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Instructional Strategies for English Language Learners in Elementary Classrooms

Jiji P. Olds
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

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Jiji P. Olds

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Instructional Strategies for English Language Learners in Elementary Classrooms

by

Jiji P. Olds

MA, Howard University, 2011

BS, Howard University, 2010

Project Study Completed in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

January 2021

Abstract

In an Eastern U.S. school district, little is understood about how elementary general education teachers apply instructional strategies for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the classroom and which strategies they perceive support academic achievement. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perceptions of how those strategies support ELL academic achievement. The study's conceptual framework consisted of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which infers that learning is a social process guided by interactions with one's environment, people, and culture. Also framing this study was Krashan's second language acquisition theory, which infers that language is attained through one's strong desire to interact with the world around them. Two research questions were used to investigate the reported ELL instructional strategies used by teachers and how teachers perceive those strategies support ELLs' achievement. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 11 elementary general education teachers. Volunteers were recruited from schools having ELL populations of 30% or more. Interview data were analyzed by using open and a priori codes and thematic analysis. The findings indicated that participants used familiar instructional strategies and consistently applied them for the whole class. Additionally, participants perceived ELLs' academic confidence and connecting concepts with their primary language as important to academic achievement. This study contributes to positive social change through a deeper understanding of the ELL instructional strategies that may benefit elementary teachers and stakeholders. A 3-day professional development was created based on the findings to improve ELL academic progress in the district.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study first and foremost to God, for without His grace I would not be here. The Almighty Father has strengthened me throughout this journey and paved the way for a successful season. I am so grateful for His blessings. To the love of my life, Nicholas, you have been my rock through all of the tough moments. I am forever appreciative. To my children, Olivya and Namir, thank you for your understanding and cooperation. Thank you for going to bed early and snuggling with me when I was working. Your love motivates me and I love you! To my parents, who always encouraged me to strive for more, thank you for your support, sacrifice and love. You gave me the foundation I needed and instilled in me the value of education and trust in God. “For I know the plans, I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11, KJV).

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To my chairperson, Dr. Wells, I appreciate your mentorship and hours of feedback. Thank you for your examples and support. To Dr. Jameson and Dr. Cale, thank you for your feedback and insight. Your suggestions, guidance, and support have helped me finish this study. I am blessed to have had a great committee to support me through this doctoral journey.

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Section 1: The Problem

There is a need to understand the current instructional strategies used by general education teachers when teaching English Language Learners (ELLs). ELLs are a fast-growing student population in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). However, many teacher preparation programs do not provide adequate training on facilitating instruction for ELLs (de Araujo, Sakow, Smith & Yeong, 2015; Mandinach & Gummer, 2016; Weinstein & Trinket, 2016; Zhang, 2017). This creates a gap in teacher training and meeting the real-world needs of these students. Although ELLs have specific teachers assigned to manage their needs with either in-class or pull-out sessions, the amount of time dedicated to each student is combined with other children and limited to certain days and times (Giles, 2020). This model leaves ELLs with the majority of their time within their general education classes with most of their support only from their teacher and peers (Giles & Yazen, 2019). A deeper understanding of ELL instructional strategies used by general education teachers may benefit ELLs and the schools that support them.

The Local Problem

The local problem addressed by the current study was a lack of understanding about how elementary general education teachers apply instructional strategies for ELLs and which strategies they perceive support academic achievement. The study setting was an Eastern U.S. school district. More data are necessary to identify elementary teachers' perceptions and practices for ELLs (Hegde, Hewett, & Terrell, 2016). Hegde et al. (2016) found that elementary teachers' application and perception of strategies vary from research-based strategies. The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

