "using tests in English," as seen in the third bullet point. The use of "notwithstanding" at the beginning of the quoted text in the third bullet point effectively nullifies the specified clause (vii)(III), given in the second bullet point, in any place that the two clauses conflict. One such conflict could be the language in which students are assessed, which the second bullet point indicated might be a language other than English, if it were more appropriate for students to demonstrate their knowledge of the academic content and if it were "practicable" for an education agency to offer.

However, the text shown in the third bullet point negates this possibility by stipulating that assessments be "tests in English" (with minor exceptions).

ESSA does not define the word "test," so there is a lack of clarity about what type of assessment could be characterized as a test. In another paragraph, the law requires that the standards-based assessments "involve multiple up-to-date measures of students' academic achievement, including measures that assess higher-order thinking skills and understanding, which may include measures of student academic growth and may be partially delivered in the form of portfolios, projects, or extended performance tasks" (Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vi)), thus suggesting that there are distinctions drawn between "tests" and "portfolios," "projects," and "performance tasks." However, according to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*,

> A test is a device or procedure in which a sample of an examinee's behavior in a specified domain is obtained and subsequently evaluated and scored using a standardized process. […] A distinction is sometimes made between tests and assessments. Assessment is a broader term than test, commonly referring to a process that integrates test information with information from other sources. (AERA et al., 2014, p. 2)

The *Standards* is a joint publication from AERA, APA, and NCME, "represents the gold standard in guidance on testing in the United States and worldwide" (American Educational Research Association, 2014, para. 1), and constitutes "relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical testing standards" (ESSA, 2015, Sec. 1111(b)(2)(B)(iii)). Under the definition of "test" given in the *Standards*, since there is no definition provided in the legislation, there is potential for flexibility in interpreting the law if policymakers choose to exercise that flexibility, even though the test unequivocally must be "written in English."

The emphasis on English language development in ESSA that I mentioned above can be interpreted as a policy orientation; the requirement that language arts assessments be tests in English has a restrictive orientation, in that it contains "legal prohibitions or curtailments on the use of minority languages" (Wiley, 2012, p. 71). The requirement overrides what might be seen as an expediency orientation in allowing "assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what such students know" (Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii)(III)). Overall, though, ESSA takes a tolerance orientation to educational language policies, in that there is a "noticeable absence of state intervention in the linguistic life of the language minority community" (Wiley, 2012, p. 71). NCLB notably removed all references to bilingual education from the ESEA (Wright, 2005), shifting the orientation of the legislation from expediency to tolerance, and this orientation was maintained in ESSA (which does contain one reference to bilingual education, but only in limited cases for Native American/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian students learning Native languages). The general orientation towards tolerance, rather than promotion or even expediency is evident in policies appropriated throughout the levels of the education system: the state, the school, and the classroom, as I demonstrated in previous sections. This widespread policy orientation demonstrates that discourses consistent with a language as problem language orientation (Hult & Hornberger, 2016; Ruíz, 1984) "are agentively reproduced across scales through policy actions mediated by individuals' historical bodies and the interaction orders in which they work" (F.M. Hult, personal communication, April 9, 2023).

6.2.1 Policy Appropriation in the Classroom: ACCESS

Here I present another vignette of policy appropriation within the classroom. One example of federal education law that has been interpreted and appropriated at the state level is the requirement in ESSA that the state set long-term and interim goals of English language

development for EL-designated students. In response to this federal requirement, Maryland's ESSA Consolidated State Plan set a long-term goal that, by 2030, 74% of all EL-designated students in Maryland would achieve English proficiency within 6 years of initial designation (MSDE, 2018). This goal exemplifies Ball's (1993) description of a policy stating an intended outcome but without specifying how districts, school, and teachers should or must help students reach that goal. The means by which policy actors at those levels interpret and respond to the goal is thus the appropriation of this policy, mediated by actors' knowledge, beliefs, and experiences encoded in their historical bodies; the interaction orders within which they work; and the discourses in place they draw on, including this policy and discourses from other scales.

The ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School, Rachel and Linda, were aware of the long-term and interim goals for their students, which is why they were focused on getting students to "level up" on ACCESS every year, as Linda put it (Interview 1, 02-03-2021), or for "students to make movement up the chart, at least, like, by point-five," according to Rachel (Interview 1, 01-27-2021). The goal of at least "point-five" or half of a proficiency level on ACCESS would be acceptable progress in general for students at Hilltop High School and is much easier to keep in mind than the actual growth-to-target model put forward by MSDE in the Consolidated State Plan. While it is not a fully accurate statement of the goals stated in the Consolidated State Plan, this simplification represents appropriation by the teacher within her context, "off-set against other expectations" (Ball, 1993, p. 12), including suitability for classroom use and communication to others in the school, such as other content area teachers and students.

In terms of their actual classroom-level language policies, Linda and Rachel started out with inclinations towards primarily English use in the classroom, though in the vein of expediency-oriented language policy, because they permitted the "pragmatic use of minority

languages, typically involving accommodations to overcome perceived communication barriers between government agencies and clients" (Wiley, 2012, p. 71). Here, the teachers stand in for "government agencies" and the students for "clients" (figuratively viewing divisions at one level of organization as divisions at another related level, similar to the process of fractal recursivity; Irvine & Gal, 2000). Rachel and Linda allowed students to use their L1s in certain, prescribed ways, such as when students had to resort to L1 use in order to participate on an assignment, or when the teachers could not realistically proscribe L1 use, such as in Zoom breakout rooms or in small-group work in the classroom. In addition, they actively encouraged L1 use at other times, such as in when teachers required the use of a peer interpreter for facilitating remote instruction over Zoom, or in other spaces, such as a Spanish language arts class, in order to promote English language development through transfer of literacy skills and content knowledge.

Other forces acting on their policy actions included their subscription to the discourse in place of academic language, which they believed students needed to develop to be successful both on ACCESS and in school. The teachers' invocation of the academic language discourse in place (as something they believed to be a measurable thing in the world) intersected with their historical bodies, of which important aspects were their assessment literacy regarding ACCESS (which they evaluated to be a good and valid test) and their policy knowledge (understanding that their school would be monitored and judged on students' performance on ACCESS) to mediate their policy actions. Relevant experiences that contributed to their assessment literacy included administering a poorly designed test that was easily manipulated (Linda), or participating in the test development process of ACCESS by completing key checks (Rachel), among others. Those particular experiences engendered positive dispositions to the ACCESS test, which then contributed to the teachers' instructional practices to prepare their students for

the test; those feelings and practices were then reinforced by the generally favorable outcomes of testing, demonstrating the recursive and dynamic nature of accumulating practices in the nexus of practice. Unexpected outcomes, such as students obtaining a lower score than the teachers thought they should have earned, were explained away through rationalizations that blamed the testing environment, student test anxiety, unfamiliarity with the mechanics of test-taking, or even "laziness" leading to responses that were not sufficiently academic—in short, rationalizations that blamed anything other than the test itself.

The ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School, Linda and Rachel, experienced significant success in that their students made progress on their growth-to-target goals, measured via ACCESS scores, and in that their students made progress on their personal language goals that they set in their language portfolios. The teachers empowered their students to take ownership of their language learning and data, to think critically about their own language use relative to the demands and expectations of the task, and to assess someone else's language with respect to those demands and expectations. The teachers' approach to language instruction through integrating the language rubric could potentially help students improve their metalinguistic knowledge and prepare them for future language learning. The ESOL department's advocacy for teachers across the school to use the language rubric in their classrooms potentially also helped the other teachers develop their abilities in teaching integrated content and language. In all of these ways and probably many others that I could not document, the ESOL teachers at Hilltop High School sought to use their knowledge and experiences to empower others, whether students for their own learning or teachers for their instruction. However, their pedagogical approach, which characterized success according to ACCESS test scores, turned student failure as well as student success into an individual-level issue with no reference to systemic issues (Valencia,

2010). Student failure under this approach is thus ascribed only to the student, not to the test, not to the teacher, and not to a larger educational system that creates EL-designated students and does not prioritize bilingualism and biliteracy in a large-scale or meaningful way.

6.3 Policy Appropriation Across Scales of Space: Policy Orientations in the State, School, and Classroom

Maryland has no state-level language policies in place, either in the constitution or in regulation (Faingold, 2018, p. 9). In the education system, there are no state-level policies that either restrict non-English language use in school (as is the case in Arizona, with Proposition 203, for example) or support use of non-English languages in school (such as in Texas, which contains explicit provisions for transitional bilingual education in the Texas Education Code §29.051–29.064). However, "very seldom is there truly an absence of policy" (Hult, 2015, pp. 220–221). While Maryland does not have explicit state-level policies specifying language of instruction, per se, the complex of English-language assessments I have documented in this study could be seen as de facto educational language policy (Menken, 2008).

The long-term goals for EL-designated students articulated in the state ESSA plan include meeting English language development goals and academic achievement goals, but there is no mention of bilingualism, biliteracy, or bicultural competence as goals. There are bilingual education programs available at various public schools in the state of Maryland, and they are one potential option provided to EL-designated students for language services. However, they do not exist at scale, and—as far as I could discern—they are not weighted as the preferred language service for enrolling EL-designated students. In addition, the landmark *Blueprint* legislation contains somewhat limited directives for recruiting bilingual teachers and staff. While the English Learner Work Group, which was formed through *Blueprint* mandate, recommends dual

language education for EL-designated students, the final report was only recently submitted (at the time of writing), and their recommendations do not (yet) carry force of law. Altogether, the policies in the Maryland ESSA State Plan and the *Blueprint* demonstrate a tolerance orientation, not explicitly seeking to restrict non-English language use, but also not actively seeking to maintain or promote bilingualism in "the language minority community" (Wiley, 2012, p. 71) through public education.

At the school level, this tolerance orientation is largely replicated. While the principals claimed that they promoted bilingualism and biliteracy, I did not see evidence that they enacted policies in a meaningful way to attempt to achieve those aims. Dr. Peterson described the benefits of the Seal of Biliteracy but acknowledged that the school could do more to support students to obtain the Seal by graduation. Dr. Santos enthused over bilingualism and biliteracy as goals for students at Hilltop High School such that students were encouraged to take Spanish language arts early on in high school to support their English language development—an expediency-oriented approach, not promotion, and one that does not serve non-Spanish-speaking students. The principals' options for supporting languages other than Spanish (or English) were limited by external constraints, such as lack of financial resources to hire additional language teachers and a lack of available qualified teachers of less commonly taught languages. However, these are not the only means for supporting development of students' full linguistic repertoires, although, admittedly, all such activities require at least minimal time from faculty and staff, which is neither free nor unlimited. Nevertheless, the schools could institute independent study courses in other languages, promote language clubs, and seek to involve family and community members as language experts or "elders," among the possible options.

In classrooms, as I documented at length in Chapters 4 and 5, teachers primarily appropriated policies that encouraged English-only use although they generally claimed not to have such rules for language use. Teachers themselves used only English when interacting with students, provided materials and assignments in only English (with few exceptions), and would only accept and grade English on assignments (with few exceptions). They allowed specific, constrained times and situations for non-English use and did not punish students for using languages other than English outside of those situations (excepting, perhaps, through giving lower grades for students turning in non-English work). Despite widespread beliefs in the value and benefits of bilingualism, including the lived experiences of almost all the teachers studying other languages and developing their own bilingualism, I saw no evidence that they sought to support their students' bilingualism or develop their biliteracy. In fact, at least Dr. Bragg even wanted to impose more restrictive language policies in class because he believed it would be a crucial step in students' English language development.

A tolerance orientation means that an institution or institutional agent does not attempt to manage the linguistic life of the language minority community; thus, members of the community have freedom to use, maintain, and develop their own language(s) in private spheres without external interference. Public spheres (including public schools) still operate within the hegemonic language system of the dominant group, so there is no dedicated space for language minorities to use, maintain, or develop their languages in public spaces with public funding. However, there is potential for implementational space to be wedged open, if there is sufficient will in the ideological space (Hornberger, 2002). I did not see evidence of activity in the ideological space for promoting bilingualism and biliteracy in the contexts I studied and among

my participants within these contexts, and the implementational space still sits closed—at least for now.

6.4 Conclusion of Policy Appropriation Across Time and Space(s)

In this chapter I gave overviews of the historical trajectories of policies that affect students, teachers, and principals at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School. Namely, I covered policies relating to the high school exit exam, the Bridge Project, and the "fail twice" requirement, and I showed how those policies are appropriated in the ELA classroom. I delved into some of the actual legislative language in ESSA, to highlight its contradictory nature regarding the assessment of EL-designated students, and also showed how ESOL-related policies are appropriated in the ESOL classroom. I ended by tracing the policy orientations through the scales in which policies are created, interpreted, implemented, and appropriated, arguing that, in light of the overall tolerance oriented to language, there is opportunity to create and promote greater linguistic inclusivity if policy agents at different levels are willing to take advantage of the available implementational space.

Chapter 7: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

In this study, I examined how educators of EL-designated students *appropriated* educational language policy and high-stakes testing policy in two Maryland public high schools, seeking to understand how educators "take in" policies, "incorporating these discursive and institutional resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation, and action" (Levinson & Sutton, 2001, p. 3). I asked the following research questions:

1. How do educators of EL-designated students manage language in the school and classroom?
2. How do educators of EL-designated students appropriate high-stakes testing policies in the school and classroom?
3. How are the relevant statewide, high-stakes testing policies appropriated by policy agents across time and space(s)?

To answer these questions, I used the methodology of nexus analysis, which traces connections among social actors and social actions, across time and space. I found that educators' language-related practices are mediated by their historical body, in which their preparation in TESOL was the most salient element, intersecting with larger-scale discourses in place relating to language ideologies. Educators appropriated educational language policy primarily through instructional practices that positioned English as the default language of academics and as the predominant, if not sole, language goal. In the appropriation of high-stakes testing policies, educators' assessment literacy was the most salient element. Principals appropriated high-stakes testing policies by accepting unavoidable constraints while creating space for success where possible, through their understanding of policies and their consequences. Teachers appropriated high-stakes testing policies through instructional practices that fully

embraced the test and its associated policies or through practices that minimally complied with the policies, varying across teachers and tests. Finally, federal policy had a strong influence on state-level policy. The impact of *No Child Left Behind* cannot be overstated, and its legacy continues today.

In a sense, this study attempted to follow up and extend the findings from Menken (2008), which reported on the impact of high-stakes testing on the education of EL-designated students in New York City in the wake of NCLB. Menken (2008) found that "tests shape what content is taught in school, how it is taught, by whom it is taught, and in what language(s) it is taught. In this way, tests have become *de facto* language policy in schools" (p. 4, italics in original). Since the time of her research, ESSA has replaced NCLB as the federal education law. Further, the present study took place in Maryland, which has no explicit educational language policy, in contrast to New York City with the Aspira Consent Decree in place, requiring the provision of bilingual education in schools with at least 20 EL-designated students of the same language background enrolled. Given these differences, but heavily influenced by Menken's notable research, I investigated how current high-stakes testing affected the education of EL-designated in this specific time, place, and policy context.

I did not include Menken (2008) in my review of previous empirical literature because I only reviewed articles published in peer-reviewed journals, not standalone book publications. In the following section, I situate my findings relative to the articles I reviewed and discuss the contributions of the present study to the research base. Following the discussion, I present implications for practice for teacher education, implications for policy in several policymaking contexts, the limitations of the present study, and suggestions for future research. Finally, I offer concluding thoughts on the study reported herein.

7.1 Discussion

Here I discuss the results of my research in light of the findings I obtained from my review of empirical research in the field of classroom-level educational language policy. In my literature review, I analyzed the roles played by or effects of assessment and found that assessments (1) were responsible for designating (and re-designating) students for services; (2) influenced decisions about language programs; (3) influenced curriculum and instruction; (4) contributed to students' and educators' perceptions of student identity; and (5) contributed to evaluations of schools and teachers. Below, I situate my study's results relative to the latter three literature review findings, since it is Maryland state policy that WIDA English language proficiency tests are used for designating and exiting students from language services, and that choosing among language programs is not pertinent to the present study.

7.1.1 Influencing Curriculum and Instruction

My review of empirical literature revealed substantial influence exerted by assessment pressures on curriculum and instruction; I found similar effects and reported them in Chapter 5, although my findings also diverged in important ways.

7.1.1.1 Materials Selection. Reviewed studies revealed that educators often selected materials that reflected the form and content of standardized tests (Heineke, 2015; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Olson, 2009; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Schissel, 2014). However, this was not precisely reflected in the data I collected. Carrie reported the reasoning behind some of the materials choices she made and that the ELA Department on the whole made, without any reference to the ELA MCAP or ACCESS. That is not to say that the tests had no impact on their thinking at all, but that impact was not evident in the interviews. Further, the reasoning she described focused more on helping students connect with the literature through presenting

experiences the students might share or identify with. She even specifically chose more linguistically accessible versions of Shakespeare's plays (with annotations and written in more contemporary English, rather than Shakespeare's Early Modern English), although she did not expect those were the versions students could potentially be tested on.

7.1.1.2 Narrowing Curriculum and Instruction. While several previous studies found that educators ended up narrowing the curriculum to tested content (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Henderson, 2017; Menken, 2006; Olson, 2009; Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Palmer et al., 2016; Zúñiga, 2016), and narrowing instruction to test-specific skills (Colón & Heineke, 2015; Henderson, 2017; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar, 2012; Menken, 2006; Olson, 2009; Palmer & Henderson, 2016; Palmer et al., 2016), I did not find this to be common among the educators in my study. Alice described the standards to which the ninth and tenth grade ELA curricula were aligned as being flexible and "broad enough" that she could work within them while still meeting her students at their various levels of knowledge and proficiency. The teachers in my study were all twelve-month employees and told me about how summers were often used for designing and revising their schools' curricula to be better suited to their students' needs and strengths. While the teachers ensured the schools' curricula stayed within the confines of the state standards and maintained coherence with the district's curricula, they had the freedom to reorder instructional units and make other changes as they saw fit. The ELA teachers could make changes across multiple years because of the looping structure between ninth and tenth grade, as long as the students had engaged with the expected content by the end of their tenth grade year.

As for teaching test-specific skills, Alice described allocating minimal class time to test preparation to show students what the test would look like and how to navigate the online

platform but not devoting excessive time or focusing on it heavily. Carrie gave instruction on writing summaries, argumentative essays, and other text types that were tested on the MCAP, but her approach was asset-oriented, recognizing and rewarding students for being able to write a summary when they were previously unable to, rather than deducting points when they wrote a summary instead of an argument. My findings relating to ELA teachers' curricular changes and instruction might differ from those of previous studies because the teachers I interviewed did not indicate much accommodation to the standardized test, believing as they did that students were not likely to pass the test, regardless, and would instead be completing a Bridge Project in eleventh and twelfth grade.

