7.0 Changing role of teachers

This concluding chapter endeavors to give the highlights of the dissertation and to offer suggestions for the future in ESL teaching and learning. In doing this, the focus is on the change in the role of teachers, the importance of multimedia in education, and how the multimedia approach was used in the present study. It also presents a synopsis of each chapter, reviews the new academic standards in the light of this study and foretells how they would impact high school students in general and ESL students in particular. Finally, it outlines what makes a good school, and recounts using the multicultural approach to teaching at the high school level.

7.1 This study

New York City is the capital of world cultures, a cosmopolitan city where one has access to museums, exhibitions, and Broadway shows. While reading Anne Frank, the students were assigned to visit the holocaust exhibition before they started reading the book in class. They were asked to write a report about their trip to Manhattan to visit the
exhibition which enhanced their skills to read the subway maps, walk the streets of Manhattan, and have an adventure in travel with their friends and spend a day together with their friends or family and of course have a practice in writing a report about their visit to the city. Almost every student enjoyed working on the project and later they told me that they had a lot of fun doing this assignment. All students were highly motivated and interested to read the book. This provided students with the background information about the book and motivated them to read the book.

To encourage students to read more, an idea of a passport to learning was invented. In the project, they first put their picture as the first page of their passport. They visited different parts of the world through the books and each part of the world they visited was stamped by the teacher for extra credit. As a separate entry from the passport, they wrote in their diary entry of the places of interest in the country of their visit.

To teach students vocabulary, an idea of a vocabulary bank was invented wherein students deposit new words in their vocabulary bank and withdrew them as they used them in sentences which earned them interest on their investment which gave them extra credit that would eventually become a part of their grade. Also an idea was instilled in the minds of the students that root is the main word and various forms of the same root are like the same person with different clothes.
To improve the students' writing, the students wrote make believe letters to characters in the same book or characters from the different books. The facilitator impressed upon them that the first letter might either be totally formal or totally informal. She suggested, "Let it be like a person's first date wherein he/she hides a few things about himself/herself and reveals a few things about himself/herself."

The students studied the stories on the theme of relationship, e.g. parent-child relationship. They explored the various facets of the relationship and in conclusion wrote about their own relationship with their parents. The teacher received some very interesting, fascinating, and revealing projects on the theme of relationship between parents and children.

In a short period of time and given the constraints of the classroom, it was difficult to implement all the different strategies in one term. It must be the teacher's goal to do his/her best so that in turn he/she can get the best from students.

Chapter 1 gave the overview of the immigrant scene in the USA and its effects on the USA educational system. It then discussed the problems faced by the ESL teachers and students and provided a linguistic profile of an ESL student. Then the chapter delineated the problem, delimitation of
the study, objectives of the study, hypothesis, null-hypothesis, constraints of the study, and the scheme of presentation.

Teaching Language and Culture simultaneously, The Cognitive Academic Language Learning approach. The chapter concluded with the teaching implications for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) culled from various approaches discussed in the chapter.

Chapter 3 discussed the research framework of experimental design and explained how it was applied to this study. Experimental and controlled groups were selected based on their academic averages, socio-cultural background etc. Type S, Type G, and Type R errors were avoided. Data was analyzed using the T test. Standard measurements like standard deviation, standard error, one-tailed test, dispersion of the scores, coefficient of variation, coefficient of skewness, and eventually the rejection of null-hypothesis and acceptance of the hypothesis were discussed. Strategies used for the study are elaborately explained in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 reported on the design of the experiment and the various strategies used to improve the performance of ESL students. The experiment was conducted at the Benjamin Cardozo High School in New York City and the subjects under study were 11th and 12th grade ESL students. After equalizing the controlled group and the experiment group, a pretest was given which was a TOEFL test. The textbooks under study were Diary Of Anne Frank, Nectar In A Sieve, and selected short stories and poems from Mcdougal, Little Blue Level anthology, and Vocabulary.
A different strategy was used while teaching each individual book.

While teaching *Diary Of Anne Frank*, students were directed to do library research, and make up an original newspaper or an original textbook for an elementary school curriculum. While teaching *Nectar In A Sieve*, students were supposed to do library research about India and then write a journal while summarizing the chapters. The summaries could be written in the form of a letter, a poem, or a journal. Students could use any format they wished. While teaching the anthology of short stories, the teacher asked students to write an original short story mixing and matching the characters, plots, and settings. To enhance students' vocabulary skills, supplementary vocabulary books were suggested, a vocabulary word a day was put on the board, and students were encouraged to make up their own dictionary. Over and beyond these strategies, students were exposed to the strategies of graphic organizers, character weave, free writing, word splash, conflict web etc. All these strategies are explained in detail in chapter 4. The posttest was given toward the end of the term and the chapter concluded after describing the context specific problems.