chairperson at one of the research schools asserted that although content objectives are posted, other visual evidence of implementation of sheltered instruction observational protocol (SIOP) strategies are not evident in classroom during “walk-throughs” or peer panel observations. Coates (2016) emphasized that it is unclear how ELL strategies are implemented in mainstream classes. Classroom observations are the main method to view strategies applied for students (van der Lance, van de Grift, & Veen, 2017). However, classroom observations often only happen during a teachers’ evaluation year and may not provide a full picture of the totality of teaching practices a teacher uses within their classroom (van der Lance et al., 2017). Although informal observations of teacher practice occur through peer panel observations within the district, these are infrequent and may not focus on strategies for ELLs at the school, according to ESOL Lead Instructional teacher. More research is necessary to understand the perceptions of elementary general education teachers on ELL strategies and their perceived effectiveness.

In an Eastern U.S. school district, ELLs have scored lower on state standardized tests than their English-speaking peers. The district’s superintendent stated that the performance of ELLs on state assessments was lower than their non-ELL peers. In the local setting, only 12.6% of ELLs scored proficient in math and 15.2% of ELLs scored proficient reading standardized assessment in 2018 (Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE], 2019). All other categories of students (other than special education) had higher percentages of proficient scores in both math and reading (MSDE, 2019). Comparatively, statewide, 41% of ELLs scored proficient in reading and 28% scored proficient in math (MSDE, 2020). In the local context, ELLs also scored lower than non-

ELLs on the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career assessment (MSDE, 2019). These scores mark a valid academic performance discrepancy between ELLs and non-ELLs in academic settings and indicate that there is a problem that requires research. The district's superintendent emphasized the need to address the academic performance of ELLs through better trained teachers. Thus, at the local level the district leadership believes that there is a need to understand classroom practices for ELLs.

Gap in Practice

The research problem represents a gap in practice because it is uncertain how teachers in the local context are or are not applying appropriate, research-based ELL instructional strategies. Education researcher Marzano (2001) described research-based strategies as instructional practices based in research that support academic achievement. Research-based strategies are widely accepted as best practices for ELLs (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012). The gap in practice is evidenced by the lead ESOL teacher, who stated that many of the teachers are not using research-based strategies in the classroom with fidelity. In addition, peer and administrator observations of the classrooms only provide a brief window into teachers' practices, which is not enough to understand the full application of ELL strategies, according to the teacher. This indicates a need for increased understanding about how general education teachers apply ELL instructional strategies and their perceptions of the support for ELLs.

The Problem Within the Broader Education Discipline

A broader view of the literature indicates a need for a deeper understanding of ELL instructional strategies that are used within mainstream classrooms. Research

suggests that little is known about general education teachers' application of ELL instructional practices in the classroom and the perceived benefit of those practices. Rodriguez and Briceño (2018) found that, although some strategies are being implemented within the classroom for ELLs, they are not always implemented appropriately. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2017) asserted that it was unclear how elementary mainstream teachers are implementing strategies for ELLs in the classroom. Although their findings contributed to an understanding of language strategies appropriate for elementary ELLs, there remains a gap in understanding of how instructional practices are actually applied in mainstream elementary classrooms. Lee (2019) established that elementary general education teachers struggle with meeting the needs of ELLs, and Brown and Endo (2017) found that teachers often confuse the needs of ELLs and use generic differentiation techniques that do not address ELL specific needs. Also, general education teachers tend to avoid instructional strategies that are intended primarily for ELLs. Researched-based strategies are difficult for elementary general education teachers to integrate within mainstream classrooms, which are often crowded with students who have many different needs (Capitelli et al., 2016). Teachers' practices often conform to their own perception of feasibility because they lack the training needed to facilitate the strategies (Hallman & Meineke, 2016). This situation further validates the need for more understanding of ELL instructional strategies utilized within mainstream classrooms that are used by general education teachers and their perceptions of these practices.