The findings for ESOL were more nuanced than simply that the teachers "narrowed" their curriculum or instruction to tested content and test-specific skills because of the different nature of ACCESS compared to the ELA MCAP. ACCESS is intended to test grade-level academic English proficiency, which is an extremely broad test construct. While Linda and Rachel oriented their classes to preparing students for ACCESS, their enactment of that goal was also broad. They worked with students to develop their language skills in the four language domains tested by ACCESS: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They included WIDA's standards in their instruction, as well: social and instructional language, the language of Language Arts, the language of Mathematics, the language of Science, and the language of Social Studies. The teachers also took time prior to the test administration to introduce students to the online testing platform and make sure they understood the mechanics of test-taking. The predominant means by which they aligned their curriculum and instruction to the standardized test was through their use of the "language rubric," which combined WIDA's proficiency level descriptors and writing and speaking scoring rubrics into a single tool for teachers and students to use for goal-setting,

self-assessment, peer-assessment, and grading. All of these aspects of instruction show substantial influence from the test. However, the purpose of ESOL is to develop students' English language proficiency, which the ESOL Department at Hilltop High School sought to do through aligning their understanding of English language proficiency with WIDA's definition, to which they have also aligned their curriculum and instruction. The use of ACCESS as the means by which students' English language proficiency is measured (and by which the teachers' success is measured) simply served to tie the knot on what is effectively a closed system, which I see as fundamentally distinct from the narrowing of curriculum and instruction attested in the reviewed research cited above.

Educators gave more examples of this phenomenon but with assessments that were not high-stakes to the same degree as the ELA MCAP and ACCESS. Carrie told me about working with a team to redesign the ninth grade ELA curriculum, and she and the team decided to change the narrative instructional unit to better align with the benchmark assessment. The change was ultimately small, resulting in having students practice continuing a narrative that was provided to them only partially complete, because that was the skill tested by the benchmark assessment, rather than other knowledge and skills already present in the narrative unit (such as reading and dissecting a narrative or writing an entire narrative on one's own). Carrie reflected on how she was typically critical of teaching to the test but then found herself doing precisely that when working on curriculum design.

Rachel gave another such example related to the SLO (student learning objective) assessments that were formerly required by the district and which she found to be poorly designed. She described how after one year of administering the SLO and seeing it go poorly, the following year she designed and taught a set of lessons to prepare students specifically for the

assessment. The SLO seemed to be intended to scaffold the writing process for students by giving them input material, pre-writing planning activities, and then instructions for writing the actual passage to be graded. However, Rachel described the different components of the assessment as disconnected and the instructions unclear, so when she taught the preparatory lessons, she created a well-designed set of activities, so that the structure would be familiar to students when they encountered it on the SLO and they would be more successful in writing what they would be graded on. While neither of these examples was for the high-stakes tests I focused on in my study, they are in line with previous research showing teachers adjusting their curriculum and instruction to accommodate testing.

7.1.1.3 Scheduling Curriculum and Instruction Around Testing Schedules. Several articles in my corpus of empirical research attested to educators scheduling curriculum and instruction to suit testing schedules (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Henderson, 2017; Koyama & Bartlett, 2011; Palmer & Henderson, 2016; Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Palmer et al., 2016; Zúñiga, 2016). I found an extreme example of this at Hilltop High School (and likely at Riverbend High School, too, but educators at Riverbend High School did not discuss it during interviews) in which the entire school's schedule is changed to accommodate ACCESS testing because such a large percentage of the student body takes the test every year. Linda described how all instruction across the school is paused for two mornings to do the writing subtest, and that ACCESS testing on the whole is "all hands on deck." Dr. Santos's account of building time into the eleventh and twelfth grade ELA curricula for students to work on their Bridge Projects could also potentially be considered in line with scheduling curriculum and instruction around testing schedules, but certainly on a different scale, since the changes

spanned multiple years, and of a different nature, since the Bridge Project is an alternative assessment rather than a standardized test.

7.1.1.4 Language of Instruction. A major finding from my review of the literature was that standardized testing influenced programmatic decisions in various ways; one way was that educators would change the (primary) language of instruction to match the language of the test, whatever the language might be, effectively turning bilingual education programs into monolingual programs (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Colón & Heineke, 2015; Henderson, 2017; Menken, 2006; Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer et al., 2016; Warhol & Mayer, 2012; Zúñiga, 2016; Zúñiga et al., 2018). My study does not fit with this literature base perfectly because my research context was not a bilingual program. However, educators in my study certainly had the flexibility to use other languages instructionally and to permit the use of other languages in the classroom—as, in fact, they said they permitted for limited uses (Section 4.2.3). Nevertheless, educators' language management in the school and classroom contributed to what I perceived to be the general positioning of English as the default language of the school, as the language of academics, and as the dominant, if not only, language goal for students. While I cannot draw a straight line to show a specifically causal relationship between the standardized tests and the dominant status of English at the schools, the association between them is evident and consistent with prior research.

7.1.2 Contributing to Educators' Perceptions of Students

Assessment shaped the way educators in my study perceived their students, a finding that was shared with prior research (Heineke, 2015; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Palmer, 2011; Palmer & Henderson, 2016; Palmer et al., 2016; Zúñiga et al., 2018). At times, teachers referred to students as being "advanced" or "high" or

"low," and following up to clarify that they meant students' language skills were advanced, or that they had high or low ACCESS scores. In this way, students' language ability, as measured by a test, was a metonym for the students themselves—a test score standing in for an identity.

Similarly, teachers' depictions of students designated as long-term English learners were shaped by the students' experiences with testing. Linda and Rachel both recounted stories about students who were strong in "conversational English" but were not successful on ACCESS for various reasons. Linda told me about a student who was a self-described "lazy student" who eventually performed well enough on ACCESS to test out of language services, although he continued to underperform in class. Rachel described a student who had gotten close to passing ACCESS several times during his schooling but did not test out until his second try of his senior year. She attributed his continuing EL designation to his not taking the test seriously enough, that he did not use academic language when responding to prompts on the speaking subtest and that he admitted to answering items on the reading and listening subtests by randomly clicking. Then after the teachers convinced him to take the test seriously, he tried harder in eleventh and twelfth grade, eventually earning a score of at least 4.5. In contrast, Alice understood one possible explanation for LTEL designations as being the consequence of students having lower literacy skills and academic knowledge as a result of pull-out ESOL instruction when students were young, resulting in a vicious cycle in which students receive ESOL instruction at the expense of literacy and academic content instruction, leading to their inability to test out, leading to their continuation in ESOL services. Regardless of the explanation offered by the teacher, LTEL status is inextricably linked to assessment because, at the time of writing, students can exit ESOL eligibility (and EL status) only via test score on ACCESS.

Reviewed articles included examples of educators evaluating students' language acquisition and/or bilingualism in relation to testing, such as judging them to be more or less proficient based on student test scores, or with respect to choosing a language for testing, according to the educator's determination of the student's dominant language. Findings from my study relating to educators' evaluation of student bilingualism did not align precisely with findings from my literature review. Most of the teachers expressed a conception of bilingualism as being more functional in nature, whether a person can "[move] through society" and accomplish what they need to do, which the students were largely able to do, with the possible exception of recently arrived newcomers with minimal English proficiency. Rachel, by contrast, construed bilingualism more in line with the notion of "balanced bilingualism," requiring roughly equal proficiency in multiple languages—and she included education in multiple languages as well, seeming to mark biliteracy as a necessary component of bilingualism.

Henderson and Palmer (2015) gave an example of educators independently determining student' dominant language for testing purposes, which was not directly relevant to my study. Dr. Santos discussed the possibility of testing a student in a language other than English, but the situation he presented differed substantially from those documented in the corpus of empirical research in Chapter 2. Maryland has limited provisions for students to take tests in languages other than English, but, for example, the Algebra I MCAP is available in Spanish. Dr. Santos recounted a time that a student wanted to take the Spanish version of the Algebra MCAP until Dr. Santos showed them example test problems, and the student realized they did not know algebra in Spanish, despite Spanish being their dominant language. Dr. Santos was accustomed to standardized tests being available in multiple languages, given his experience as an educator in New York City, which had greater provision for bilingual education and standardized testing in

languages other than English. This account also differed from those in reviewed literature because of the age of the student involved. The majority of articles I reviewed studied elementary contexts because there are more bilingual programs in elementary than secondary contexts, and elementary school students may not (be perceived to) have the same level of self-awareness as high school students for determining the language the wish to be tested in.

7.1.3 Contributing to Evaluations of Schools and Teachers

The literature base documented the misuse of standardized testing for teacher and school evaluation (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Combs et al., 2005; Colón & Heineke, 2015; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Mackinney & Ríos-Aguilar, 2012; Menken & Solorza, 2014, 2015; Palmer et al., 2016; Palmer & Lynch, 2008), which had extreme potential consequences under NCLB. The requirement to use student test scores for teacher evaluations was removed through ESSA, hopefully "[helping] relieve pressure on teachers who were being held accountable for ELL test scores of questionable validity" (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 187).

As favorably as Dr. Bragg regarded standardized testing, to the point of even requesting to teach a tested subject, he argued against student test performance being used to determine his pay, which was understandable given his years of teaching experience during the time NCLB was in effect, although it also hinted at the limits of his faith in the validity and value of standardized test scores. Linda, on the other hand, talked about how she sees students' performance on ACCESS as an informal gauge of her effectiveness as teacher and that it was one of the reasons she enjoyed looking at their test results and seeing their growth. The ELA teachers diverged widely from teachers portrayed in previous research. Palmer and Lynch (2008) and Henderson and Palmer (2015) reported the extreme emphasis placed on standardized testing by the teachers, whereas Carrie and Alice both largely dismissed the ELA MCAP and its impact on

their teaching—although Carrie admitted to feeling more concerned and pressured about it when it seemed imminent for her, prior to test cancellations in spring 2020.

As I showed in Section 5.2, "Principals' Appropriation of High-Stakes Testing Policies," schools are still judged according to student performance on standardized tests, and lackluster scores on the School Report Card can still lead to schools being placed lists for comprehensive or targeted school improvement (CSI or TSI), which Dr. Peterson denounced when Riverbend High School was wrongfully (in her opinion) marked out for TSI. Dr. Santos demonstrated that the School Report Card scores could nevertheless be flexible for savvy and adept school leaders. Dr. Peterson's and Dr. Santos's opinions about the School Report Card were vastly different from some of the reactions from principals documented in previous literature. Menken and Solorza (2014), for example, revealed that some principals went so far as to discourage multilingual students from enrolling in their schools, so that they could avoid the mandate to create a bilingual program when sufficient numbers of students with the same language background enrolled, or that some principals intentionally dismantled bilingual programs in favor of ESL programs. Dr. Peterson and Dr. Santos specifically sought out to serve EL-designated students; Dr. Peterson in particular emphasized the fact that Riverbend High School was a "school of choice" for her students, and that the students chose Riverbend High School, rather than it being a boundary school, which students would enter by default.

7.1.4 Contributions to Educational Language Policy Research at the Micro Level and Via Nexus Analysis

This study also contributed to the larger research bases of micro-level educational language policy research and nexus analyses of language policy. Hornberger and Johnson (2007) "[took] up the call for more multilayered and ethnographic approaches to LPP research" (p. 511)

as a way to "metaphorically speaking, slice through the layers of the LPP onion to reveal varying local interpretations, implementations, and perhaps resistance" (p. 510). In particular, they noted that earlier LPP research had overlooked the agency of micro-level policy actors in its emphasis on top-down conceptualizations of language policy processes. In line with the call for multi-leveled, ethnographic analyses of educational language policy, Hult (2015) recommended nexus analysis as "especially useful in this regard because it facilitates mapping connections across scales" (p. 217). Ricento and Hornberger (1996) called attention to the actions of English language teaching (ELT) professionals as micro-level policy actors, and Hornberger and Johnson (2007) provided examples of research methods to reveal how ELT professionals' actions are part of and connect to language policy processes across the layers of the language policy onion. Menken and Garcia (2010) showcased examples of educators taking part in policymaking; half of the book contained research that emphasized the individual context and half emphasized the social or structural context of policymaking, but, regardless of the primary focus, all chapters connected the individual to the social/structural.

My study contributes to this corpus of literature in which educators have prominent roles in policy processes, appropriating policy at the "heart" of the language policy onion. My use of nexus analysis helps to build the research base of educational language policy studies employing this methodology as well. I emphasized the personal and individual aspects of policy appropriation by exploring the relevant areas of the historical body that were brought to bear on the nexus of practice of classroom-level educational language policy, while also connecting the individual to the structural and tracing policy appropriation across time (historical analysis of policy changes) and spaces (policymaking arenas within the education system).

7.2 Implications for Practice

Ricento & Hornberger (1996) named "the most fundamental concerns of ESL/EFL teachers—that is, what will I teach? How will I teach? And why do I teach?" as "all language policy issues" (p. 421). They characterized ELT professionals as working at the center, the "heart," of the language policy onion and meriting further study as well as capacity building to increase their understanding of themselves as language policy agents and their work as language policy appropriation. My findings have several implications for educators as language policy actors, and in this section I make recommendations for the education of pre-service and in-service teachers, to empower them through providing them with tools for navigating language policy spaces and processes.

7.2.1 Assessment Literacy

A major finding from my study was that educators' assessment literacy mediated their appropriation of testing policies and that educators varied in the depth and breadth of their assessment literacy. Assessment literacy is vitally important for educators, yet "many teachers are often involved in assessment-related decision-making without sufficient background or training in assessment" (Xu & Brown, 2016, p. 149). I recommend that all teachers, pre-service or currently practicing, receive additional training in assessment literacy, whether as part of a teacher education program for pre-service teachers or professional development for currently practicing teachers.

Xu and Brown's (2016) reconceptualization of "assessment literacy" as "teacher assessment literacy in practice" (TALiP) provides a framework for guiding teacher education (in a broad sense, pertaining to both in-service and pre-service teachers) in assessment literacy. TALiP, as they defined it, consists of six components: knowledge base, teacher conceptions of

assessment, institutional and socio-cultural contexts, teacher assessment literacy *in practice*, teacher learning, and teacher identity (re-)construction as assessors (p. 155). They argued that a knowledge base of assessment concepts is a necessary foundation for TALiP but is only the foundation, and that developing teacher assessment literacy requires "the development of a sophisticated, contextually-appropriate set of inter-related competencies" (p 155). Xu and Brown demonstrated that teacher knowledge is mediated by cognitive and affective dimensions of learning, so teacher education must take those dimensions into account as well. They also advocated for teacher educators to support teachers in (re-)constructing their identity to see themselves not only as teachers but also as assessors, a role that comes with both power and responsibility. This expansion of teacher identity can assist teachers in developing better assessments themselves, in better integrating assessment for learning into their teaching practice, and in making them more critical consumers of assessments who see assessment literacy in practice as a set of "compromises that teachers make […] to reach a balancing point among the tensions generated by context, knowledge, and conceptions" (Xu & Brown, 2016 p. 157).

Mahoney (2017) provides an excellent resource for teachers of EL-designated students, regardless of content area or ESOL certification. Her PUMI "decision-making framework" is derived from assessment theory and practice but is accessible to non-specialists, as I have personally seen when using it to teach about the assessment of EL-designated students to non-ESOL teachers. PUMI stands for purpose, use, method, and instrument, and is intended to help educators articulate each of these elements for a given assessment that they are developing or administering, to check for appropriateness of and alignment between the components. Through the PUMI framework, teachers are empowered to view assessments through the unified view of validity, which was initially put forward by Samuel Messick (1989, 1994) and redefined validity

from a “fragmented and incomplete” concept that was used to judge quality of test content (1994, p. i) to one that emphasized “the *adequacy* and *appropriateness* of *interpretations* and *actions* based on test scores or other modes of assessment (Messick, 1989)” (1994, p. 1, italics in original). Within the unified view of validity, the validity of an assessment depends as much on the *consequences* of the assessment as on the content of the assessment. Mahoney (2017) stated that test use and interpretation are, in fact, the most important elements of validity. Altogether, these descriptions lead to a critical perspective on assessment that contextualizes and historicizes assessments as products of interacting social actors, social values, and social practices, rather than a perspective that takes assessments as “natural” or objective measures of some aspect of material reality.

This is not to say that assessments themselves are not judged for quality within a use-oriented perspective. Ascertaining the quality of an assessment is particularly important for judging whether it is used appropriately. The simple fact that a test has been developed by a testing company does not guarantee quality, nor can it attest to the appropriateness of the use to which it will be put by various stakeholders (Sireci, 2016; Thompson et al., 2002). This is particularly true of tests designed for monolingual students which are administered to bilingual students, especially bilingual students who are not dominant in the tested language (Faulkner-Bond & Sireci, 2015; Solano-Flores, 2006; Solórzano, 2008). Although certain accommodations are mandated for EL-designated students when taking standardized tests in English, such accommodations are generally insufficient and inappropriate (e.g., Abedi et al., 2004). In her interviews, Alice alluded to the inappropriateness of available test accommodations for her students, as she pointed out the absurdity of the apparent assumption that a dictionary would level the playing field for students with minimal English proficiency as they were hypothetically

tested on the literature of Charles Dickens. PUMI gives teachers a coherent framework for understanding, articulating, and critiquing assessments, that is, it provides structure for them to employ assessment literacy in practice. It is straightforward in its design, so the basics of PUMI can be taught in a very short time, but it is powerful and comprehensive enough for educators to continue to use it as they become well-practiced and experienced assessor-teachers.

7.2.2 Academic Language

As I documented in Section 4.1.2, educators' language management was mediated through their engagement with larger-scale discourses about academic language, which included the BICS/CALP dichotomy. Although Linda and Rachel ultimately put their conceptions of academic language to good use in teaching their students how to develop their reading, writing, speaking, and listening in ways that are valued in many academic settings and promoting their success on the ACCESS test, I argue that the concept of academic language is inherently limiting to students, and students and teachers would benefit by taking an alternative view on language use in academic settings and/or for academic purposes.

Although different researchers have used a variety of descriptions and definitions for academic language, it can be characterized as "[referring] to the language used in school to help students acquire and use knowledge" (DiCerbo et al., 2014, p. 448). Many researchers (e.g., Bailey & Huang, 2011; DiCerbo et al., 2014; Lucero, 2014; Moore & Schleppegrell, 2019; Nagy & Townsend, 2012; Phillips Galloway et al., 2015; Uccelli et al., 2019) referred to academic language as a "register," which Uccelli et al. (2015) defined as "the assemblage of lexical, grammatical, and discourse features prevalent in particular uses of language" (p. 1081). That is to say, academic language is viewed as the language used in the context of schooling and exhibits

differences in the types of language used when compared to the language used in other contexts (i.e., other registers).

Cummins (e.g., 2013) also characterized academic language as register-based: "academic language proficiency reflects an individual's access to and command of the specialized vocabulary, functions, and *registers* of language that are characteristic of the social institution of schooling" (p. 10, emphasis added). Cummins (2013) articulated his conception of academic language as the BICS/CALP dichotomy. According to Cummins (2013), basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) is distinct from cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in several ways. For example, he claimed that CALP is more difficult and time-consuming for second language learners to acquire than general, conversational English (BICS). Cummins (2013) also proposed that language falls on a plane composed of two continua ranging from cognitively simple to demanding and from context-dependent to context-reduced, and so BICS is comparatively simple and embedded within a context, whereas CALP is more cognitively demanding and less dependent on context.