Chapter 5 analyzed and interpreted the data. The data which was collected to ascertain if the learners' performance showed significant improvement or not. The investigator compared the mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and T test scores of the controlled and
the experimental groups. The hypothesis was tested based on those scores. The investigator came to the conclusion that the traditional as well as the experimental method improved the student performance, but, between the two, the experimental method produced better results. At $a = 0.05$ with 38 df and one-tailed $T$ test and computation at $T=1.6866$, the null-hypothesis was rejected.

Chapter 6 was divided into three sections. The first section dealt with the main findings about the ESL students in general and Benjamin Cardozo High School ESL students in particular. The second section covered the implications of those findings for teaching of ESL and teacher preparation. The third section discussed the areas of further research in ESL. The chapter concluded with the new high school graduation requirements for students from New York state inclusive of ESL students and its impact on the graduation rate of ESL students. With the rise in graduation requirements for high school students, the proposal by the Board of Regents to recertify the teachers and its implications on the teaching profession in general and teachers in particular was discussed. The chapter concluded with the pros and cons of the proposal.
7.2 The new standards

To compete with the students in the developing nations, a rise in the graduation requirements was essential yet it may pose a special problem for students whose mother tongue is not English. President Bush, being the educational president and President Bill Clinton who vowed to lead the nation into the 21st century, wanted to implement the nationwide standards for high school graduation. Although the standards project began during the Bush years, the Clinton administration adopted it as part of its "Goals 2000" program of educational reforms. President Clinton proposed national academic standards which met with strong opposition from the conservatives who argued that it would bring excessive federal control over education and as a result the proposal is now languishing in a congressional committee. Inspired by an education summit that took place in May 1996, 44 states are revising their standards, and five more are writing them for the first time (Iowa is the lone hold out). That would encourage textbook publishers and school systems to adopt the standards. But they would remain voluntary. The term "standards" in this case refers to something quite specific: official, written guidelines that define what a state expects its public school students to know and be able to do. Some states have set standards for every grade; others measure students' progress over periods of several years. Only a few states impose sanctions on under performing schools and students. One place accountability has been established is Virginia, where Governor George Allen announced that any school with a
pass rate less than 70% will lose its accreditation. President Clinton may get the national standards he wants without ever trying. When all 49 of these states are finished developing their standards, the country may end up eating its cake and having it too: de facto national standards created by the individual states.

7.3 The new standards and Asian American student

As an example, New York State is planning to raise educational standards for high school students, the implementors of these higher standards do not realize what they are up against. Many questions have remained unanswered. The following questions need a serious consideration. How do we expect ESL students and students with learning disabilities to achieve the level of education expected of the students in the mainstream? If the mainstream student finds it overwhelming, how can the other two groups be expected to meet the increased standards? Will these high expectations hurt the borderline students and push them over the edge to giving up? Will there be the additional assistance necessary to help both the mainstream child and the ESL and special education student to accomplish the objective of high standard performance? Where and when will the assistance be housed and will it not further deplete already inadequate school funding? Who will prepare the teachers for the arduous task of educating the next generation and will they have the necessary time in which to impart the knowledge? What assurances do parents have that
their children are receiving the required course of study to excel in the Regents? Parents must be able to assist their children in the educational process. English is a second language to many and parents' ability to help with the assignments is limited. Where are the resources for parents to upgrade their skills?

The raising of standards is commendable. To raise standards means doing away with old standards. Change takes time and money. Is the time frame proposed for those changes realistic? Will there be ample funding to incorporate the changes? Will the raising of standards hinder the road to graduation and thus create a "holdover" of students so that they can meet the standards? How will this impact upon resources, space, staff? There is much work to do. It is hoped that all feasible avenues will be explored for the betterment of all and not just a limited few.

An increasing number of young Asian Americans confronts inadequate educational services, racial and ethnic harassment, and a mainstream culture that overlooks their problems according to the report "An Invisible Crisis" released on November 10, 1997, by the Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAIP). The report dispels the popular perception that Asian American students are a "model minority" and thrive academically as a group. This image hides difficulties that many Asian Americans, especially those from Southeast Asia, face.
By the year 2020, there will be 4.4 million Asian American children between the ages of 5 and 17 in the USA. In just a few years it is estimated that 75 percent of Asian American school-age children will be headed by the foreign-born children of recent immigrants. AAIP reports that nationwide, two-thirds of the students who need bilingual services are not receiving them and a growing number of Asian-American students from Southeast Asia live in poverty. The report says, "As their schools fail them, these children become increasingly likely to graduate with rudimentary language skills, to drop out of school, to join gangs, or to find themselves in low-paying occupations and on the margin of American life."