Jiménez-Castellanos and Garcia (2017) found that general education teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of ELLs in the general education classroom. Additionally,

Penner-Williams, Diaz, and Gonzales Worthen (2019) discovered that although some strategies for ELLs are implemented, not all strategies were implemented with fidelity or consistency. Teachers implemented some strategies but lack the time and training to adequately implement strategies specifically for ELLs. Song (2016) found that many teachers do not have the skills or training to implement the ELL specific strategies. Also, Coady, Harper, and de Jong (2016) found that new mainstream elementary teachers lacked the necessary skills to identify the needs of ELLs operating at different language development stages and to differentiate the content accordingly. This type of differentiation requires extra training that teacher preparation programs do not provide (Coady et al., 2016). Therefore, research indicates that there are inadequate practices employed within many mainstream United States elementary classrooms because of a lack of teacher training (Gottschalk, 2015; Song 2016).

Inadequate practices lead to reduced student performance. ELLs perform lower than their English-speaking peers in academic testing. By the time they reach high school, many ELLs are 30-40 points behind on state testing (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). The lower scores could be due to ELLs having teachers who are not prepared for their needs, underfunding in their schools, or lack of programs and materials designed to meet their needs (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). An exploration of the perceptions of elementary general education teachers on ELL specific strategies would be a benefit. Research on teachers' perceptions can provide insight into the gap between research-based strategies and current practices within the elementary general education classroom. Spees et al. (2016) described general education teachers as lacking the preparation to support ELLs effectively.

Many mainstream elementary teachers implement ELL strategies within the classroom based on their personal knowledge and training, not research-based pedagogy. Cervetti, Kulikowich, and Bravo (2015) described teachers' pedagogy as being a result of their experiences. Teachers' desire to provide an equitable learning experience is guided by their preferences and familiarity with the instructional practices (Irby et al., 2018). Even veteran teachers find it difficult to use research-based practices to create learning environments for diverse learners (Cardimona, 2018). Teachers' lack of confidence in implementing strategies for these diverse learners often causes them to favor strategies based on feasibility (Andrei, Ellerbe, & Cherner, 2015; Daniel & Pray, 2017). Turkan and De Jong (2019) found that elementary teachers are aware that ELLs need different strategies; however, they are unclear of the value or ways to implement strategies effectively. It follows, therefore, that the quality of strategies used within the classroom may suffer because teachers are not incorporating research-based practices.

Researchers have investigated teachers' perceptions of their practice and found them valuable (Agcam & Babanoglu, 2016; Bahreini & Zamanian, 2017; Kiralp & Bolkan, 2016; Tajeddin & Adeg, 2016). However, the research is limited regarding teachers' perceptions of their own strategies for ELLs (Mustafa & Radizi, 2019; Telléz, 2015). Carley Rizzuto (2017) found that teachers' perceptions shaped their instructional practices. There is a need to understand the perceptions of teachers because research indicates that their perceptions influence how they implement instructional strategies (Lumbrears & Rupley, 2019). If they perceive including ELL specific strategies as valuable, then it is more likely that they will include these strategies in their practice. The

current study thus has the potential to contribute valuable insight to the education community.

Rationale

The literature substantiated the need for this study. Three reasons to address the research problem within the educational discipline are (a) many teacher preparation programs do not provide adequate training on facilitating instruction for ELLs, (b) educators need to have the strategies and the mindsets that the strategies are effective, and (c) mainstream teachers have misconceptions on how to teach ELLs. These reasons supported the necessity of this study.

The first rationale for the current study is that many teacher preparation programs do not provide adequate training on facilitating instruction for ELLs. ELL training is not mandatory in many of these programs. Over 30 states have no course or training regulations for teachers with ELLs within the classroom outside of the state's teacher licensing criteria (Education Commission of the States, 2014). Adequate training is necessary for teachers to have the skills to teach ELLs but is not readily available in teacher training programs (Feiman- Nemsar, 2018). General education teachers have a critical job of supporting ELLs in developing academic language but have limited training on this task. Training is limited because the training is not mandatory. Although ELLs are one of the fastest growing student populations in the United States, many teacher preparation programs do not provide adequate training on facilitating instruction for ELLs (de Araujo et al., 2015; Turkan & Buzick, 2014).