There has been substantial pushback on the BICS/CALP dichotomy, essentially since the time it was proposed. For example, Edelsky and colleagues (1983) described the difficulty they faced in supporting Cummins (1979) in the purposes and goals of his research, that is, to support full bilingual education for bilingual students, but in disagreeing with the theoretical reasoning behind it. They pointed out that his premise and interpretation of data were both faulty, and his theory was rooted in semilingualism (Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa, 1976), the idea that a person has imperfectly acquired their native language, and thus possesses no native language. MacSwan (2000) made explicit the connection between CALP (or academic language), linguistic prejudice, and linguistic deficit. MacSwan and Rolstad (2010) clarified that the prestige

associated with academic language is not derived from value inherent to the language but is rather the result of "social and political forces that are altogether independent of the linguistic system itself" (pp. 176–177), that is, any language variety associated with the dominant group will be valorized, regardless of the characteristics of the variety (see Section 2.1.2.2., "Language Ideologies"). Gee (2014) dismantled the idea that any language could be "decontextualized," arguing that all language is produced and received in a context that unavoidably shapes its meaning. Given these and other critiques, it remains for researchers to put forward alternative conceptualizations regarding language use in school.

Rolstad (2017) critiqued the description of academic language given by DiCerbo and colleagues (2014) and instead proposed the concept of second language instructional competence (SLIC) instead, a conceptualization of language ability rooted in linguistic egalitarianism, rather than in language proficiency dichotomies (Rolstad, 2017, p. 499). SLIC does not contain the problematic cognitive component that positions the language of the school as better or more complex than language used in any other setting. Rather, SLIC is simply a stage of development in the lifelong process of language learning at which students are "able to understand instruction and perform grade-level school activities using the second language alone, in the local educational setting" (Rolstad & MacSwan, 2008, p. 64). With SLIC, Rolstad and MacSwan (2008) and Rolstad (2017) separated academic achievement from language ability, and separated first language acquisition from second language ability, stating that such a conception acknowledged "that second language learners need time and learning experience," (p. 502), specifically through bilingual education, to build up their content knowledge in their home language so that they can use it as a foundation for their developing language skills in an academic setting.

Flores (2019) also critiqued academic language, contending that it "is not a list of empirical linguistic practices but rather a *raciolinguistic ideology* that frames the home language practices of racialized communities as inherently deficient" (p. 4, italics in original). The concept of raciolinguistic ideologies was proposed by Flores and Rosa (2015), who located the formation of such ideologies within the White listening (or reading or perceiving) subject, such that the occupant of the White perceiving subject position—whether or not they are, in fact, White—construes the language practices of the racialized speaking (or writing or signing) subject as "linguistically deviant" even when such language practices would be "positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 150). That is to say, the "embodiedness" of the language practices is more important to the White perceiving subject than any characteristics of the practices themselves when determining whether those language practices are academic or conversational, appropriate or inappropriate, and so on.

Flores (2019) proposed the use of "language architecture" in place of "academic language" for analyzing and teaching specific language practices. He noted that, "like a building architect, language architects are not free to simply do whatever they want. If this were the case, buildings would be unsafe and communicative efforts would fail" (p. 4). However, different types of buildings have general guidelines that make them what they are, in addition to ensuring safety—office buildings, apartment buildings, restaurants, etc., all have distinguishing features, although there is also room for innovation within each type. Similarly, different text types or literary genres have certain features that are more or less common in one versus another, but the rules are not hard and fast, and well-executed bending of the "rules" can create memorable and exciting new texts. He argued that "what needs remediation is *not* the cultural and linguistic

practices of racialized communities but the listening/reading practices that continue to inform mainstream representations of these practices" (p. 7, italics in original).

It may be difficult to avoid teaching the concept of academic language in ESOL educator preparation, given that the ESOL Praxis subject test specifically tests knowledge of "the distinction between social and academic language functions," including "BICS and CALP as concepts" and "rate of acquisition of BICS and CALP" (ETS, 2022). However, the concepts of SLIC and language architecture provide viable alternatives for pre-service teachers who can be taught that what they learn in their coursework will be on the test in the form of "academic language." For practicing teachers who may already subscribe to academic language and BICS/CALP, professional development can emphasize the advantages of SLIC and language architecture as being more flexible, more useful, and more true to life, compared to the limitations of academic language. "Undoing" BICS/CALP could include demonstrating the ways children accomplish the same language functions enumerated in WIDA's Standards and other materials, such as *identify*, *compare*, *categorize*, *describe*, *explain*, *persuade*, or *discuss*, to perform the same cognitive functions that appeared in Bloom's (revised) taxonomy—*remember*, *understand*, *apply*, *analyze*, *evaluate*, and *create* (Armstrong, 2010)—in non-academic settings for non-academic purposes.

7.2.3 Translanguaging Pedagogy

Although Spanish was by far the dominant L1 at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School, students had many different linguistic backgrounds, which Alice indicated as a reason for instituting an English-only policy for her own instruction and for students completing assignments. She could not teach or grade their work in all the students' languages so she believed the most fair solution would be for everyone to use English for academic uses. It is

reasonable to be concerned with unfairly advantaging or disadvantaging certain groups of students, or to feel unsure of how to provide all students with opportunities to use their L1 for academic purposes when the teacher does not know all the languages or may even be monolingual. Translanguaging pedagogy may offer resources to teachers of linguistically diverse students for promoting linguistic inclusivity.

Translanguaging has its roots in Welsh language instruction and involved students moving between English and Welsh to accomplish academic tasks (Williams, 1994). As a term, *translanguaging* has come to refer to a unitary conceptualization of an individual's linguistic repertoire and the ways that an individual draws on and employs that full repertoire (García & Li Wei, 2014). In the classroom, using translanguaging pedagogy means that "educators leverage the students' full language repertoires to teach and assess, enabling a more socially just and equitable education for bilingual students" (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 17).

Shi and Rolstad (2022) illustrated how monolingual English teachers in China implemented translanguaging pedagogy in their early years classrooms with English- and Chinese-speaking children. In the translanguaging classroom, students' developing bilingualism and bilingual identities were fostered and encouraged to "shine" (p. 21). Students drew on their full linguistic repertoires to communicate meaningfully with the teachers even though the teachers were not themselves bilingual in English and Chinese. De Oliveira and colleagues (2016) also demonstrated how a self-described monolingual English teacher used Spanish to support literacy instruction for her Spanish-speaking EL-designated kindergarten students. They did not describe the teacher's practices as translanguaging pedagogy, but the study nevertheless provided an example of a teacher creatively drawing on her own full set of linguistic resources to create a welcoming academic space for students' languages.

In both of these studies, the bilingual students share the same language backgrounds with each other, even if they are not shared with the teachers. This is not the case at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School or at many schools with linguistically diverse students, in which several language backgrounds may be present in the same classroom. Woodley and Brown (2016) described a fifth-grade class which contained "eight home languages. Twenty-seven students. Twenty-seven levels of English language development, home language literacy, and content knowledge" (p. 83). The teacher in this class used translanguaging pedagogy to teach academic content in English, as well as to use and introduce content-related vocabulary words in students' L1s, to pair students with other students from the same language background to work on assignments that encouraged translanguaging, and to discuss lesson-related topics in English while reflecting on the meaning of words and expression of ideas in multiple L1s.

In all of these cases, whether explicitly or not, the teachers seemed to hold a *translanguaging stance*, or a favorable orientation to translanguaging, which affects how teachers frame bilingual students, their abilities, and their places in the classroom (Menken & Sánchez, 2019). Teachers may hold such a stance and thus work to create a translanguaging classroom, or they may adopt translanguaging pedagogy for other reasons (such as implementing language policies handed to them by their principal) which then leads to them developing the stance (Menken & Sánchez, 2019). Unquestionably, the translanguaging pedagogical practices used by the teachers I have described above, especially in Woodley (2016), required additional work and preparation on the part of the teachers. This is a big ask, especially for teachers already teaching in or pre-service teachers who will go on to work in under-resourced schools. However, these cases also provided examples for how teachers can start to implement translanguaging pedagogy in small ways, which could serve to show students that not only are they welcome in

the classroom and school, but all the parts of their identity, including their language backgrounds, are welcome too.

Kleyn (2016) placed responsibility for implementing translanguaging pedagogy in K–12 classrooms on teacher educators, as well as on teachers, because "in order for teachers to make translanguaging a natural part of their practices, it must become an embedded component of their teacher education programs" (p. 210). To promote translanguaging practices and stance among future teachers, she recommended several steps to be taken in teacher education programs: (1) all faculty, regardless of discipline, must seek to prepare their teacher candidates to work with linguistically diverse students; (2) translanguaging should be infused throughout coursework, while programs of study should also include dedicated courses on language acquisition and bilingualism; (3) faculty should create a linguistically welcoming environment in teacher education classrooms, in which teacher candidates themselves are encouraged to translanguage; and (4) faculty should "encourage teacher candidates to *plan* for translanguaging" (p. 214, emphasis mine) across different contexts and settings (Kleyn, 2016, pp. 210–219).

7.2.4 Critical Language Awareness

Translanguage pedagogy is not the only way that teachers can create linguistically inclusive classrooms. Critical language awareness (CLA) is one means by which teachers can work to subvert dominant language ideologies, including English monolingualism. Language awareness refers straightforwardly to "knowledge about language"; *critical* language awareness focuses on "language-related issues of power which ought to be highlighted in language education" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 222). Mahalingappa and colleagues (2022) wrote that "the language and texts that are used in classrooms carry with them ideologies that represent dominant groups, often to the detriment of students from marginalised communities" (p. 2).

CLA can be taught directly to students, regardless of the content area (ELA, science, social studies, etc.) because it provides tools for dissecting genre- or discipline-specific communication practices, as well as uncovering hidden ideologies that underly language practices. As part of his recommendations for school language policymaking as a plan for learning, Corson (1999) advocated for inclusion of critical language awareness within the school curriculum. In line with the concrete applicability of his book generally, he enumerated areas of language awareness already commonly part of curricula, and then went on to "suggest that schools need to provide their students with *critical* language awareness experiences if their knowledge about language is to be more complete and effective in helping them become autonomous and contributing citizens" (Corson, 1999, p. 135, italics in original).

Flores's (2019) conception of "language architecture" envisioned one way of teaching principles of CLA in the classroom: teachers could

> [provide] students with opportunities to break down and analyze the language choices of speakers and writers to determine if and how they are using particular language forms for particular effects. […] This language exploration would facilitate the development of critical language awareness that raises both teacher and student understanding of the relationship between language and power as an important first step in challenging linguistic hierarchies (Alim 2005). (Flores, 2019, p. 8)

Hankerson (2022) provided a case study of employing CLA pedagogically to teach composition at the post-secondary level, with implications for K–12 instruction as well. She found that a writing curriculum based on CLA "helped support students' development of critical consciousness, thereby providing them with the tools to replace feelings of […] racialized writing trauma" (Hankerson, 2022, p. 1); in addition, students also demonstrated improvement in

their writing at macro and micro levels of composition. Hankerson (2022) argued for the application of CLA-based writing instruction in K–12 contexts for speakers of AAL, but her approach could be extended to EL-designated students, who are also racialized and language-minoritized and potentially subjected to writing trauma as well.

Mahalingappa et al. (2022) described ways to introduce and apply CLA to teacher education for the purpose of helping pre-service teachers "question and respond to the texts they see throughout their schooling experiences" (p. 4) and advance their own commitment to social justice values. She and her colleagues characterized linguistically responsive instruction (Lucas et al., 2008; Lucas & Villegas, 2013), which attends to supporting the language-specific instructional needs of linguistically diverse students, as an important part of their overall educational experience shaped by culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012). The researchers found that a CLA-oriented course on language and language acquisition "seemed to have had a significant impact on preservice teachers' perceptions about language and identity, their own language use, the use of the first language in the classroom, and advocacy for MLLs [multilingual learners] in their classes" (Mahalingappa et al., 2022, p. 12).

While the research cited above contains examples of teaching CLA in K–12 and post-secondary settings, teacher education must also address how to prepare teachers both to use CLA and to teach CLA in their classes. The course on language and language acquisition described by Mahalingappa et al. (2022) may act as a roadmap for other teacher educators to introduce principles of CLA to pre-service teachers, although further work is needed for developing teachers' *pedagogical* content knowledge (Shulman, 1987) for CLA.

7.2.5 Teachers' Roles as Language Policy Actors

Teachers are undeniably language policy actors, but they may not necessarily see themselves in this way, or they may see themselves as "simply carrying out policies that others have articulated" (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 417), rather than as agentive policymakers in their own right. Teacher educators—of pre-service teachers or practicing teachers—should work to expand teachers' knowledge of policy processes at all levels, including their own sphere of direct influence. García and Menken (2010) provided "ten guiding principles for teachers" to help them "make sense of this complex terrain, to see [themselves] as policymakers, and to act upon the agency and power that [they] have" (p. 262):

1. Understand your own sociolinguistic profile and language practices.
2. Know the sociolinguistic profile and practices of the students in your classroom, school community, students' families, and the community surrounding the school.
3. Know the societal language management policy.
4. Know the school's language education policy.
5. Understand your beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, and motivations.
6. Understand the beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, and motivations of others.
7. Know the staffing, organization, and leadership structure in your school.
8. Understand how the curriculum and pedagogy are interrelated with language education policies, and the ways that you act as a policymaker in your school or classroom.
9. Understand how ways of assessing students are interrelated with language education policies.
10. Remain critical and aware of language education policies. (pp. 262–267)

Although their guiding principles were intended for teachers to use for self-reflection and self-guided study, they also offer a readymade structure for teacher education programs or professional development to support teachers in their growing knowledge about their own roles as language policy actors.

For instance, such courses of study could attend to overt and implicit (or covert) language education policies, such as mandates to teach content only in English or graduation requirements including a minimum number of credits in a world language. These kinds of requirements are obvious language policy mechanisms, but differential funding allocations for different types of language education also constitute mechanisms that operate more covertly. Likewise, assessment also functions to influence language practices because teachers alter their instruction to "teach to the test" in high-stakes testing situations, whether in language teaching (Cheng et al., 2004) or content-area classrooms (Valli et al., 2008). Teacher education in educational language policy could offer pre-service and in-service teachers tools for critically analyzing situations like these which will have direct bearing on their professional lives and practice. In addition, teacher education programs could work to demonstrate to teachers their power and agency as language policy agents. While recognizing the colonizing legacy (and current hegemonic uses) of language policy, teacher education should also engage with the potential of language policy to serve non-dominant groups (Johnson, 2013; Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991, 2006):

> While it is important to recognize the power of language policies to *marginalize* minority and indigenous languages and their users, language policies can also have the *opposite effect*, specifically when they are designed to promote access to, education in, and use of minority and indigenous languages (Johnson, 2013, p. 8; emphasis mine).

As language policy actors at the heart of the education system, teachers have immense potential to creatively appropriate language policy for the benefit of their students, and teacher education can provide them with frameworks and resources to do so.

7.3 Implications for Policy

Ricento (2019) wrote,

> It is not enough simply to analyze and critique language policies, practices, attitudes, and their consequences, important as this may be; scholars and activists should also consider how alternative policies (or policy approaches) at the local/community level can influence policies and practices in institutions, and how those changes can influence policymakers at the meso and macro political levels. (Ricento, 2019, p. 2)

In this dissertation, I have written about the effects of policies produced at larger scales of influence on educators and their practice, specifically on teachers and their instruction in the classroom, which directly interacts with students. I have critiqued certain policies and how they have been appropriated at different levels of policymaking spaces and processes. In this section I offer policy recommendations for schools (Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School in particular), the state, and federal education policy. I do not offer policy recommendations for the classroom because I envision those changing with respect to the practice-oriented recommendations I proposed in the previous section.

7.3.1 School-Level Policy Recommendations

I recommend that Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School create and adopt school language policies, since, according to Corson (1999), "a school language policy is that school's policy for learning" (p. ix). A school language policy does not necessarily entail language exclusion or rigidity; rather, it makes explicit what is otherwise tacit. It provides a

means and venue for school stakeholders (administrators, teachers, staff, students, and community members) to discuss and come to consensus on shared expectations for all members of the school community—it details the set of rights and obligations of being a member of the school community, comparable to the notion of citizenship in a polity. Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School already have school handbooks, which are themselves statements of policy. I recommend that they add their own independently articulated school language policy to their school handbook. Corson (1999) proposed school language policies as "[bundles] of solutions addressing different problems in different ways," with "problems" referring to challenges that must be solved, not that languages or linguistic diversity is itself a problem. In Corson's approach, solutions are proposed and policies are created through *critical policymaking*, which involves participatory devolution through emancipatory leadership. Devolution typically refers to "the transfer of power from the central government of a sovereign country to a state, regional, or local government" (Faingold, 2018, p. 59) but can be conceptually broadened to the transfer of power from some kind of central control to smaller constituent units within the sphere of control. Emancipatory leaders promote devolution in the interest of making decision-making more democratic. Critical policymaking also promotes *justice* over *fairness*; for example, voting for solutions via simple majority might be fair but it could lead to unjust solutions because a majority of individuals could support a policy that exploits a minority of community members. Consensus among all stakeholders is more likely to ensure justice is attained through the policies. To work toward just solutions for the community, Corson (1999) noted, "A school policymaking group also has to go well beyond the mere collection of aggregate preferences. It needs to consult directly with sectional groups and respond as best it can to their concerns, while balancing them against other interests" (p. 63).

Corson (1999) provided guidelines for how to create a school language policy. The stages of policymaking are "Stage I—Identifying the Real Problem(s)"; "Stage II—Trial Policies"; "Stage III—Testing Policies Against the Views of Participants"; and "Stage IV—Policy Adoption and Implementation" (pp. 64–70). In considering membership in the school policymaking group, administrator(s) should pay attention to "the role of expert knowledge," although Corson nuanced the definition of who counts as an expert or a novice in the situation of policymaking for a school that "[serves] diverse communities" (1999, p. 66). While teachers and staff have expertise in their particular spheres of work, school language policymaking "requires the depth of insight into the local community and its cultures that experts in those cultures possess" (p. 66)—here, I understand "culture" broadly, referring to local interest groups. Since Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School are community schools offering wraparound services, representation of the local community in the policymaking group is of increased importance.

Data I collected from Hilltop High School actually provides a real-life example of a comparable process to the policymaking Corson (1999) described. Over the 2020–2021 school year (and into the summer, possibly into the fall as well), Rachel and Linda worked to revise the language rubric, employing a process that demonstrated intuited understanding of participatory devolution. They had previously revised the rubric on their own and found it inadequate for their purposes, so they recruited stakeholders from different groups (teachers from other content areas and students) to participate in its revision. They asked students to annotate the rubric as they would annotate a text for a school assignment, marking words and phrases they did not understand, suggesting alternate word choices, recommending changes in format, and so on. The ESOL teachers asked students and other teachers to use the rubric to grade sample texts to test its utility. Rachel recounted to me the feedback she received from one student, who recommended

that they produce different versions of the rubric (or of different parts of the rubric) to be accessible to students at different levels of proficiency, such that description of language production at a Level 1 would be written in a way that a student at Level 1 could understand it. The experience that educators at Hilltop High School had in revising the language rubric acts as proof of concept that the creation of a school language policy is also well within their capacity.

While I perceived various issues during my research that I would suggest as problems to be solved via language policymaking, I recognize that a policymaking group at the schools might not see them as problems or as of the same level of importance as other problems to be solved. Regardless, I would suggest to Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School that they consider addressing how to promote linguistic inclusivity in the school at large and in the classroom, how to balance that priority with the dominance of Spanish among the languages in the school, and how to materially support students' bilingualism and biliteracy through access to academic content in their L1s and development of literacy in their L1s.