The poverty rate among Indian Americans is 10 percent, three percent below the national average. The report states that not enough information exists on the educational needs of South Asians and that more research is needed on more recent immigrants from South Asia who are coming with lesser credentials than immigrants who came 20 or 30 years ago.

In New York City, the number of South-Asian students in need of English as a second language assistance is growing. Citywide, students from Bangladesh are the fifth largest group requiring help in English; Urdu-speaking students are the eighth largest group and Punjabi-speaking students are the tenth. In the year 1996, there were more than 7,100 South Asian students in city schools who required help in learning English. Responding to the needs of newly arrived immigrant students, the city opened the Newcomer High School in 1995 which has a large number of
students from Bangladesh, and caters to them with extensive bilingual programs and classes that teach about everyday life in New York, including how to get around the city by subway.

Marjorie Fujiki, the executive director of AAIP, said that no matter how successful, all Asian Americans in the USA have the experience of feeling "marginalized" or becoming a victim at some point of a racially-motivated attack or insult. In a study cited in the AAIP report, of more than a thousand immigrant students in California, 93 percent cited violence, harassment, and a wish for an American friend as major concerns. Currently, Asian Americans comprise 4 percent of the USA population. Racism is a major concern for Asian American students here, and incidents of it are not effectively dealt with by either school or parents. The findings of the report are said to reveal the serious problems faced by many Asian American students in school—a stark contrast to model-minority myth often attributed to Asian American students. "Go back to your country", "holy cow", "Hindu" are a few of the taunts used by less tolerant native American students which devastate the self esteem of those students who suffer from nightmares, stomach aches, and a feeling of worthlessness. The parents of these students are reluctant to complain to higher authorities or press charges for fear of retaliation often because of their limited proficiency in English. It is very unnerving for an immigrant family to come to the USA with an American dream and to be picked on, frightened, and made fun of.
To succeed in school, Asian American students need teachers and other professionals who understand their culture and challenges of adjusting to live in a new homeland. Many problems occur due to cross-cultural misunderstandings. Language is one of the several obstacles to understanding. Teachers' understandings of how different culture groups learn, interact, and use language can assist them to organize instruction in ways to support the culturally different learner. A lack of knowledge in this area can set up barriers to children's learning. In everyday classroom situations, a teacher may mistake a lack of questions to mean that a child understands his lesson while in the student's own culture, it may indicate respect accorded a teacher. While many Asian parents highly value education, many others play a limited role in educating their children due to language, cultural and other barriers. Many parents are either too busy to make a living or too embarrassed to expose their lack of proficiency in English.

The report added that the "barriers of racism at school, disintegration of family units and the need for family support services, lack of a multicultural curriculum and limited availability of bilingual education are experienced to varying degrees by the Asian American community depending on factors like their socioeconomic status, communities in which they live and the schools their children attend."
7.4 Demographic transformation of New York City

Benjamin Cardozo High School is located in Queens which as noted earlier, is one of the five boroughs of New York City. To get a larger picture one must study and evaluate what is happening in New York City and how the flow of immigrants inclusive of ESL students has drained or enhanced the city economically, and educationally. New York has inspired many collective metaphors - melting pot, boiling pot, a rainbow, a patchwork quilt, a gorgeous mosaic - and none of them really work. Seven million people do not resemble an inanimate object. The melting-pot metaphor has been around at least since 1782, when M. G. Jean de Crevecoeur, a naturalized New Yorker, declared, "Here individuals of all nations are melting into a new race of men." In 1908, the metaphor became a title of a Broadway play which became an instant success and a hit, but the reality outside the theater remained quite different. "The point about the melting pot is that it did not happen," wrote Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan in their classic 1963 study, "Beyond the Melting Pot." The ethnic array of blacks, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, Irish seems parochial in comparison with today's New York. During the 1990's, more than 100,000 people from 187 countries have been coming each year, further dividing and subdividing the city's ethnic worlds. New Yorkers need their separate worlds to cope with what is the most unnatural aspect of the city: the loneliness of people far from their families. More than half of the population was born outside the city - 2.5 million in foreign countries.
and more than one million in other parts of the USA. No matter how cosmopolitan the New Yorkers think they are, they belong to a species that evolved in small, exclusive clans. They have an innate urge to recreate similar worlds here. The melting pot could never turn New York into a happy family or any other kind of family. No sane human would ever wish for seven million relatives. The best image of the city's diversity is not an abstraction. It is alive in any New York City public school where one will meet 34 high school students from the Ukraine, Nepal, Taiwan, China, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Latvia, Russia, Pakistan, India avoiding one another's glances and struggling to speak English correctly, as eager as if the teacher were an aid worker distributing bread to the hungry, when he/she directs the class saying, "It does not matter, right or wrong, speak English. Do not talk to me. Talk to your partner." Their feelings seem clear: they see English as something that the teacher has, which they want to get from her and they do not want to be redirected toward others as empty-handed as they are.