Educators need to have appropriate strategies and the mindset that strategies are effective. Johnson and Wells (2017) found that preservice teachers needed extensive field

work with ELLs to feel confident with implementing strategies for ELLs. Confidence with teaching techniques gives teachers the mindsets that strategies are effective (Kibler, Walqui, & Bunch, 2015). Teacher confidence in the strategies is built through experience with the strategies and the understanding of which strategies to use for students (Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019).

Many mainstream teachers have misconceptions about the needs of ELLs (Gottschalk, 2015). This may be because of a lack of understanding on how to implement appropriate strategies and the feasibility of ELL strategies (Peercy, DeStefano, Yazan, & Martin-Beltrán, 2016). ELLs struggle to master the academic content while learning a new language with limited support from ELL teachers (Gottschalk, 2015). Teachers assume that ELLs need minimal support above the regular education students' needs and thus provide very few additional strategies within lessons to support their academic achievement (Brandes & McMaster, 2017). If teachers were to implement specific strategies for ELLs, it would support ELLs academic growth during each lesson (Gottschalk, 2015). Teachers' misconceptions about ELLs adversely affect ELLs within the classroom because they are not able to receive the appropriate instruction (Rodríguez-Arroyo & Vaughns, 2017).

More research is necessary to identify the strategies used within elementary grade levels for ELL students (Hegde et al., 2016). This study provides insight into lesson delivery and planning needs within the study district. Effective lessons with appropriate strategies taught by teachers who can instruct a variety of students can help boost achievement for ELLs (Johnson & Wells, 2017). Effective teachers are important components to any instructional program. Johnson and Wells (2017) found that teachers

are unprepared to facilitate the needs of ELLs in mastering the Common Core State Standards. Petrie and Darragh (2018) also researched teachers of ELLs and found that teachers need to be aware of the needs of their students to be effective. The current study improves understanding in this area and reveals teachers' needs, mindsets, and skills that they use to teach ELLs. This information identifies the strategies already used and provides insight into areas where the district can provide additional support. The study provides value to the educational community by identifying the strategies in use and areas of needs within the district.

Lastly, the research literature suggests that a deeper understanding of how to support diverse learners is necessary to prepare teachers to support ELLs (Gottschalk, 2016). Pappamihiel and Lynn (2016) stated that there is a lack of preparation of general education teachers to reach ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This lack of preparation is visible in lesson delivery, planning, and test scores. Students cannot perform to their potential if they have not been taught the material in a way that they can understand. Adequate exposure to the needs of ELLs and methods to support ELLs in the classroom benefits teachers and makes teachers feel more prepared to address the needs of ELLs (Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019). Preparing teachers benefits both students and teachers.

Investigating current strategies that are utilized within the classroom can provide insight into the gaps in the academic progress of ELLs and non-ELLs. In the broad context, ELLs score lower on state standardized tests than non-ELLs (Ransom & Esmail, 2016). Fuchs, Khan-Horwitz, and Katzir (2019) inferred that researching teacher perceptions can provide information about classroom practices. Strategies and practices used within the classroom can provide useful information about the needs of students and

teachers. Classroom practices are critical in the achievement of students and helping students move towards academic and language proficiency (Ferlazzo, 2019). It can also provide understanding into the progress or lack of progress of subgroups such as ELLs. An investigation of the strategies used within the classroom can therefore be useful to the educational community.

The purpose of this study was to explore elementary general education teachers reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perception of how those strategies support ELL academic achievement. ELL strategies used within the classroom are important components to address the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs (Chen & Chalhoub-Deville, 2016). There is a need for more research to understand teachers' use and perceptions of teaching strategies because some teacher preparation programs do not provide adequate training on facilitating instruction for ELLs (de Araujo et al, 2015). Teacher perception of strategies are important indicators of their application of instructional practices (Bell et al, 2017).