7.3.2 State-Level Policy Recommendations

Various state-level policies were singled out by educators (and by me) in my research, and I propose several changes to policies in this section. Education in Maryland is at an inflection point, with the *Blueprint* legislation currently being put into practice. The legislation continues many of the same policies that have been in place, essentially unchanged, since the heyday of No Child Left Behind. The goal of the *Blueprint* was "to transform public education in the state into a world-class education system" (Maryland State Department of Education, n.d.c); transformation will require big changes, not tweaks, and not continuances of policies that harm and hinder students in their pursuit of success.

The first meeting of 2023 of the State Board of Education took place on January 24, and on the agenda was permission to publish COMAR 13A.03.02 Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland, which has been amended to account for changes to the statewide assessments. The amended regulations still include the "fail twice" requirement. A major change, however, is that a student's MCAP test score "would move from a stand-alone assessment requirement to an end-of-course assessment requirement, which would count for 20 percent of the student's final grade in the respective course," according to a memo from State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury included in meeting materials.

In the short term, the SBOE should issue guidance to clarify the following: (1) how the requirement for MCAP test scores to count for 20% of a student's final grade in the associated course should be implemented at Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School, given their use of mastery-based grading; (2) how and on what timeline teachers should determine a student's final grade when they must wait for the associated MCAP test to be scored and/or Bridge Project to be graded and results returned; and (3) whether students will be required to repeat a course if they have failed the MCAP and are working to complete a Bridge Project. Educators will need answers to these questions, which were posed by the educators in my study, before grades are due at the end of the current school year.

In the medium term, the Maryland State Department of Education should propose revised regulations and the State Board of Education should support such regulations to change the "fail twice" requirement for students taking the MCAP in any subject to allow students to begin and submit a Bridge Project after taking and failing the test once. In addition, given MSDE's own analysis showing that EL-designated students do not have an "equi-probable" chance of passing the MCAP until they have reached a proficiency level of 4.5 on ACCESS, the SBOE should

consider changing testing policy for EL-designated students, to waive the requirement that they take and fail the MCAP before beginning a Bridge Project, instead allowing them to begin a Bridge Project after completing the relevant course. Going beyond the recommendation to waive the testing requirement for students without the level of language proficiency needed to access test content, the SBOE should order MSDE to study options for alternative assessments, such as the example provided by the New York Performance Standards Consortium, and report them to the Board along with recommendations for implementation in Maryland.

7.3.2.1 English Learners Workgroup Final Report Recommendations. The English Learners Workgroup was formed by mandate in the Blueprint and issued its final report in November 2022 with nine sets of recommendations:

1. Support and sustain multilingualism by promoting an asset-based approach;
2. Equitable engagement and communication with multilingual families;
3. Implementation of instructional programs to support ELs;
    a. Scale two-way immersion programs;
    b. Literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading that meets the needs of English learners;
    c. Effective English language development (ELD) programs;
4. Assessment and accountability systems to support ELs;
    a. Equitable and valid assessments for ELs;
    b. Transparent and equitable accountability and reporting for ELs at all stages of English language development;
    c. New and expanded ways to reclassify ELs;
5. Teacher preparation policies to support ELs;

   a. All teachers prepared to serve English learners;
   b. Maryland bilingual teacher certification;
   c. Teacher pipeline;
6. Identification and support for young English learners;
7. Support for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE);
8. Equitable access to college and career readiness curriculum and pathways; and
9. Funding allocations and spending decisions that support success for English learners.

The chair of the workgroup and State Superintendent of Schools, Mohammed Choudhury, wrote in the introductory note, "This is not just another report. These recommendations will have serious implications for how the State chooses to educate English learners going forward" (Workgroup on English Learners, 2022, p. 4). However, the recommendations do not yet carry the force of law. I will not go into all of the recommendations in detail, but some are especially timely and/or relevant to my present research, although they are all vital. I call particular attention to Recommendations 1, 4c, and 7 as being low- or no additional cost to implement beyond current planned expenditures, according to the Workgroup, and should be adopted in the immediate term.

The fourth set of recommendations address assessment and accountability systems to support EL-designated students. The importance of Recommendation 4c is evident in the data I presented in Chapter 4. Linda, Rachel, and Alice all discussed the reclassification of EL-designated students and difficulties with reclassification encountered by students as they sometimes failed to progress in English language proficiency according to externally set expectations. While Linda, Rachel, and Alice attributed such difficulties to different causes, they all indicated that a single point of data could not tell the whole story of a student's language

proficiency. Rachel and Linda both told me that they had seen many instances in which students did not perform as well on the ACCESS test as they had expected, and repetitions of underperformance led to classification of these students as long-term English learners. Setting new and expanded ways to reclassify students could provide flexibility for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in contexts and through methods that are more authentic, valid, and meaningful for the students. For instance, other data points to consider incorporating in a reclassification determination might include final grade in the most recent ESOL course; obtaining a passing score on an MCAP test administered in English; obtaining a score of Intermediate High on ACTFL's oral proficiency interview (OPI), since that is an accepted method for determining proficiency in a non-English language to qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy in Maryland; or obtaining a passing score on a portfolio- and/or performance-based assessment of English language knowledge and skills (distinct from an assessment of academic content knowledge in a subject). The Workgroup's report noted that implementing Recommendation 4c would be low- or no additional cost beyond current budget, but it is clear that some expense must be incurred, such as through staff hours or commissioning research, to ensure that new criteria are selected with care and do not create additional hindrances to EL-designated students and their educators.

Recommendation 4a calls for expanding the development of assessments in EL-designated students' dominant languages, which I support, in addition to my recommendations related to assessments, above. As Dr. Santos pointed out in an interview (Interview 2, 02-26-2021), drawing on his experiences in New York, students were allowed to choose the language in which they preferred to be tested (though not for all tests), but they were required to use only that language on the test and could not mix languages. New York's approach does not comport with a

functional perspective on bilingualism (Grosjean, 2010) or a holistic, translanguaging perspective (García & Li Wei, 2014); according to either perspective, an individual uses their full range of linguistic abilities to move through and interact with the world. A functionalist approach to assessment of multilingual students could instead follow the example of Washington state as described in the Workgroup's report as a national exemplar, in which Spanish-English bilingual students taking math or science tests had the option "to respond to items in English, Spanish, or a combination of both" (Workgroup on English Learners, 2022, p. 69). In concert with my recommendation above that MSDE explore the possibilities of alternative performance- and/or portfolio-based assessments, I also recommend that both alternative assessments and standardized tests that are primarily selected response be developed in such a way that multilingual students can draw on their full range of linguistic abilities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

In the same interview as mentioned just above (Dr. Santos, Interview 2, 02-26-2021), Dr. Santos pointed out that making an assessment in a language other than English available to students may be inappropriate if the students have not had the opportunity to learn the academic content in that language as well. This is why Recommendation 3a is especially critical for improving the educational experiences of EL-designated students in Maryland. The Workgroup report included a substantial research base demonstrating the benefits of bilingual education (of various types) for EL-designated students and concluded that "Maryland should develop, fund, and implement a statewide approach to expansion of two-way immersion programs" (p. 49).

An expansion of bilingual education programs necessitates expanding the potential pool of educators qualified to teach in such programs, which is addressed in Recommendations 5b and 5c. Despite the recommendations in the Workgroup's report, such expansion in Maryland was

recently stymied, as of the time of writing. In the 2023 legislative session for the Maryland General Assembly, a bill (House Bill 56) was proposed to require MSDE to adopt regulations for the certification of dual language teachers in public schools and to develop guidelines for implementing dual language immersion programs in public schools. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass. While Maryland nevertheless has dual language education programs and teachers in such programs, the General Assembly's failure to encode into law both support and infrastructure for expanding dual language education suggested apathy at the highest levels of state government, despite demonstrated need.

Dual language education is a broad term and can include one-way and two-way immersion programs. One-way immersion programs serve a group of students who share the same language background (e.g., Spanish-dominant students who are learning English as an additional language or English-dominant students who are learning a world language as an additional language), while two-way immersion programs serve students who have different dominant languages (e.g., English-dominant and Spanish-dominant students who are learning both English and Spanish; Delavan et al., 2021). Moore (2021) rightly cautioned that two-way immersion programs can serve to perpetuate hegemonic Whiteness (Flores, 2016); however, she also provided guidance for how to "confront and decolonize 'elite multilingualism'" and other language ideologies and policies that continue to marginalize language-minoritized students while they benefit White, dominant-culture students. Recommendation 5a provides guidance that could affect EL-designated students relatively soon, in comparison to Recommendation 3a, advising that the state should:

i. Require that all educator preparation programs provide training in EL-related teacher competencies and provide EL student clinical opportunities for pre-service teacher educators.

ii. Expand dual certification offerings (English for Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL] combined with another certification area).

iii. Invest in training for all current educators focused on the assets of multilingualism and improving academic outcomes for ELs. (p. 86)

As I noted in Chapter 1 and as the Workgroup also reported, all teachers are potentially teachers of EL-designated students, whether or not they intend to be or have been prepared to be. As of the 2021–2022 school year, students classified as English learners make up 11.5% of the total student population in Maryland, numbering 98,567 (p. 18), and the number and percentage have also grown steadily over time (p. 23). There are students classified as English learners at all grade levels, in every school district across the state, and in almost every school in the state (pp. 18–25). Linda, Carrie, and Dr. Bragg all described their experiences of being prepared to teach mainstream students in mainstream schools and not being prepared for teaching EL-designated students. Carrie remembered that her education preparation program included only one course on teaching EL-designated students and the course also included the only required content on teaching students eligible for special education services. Linda and Dr. Bragg both pursued ESOL certification because they felt underprepared for teaching EL-designated students, despite their many years of teaching experience. As I discussed in Chapter 4, ultimately Linda and Dr. Bragg chose different routes for their certification, and I believe the differences in the nature of their TESOL preparation contributed to differences in their pedagogy. Dr. Bragg's independent study for the ESOL Praxis exam led to ESOL certification, but I argued above that it did not

prepare him to be as confident or effective an ESOL teacher as Linda, who became certified through an intentionally designed course of study at an institution of higher education. While there were many other differences between the two educators, I saw the disparities in their TESOL preparation to be salient and compelling.

Therefore, given the experiences described by Linda, Dr. Bragg, and Carrie, I support Recommendation 5a's advice that all preservice teachers undergo additional training through their educator preparation programs and in-service teachers undergo dedicated professional development for teaching EL-designated students. As I discuss above in Section 7.2, professional development for in-service teachers should focus on expanding assessment literacy, "undoing" the widespread focus on academic language, promoting translanguaging pedagogy, developing critical language awareness, and exploring educators' roles as policymakers. These areas of focus speak directly to item (iii) under Recommendation 5a, in particular undoing academic language, promoting translanguaging pedagogy, and developing critical language awareness among teachers so that they can employ it in their classrooms and in turn teach it to their students to empower them as language users, which all recognize "the assets of multilingualism" (p. 86). I believe that a crucial component of such professional development is the opportunity for educators to engage deeply and critically with the material and with their colleagues, so they can participate in social and collaborative meaning-making about this important content. It is clear that all Maryland teachers need to be prepared to serve the unique linguistic needs of students designated as English learners, and the Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools has accomplished an immense task by outlining how such a need may be addressed.

Finally, Recommendation 8 is important and relevant to secondary EL-designated students, but it will necessarily be a longer-term goal because MSDE is still in the process of determining the new definition for college and career readiness.

7.3.3 Federal-Level Policy Recommendations

If previous reauthorizations of the federal education law, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, are predictive of future actions, ESSA as it is currently written may stand for several more years to come. Nevertheless, when Congress chooses to take action regarding federal education policy, it should include reintroducing—while revitalizing and revising —the Bilingual Education Act. Moore (2021) made several recommendations for "strengthening bilingual education" nationally, including convening "a symposium composed of leading scholars and activists in the fields related to bilingual education and language education"; creating "regional technical assistance centers [to] lead responsiveness efforts" with school districts and states; developing pathways and expanding pipelines for bilingual educators; and creating policy "to require school districts [to] provide bilingual dual language education as the instructional priority for emergent bilingual students" (pp. 138–141).

In addition, although ESSA is less strict than NCLB with respect to school and state accountability systems and consequences, I cannot imagine that accountability-based testing will be eliminated in the next ESEA reauthorization. However, I recommend that legislators remove the stipulation requiring that EL-designated students take "tests (written in English) of reading or language arts" (ESSA, Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(ix)), and instead permit assessments of language arts content knowledge in any language and via alternative assessment methods. In this case, state education agencies could have greater freedom to implement more valid and reliable assessments of their EL-designated students.

7.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study investigated educators' appropriation of educational language policy at two public high schools that served student populations composed entirely of EL-designated (or reclassified) students. Its data, findings, and implications are necessarily limited for several reasons, and future research should address these areas in order to strengthen potential contributions to the research base.

7.4.1 Include Participants From a Wider Range of Backgrounds

For this study, I recruited principals, ESOL teachers, and ninth-grade ELA teachers, and I gained valuable knowledge from their experiences, expertise, and perspectives. Future studies would benefit from recruiting teachers of other content areas with high-stakes tests attached, such as Algebra I in the case of Maryland, since students are also required to take the Algebra I MCAP. In addition, I attempted to recruit ELA teachers in other grade levels, but was unsuccessful in doing so, therefore I was unable to collect first-hand information about ELA MCAP testing pressures for the 2020–2021 school year or about how the Bridge Project is integrated into the ELA curriculum in eleventh and twelfth grade.

Future studies should not only include teachers from other content areas and grade levels but also from other types of schools. Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School are unique contexts. The schools were designed from the beginning to serve EL-designated students and provide comprehensive supports to the students and their communities, since they were also community schools with wraparound services. At these two schools, EL-designated students are not in the minority and their needs cannot go unnoticed. As I wrote in Section 3.3, Riverbend High School and Hilltop High School constitute a "critical case" (Patton, 1990). I chose them

specifically because they were special. Future research on this topic should examine classroom language policy in more typical contexts as well.

Other types of stakeholders may offer valuable perspectives, including school test coordinators and union representatives, both of which were named by my participants as sources of information about changes to test policy. Finally, I consider students to be the most significant stakeholder group to include in future research. Their points of view regarding how they are tested, how they are taught English, how their language is managed (including self-management), and generally how they experience education are all of the utmost importance. Youths in the U.S. have fewer rights than adults; therefore they, and in particular, students who are minoritized and marginalized due to their language, race and ethnicity, national background, immigration status, social class, and other characteristics, are deserving of the greatest considerations for their protection and recognition of their human rights (whether legally protected or not). The consequences of high-stakes testing that they experience are personal—they may feel anxiety about testing, their opinion of their own self-worth may be impacted by their test performance, they may not be able to earn a diploma (or on the timeline they anticipated), and/or they may find their future options in life curtailed because of a test they should not have had to take in the first place. I most regret the omission of students' perspectives from the present study and strongly recommend prioritizing their inclusion in future research.

7.4.2 Include a Greater Variety of Data Sources

Future studies on educational language policy appropriation should include a variety of data sources beyond those in the present study. I was constrained by the unforeseeable circumstances of a pandemic that forced schools to close and later to operate remotely. These circumstances placed restrictions on the types of data sources to be tapped and data collection

methods to be employed. Classroom interactions show what educators actually *do*, in terms of their own language practices, practiced language policies, instructional techniques, and their pedagogy, writ large. Interviews can provide rich data, but the addition of classroom observations helps triangulate the self-reports provided in interviews, provides prompts for educators to reflect on in later interviews, and generally serves to augment collected data. Classroom observations as part of future research that permits the researcher to be physically present at schools would also enable collection of "linguistic landscape" data (Gorter, 2006), which would provide another source of information about what languages are used at the school, for what purposes, and with what status accorded to them (Dressler, 2015).

Additionally, data from other policymaking contexts may provide a more complex and multidimensional picture of the phenomenon of interest. The school district (or local education agency [LEA]) also contains policy actors and policy processes; the local board of education creates and passes policies, and the district (or "central") office carries out policies as instructed by the board. Several of the participants in the present study described actions taken at the district level and even their own participation in district-level work, thus indicating its role as potentially significant in the appropriation of policies within and across educational contexts.

7.4.3 Utilize a Variety of Approaches to Data Analysis

I analyzed my collected data through descriptive and pattern coding to generate thematic categories, but there are many possible approaches to data analysis that would prove fruitful, either for the present study's data or future studies. For example, Bonacina-Pugh (2012) made a compelling argument for the use of conversation analysis (Sacks et al., 1974) of classroom interactional data to reveal practiced language policies.

Scollon and Scollon (2004) acknowledged that the examples of nexus analyses they documented in their volume were conducted through the lens of anthropological linguistics since the "newer research frameworks of interactional sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis had not yet arisen as identifiable theoretical or methodological positions" at the time of their research (p. 136). They described some of the affordances of each approach, not advocating for one over the other for general purposes: anthropological linguistics was most appropriate for its "comparative ethnographic perspective"; interactional sociolinguistics provided tools for "the study of ongoing, real-time, face-to-face social interaction"; and critical discourse analysis theorized "the study of the circulation of power within the semiotic ecosystems with which we are concerned" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 136).

Beyond analysis of the collected data for the direct purpose of answering a study's research questions, future research and future analysis of the present data should be concerned with analysis of interview data in and of itself. Talmy (2010) contrasted the typical perspective on and use of interview in applied linguistics research, which he termed the "interview as research instrument" perspective, with "an orientation [he called] *research interviews as social practice*, in which the research interview is explicitly conceptualized and analyzed as social action" (p. 129). Following Briggs (1986; 2007), Talmy (2010) argued that the interview-as-research-instrument perspective positioned the data obtained through interviewing as ontologically real, that an interviewee might "report" some occurrence or phenomenon in an interview, the report being representative of the reality of that occurrence. An interview-as-social-practice perspective, on the other hand, recognizes that not only does the interviewee accomplish discursive goals other than "answering the question" through their responses, but that the interviewer is also an active participant in the interview, contributing to the co-construction

of meaning. This perspective also recognizes that "interviews themselves [are] topics for investigation" (Talmy, 2010, p. 131). Although I held in mind the distinction between the two perspectives while conducting my analysis and used the ideas to prompt me to reflect on what my participants were *doing* in the interview as well what they were *saying*, I did not undertake a formal analysis as such of the interviews, which would have provided depth and nuance to my findings.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter opened with a discussion of the findings I reported in Chapters 4 through 6 as they relate to the empirical research base that I reviewed in Chapter 2, thus situating the present study within the larger field of work to which it belongs. While the actions of participants in my research were consistent with those of educators in prior studies in some ways, they diverged in others. In previous and the present work, high-stakes assessment influenced curriculum and instruction, contributed to educators' perceptions of their students, and contributed to evaluations of schools, but the specifics of how, why, and in what ways differed. Ultimately it mattered a great deal that my research was conducted in a state that did not have restrictive educational language policies in place that contributed to hostile and unwelcoming environments for EL-designated students, and that it was conducted in a state that did not have official educational language policies that mandated offering bilingual education programs for students of shared language backgrounds. Educators in the present study were thus unfettered by explicit educational language policies (advertised as such) to appropriate language policies in their classroom according to their own beliefs and knowledge about language, language acquisition, language education, and education, broadly speaking.

I also presented several practice-oriented implications of my research for teacher education. I suggested that teacher education for pre-service and in-service teachers focus on developing teacher assessment literacy, recasting conceptions of academic language, laying the groundwork for translanguaging pedagogy, and promoting critical language awareness. Ultimately, teachers are language policy actors, whether they recognize that role or not, and I advised that teacher education also work to develop teachers' identities regarding and knowledge about their positions as language policy agents.