Data drawn from the last New York City Housing and Vacancy survey taken in 1996 and from the information obtained from the US Department of Census is the basis for the study prepared by the Taub Urban Research Center at New York University. The study covers the impact of the New York City's ethnic mix from 1980 to 2000. By 2000, whites will account for only 33 percent of Queens population. Hispanics will overtake blacks as the largest minority and Queens will be home to the city's Asian
population, making up 20 percent of the two million residents of Queens County. The projections mark a drastic change from 1980 Census, which showed Queens County as being 62 percent white, 18 percent black, 14 percent Hispanic and 6 percent Asian. Demographic projections for 2000 estimate 37.5 percent of the city's population will be foreign-born, which rivals the century's high point in 1910 when that level reached 40 percent. In 1996, Hispanics, who accounted for 22 percent of the borough's population, had just recently surpassed blacks, who made up 21 percent, as the largest minority group in Queens. The trend will continue until the year 2000, when Hispanics will constitute a growing 27 percent of Queens residents, and both blacks and Asians will hover around 20 percent. Queens remains the most diverse borough, with almost half of the borough's households headed by an immigrant. More than half of the Asian community live in Queens now; by the year 2000, one-fifth of Queens will be Asian. Most recent census reports show that immigration from South Asia to New York, particularly from Bangladesh is on the increase in recent years. For the first time, the number of immigrants to the city from Bangladesh outnumbered the number who came from India. Immigrants from Bangladesh made up the sixth largest immigrant group coming to the city and those from India made the seventh largest group.

Mitchell Moss, director of New York University's Urban Research Center, said, "New York is going through a demographic transformation more powerful than at the turn of the century...Queens is the epicenter of
New York's immigration population. Queens has a strong set of neighborhoods, which has allowed immigrants to come in and settle and develop its infrastructure." As the white population shrinks more dramatically in Queens than in the city as a whole, the Asian community will make up almost one-fifth of the population of Queens. The current wave of immigrants pose a challenge to the public school system in the city where more than 46 percent of school-age children live in homes headed by a foreign-born person.

The U. S. has probably the most decentralized system of public education in the advanced world. Some countries, like France, have an education ministry that is officially in charge of every neighborhood elementary school. Some, like Japan, have a centrally dictated curriculum. Some, like England, have tests, administered by the government, that every student must pass in order to move on to the next level of the system. Only in the USA is education substantially in the hands of almost 15,000 local school boards. The only way to make sure no American child gets a substandard education is to guarantee, nationally, that every child gets a good one.

In USA, students spend 180 days in class which puts them well behind the rest of the industrialized world. In Korea and Taiwan, the school year is 222 days; in Japan 220 days; Germany 219 days; and Canada 188 days. While Japanese students on average spend fewer hours a day in
school hours which is five and a half hours a day, they also attend school for half a day on Saturday. In India, students spend 210 days in school which includes half a day on Saturday. In USA, students spend six hours and twenty minutes a day but they do not attend school on Saturday. The American school year is based on an outdated model that goes back to the 19th century when most Americans lived on farms and summer vacation was designated to allow students to help families bring in the crops. Nowadays summer for most school children is a time for play which is a lovely idea if you are a student, but it is not helping American students catch up in the global academics game.

Moreover, observers of school systems say, in Japan the academic classes are far more intense than they are in the USA and when the students are in class they are far more focused. In China, high school teachers teach fewer classes and have more time to prepare. The classes are larger, but the quality of the teaching is higher. Harold Stevenson, a University of Michigan psychology professor who has studied school systems in many countries, believes the real reason American students fare less well in school has less to do with the length of the school year than with what is done in the time the schools have them. One of the four school districts, according to Rudy Crew, New York City School Chancellor, has chosen to participate in an experiment in year-round school. District 27 in Queens, has found a way to extend the instructional year to 202 days and to extend each school day by up to 70 minutes. One needs both more school time and
different methods of teaching and finding ways to use the existing school year better. In that regard, one has a lot to learn from one's friends overseas. It would be a good idea to extend the school year and the school day if the school system can find ways to pay for it.