Based on the present research, I made recommendations for policy changes at the school level, state level, and federal level. I suggested that all schools should have an explicit, democratically determined language policy, which is an articulation of a plan for learning (Corson, 1999). I made several policy recommendations that the State of Maryland should adopt as part of its openly advertised commitment to transforming education in the state, in particular, policies for improving educational experiences for and assessment practices of EL-designated students. Finally, I recommended that the federal government commit to promoting and expanding bilingual education across the country.

This study, as with all research studies, was limited in a variety of ways, and I made suggestions for how future educational language policy research would benefit from addressing the limitations I described. I recommended that additional studies would benefit from including participants from a wider range of backgrounds, including a greater variety of data sources, and utilizing a variety of approaches to data analysis. Despite any weaknesses in or limitations to the present study, its findings make important contributions to the field of educational language policy research, and I look forward to continuing to build on these findings in the future.

In this study, I set out to *ask* and to *listen*. In Chapter 2, I named social activism as the guiding force behind this study, being that inquiry is, inherently, social activism (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). I hope that the questions I asked my participants prompted them to reflect on themselves, on their practice, and on their roles in the systems through which they move. I know that the process of conducting this research caused me to reflect on myself, on my research, on my role as a researcher, and my other roles in the systems through which I move. I asked questions and I listened to the answers and I tried to understand what my interviewees told me, both in their words and below their words (their message and their metamessage; Tannen, 2005). I hope that I have fulfilled my responsibility (Vaught, 2011) as researcher and done justice to my participants, who so generously gave me their time and knowledge.

An honest belief in the inherent value of pluralism and genuine respect for the dignity of other human beings, regardless of age, national origin, language background, race and ethnicity, and immigration status requires a commitment to more than mere *inclusion*—as educators, we must demonstrate that racialized, language-minoritized, and otherwise marginalized students are deserving of high-quality, justice-oriented, and exciting and innovative educational experiences. If we fail to demonstrate it for them, then we cannot rightly claim it for any students. The educational language policies we create at any level are manifestations of our belief systems regarding the education of these students; we must keep working to create policies that promote the values we aspire to hold.

Appendix A: (Pre)dispositions in the Orientations to Language Planning

The table below is reproduced verbatim and in full from Hult and Hornberger (2016, p. 33).

Language as Problem	Language as Right	Language as Resource
• Monolingualism in a dominant majority language is valued • Policies seek to limit or eliminate multilingualism • Linguistic diversity is a threat to assimilation and national unity • Minority languages are a threat to the status of the dominant majority language • Language problems are (falsely) equated with social problems • Speaking a minority language is a communicative disability to be overcome • Minority language speakers are defined based on missing linguistic abilities in the dominant majority language • Minority language maintenance is unnecessary; minority language loss is a solution to language problems • Language education aims at transition to the dominant majority language • Educational programs that facilitate bilingual language development exacerbate social divisiveness • Skepticism that bilingual programs in general may focus on the minority language to the detriment of majority language development • Bilingualism is related to cognitive difficulties and reduced academic achievement	• Language mediates access to society including, but not limited to, employment, healthcare, jurisprudence, voting, education, and media • Concern that linguistic inequality leads to social inequality • Rights to use one's language in specific domains, such as those above, are codified in de jure policy (positive rights) • Rights to non-discrimination based on language are codified in de jure policy (negative rights) • Rights may be framed in relation to international conventions and treaties • Speaking and maintaining one's language is a human right • Access to civil rights may not be denied due to linguistic ability • Language is related to personal freedom • Language rights may be limited to certain specifically defined individuals or groups • Rights may focus on opportunities to attain proficiency in a dominant majority language and/or opportunities to develop and maintain minority languages • Academic programs for linguistic minorities facilitate equal access to education; program types may vary	• Societal multilingualism and cultural diversity are valued • National unity includes linguistic diversity • Languages are resources for everyone, not only for linguistic minorities and their communities • Languages are both a personal and a national resource • Linguistic minority communities have unique linguistic expertise to contribute to society • Languages have extrinsic value for purposes such as national security, diplomacy, military action, espionage, business, media, public relations, among other possibilities • Languages have intrinsic value for purposes such as cultural reproduction, community relations, identity construction, building self-esteem, intellectual engagement, civic participation, among other possibilities • Rationales for language maintenance are aligned with extrinsic and/or intrinsic values • The interests and needs of a nation or of linguistic minorities themselves may be variously foregrounded • Bi-/multilingualism can enhance academic achievement

Language as Problem	Language as Right	Language as Resource
• Second language and mainstream immersion programs are favored over bilingual education (i.e., minority students are best served by as much exposure to the dominant majority language as possible) • Language learning is generally subtractive		• Awareness of different languages and cultures reduces ethnocentrism and xenophobia and enhances intercultural understanding • Linguistic minorities are resources for the multilingual development of a dominant majority • Academic programs focus on the development of life-long bi-/multilingualism; program types may be designed for linguistic minorities or both linguistic minorities and a dominant majority • Language learning is generally additive

Appendix B: English Language Proficiency Targets in Maryland ESSA State Plan

The following text and table are copied and pasted from the Maryland ESSA State Plan, pages 19–21:

c. English Language Proficiency. *(ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii))*

1. Describe the long-term goals for English learners for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English language proficiency, as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the State-determined timeline for such students to achieve English language proficiency; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

Maryland has always established common entrance and exit assessments and criteria throughout the State's 24 LEAs. Since joining WIDA in 2011, the proficiency attainment goal has been an overall score of 5.0 or higher on ACCESS for ELLs and a required 4.0 or higher on Literacy. WIDA has reset the scale score points on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, which requires students to achieve higher language skills and allows students to meaningfully demonstrate what they know and can do on Maryland's more rigorous English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Assessments. Additionally, Maryland data does not support the use of conjunctive exit criteria. After two years of data on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and PARCC were reviewed, LEA stakeholders, WIDA experts, and SEA staff re-examined the attainment goal that will provide ELs an opportunity to demonstrate performance comparable to their native English-speaking classmates. Maryland has updated the proficiency attainment goal to an overall score of 4.5 or higher on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.

Based upon an analysis of data and multiple models with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), LEA and MSDE assessment and EL specialists, Maryland will use a proficiency level growth-to-target model that is operationalized through a value table to create transparency. This decision is a result of significant internal and external stakeholder input, including community advocates, LEA EL supervisors, and the EL advisory council. Upon examination of historical State data, Maryland established ambitious long-term goals and annual measurements of interim progress based upon a student's baseline proficiency level and date of that initial summative assessment: **The goal is for all Maryland English Learners to attain the State English language proficiency (ELP) level within a maximum of six years which includes a baseline year, dependent upon the initial year proficiency level as indicated in the Growth-to-Target Model for ELP shared in the table below:**

Growth-to-Target Model for ELP

Expected ELP Growth by Years					
Initial Year Proficiency Level (based on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0)	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**	**Year 6**
1.0 – 1.9	1.0	.9	.7	.5	.4
2.0 – 2.9	.9	.7	.5	.4	---
3.0 – 3.9	.7	.5	.3	---	---
4.0 – 4.4	.3	.2	---	---	---
Proficiency Attainment Met	---	---	---	---	---

The values in the above table represent the growth in levels on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 expected each year based upon attainment of proficiency at an overall level of 4.5 or higher. The annual measurements of interim progress were adjusted based upon the updated 2018 common exit criteria. Multiple year aggregation is used to calculate growth. For instance, if a student has not met the growth target shared in the Growth-to-Target Model for ELP table in the current year, the growth of the current year will be combined with the prior year. Accumulative growth targets

are used to take into consideration fluctuations in years with particularly high or low growth while still holding ELs accountable for staying on the overall English proficiency progress trajectory. A school is not penalized if the student reaches proficiency within the expected time frame. If an EL does not meet the annual measurement of interim progress in an individual year or using his/her accumulative growth, the student is not considered as to have met the annual measurement of interim progress. Analysis of current data indicates that an average of 48 percent of all Maryland ELs exit within a 6-year timeframe. Therefore, the MSDE will collaborate with the CCSSO to develop a model for early identification of ELs who may not attain the State's ELP level within a maximum of six years to proactively address the needs of long-term ELs. The mean for meeting the growth target indicated in the Growth-to-Target Model ELP table is 48 percent which means that an average of 48 percent of ELs in the dataset met this target. Therefore, Maryland will set the baseline target at 48 percent and the goal for 2030 at 74 percent of ELs achieving English language proficiency in six years, dependent upon the initial year proficiency level.

2. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goal for increases in the percentage of English learners making progress in achieving English language proficiency in Appendix A.

Maryland data mirrors research and national trends regarding students at lower proficiency levels progressing more rapidly than students at a higher proficiency level. The review of actual trend data for Maryland's ELs informed the setting of the State's ambitious long-term goal and annual measurements of interim progress. The annual measurements of interim progress are established through calculating the gap between the current performance, which is 48 percent of ELs achieving English proficiency within six years, based upon the initial

year proficiency level, and 100 percent of ELs reaching this long-term goal. This is a gap of 52 percent. The annual measurements of interim progress are based upon reducing the gap by half, which is 26 percent. With a baseline of 48 percent combined with an additional 26 percent to decrease the gap by half, the final long-term goal is established at 74 percent. An increase of 2 percent each year is needed in order to decrease the gap by 26 percent and meet the long-term goal of 74 percent over 13 years as shown in the annual measurements of interim progress table below.

Annual Measurements of Interim Progress

Year	Target in %
Baseline: 2016-17	48
2017-2018	50
2018-2019	52
2019-2020	54
2020-2021	56
2021-2022	58
2022-2023	60
2023-2024	62
2024-2025	64
2025-2026	66
2026-2027	68
2027-2028	70
2028-2029	72
2029-2030	74

The annual measurements of interim progress were adjusted based upon the updated 2018 common exit criteria.

Appendix C: Reference List for Language Policy Nexus Analyses

Language Policy Nexus Analyses

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Appendix D: Interview Protocols

Table D-1. Interview Questions for Carrie

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Opening	1. Could we start with going into your background—would you talk a bit about your educational and professional background, what path led you here, to being a teacher at [School 1]? - How were you brought on at the school? - Did you know about the [Multicultural Schools] and model prior to working here? - What kind of training or preparation did you get for working with language learners? What wasn't covered in your teacher preparation that you wish you had learned?	Personal background	
Interview 1	Middle	2. I'd like to dig in a little more to how you work with language learners. Does your school or department have a particular approach to integrating language and content instruction? If so, how does that affect your teaching? If you do it differently, how do you approach integrating language and ELA content? - Do you focus on "academic language"?	ESOL, Language ideologies	1
Interview 1	Middle	3. I'm also interested in the tests that high school students take. Would you tell me about what (standardized) tests your students have to take (for your content area)? - What is your impression/opinion of the tests? - How do you use the tests / test data in your teaching, if at all? - If you could change the way your students are tested, how would you want them to be assessed?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	4. What do you see as your responsibilities for preparing them for their different tests? What are your goals for preparing them, and how do you try to do it? (What sources of support do you have for these efforts?)	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	5. How do you talk to your students about the tests? What do you tell them? Do you talk to their families / parents / caregivers?	Testing, Information dissemination	2
Interview 1	Middle	6. How do you think these tests affect your students?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	7. Now switching gears a little bit— What do you think about the graduation requirement for students that involves passing the English 10 test? How have you seen that requirement affect your students? If you could change that requirement, how would you change it?	Testing, Graduation	2

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Wrap-up	8. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk again next month, if that works for you?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	9. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 2	Opening	1. What have you heard about reopening plans for the county and the school? - How did you hear about them (through what channels)? - What do you think / how do you feel about the announcements? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 2	Opening	2. What have you heard about testing for this year? - How did you hear about it (through what channels)? - What do you think about the announcements / decisions? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events, Testing	
Interview 2	Opening	3. A lot of proponents of testing have said that testing this year is crucial so that we can find out how the pandemic has affected students and their learning. What do you think of this / how would you respond to this?	Reacting to current events, Testing	
Interview 2	Middle	4. I'd like to follow up on something you said the last time we talked, if that's all right, because I thought it was really interesting and insightful. I asked you about your opinion of the standardized tests and the way they're used for graduation requirements, and you said that you thought testing isn't set up well for Black and Brown students. I'd like to pull on that thread a little bit—do you think that's true for all students of color, or did you just intend for students who are English learners? - What about English learners who are White? Are there English learners who are White? In your school, or just possible anywhere? - Do you think testing is different for English learners from different races or ethnicities? Whether that's within your direct experience, or something that you're just imagining, based on what you know. (As needed, emphasize that there are no correct answers.)	Testing, Race	2, 3
Interview 2	Wrap-up	5. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk once more during the semester, and then one more time after the semester has wrapped up, if it's convenient for you—would you like to try putting down on the calendar sometime after students have returned to school, if that happens on schedule?		
Interview 2	Wrap-up	6. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Opening	1. How's it going with being back in the building?	Reacting to current events	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Opening	2. How are you feeling about students returning in a few weeks?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Middle	3. I know you're not teaching a tested year right now, but I'd like to talk a bit more about testing. The Maryland State Department of Education and the State Board of Education have been discussing making changes to the English 10 and Algebra graduation requirements—have you heard about these possible changes at all? - If no, describe the proposed plan: for students graduating in 2023, the EOC tests would not be graduation requirements, but students would still have to take them and their scores would count for 20% of their final grade. In the meantime, students will still have to take the tests, but the years will count as "transitional" and students don't have to pass them. (Pull up presentation to SBOE and walk through highlighted sections.) - Just on first look, what do you think about these proposed changes? (Good idea, bad idea, step in the right direction, doesn't go far enough…?) - What questions do you have about this proposed change? - What would you want the State Board of Education to know that they might not otherwise know about this proposed change? - How can you imagine this impacting you and your students? (Give time for teacher to think, prompt as needed—What about grading? Students will still need to do bridge projects with same requirements if they don't pass test; what are the implications there, do you think?)	Policy interpretation, Testing	2
Interview 3	Middle	4. I'd also like to dig into thinking about language. What do you think it means to be bilingual (or multilingual)? (Would you say that you have bilingual students?) - What are the different components to being bilingual or multilingual? (First language, second language – education level, literacy, etc.) How does biliteracy tie into being bilingual? - Have you had students work on the Seal of Biliteracy? What do you think about the Seal?	Language ideologies	1
Interview 3	Middle	5. How do you feel about students using languages other than English in the classroom? - Does that differ depending on who they're talking to—to their classmates versus to you? What about if they're speaking versus writing? - How do you feel about students using languages other than English on assignments?	Language management	1

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
		- How do you handle different languages being used in the classroom when everyone shares a common language (e.g. Spanish) versus when there are students from several language backgrounds? - How do you feel about students mixing languages?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	6. Would you like to schedule our final interview, or would you like to hold off on that until closer to the end of the year?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	7. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 4	Opening	1. I've been keeping an eye on plans for the fall and saw that State Board of Education has mandated general in-person instruction, and that the county is also offering a limited "virtual campus"—what do you think of these decisions / plans, and how are you feeling about the fall?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Opening	2. How is the summer looking for you?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Middle	3. Looking back on the year, are there any successes or anything you're especially proud of?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	4. In what ways were your challenges unique? What were challenges that you think were common with other educators across the state or country?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	5. As we're moving toward the "new normal," is there anything you'd like to keep from this past year? Is there anything that was normal pre-COVID that you'd like to see changed going forward?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Closing	6. Have you heard anything further about the English 10 test and the change to graduation requirements?	Testing	2
Interview 4	Closing	7. Some of the policy changes this year weren't COVID-related—I'm thinking of the change to the graduation requirements so that the English 10 test won't be a standalone test, it will be attached to students' final grade in a course. How do you think you might keep track of that or other policies in the future, if at all?	Policy appropriation	2
Interview 4	Closing	8. Over the past (almost) year and half, there have been some really big shifts in education policy, with moving to emergency instruction online, and then the planned shifts to ongoing virtual instruction, hybrid, and so on; tests have been canceled, waived, changed, canceled again, and so on. And in some of our interviews, I've asked you how you find out about these changes. How do you think that part, how you would find out about changes, compares to pre-COVID? How did it change during COVID, if at all?	Information dissemination	2

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 4	Closing	9. How do you think these policies and policy changes took into account the needs of your students and your needs as their teacher? (If at all?) At any level—federal Department of Education, State Board of Education, County Board of Education, whatever.	Policy development	
Interview 4	Wrap-up	10. How do you want to be recorded demographically, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, national background, languages, other?		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	11. Now that my interviews are wrapping up, do you have any questions for me about my research? It's okay if you don't, but I want to be sure you have the chance to ask.		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	12. I know I ask this after every interview, but I want to be sure to ask it now—is there anything you want to say as an educator in this school that you think might not have been said, or that you want to be sure to emphasize?		

Table D-2. Interview Questions for Alice

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Opening	1. Could we start with going into your background—would you talk a bit about your educational and professional background, what path led you here, to being a teacher at [School 2]? - How were you brought on at the school? - Did you know about the [Multicultural Schools] and model prior to working here? - What kind of training or preparation did you get for working with language learners? What wasn't covered in your teacher preparation that you wish you had learned?	Personal background	
Interview 1	Middle	2. I'd like to dig in a little more to how you work with language learners. Does your school or department have a particular approach to integrating language and content instruction? If so, how does that affect your teaching? If you do it differently, how do you approach integrating language and ELA content?	ESOL	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Middle	3. I'm also interested in the tests that high school students take. Would you tell me about what (standardized) tests your students have to take (for your content area)? - What is your impression/opinion of the tests? - How do you use the tests / test data in your teaching, if at all? - If you could change the way your students are tested, how would you want them to be assessed?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	4. What do you see as your responsibilities for preparing them for their different tests? What are your goals for preparing them, and how do you try to do it? (What sources of support do you have for these efforts?)	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	5. How do you talk to your students about the tests? What do you tell them? Do you talk to their families / parents / caregivers?	Testing, Information dissemination	2
Interview 1	Middle	6. How do you think these tests affect your students?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	7. Now switching gears a little bit— What do you think about the graduation requirement for students that involves passing the I 10 test? How have you seen that requirement affect your students? If you could change that requirement, how would you change it?	Testing, Graduation	2
Interview 1	Middle	8. I'd like to talk a little more about language, especially language use in school. What do you think it means to be bilingual (or multilingual)? (Would you say that you have bilingual students?)	Language ideologies	1
Interview 1	Middle	9. How do you feel about students using languages other than I in the classroom? - Does that differ depending on who they're talking to—to their classmates versus to you? What about if they're speaking versus writing? - How do you feel about students using languages other than I on assignments? - How do you handle different languages being used in the classroom when everyone shares a common language (e.g. Spanish) versus when there are students from several language backgrounds? - How do you feel about students mixing languages?	Language management	1
Interview 1	Wrap-up	10. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk again next month, if that works for you?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	11. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 2	Opening	1. What do you think / how do you feel about the reopening plans for the county and the school? - How did you hear about them (through what channels)? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 2	Opening	2. What do you think about the announcements / decisions about testing for this year? - Were you able to watch the Board of Education meeting? If not, what did you do to find out the decision? - Who did you talk to about the decision? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 2	Opening	3. A lot of proponents of testing have said that testing this year is crucial so that we can find out how the pandemic has affected students and their learning. What do you think of this / how would you respond to this?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 2	Middle	4. Not just the recent decision about testing for this year, but the State Department of Education and the State Board of Education have also been discussing making permanent changes to the I 10 and Algebra graduation requirements—have you heard about these changes at all? - If no, describe the proposed plan: for students graduating in 2023, the EOC tests would not be graduation requirements, but students would still have to take them and their scores would count for 20% of their final grade. In the meantime, students will still have to take the tests, but the years will count as "transitional" and students don't have to pass them. (Pull up presentation to I if needed/requested.) - What do you think about this proposed change? (Good idea, bad idea, step in the right direction, doesn't go far enough…?) - How can you imagine this impacting you and your students? - What questions would you want to ask the State Board and/or State Department of Education about these changes? - What would you want the State Board of Education to know that they might not otherwise know about this proposed change?	Policy interpretation, Testing	2
Interview 2	Middle	5. I'd like to follow up on something you said the last time we talked, if that's all right, because I thought it was really interesting and insightful. I asked you about your opinion of the standardized tests, and you said that you thought the tests are racially biased. I'd like to pull on that thread a little bit—do you think that's true for all students of color, or did you just intend for students who are I learners? - What about I learners who are White? Are there I learners who are White? In your school, or just possible anywhere? - Do you think testing is different for English learners from different races or ethnicities? Whether that's within your direct experience, or something that you're	Testing, Race	2, 3

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
		just imagining, based on what you know. (As needed, emphasize that there are no correct answers.)		
Interview 2	Middle	6. I know that you're not directly involved with the WIDA test, but one thing in particular I'm interested in is this idea of academic language, and the WIDA test is designed to assess academic language. Could you talk a bit about what you understand academic language to be, or to refer to, or to include? What counts as academic language, in your book? How would you define it? Is it something you think about when designing your lessons, when talking with students?	Language ideologies	1
Interview 2	Wrap-up	7. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk once more during the semester, and then one more time after the semester has wrapped up, if it's convenient for you—would you like to try putting down on the calendar sometime after students have returned to school, if that happens on schedule?		
Interview 2	Wrap-up	8. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Opening	1. How are you feeling about your students returning (next week, right)? - Do you feel satisfied with the safety protocols, with communications you've received and that have been put out to students and families, with provisions for what to do in case of spikes, etc.?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Opening	2. There's been this real push-pull throughout the pandemic about whether students should be in schools face-to-face, whether certain groups of students should be prioritized, whether teachers should be forced to be in person if they don't want to be, and so on—could you reflect on that a little bit? How did you come down on the debate about schools reopening? How did you feel about the tenor / tone of the debate?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Middle	3. What do you mean when you say a test is reliable or not? How do you know if a test is reliable?	Testing	2
Interview 3	Middle	4. What do you mean when you say a test is valid or not? How do you know if a test is valid? - How do you determine the validity of a test? - How might it change the way you feel about or interact with a test, depending on whether you see it as more or less valid?	Testing	2

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Middle	5. Part of the reason we talk about tests as "standardized" is that they're supposed to be administered in a standard way. But another part is that they're aligned to standards—how do feel about content standards, generally speaking, or the content standards you work with, in particular, the Common Core? - Do you think they're good / comprehensive / important for students to know / helpful for teachers to use for planning and instruction…? - How do you use the standards in your instruction? - Do you use other standards, like the WIDA language proficiency standards, at all in your instruction?	Standards	2
Interview 3	Middle	6. Tell me about a time when you experienced a conflict about language with a student (or witnessed conflict between others). - How did the conflict resolve? - Did it change how you approached this topic with other students? Or did it stay with you in any other way? Do you feel like you learned anything from this interaction?	Language management	1
Interview 3	Middle	7. *Ask about how teachers should be evaluated?*		
Interview 3	Middle	8. *T mentioned how much money assessment costs – what might she want to see the money spent on instead?*	Testing	2
Interview 3	Middle	9. This question might get kind of deep into the weeds, but I'd love for you to talk more about how you distinguish and separate out your language arts content from language content in your instruction—or how you might not separate them—when we talked before, you referred to how the lines between them are kind of blurred. - If needed for prompting: for example, how do you distinguish your content from your language objectives? How do you provide language scaffolds for your content?	ESOL	1
Interview 3	Wrap-up	10. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	11. Would you like to schedule our final interview, or would you like to hold off on that until closer to the end of the year?		
Interview 4	Opening	1. I've been keeping an eye on plans for the fall and saw that State Board of Education has mandated general in-person instruction, and that the county is also offering a limited "virtual campus"—what do you think of these decisions / plans, and how are you feeling about the fall?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Opening	2. How is the summer looking for you?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Middle	3. Looking back on the year, are there any successes or anything you're especially proud of?	Reflection	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 4	Middle	4. In what ways were your challenges unique? What were challenges that you think were common with other educators across the state or country?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	5. As we're moving toward the "new normal," is there anything you'd like to keep from this past year? Is there anything that was normal pre-COVID that you'd like to see changed going forward?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Closing	6. Have you heard anything further about the English 10 test and the change to graduation requirements?	Testing	2
Interview 4	Closing	7. Some of the policy changes this year weren't COVID-related—I'm thinking of the change to the graduation requirements so that the English 10 test won't be a standalone test, it will be attached to students' final grade in a course. How do you think you might keep track of that or other policies in the future, if at all?	Policy appropriation	2
Interview 4	Closing	8. Over the past (almost) year and half, there have been some really big shifts in education policy, with moving to emergency instruction online, and then the planned shifts to ongoing virtual instruction, hybrid, and so on; tests have been canceled, waived, changed, canceled again, and so on. And in some of our interviews, I've asked you how you find out about these changes. How do you think that part, how you would find out about changes, compares to pre-COVID? How did it change during COVID, if at all?	Information dissemination	2
Interview 4	Closing	9. How do you think these policies and policy changes took into account the needs of your students and your needs as their teacher? (If at all?) At any level—federal Department of Education, State Board of Education, County Board of Education, whatever.	Policy development	2
Interview 4	Wrap-up	10. How do you want to be recorded demographically, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, national background, languages, other?		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	11. Now that my interviews are wrapping up, do you have any questions for me about my research? It's okay if you don't, but I want to be sure you have the chance to ask.		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	12. I know I ask this after every interview, but I want to be sure to ask it now—is there anything you want to say as an educator in this school that you think might not have been said, or that you want to be sure to emphasize?		

Table D-3. Interview Questions for Dr. Bragg

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Opening	1. Could we start with going into your background—would you talk a bit about your educational and professional background, what path led you here, to being a teacher at [School 1]? - How were you brought on at the school? - Did you know about the [Multicultural Schools] and model prior to working here? - What kind of training or preparation did you get for working with language learners? What wasn't covered in your teacher preparation that you wish you had learned?	Personal background	
Interview 1	Middle	2. I'd like to switch gears now and talk a bit about testing, if that's all right. Would you tell me about what (standardized) tests your students have to take (for your content area)? Also feel free to talk about previous tests you have experience with. - What is your impression/opinion of the tests? - How do you use the tests / test data in your teaching, if at all? - If you could change the way your students are tested, how would you want them to be assessed?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Wrap-up	3. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk again next month, if that works for you?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	4. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 2	Opening	1. How's it going so far being back in the building?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 2	Opening	2. How are you feeling about students returning in a couple weeks?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 2	Middle	3. I'd like to continue talking about testing, from our last interview. You said that you haven't had a lot of experience with WIDA ACCESS before, which is fine, so definitely feel free to draw on your previous experiences with different tests. - Which tests have you had experience with over the years? - What is your impression/opinion of the tests? Did you feel like they accurately reflected your students' abilities? - How would you use the tests / test data in your teaching, if at all? - If you could change the way students are tested, how would you want them to be assessed?	Testing	2
Interview 2	Middle	4. How do you think tests affect your students?	Testing	2

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 2	Middle	5. How do you talk to students about the tests they have to take? What do you tell them? Do you talk to their families / parents / caregivers?	Testing, Information dissemination	2
Interview 2	Middle	6. When a student takes an AP course, the test is sort of a given, in that students take the course so they can take the test to try for AP credit, as I understand it. That was my impression when I took AP courses in high school. That's not the case, though, for students in non-AP or "regular" classes—would you agree with that? Do you think that difference matters in how students approach the end-of-course test? How so?	Testing	2
Interview 2	Middle	7. What do you see as your responsibilities for preparing students for their tests? How do you try to do it?	Testing	2
Interview 2	Wrap-up	8. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk again next month, if that works for you?		
Interview 2	Wrap-up	9. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Opening	1. How's it going so far being back in the building with students?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Opening	2. How is it going with teaching hybrid?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Middle	3. You mentioned the last time we talked that you had just had a PD about translanguaging—would you mind telling me about it? What was discussed, how you felt about it?	Language management	1
Interview 3	Middle	4. How would you define bilingualism? What does it mean to be bilingual (or multilingual)? (Would you say that you have bilingual students?) What do you look at (what components) when judging someone to be bilingual?	Language ideologies	1
Interview 3	Middle	5. You mentioned in our previous interview that your sons attend bilingual immersion schools. Would you mind talking about your decision to choose those schools for your children? Of course, if you'd rather not talk about your family, I completely understand.	Language ideologies	1
Interview 3	Middle	6. How is being bilingual different from being bidialectal?	Language ideologies	1
Interview 3	Middle	7. Do you have rules about language use in the classroom? What are they? How are they decided? (This might get interpreted as manners and politeness-related language use OR languages other than English—or both. If the former, be sure to get to the next question.)	Language management	1

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Middle	8. How do you feel about students using languages other than English in the classroom? - How do you feel about students using languages other than English on assignments? - How do you handle different languages being used in the classroom when everyone shares a common language (e.g. Spanish) versus when there are students from several language backgrounds?	Language management	1
Interview 3	Middle	9. I'd like to dig in a little more to your work with your students. What would you describe as the language-related goals you have for your students? (Put another way, how would you describe your teaching goals?) - (If they don't bring up bilingualism or biliteracy, ask if those are goals they have for their students.)	Language management	1
Interview 3	Wrap-up	10. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	11. Would you like to schedule our final interview, or would you like to hold off on that until closer to the end of the year?		
Interview 4	Opening	1. I've been keeping an eye on plans for the fall and saw that State Board of Education has mandated general in-person instruction, and that the county is also offering a limited "virtual campus"—what do you think of these decisions / plans, and how are you feeling about the fall?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Opening	2. How is the summer looking for you? What will you be working on this summer?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Middle	3. Given that this past year was your first year in the ESOL department, how do you feel about what you learned, how you adapted to a new content AND remote and hybrid instruction?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	4. Are there any successes or anything in particular from this year you're especially proud of?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	5. In what ways were your challenges unique, compared to challenges that you think were common with other educators across the state or country?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	6. As we're moving toward the "new normal," is there anything you'd like to keep from this past year? Is there anything that was normal pre-COVID that you'd like to see changed going forward?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Closing	7. Since you won't be getting WIDA data as you normally would over the summer, how are you planning to place students, create cohorts, etc.?	Testing	2

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 4	Closing	8. Over the past year and a half, there have been some really big shifts in education policy, with moving to emergency instruction online, and then the planned shifts to ongoing virtual instruction, hybrid, and so on; tests have been canceled, waived, changed, canceled again, and so on. And in some of our interviews, I've asked you how you find out about these changes. How do you think *that part*, how you would find out about changes, compares to pre-COVID? How did it change during COVID, if at all? - Follow up with prompts about how policies ACTUALLY changed, not just how they learned about changes, if applicable.	Information dissemination, Policy development	2
Interview 4	Closing	9. How do you think these policies and policy changes took into account the needs of your students and your needs as their teacher? (If at all?) At any level—federal Department of Education, State Board of Education, County Board of Education, whatever.	Policy development	2
Interview 4	Wrap-up	10. How do you want to be recorded demographically, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, national background, languages, other?		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	11. Now that my interviews are wrapping up, do you have any questions for me about my research? It's okay if you don't, but I want to be sure you have the chance to ask.		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	12. I know I ask this after every interview, but I want to be sure to ask it now—is there anything you want to say as an educator in this school that you think might not have been said, or that you want to be sure to emphasize?		

Table D-4. Interview Questions for Linda

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Opening	1. Could we start with going into your background—would you talk a bit about your educational and professional background, what path led you here, to being a teacher at [School 2]? - How were you brought on at the school? - Did you know about the [Multicultural Schools] and model prior to working here? - What kind of training or preparation did you get for working with language	Personal background	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
		learners? What wasn't covered in your teacher preparation that you wish you had learned?		
Interview 1	Middle	2. I'd like to dig in a little more to your work with your students. What would you describe as the language-related goals you have for your students? (Put another way, how would you describe your teaching goals?) - (If they don't bring up bilingualism or biliteracy, ask if those are goals they have for their students.)	Language management	1
Interview 1	Middle	3. What does it mean to be bilingual (or multilingual)? (Would you say that you have bilingual students?)	Language ideologies	1
Interview 1	Middle	4. Do you have rules about language use in the classroom? What are they? How are they decided? (This might get interpreted as manners and politeness-related language use OR languages other than English—or both. If the former, be sure to get to the next question.)	Language management	1
Interview 1	Middle	5. How do you feel about students using languages other than English in the classroom? - Does that differ depending on who they're talking to—to their classmates versus to you? What about if they're speaking versus writing? - How do you feel about students using languages other than English on assignments? - How do you handle different languages being used in the classroom when everyone shares a common language (e.g. Spanish) versus when there are students from several language backgrounds? - How do you feel about students mixing languages?	Language management	1
Interview 1	Middle	6. I'd like to switch gears now and talk a bit about testing, if that's all right. Would you tell me about what (standardized) tests your students have to take (for your content area)? Also feel free to talk about previous tests you have experience with. - What is your impression/opinion of the tests? - How do you use the tests / test data in your teaching, if at all? - If you could change the way your students are tested, how would you want them to be assessed?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	7. What do you see as your responsibilities for preparing them for their tests? How do you try to do it?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	8. How do you talk to your students about the tests? What do you tell them? Do you talk to their families / parents / caregivers?	Testing, Information dissemination	2

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Middle	9. How do you think these tests affect your students?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Wrap-up	10. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk again next month, if that works for you?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	11. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 2	Opening	1. What do you think / how do you feel about the reopening plans for the county and the school? - How did you hear about them (through what channels)? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 2	Opening	2. What have you heard about testing for this year? - How did you hear about it (through what channels)? - What do you think about the announcements / decisions? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events, Testing	2
Interview 2	Opening	3. A lot of proponents of testing have said that testing this year is crucial so that we can find out how the pandemic has affected students and their learning. What do you think of this / how would you respond to this?	Reacting to current events, Testing	2
Interview 2	Middle	4. You mentioned that you've taught long-term ELs before. What do you think causes a student to become a long-term EL while other students make progress on a faster timeline?	Language ideologies, ESOL	1
Interview 2	Middle	5. I know the WIDA test says it's designed to assess "academic language." Would you mind talking a bit about academic language? What it is or what its components are? How you "know it when you see it"? How you teach it? How you assess it in the classroom, whether informally in the midst of instruction, or formally through specific assignments or assessments of some kind? Why is it important, outside of the WIDA ACCESS? - Does it depend on academic content knowledge? - Does it include all four language domains (speaking, listening, reading, writing)? - Does it go beyond the four language domains in some way?	Language ideologies	1, 2, 3
Interview 2	Wrap-up	6. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk again next month, if that works for you?		
Interview 2	Wrap-up	7. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Opening	1. The last time we talked, you were feeling concerned about possibly having to go back to school—what happened with that?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Opening	2. How is it going with teaching now that some students and most teachers are back in schools?	Reacting to current events	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Opening	3. I heard about ACCESS being cancelled in Maryland—how are you feeling about that? - How did you hear about it (through what channels)? - What do you think about the announcements / decisions? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events, Testing	2
Interview 3	Opening	4. There's been this real push-pull throughout the pandemic about whether students should be in schools face-to-face, whether certain groups of students should be prioritized, whether teachers should be forced to be in person if they don't want to be, and so on—could you reflect on that a little bit? How did you come down on the debate about schools reopening? How did you feel about the tenor / tone of the debate? - That conversation is still kind of taking place with discussions about what to do in the fall. I read in the Washington Post today that the State Board of Education voted that all school districts must offer in-person instruction in the fall for all students. - Text of resolution: "Beginning with the opening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year, local boards of education must permit all students to attend school for at least 180 actual school days and a minimum of 1,080 school hours during a 10-month period for in-person, in-school instruction, with the teacher in the classroom. Any deviation from this will need State Board approval."	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Middle	5. The last time we talked, you said that you decided to get certified in ESOL when you were doing your primary recertification. Could you talk a bit about the program? - I know you said it's been a little while, and I'm not looking for a specific review about the program! Does anything immediately stick out in your memory? Is there anything in particular that you later wished you had learned more about? - Could you talk about the preparation you received for assessing ELs? What about specifically WIDA ACCESS?	Personal background	
Interview 3	Middle	6. Could you tell me about a time when you saw students having a conflict about language? - For example, a disagreement about the right way to say something, or whether or not something was appropriate. - How did the conflict resolve? - Did it change how you approached this topic with other students? Or did it stay with you in any other way? Do you feel like you learned anything from this interaction?	Language management	1

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Middle	7. You mentioned that you're co-teaching an ELA course this year—I'd love to hear about your experiences doing that. - Could you tell me about why and how it came about? Is this something you do every year? - Could you describe your planning process? Do you both plan things separately and then compare together and compare notes? What does it look like? - Could you describe how instruction goes during class—do you take turns teaching the whole class? Do you both split off different groups to work with? What does it look like?	ESOL	1
Interview 3	Middle	8. What opportunities do you have for working / collaborating with [School 1]?		
Interview 3	Middle	9. I've heard that the exit rates for [School 2] are really different from (and higher than) [School 1]—do you know if that's true? Why do you think that might be?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	10. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	11. Would you like to schedule our final interview, or would you like to hold off on that until closer to the end of the year?		
Interview 4	Opening	1. I've been keeping an eye on plans for the fall and saw that State Board of Education has mandated general in-person instruction, and that the county is also offering a limited "virtual campus"—what do you think of these decisions / plans, and how are you feeling about the fall?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Opening	2. How is the summer looking for you? I remember you said you'd be working with staff on the new language rubrics—any news on the rubrics? Any other summer plans?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Middle	3. Looking back on the year, are there any successes or anything you're especially proud of?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	4. In what ways were your challenges unique? What were challenges that you think were common with other educators across the state or country?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	5. As we're moving toward the "new normal," is there anything you'd like to keep from this past year? Is there anything that was normal pre-COVID that you'd like to see changed going forward?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	6. What do you mean when you say a test is reliable or not? How do you know if a test is reliable?	Testing	2

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 4	Middle	7. What do you mean when you say a test is valid or not? How do you know if a test is valid? - How do you determine the validity of a test? - How might it change the way you feel about or interact with a test, depending on whether you see it as more or less valid?	Testing	2
Interview 4	Closing	8. Since you won't be getting WIDA data as you normally would over the summer, how are you planning to place students, create cohorts, etc.?	Testing	2
Interview 4	Closing	9. Over the past (almost) year and half, there have been some really big shifts in education policy, with moving to emergency instruction online, and then the planned shifts to ongoing virtual instruction, hybrid, and so on; tests have been canceled, waived, changed, canceled again, and so on. And in some of our interviews, I've asked you how you find out about these changes. How do you think that part, how you would find out about changes, compares to pre-COVID? How did it change during COVID, if at all? - Follow up with prompts about how policies ACTUALLY changed, not just how they learned about changes, if applicable.	Information dissemination, Policy development	2
Interview 4	Closing	10. How do you think these policies and policy changes took into account the needs of your students and your needs as their teacher? (If at all?) At any level—federal Department of Education, State Board of Education, County Board of Education, whatever.	Policy development	2
Interview 4	Wrap-up	11. How do you want to be recorded demographically, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, national background, languages, other?		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	12. Now that my interviews are wrapping up, do you have any questions for me about my research? It's okay if you don't, but I want to be sure you have the chance to ask.		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	13. I know I ask this after every interview, but I want to be sure to ask it now—is there anything you want to say as an educator in this school that you think might not have been said, or that you want to be sure to emphasize?		