7.5 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism, being the quest to achieve equal recognition and inclusion for the many diverse cultures which constitute the USA, is an unmistakable feature of the present day American society. Literature teachers and literature programs need to lead to the original promise of multiculturalism: to teach students to understand and appreciate one another's ethnic heritage as well as their common heritage as Americans. As E. D. Hirsch, Jr., put it, all American students deserve a "centrist curriculum" that "encourages knowledge of and sympathy towards the diverse cultures of the world," that "fosters respect for every child's home culture as well as for the cosmopolitan school-based cultures," and that "gives all children competence in the current system of language and allusion that is dominant in the nation's economic and intellectual discourse." Since Americans lack the foundational bonds of race, blood, religion, geography, even long enduring political covenants, they need metaphors to help define themselves. Their kitchens and rivers provide a key. They embrace the tension between community and individuality while underscoring the energy and openness of life. In them, we better become
one. "E pluribus unum," the motto of the USA, means "Out of many one," but the one is a wholly different kind of entity from the many, especially since the melting pot became a microwave.

New York is one of the crossroads cities where successive waves of immigrants have settled to create a rich and diverse life and a shared sense of belonging. Crossroads cities also act as laboratories for the future for their nations as they face the challenges of globalization. The articles in Unesco Courier discuss Tangier, Morocco; New York, USA; Bombay, India; Marseilles, France; La Paz, Bolivia; Vancouver, Canada; and the spirit of diversity found in crossroads cities. The so-called crossroads cities have evolved through the centuries due to the population shifts and voluntary or forced migrations bridging together diverse cultures and ethnic groups. Some people regard this ethnic and cultural intermingling as a source of mutual enrichment. Others, however, see it as a source of cultural impoverishment. This dilemma reveals the paradox that is at the core of all crossroads cities, the question of whether the pursuit of cultural intermingling as an ideal in plural cities is in fact anathema to their very pluralism.
Conclusion

In conclusion, an educator of ESL must be aware of the fact that it takes time to become a proficient user of a second language. While some children rather quickly take on a new language, for others the time frame is much longer. It is really unfair to expect a newly arrived immigrant ESL student to take a LAB test the day he enrolls in school. He/she is neither exposed to the culture nor to the pronunciation of teachers and to expect him/her to do well on the test is expecting a miracle. Also the LAB test is given only once in a year (either in March or in April) hence a student has no way to show the improvement in proficiency in English until the following year. With a little time to acclimatize to the new environment, chances are that the student may not do well on the LAB test. There is a strong evidence that most children require from 4 to 6 years to reach the level of proficiency needed to participate fully in an academic setting (Cumming 1981; Wone Fillimore, 1986). Support for these students, although it may change in both focus and amount, needs to continue until the child is able to achieve academic success. The students should be able to interpret the written word. Barbara Tuchman has very aptly said, "Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill..."
The teachers of ESL need to provide classrooms where students will be able to do the following:

1. Acquire the knowledge naturally, using the language for real purposes;
2. Receive linguistic input that is made comprehensible by strong and supportive context;
3. Experiment with, hypothesize about, and try out language in low anxiety settings;
4. Work with English-speaking peers on meaningful tasks that create opportunities and real reasons to talk, write, and read together;
5. Use language for a broad variety of functions, both social and academic.

Finally, it is important that these children who are taking on English as their language be viewed not as an educational problem, but as a rich and valued resource. They bring much to our schools and to the society. They need time and the sensitive and knowledgeable support of educators if they are to be prepared to take their place in the world outside the classroom.

On a personal note, I might add to this discussion of teaching the English language that I have experienced being an ESL student at the graduate school level (even though I was not labeled as an ESL student, I exhibited all the characteristics of being one) and have suffered silently in
the hands of unsympathetic professors and flourished in the hands of sympathetic and caring professors. My experience has made me a better teacher for my ESL students as I had walked the same path before that my students are going through now. ESL students strive harder if they realize that their teachers note and applaud even the most insignificant achievement their students exhibit.

In summary, the future of ESL educational research rests jointly upon the federal government, which is the logical source of funds for research of national significance; the universities, which must bear the burden of training more and better educational researchers; and the public schools, which must better learn to translate research knowledge into classroom practice.