Table D-5. Interview Questions for Rachel

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Opening	1. Could we start with going into your background—would you talk a bit about your educational and professional background, what path led you here, to being a teacher at [School 2]? - How were you brought on at the school? - Did you know about the [Multicultural Schools] and model prior to working here? - What kind of training or preparation did you get for working with language learners? What wasn't covered in your teacher preparation that you wish you had learned?	Personal background	
Interview 1	Middle	2. I'd like to dig in a little more to your work with your students. What would you describe as the language-related goals you have for your students? (Put another way, how would you describe your teaching goals?) - (If they don't bring up bilingualism or biliteracy, ask if those are goals they have for their students.)	Language management	1
Interview 1	Middle	3. What does it mean to be bilingual (or multilingual)? (Would you say that you have bilingual students?)	Language ideologies	1
Interview 1	Middle	4. Do you have rules about language use in the classroom? What are they? How are they decided? (This might get interpreted as manners and politeness-related language use OR languages other than English—or both. If the former, be sure to get to the next question.)	Language management	1
Interview 1	Middle	5. How do you feel about students using languages other than English in the classroom? - Does that differ depending on who they're talking to—to their classmates versus to you? What about if they're speaking versus writing? - How do you feel about students using languages other than English on assignments? - How do you handle different languages being used in the classroom when everyone shares a common language (e.g. Spanish) versus when there are students from several language backgrounds? - How do you feel about students mixing languages?	Language management	1

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Middle	6. I'd like to switch gears now and talk a bit about testing, if that's all right. Would you tell me about what (standardized) tests your students have to take (for your content area)? Also feel free to talk about previous tests you have experience with. - What is your impression/opinion of the tests? - How do you use the tests / test data in your teaching, if at all? - If you could change the way your students are tested, how would you want them to be assessed?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	7. What do you see as your responsibilities for preparing them for their tests? How do you try to do it?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	8. How do you talk to your students about the tests? What do you tell them? Do you talk to their families / parents / caregivers?	Testing, Information dissemination	2
Interview 1	Middle	9. How do you think these tests affect your students?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Wrap-up	10. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk again next month, if that works for you?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	11. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 2	Opening	1. What do you think / how do you feel about the reopening plans for the county and the school? - How did you hear about them (through what channels)? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 2	Opening	2. What have you heard about testing for this year? - How did you hear about it (through what channels)? - What do you think about the announcements / decisions? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events, Testing	
Interview 2	Opening	3. A lot of proponents of testing have said that testing this year is crucial so that we can find out how the pandemic has affected students and their learning. What do you think of this / how would you respond to this?	Reacting to current events, Testing	2
Interview 2	Middle	4. Could you talk a bit about the preparation you received for assessing ELs? What about specifically WIDA ACCESS?	Personal background	
Interview 2	Wrap-up	5. Could we schedule a follow-up interview? I'd love to talk once more during the semester, and then one more time after the semester has wrapped up, if it's convenient for you—would you like to try putting down on the calendar sometime after students have returned to school, if that happens on schedule?		

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 2	Wrap-up	6. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Opening	1. How are you feeling about your students returning? - Do you feel satisfied with the safety protocols, with communications you've received and that have been put out to students and families, with provisions for what to do in case of spikes, etc.?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Opening	2. What have you heard about testing for this year? I heard ACCESS was cancelled in Maryland, is that right? - How are you feeling about that? - How did you hear about it (through what channels)? - What do you think about the announcements / decisions? - How do you expect these plans to affect you and your students?	Reacting to current events, Testing	2
Interview 3	Opening	3. There's been this real push-pull throughout the pandemic about whether students should be in schools face-to-face, whether certain groups of students should be prioritized, whether teachers should be forced to be in person if they don't want to be, and so on—could you reflect on that a little bit? How did you come down on the debate about schools reopening? How did you feel about the tenor / tone of the debate? - That conversation is still kind of taking place with discussions about what to do in the fall. I read in the Washington Post today that the State Board of Education voted that all school districts must offer in-person instruction in the fall for all students. - Text of resolution: "Beginning with the opening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year, local boards of education must permit all students to attend school for at least 180 actual school days and a minimum of 1,080 school hours during a 10-month period for in-person, in-school instruction, with the teacher in the classroom. Any deviation from this will need State Board approval."	Reacting to current events	
Interview 3	Middle	4. What do you mean when you say a test is reliable or not? How do you know if a test is reliable?	Testing	2
Interview 3	Middle	5. What do you mean when you say a test is valid or not? How do you know if a test is valid? - How do you determine the validity of a test? - How might it change the way you feel about or interact with a test, depending on whether you see it as more or less valid?	Testing	2

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Middle	6. Do you have any long-term ELs this year, or have you had them in previous years? - What do you think causes a student to become a long-term EL while other students make progress on a faster timeline?	Language ideologies	1
Interview 3	Middle	7. We've talked a bit about academic language in our previous interviews, and I'd like to dig into it a little more, if that's all right. - Given what I've heard, I would say that academic language is important to you as a teacher. Does that sound right to you? Why would you say that academic language specifically is important to you? - How would you define academic language, or what are its components? How do you "know it when you see it"? How do you teach it? How do you assess it in the classroom, whether informally in the midst of instruction, or formally through specific assignments or assessments of some kind? - Does it depend on academic content knowledge? - Does it include all four language domains (speaking, listening, reading, writing)? - Does it go beyond the four language domains in some way?	Language ideologies	3
Interview 3	Middle	8. Could you tell me about a time when you saw students having a conflict about language? - For example, a disagreement about the right way to say something, or whether or not something was appropriate. - How did the conflict resolve? - Did it change how you approached this topic with other students? Or did it stay with you in any other way? Do you feel like you learned anything from this interaction?	Language management	1
Interview 3	Wrap-up	9. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	10. Would you like to schedule our final interview, or would you like to hold off on that until closer to the end of the year?		
Interview 4	Opening	1. I've been keeping an eye on plans for the fall and saw that State Board of Education has mandated general in-person instruction, and that the county is also offering a limited "virtual campus"—what do you think of these decisions / plans, and how are you feeling about the fall?	Looking ahead	
Interview 4	Opening	2. How is the summer looking for you? I remember you said you'd be working with staff on the new language rubrics—any news on the rubrics? Any other summer plans?	Looking ahead	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 4	Middle	3. Looking back on the year, are there any successes or anything you're especially proud of?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	4. In what ways were your challenges unique? What were challenges that you think were common with other educators across the state or country?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Middle	5. As we're moving toward the "new normal," is there anything you'd like to keep from this past year? Is there anything that was normal pre-COVID that you'd like to see changed going forward?	Reflection	
Interview 4	Closing	6. Since you won't be getting WIDA data as you normally would over the summer, how are you planning to place students, create cohorts, etc.?	Testing	2
Interview 4	Closing	7. Over the past (almost) year and half, there have been some really big shifts in education policy, with moving to emergency instruction online, and then the planned shifts to ongoing virtual instruction, hybrid, and so on; tests have been canceled, waived, changed, canceled again, and so on. And in some of our interviews, I've asked you how you find out about these changes. How do you think that part, how you would find out about changes, compares to pre-COVID? How did it change during COVID, if at all? - Follow up with prompts about how policies ACTUALLY changed, not just how they learned about changes, if applicable.	Information dissemination, Policy development	2
Interview 4	Closing	8. How do you think these policies and policy changes took into account the needs of your students and your needs as their teacher? (If at all?) At any level—federal Department of Education, State Board of Education, County Board of Education, whatever.	Policy development	2
Interview 4	Wrap-up	9. How do you want to be recorded demographically, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, national background, languages, other?		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	10. Now that my interviews are wrapping up, do you have any questions for me about my research? It's okay if you don't, but I want to be sure you have the chance to ask.		
Interview 4	Wrap-up	11. I know I ask this after every interview, but I want to be sure to ask it now—is there anything you want to say as an educator in this school that you think might not have been said, or that you want to be sure to emphasize?		

Table D-6. Interview Questions for Dr. Peterson

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Opening	1. I would normally start with a question about your background, but you told me a bit about that a couple of years ago. If it's all right with you, I'd like to use that interview as data for this research. I can send you the transcript, if you'd like to review what you said. I have to file an amendment with the IRB to use it and then I'll ask you to sign another consent form, but I wanted to mention it now while we were talking. And if you'd rather I not use it, that's absolutely fine! I might retread some of the same ground, regardless	Personal background	
Interview 1	Opening	*2. If P1 agrees to using prior interview data*: You previously told me that you previously taught high school ESL, got your masters, and then worked in teacher education for a while before you were hired as founding principal at [School 1]. Would you like to correct or add anything to that? - Would you talk a bit more about the process of founding the International High School? Why did you choose this model, versus another? Why a public school and not a charter, or some other option?	Personal background	
Interview 1	Opening	3. Could you tell me about what it's like to be a principal in this district, in Maryland in terms of your autonomy and independence as an educational leader? - As needed for follow-up prompting: What is your experience with oversight and accountability (of you, specifically as principal, and/or of your school specifically)? Why do you say that, or how does that oversight get conveyed to you? How are you evaluated, and by whom?	Personal background	
Interview 1	Middle	4. What [language-related] goals do you have for your students? What do you hope your school will prepare them for? - Is bilingualism a goal you have for your students? [If no, why not? If yes, what do you think is the best way to achieve that? How does your school foster bilingualism?] Biliteracy? (Seal of Biliteracy?)	Language management	1
Interview 1	Middle	5. How does your school approach integrating content and language instruction, when students are at a variety of levels of language ability? - What methods / approaches / sets of practices do you encourage your teachers to use, if any? - How do you want your teachers to address "academic language"?	Language management, Language ideologies	1

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Middle	6. What are different teachers' responsibilities for language instruction? (E.g., how is it different for ESOL vs. ELA vs. math teachers?) - Could you describe what the requirements are in terms of teacher qualifications for English learners? - What is your impression of how teachers react to these types of requirements?	Language management, Language ideologies	1
Interview 1	Middle	7. Could you talk about your impression of the graduation requirements that involve students passing math and ELA standardized tests?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	8. There are many different approaches to assessing students who are learning another language. Would you like to see your students assessed differently from how they're tested now? If yes, how so? If no, why not? - (Ask here about bridge projects, if not brought up by principal) - How do you think (your) students are affected by taking standardized tests?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	9. As you know, Maryland's ESSA Plan lays out the framework for the school report card and ranking system—could you talk a bit about the system Maryland uses to evaluate schools? Do you think it's appropriate your school? Do you give it much thought when testing periods are coming up, or during just the normal course of your work?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	10. In 2019, your school's graduation rate was quite high compared to the state and national averages for EL students. Could you talk about how you accomplished that, especially in the face of policies like some of the graduation requirements that are often hindrances for EL students?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Wrap-up	11. Follow-up questions: Is there a school handbook that I can possibly have access to? Are there publicly available documents that you recommend I read to get a better understanding of the school?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	12. Could we schedule a follow-up interview?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	13. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 3	Opening	1. I've been keeping an eye on plans for the fall and saw that State Board of Education has mandated general in-person instruction, and that the county is also offering a limited "virtual campus"—what do you think of these decisions / plans, and how are you feeling about the fall?	Looking ahead	
Interview 3	Opening	2. How is the summer looking for you?	Looking ahead	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Middle	3. Looking back on a year (and a half) full of challenges, in what ways were your challenges unique? What were challenges that you think were common with other educators across the state or country?	Reflection	
Interview 3	Middle	4. Are there any successes or anything you're especially proud of?	Reflection	
Interview 3	Middle	5. As we're moving toward the "new normal," is there anything you'd like to keep from this past year? Is there anything that was normal pre-COVID that you'd like to see changed going forward?	Reflection	
Interview 3	Closing	6. How do you feel about the WIDA ACCESS test being cancelled this year?	Testing	2
Interview 3	Closing	7. What about the MCAPs being moved to next fall? What do you think about that decision? How will it affect your school?	Testing	2
Interview 3	Closing	8. I've been following the changes the State Board of Education has been making to graduation requirements, and I'm especially interested in the Algebra 1 and English 10 tests which previously were used as exit exams and now will be end-of-course tests, counting for 20% of a student's final course grade. Could you talk a bit about how you're feeling about that change?	Testing	2
Interview 3	Closing	9. Over the past (almost) year and half, there have been some really big shifts in education policies, with moving to emergency instruction online, and then the planned shifts to ongoing virtual instruction, hybrid, and so on; tests have been canceled, waived, changed, canceled again, and so on. And in some of our interviews, I've asked you how you find out about these changes and how you communicate the changes to others. How do you think *that part*, how you would find out about changes, compares to pre-COVID? How did it change during COVID, if at all?	Information dissemination, Policy development	
Interview 3	Closing	10. How do you think these policies and policy changes took into account the needs of your students and the needs of your teachers? (If at all?) At any level—federal Department of Education, State Board of Education, County Board of Education, whatever.	Policy development	
Interview 3	Wrap-up	11. How do you want to be recorded demographically, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, national background, languages, other?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	12. Now that my interviews are wrapping up, do you have any questions for me about my research? It's okay if you don't, but I want to be sure you have the chance to ask.		

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Wrap-up	13. Is there anything you want to say as an educator in this school that you think might not have been said, or that you want to be sure to emphasize?		

Table D-7. Interview Questions for Dr. Santos

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 1	Opening	1. Could we start with going into your background—would you talk a bit about your educational and professional background, what path led you here, to being principal at [School 2]? - How were you brought on at the school? - Did you know about the [Multicultural Schools] and model prior to working here?	Personal background	
Interview 1	Middle	2. Could you tell me about what it's like to be a principal in this district, in Maryland in terms of your autonomy and independence as an educational leader? - As needed for follow-up prompting: What is your experience with oversight and accountability (of you, specifically as principal, and/or of your school specifically)? Why do you say that, or how does that oversight get conveyed to you? How are you evaluated, and by whom?	Personal background	
Interview 1	Middle	3. This might be a big question, but what do you think it means to be bilingual (or multilingual)? (Would you say that you have bilingual students in your school?) - Is bilingualism a goal you have for your students? [If no, why not? If yes, what do you think is the best way to achieve that?] - What [language-related] goals do you have for your students? What do you hope your school will prepare them for? (Seal of Biliteracy?)	Language management	1
Interview 1	Middle	4. How does your school approach teaching language, and teaching content to students at a variety of levels of language ability? - Do you encourage your teachers to use any particular method or approach or set of practices? - Do you think different teachers have different responsibilities for teaching language? - Do your teachers focus expressly on "academic language"? What language skills do you think teachers should focus on? (If needed for prompting: other than the basic	Language management, Language ideologies	1

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
		domains of language use—reading, writing, speaking, listening—what do you think are important language-related skills?)		
Interview 1	Middle	5. I was reading through your dissertation, and you pointed to certain policies that hinder Latina/Latino EL students in their academic achievement, including mandated assessments that EL-designated students have to take, even without proficiency in English. Then for your participants, you focused on teachers of math and ELA because of the emphasis on those subjects in Maryland's ESSA plan. Could you talk about your perspective on these assessments?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	6. There are many different approaches to assessing students who are learning another language—bilingual tests, project-based assessments, portfolio assessments, just to name a few. Would you like to see your students assessed differently from how they're tested now? - How do you think students are affected by taking standardized tests?	Testing	2, 3
Interview 1	Middle	7. As you know, Maryland's ESSA Plan lays out the framework for the school report card and ranking system—could you talk a bit about the system Maryland uses to judge schools? Do you think it's appropriate in general? What about for your school, specifically? Do you give it much thought when testing periods are coming up, or during just the normal course of your work?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Middle	8. Despite low performance on the standardized tests for Algebra I and ELA, your school's graduation rate was higher than the state average for EL students—could you talk about how you accomplished that?	Testing	2
Interview 1	Wrap-up	9. Follow-up questions: Is there a school handbook that I can possibly have access to? Are there publicly available documents that you recommend I read to get a better understanding of the school?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	10. Could we schedule a follow-up interview?		
Interview 1	Wrap-up	11. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		
Interview 2	Opening	1. Could I start out by asking what communications or guidance you've gotten from the county or state about testing this year?	Reacting to current events	
Interview 2	Opening	2. So my first question is a really big, broad question, just asking how you're reacting to the news about federal department of education saying they won't issue blanket waivers for testing and MD state board of education deciding to move forward with testing this year but changing the tests to shorten them and not use them for accountability?	Reacting to current events, Testing	

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
		- How have you learned about them? (Do you get communications from the State Board, from the County, otherwise?)		
Interview 2	Opening	3. I'm assuming that WIDA testing is also going forward, although I haven't seen any communication about that. Do you know if that's the case?	Reacting to current events, Testing	
Interview 2	Middle	4. The State Board of Education has also been discussing major changes to testing policy for high schoolers, unrelated to the pandemic. I don't know if you saw this, but in last month's State Board meeting, they voted to approve moving forward with not making the MCAPs graduation requirements anymore; instead, they would count for 20% of a student's final grade. - Did you know about this already? If so, how did you learn about it? - How do you feel about it? Do you think it's good? A step in the right direction? Not a good move? Doesn't go far enough? - What would you like the State Board to know about, in terms of this decision's effect on students at your school?	Testing, Policy Interpretation	2
Interview 2	Middle	5. A researcher I was reading characterized the history of assessing English learners as like a pendulum swinging between validity and accountability. For example, NCLB made testing English learners a priority like it never had been before, but the tests weren't good for them—it was excessive testing, the tests weren't designed for them, and the outcomes unfairly penalized schools with a large number of English learners. Of course, we don't want the situation to return to how it was before schools and states were forced to care about outcomes for English learners, but can you imagine a way forward that strikes a happy balance between better assessment practices and policies for English learners and accountability for schools that don't necessarily prioritize ELs' success the way your school does? - Or maybe it's better to talk / think about it like balancing high expectations and accountability to reach the best possible education experience for English learner students – how do you think they should be balanced? What do you think is the tradeoff?	Testing	2, 3
Interview 2	Wrap-up	6. Would you like to schedule our final interview, or would you like to hold off on that until closer to the end of the year?		
Interview 2	Wrap-up	7. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to say today that you'd like to add?		

Interview	Segment	Question	Topic, Concept	RQ
Interview 3	Opening	1. I've been keeping an eye on plans for the fall and saw that State Board of Education has mandated general in-person instruction, and that the county is also offering a limited "virtual campus"—what do you think of these decisions / plans, and how are you feeling about the fall?	Looking ahead	
Interview 3	Opening	2. How is the summer looking for you?	Looking ahead	
Interview 3	Middle	3. Looking back on a year (and a half) full of challenges, in what ways were your challenges unique? What were challenges that you think were common with other educators across the state or country?	Reflection	
Interview 3	Middle	4. Are there any successes or anything you're especially proud of?	Reflection	
Interview 3	Middle	5. As we're moving toward the "new normal," is there anything you'd like to keep from this past year? Is there anything that was normal pre-COVID that you'd like to see changed going forward?	Reflection	
Interview 3	Closing	6. Have you heard anything further about changes to the graduation requirements and former exit exams for English 10 and Algebra I?	Testing	
Interview 3	Closing	7. Over the past (almost) year and half, there have been some really big shifts in education policies, with moving to emergency instruction online, and then the planned shifts to ongoing virtual instruction, hybrid, and so on; tests have been canceled, waived, changed, canceled again, and so on. And in some of our interviews, I've asked you how you find out about these changes and how you communicate the changes to others. How do you think *that part*, how you would find out about changes, compares to pre-COVID? How did it change during COVID, if at all?	Information dissemination, Policy development	
Interview 3	Closing	8. How do you think these policies and policy changes took into account the needs of your students and the needs of your teachers? (If at all?) At any level—federal Department of Education, State Board of Education, County Board of Education, whatever.	Policy development	
Interview 3	Wrap-up	9. How do you want to be recorded demographically, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, national background, languages, other?		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	10. Now that my interviews are wrapping up, do you have any questions for me about my research? It's okay if you don't, but I want to be sure you have the chance to ask.		
Interview 3	Wrap-up	11. Is there anything you want to say as an educator in this school that you think might not have been said, or that you want to be sure to emphasize?		

Appendix E: Transcription Conventions and Formatting Guidelines

List of Symbols

[Speaker: Word.]	backchanneling
((verb)) or ((description))	transcriber's comment to describe extra- or paralinguistic content
(word)	transcriber's best guess for transcription
(xxx)	untranscribable speech
/wɚd/	broad phonetic transcription for marked (or otherwise relevant) pronunciation
.	falling / sentence-final intonation
?	rising intonation or marking grammatical question
,	continuing intonation
!	exclamatory intonation
word, word, word	repeated word with no other changes in meaning
w- w- word	repeated sound with no other changes in meaning
they went— they gave me	self-repair with some salient change in meaning
wo:rd	elongated syllable
word or syllable	emphatic stress or increased amplitude
WORD	acronym

Transcription Formatting Guidelines

[TIMESTAMP]

Speaker: (boldface, with colon)

Main question, verbatim (Normal style plus italics). Rest of turn (Normal style) – use 1.15 spacing, no extra space, and second hard return between paragraph breaks and speakers. Use single, continuous paragraph within turns except in the case of obvious changes in topic.

Follow-up questions (Normal style plus italics). Rest of turn (formatting as described above). Spell out numbers except for WIDA levels (e.g., "My [level] 1s"), time, names of classes or tests (e.g., Algebra 1, English 10), dates

Appendix F: Meetings of the Maryland State Board of Education

Date	Bridge	MCAP	Graduation Reqs.	NCLB/ ESSA	Kirwan Cm./ Blueprint	ELs	District/ Schools	MD School Report Card	WIDA	COVID
2002-01-29		MCAP	graduation	NCLB						
2002-02-26		MCAP		NCLB						
2002-04-24		MCAP		NCLB						
2002-05-21		MCAP		NCLB						
2002-06-26				NCLB						
2002-09-24		MCAP		NCLB						
2002-10-29				NCLB						
2003-01-28				NCLB						
2003-04-29		MCAP		NCLB						
2003-05-21		MCAP		NCLB						
2003-06-24		MCAP		NCLB						
2003-07-22		MCAP	graduation	NCLB						
2003-08-26		MCAP	graduation	NCLB						
2003-12-02		MCAP	graduation							
2004-02-24		MCAP	graduation							
2004-03-30	Bridge	MCAP	graduation			ELs				
2004-05-25		MCAP	graduation							
2004-06-15		MCAP	graduation							
2004-07-20				NCLB						
2004-08-24		MCAP								
2005-02-22		MCAP	graduation							
2005-08-30		MCAP	graduation							
2005-09-26	Bridge	MCAP								
2005-10-25		MCAP								
2006-05-23		MCAP								
2006-07-18		MCAP	graduation	NCLB						

Date	Bridge	MCAP	Graduation Reqs.	NCLB/ ESSA	Kirwan Cm./ Blueprint	ELs	District/ Schools	MD School Report Card	WIDA	COVID
2006-08-29		MCAP								
2006-09-26		MCAP								
2006-10-24	Bridge									
2007-02-27		MCAP	graduation							
2007-03-27		MCAP								
2007-04-24		MCAP								
2007-05-30		MCAP	graduation							
2007-06-26		MCAP				ELs				
2007-07-24		MCAP	graduation							
2007-08-28	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2007-09-25	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	NCLB						
2007-10-30	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2008-03-25	Bridge		graduation	NCLB						
2008-09-23	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2008-10-28	Bridge	MCAP	graduation			ELs				
2008-12-17	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	NCLB				Report Card		
2009-01-27	Bridge	MCAP								
2009-03-24	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2009-05-02	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	NCLB		ELs				
2009-12-10	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	NCLB						
2010-01-26		PARCC								
2010-02-23										
2010-03-23	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2010-04-27										
2010-05-25										
2010-06-22		PARCC								
2010-07-20										
2010-09-21										
2010-10-26										
2011-06-21										

Date	Bridge	MCAP	Graduation Reqs.	NCLB/ ESSA	Kirwan Cm./ Blueprint	ELs	District/ Schools	MD School Report Card	WIDA	COVID
2011-07-19										
2011-08-30		PARCC								
2012-01-24		PARCC								
2012-02-13		PARCC							WIDA	
2012-02-28		PARCC							WIDA	
2012-03-27		PARCC								
2012-04-24		PARCC								
2012-09-25		PARCC								
2013-02-26		PARCC								
2013-04-23	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2013-05-09	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	NCLB						
2013-06-25		PARCC								
2013-08-27		PARCC								
2013-09-24		PARCC								
2014-01-28	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	NCLB						
2014-02-25	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	NCLB						
2014-04-22	Bridge		graduation							
2014-05-20		PARCC								
2014-07-22		PARCC								
2014-08-26	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2014-10-28	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2014-12-16	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2015-01-27										
2015-02-24										
2015-05-19	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2015-06-23										
2015-07-28										
2015-08-25										
2015-09-22										
2015-10-27										

Date	Bridge	MCAP	Graduation Reqs.	NCLB/ ESSA	Kirwan Cm./ Blueprint	ELs	District/ Schools	MD School Report Card	WIDA	COVID
2015-12-08		MCAP								
2016-02-12		MCAP	graduation							
2016-02-23	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.					
2016-03-21	Bridge	MCAP								
2016-03-22		MCAP	graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.					
2016-04-26	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2016-05-24		MCAP		ESSA		ELs	Multicultural Schools			
2016-06-28				ESSA						
2016-07-26		MCAP		ESSA						
2016-08-22	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2016-08-23		MCAP	graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.	ELs				
2016-09-26	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	ESSA						
2016-09-27		MCAP		ESSA		ELs	district			
2016-10-25			graduation	ESSA		ELs		Report Card		
2016-12-05				ESSA		ELs		Report Card		
2017-01-24		MCAP	graduation	ESSA		ELs	district	Report Card		
2017-02-27				ESSA						
2017-02-28				ESSA		ELs		Report Card		
2017-03-27								Report Card		
2017-03-28				ESSA				Report Card		
2017-04-25				ESSA				Report Card		
2017-06-26				ESSA						
2017-06-27		MCAP	graduation	ESSA			district	Report Card		
2017-07-18				ESSA				Report Card		
2017-08-22		MCAP	graduation	ESSA				Report Card		
2017-09-19	Bridge	MCAP	graduation			ELs	district			
2017-10-24	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							
2017-12-04	Bridge									
2017-12-05	Bridge		graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.			Report Card		

Date	Bridge	MCAP	Graduation Reqs.	NCLB/ ESSA	Kirwan Cm./ Blueprint	ELs	District/ Schools	MD School Report Card	WIDA	COVID
2017-12-19				ESSA						
2018-01-30	Bridge		graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.		district	Report Card		
2018-02-27	Bridge	MCAP	graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.		district			
2018-03-20			graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.					
2018-04-28		MCAP		ESSA			district	Report Card		
2018-05-22				ESSA						
2018-06-20		MCAP	graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.					
2018-07-24			graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.			Report Card		
2018-08-28		MCAP	graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.			Report Card		
2018-09-25		MCAP	graduation	ESSA	Kirwan Cm.	ELs				
2018-10-23			graduation	ESSA				Report Card		
2018-12-04				ESSA	Kirwan Cm.	ELs	district	Report Card		
2019-01-22		MCAP		ESSA	Kirwan Cm.		district	Report Card		
2019-01-23					Kirwan Cm.					
2019-02-26			graduation	ESSA				Report Card		
2019-03-26			graduation		Kirwan Cm.					
2019-04-23			graduation	ESSA				Report Card		
2019-05-21			graduation							
2019-06-25		MCAP	graduation		Kirwan Cm.	ELs				
2019-07-23			graduation		Blueprint					
2019-08-27	Bridge	MCAP			Kirwan Cm.	ELs				
2019-09-24		MCAP	graduation					Report Card		
2019-10-22		MCAP			Kirwan Cm.	ELs				
2019-12-03			graduation					Report Card		
2020-01-28			graduation					Report Card		
2020-02-25	Bridge	MCAP	graduation					Report Card		
2020-03-24				ESSA				Report Card		COVID
2020-04-14		MCAP	graduation	ESSA						COVID
2020-04-28										COVID
2020-05-27	Bridge	MCAP	graduation							COVID

Date	Bridge	MCAP	Graduation Reqs.	NCLB/ ESSA	Kirwan Cm./ Blueprint	ELs	District/ Schools	MD School Report Card	WIDA	COVID
2020-06-23				ESSA						COVID
2020-07-28								Report Card		COVID
2020-08-24										COVID
2020-09-01										COVID
2020-09-22										COVID
2020-10-26										COVID
2020-10-27		MCAP	graduation	ESSA				Report Card		COVID
2020-12-07		MCAP	graduation							COVID
2020-12-08			graduation							COVID
2021-01-25										COVID
2021-01-26		MCAP	graduation							COVID
2021-02-22										
2021-02-23		MCAP								
2021-03-04										
2021-03-22										
2021-03-23		MCAP			Blueprint			Report Card		COVID
2021-04-27				ESSA	Blueprint			Report Card		COVID
2021-05-25			graduation		Kirwan Cm.					COVID
2021-06-22		MCAP		ESSA						COVID

Appendix G: Codes

Table G-1. Initial, Full Codebook as of January 10, 2022

Name	Files	References
academic language	11	30
accommodations	9	10
accountability	9	13
admin support	16	50
apprenticeship of observation	4	4
BICS CALP	6	12
bilingualism and multilingualism	12	25
biliteracy and literacy	10	17
Bridge Projects	55	66
college and career	9	18
Common Core	21	29
conflict about language	4	5
content and-or language	16	36
COVID	42	116
critical language policy	0	0
• critique traditional ways	0	0
• raciolinguistic perspective	0	0
• social justice	3	3
culture	9	20
district	33	71
educational policies	9	27
educator preparation	15	42
ELs	30	34
ESSA	55	68
exiting ESOL	9	19
facilities	8	14
failing	14	27
family	15	30
federal	7	13
foreign exchange	3	3
gaps	14	25
Google Translate	3	4
graduation requirements	90	128
growth	16	39
informal interpreters	3	8

Name	Files	References
information dissemination	17	49
Kirwan Commission	25	28
language goals	11	19
language policy	0	0
• de facto language policy	0	0
• language ideologies	11	25
○ monoglossic ideology	1	1
○ standard language ideology	0	0
• language management	2	4
○ classroom language policies	6	15
• language practices	6	11
local community	9	17
local control	0	0
long-term ELs	5	7
looping	12	13
Maryland Report Card	40	48
MCAP	130	248
• Algebra I Test	2	2
• English-10 Test	2	2
money	19	43
mRQ3	1	68
Multicultural Schools	27	97
NCLB	12	29
New York	13	21
newcomers	1	3
nexus of practice	0	0
• discourses in place	0	0
• historical body	9	32
• interaction order	0	0
• mediated action	0	0
outside perspective	5	7
PD	14	27
Peace Corps	3	6
pedagogy and instructional practices	26	102
portfolios	8	15
QUOTES	24	79
race	16	29
rubric	9	22
SLIFE and newcomers	12	19

Name	Files	References
social-emotional learning	10	13
Spanish dominance	9	16
SpEd	6	12
standardized testing	40	85
state	18	39
teacher evaluation	2	2
test anxiety	10	13
test prep	13	21
test security	8	11
testing burden	14	29
testing consequences	15	25
testing policies	15	41
translanguaging	3	9
• first language support	3	4
trauma	4	7
union	6	6
unsuccessful language learning	5	7
validity and reliability	17	38
value of data	19	47
virtual and hybrid learning	33	104
Wednesday	9	11
WIDA	12	33
• ACCESS	18	49

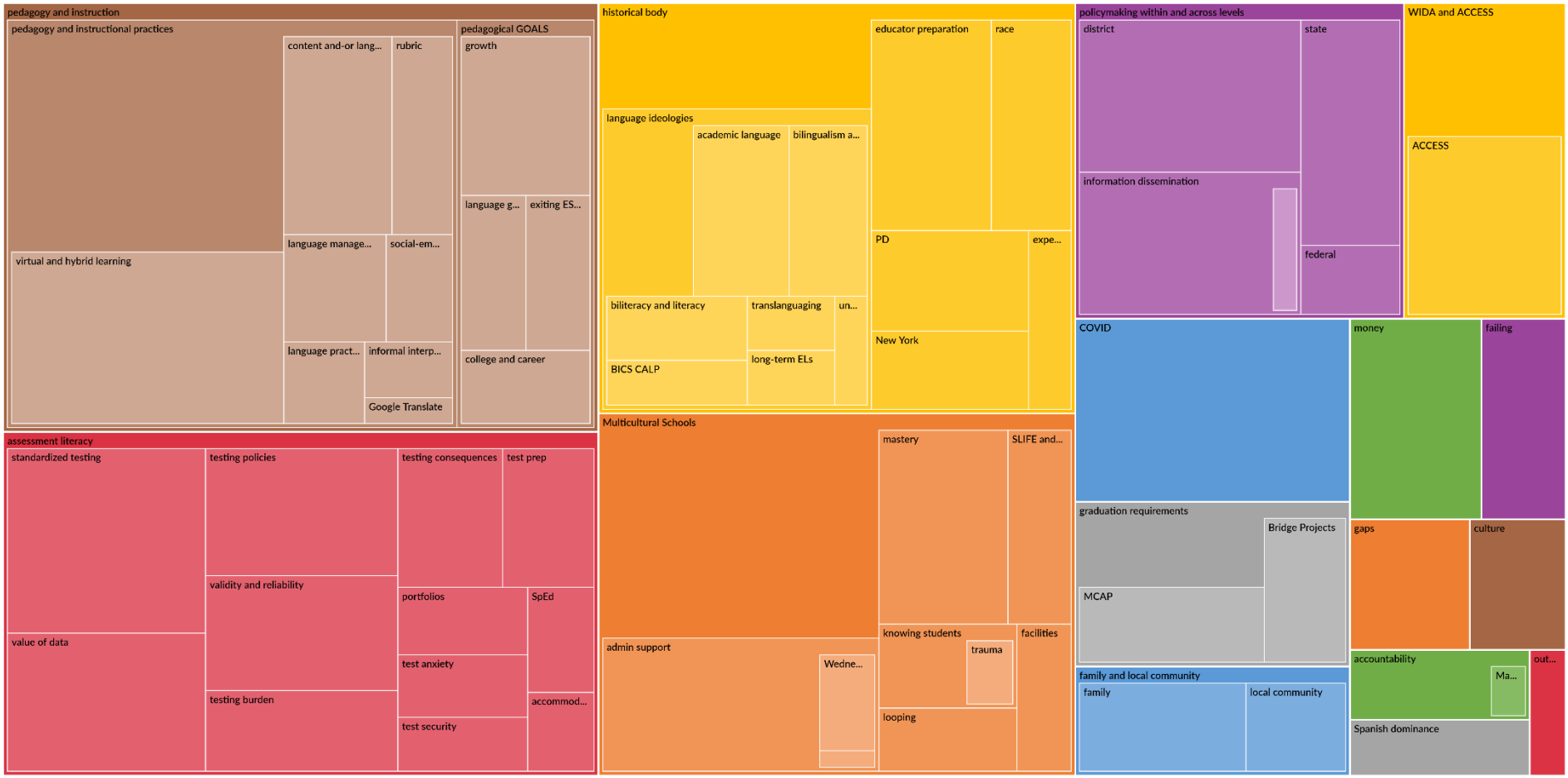
Table G-2. Final Codebook (as of January 2023)

Name	Files	References
accountability	9	16
• Maryland Report Card	40	48
assessment literacy	0	0
• accommodations	10	11
• portfolios	8	15
• SpEd	6	12
• standardized testing	40	85
• test anxiety	10	14
• test prep	13	22
• test security	9	12
• testing burden	14	29
• testing consequences	15	25
• testing policies	15	42
• validity and reliability	17	38
• value of data	19	47
COVID	42	119
culture	9	20
family and local community	18	48
gaps	16	28
graduation requirements	90	128
• Bridge Projects	55	66
• MCAP	130	248
historical body	12	41
• educator preparation	15	43
• experiences abroad	8	13
• New York	13	21
• PD	14	27
• race	16	29
• **language ideologies**	12	28
○ academic language	13	33
○ BICS CALP	6	12
○ bilingualism and multilingualism	12	25
○ biliteracy and literacy	10	17
○ long-term ELs	7	9
○ pedagogical translanguaging	3	9
money	19	45
Multicultural Schools	28	101
• **admin support**	16	50
○ teacher evaluation	2	2
○ Wednesday	9	11

Name	Files	References
• facilities	8	14
• knowing students	6	13
• trauma	4	7
• looping	12	15
• mastery	13	43
• SLIFE and newcomers	12	21
• Spanish dominance	9	16
• failing	14	27
outside perspective	5	7
pedagogy and instruction	26	107
• **instructional practices**		
○ content and-or language	16	39
○ Google Translate	3	4
○ informal interpreters	4	9
○ language management	2	4
▪ classroom language policies	6	16
○ language practices	6	12
○ rubric	9	22
○ social-emotional learning	10	13
○ virtual and hybrid learning	33	104
• **pedagogical GOALS**	0	0
○ college and career	9	18
○ exiting ESOL	9	19
○ growth	16	39
○ language goals	11	19
policymaking within and across levels	0	0
• district	33	72
• federal	7	12
• state	18	39
• **information dissemination**	17	49
○ union	6	6
WIDA and ACCESS	22	83

SBOE-only codes	0	0
• Common Core	21	29
• ELs	30	34
• ESSA	55	68
• Kirwan Commission	25	28
• NCLB	12	29

G-1. Tree Map Hierarchy Chart of Codes Applied to Interviews



This tree map was generated within NVivo and shows hierarchical data to compare code prominence, size representing the amount of coding at each node.

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