Definition of Terms

Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS): “Conversational fluency in a language” (Cummins, 2013, p. 65).

Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP): “Students’ ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school” (Cummins, 2013, p. 65).

English Language Learners (ELLs): “Students whose first language is not English” (Howard, 2018)

Realia: “Real life materials provided during lessons to help students visualize the content” (Kinard & Gainer, 2015).

Significance of the Study

In this study, I explored general education teachers’ reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perceptions of the support of those strategies on ELL academic achievement. A deeper understanding of ELL teachers’ application of ELL strategies and their perceived effectiveness is beneficial to the local schools by (a) providing insight into the current strategies that are utilized within the classroom, (b) help to evaluate current practice and (c) provide insight into efforts to provide teacher training. A lot is known about research-based strategies and their effectiveness for ELLs. However, little is known about the real application of these strategies and the teachers perceived support of these strategies. The findings of this study can contribute to the understanding of the application of ELL instructional strategies.

General education teachers’ reported use of ELL instructional strategies and their thoughts on the benefits of these strategies to support their students provides insight into lessons, their planning, and perception on supporting ELLs. Classroom practices directly influence efforts to support closing achievement gaps (Johnson, Bolshakova, & Waldron, 2016). Precise planning for the instruction for ELLs supports their academic growth and teachers’ ability to implement strategies for ELLs (Giles & Yazan, 2020). It is important to understand how teachers perceive the support of the strategies because this information supports the understanding of which strategies are implemented (Khoshsima and Shokri, 2017). Teacher’s perceptions will help administrators and stakeholders to understand current classroom practices and identify possible ways to support current

classroom practices (Lew, 2016). The study is useful to the local district because it has the potential to help provide insight into the application and perception of ELL strategies in district schools.

A deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions of ELL strategies helps evaluate the current practice of teachers. Teachers' perceptions of the benefits of strategies are important. If teachers believe that the strategies are advantageous to students, they will be likely to apply the strategy consistently (Greenfield, 2016). It can be beneficial to administrators to understand which strategies teachers value and provide insight into the application of appropriate, research-based strategies (Wissink & Starks, 2019).

Appropriate implementation of research-based strategies ensures that students receive the scaffolds they need to support their learning (Franco-Fuenmayor, Padròn & Waxman, 2015). Research-based strategies support the learner with academic language and have a proven track record to increase student achievement (Master, Loab, Whitney, & Wyckoff, 2016). A deeper understanding helps illuminate the current practices in the districts' classrooms.

The findings of this study have the potential to inform future trainings, which can be an effective way to support teachers and increase their competency to support ELLs. Teacher perceptions also aid in the understanding of which needs are prioritized for ELLs by the teachers and their reasoning behind it (Lachance, Honigsfeld, & Harrell, 2019). Teachers training supports their ability to implement appropriate strategies (Lucero, 2015). This is beneficial to ELLs because it aids in the efforts to increase their academic success. Teacher training is an important tool to support the application of ELL appropriate strategies in the classroom. Murphy, Haller and Spiridakis (2019) found that

teachers reported significant value in training to support the implementation of ELL specific strategies.

General education teachers spend the most amount of time with ELLs and need training to access the strategies to support their students. Training for teachers is important to support ELLs within the district. Johnson, Bolshakova, and Waldron (2016) found that professional development can increase the quality of lessons, increase student engagement and improve test scores for ELLs. The study's findings support training efforts for the district and teachers in the area of application of ELL strategies by providing insight into the current application of ELL strategies in mainstream classrooms. Bohon, Mckelvey, Rhodesa and Robnolt (2017) found that teachers can benefit from professional development on the application of ELL specific strategies, even if they have had previous training on ELLs. Continual professional development supports educators' performance. Roberts (2020) found that teachers and teacher trainers need support to identify applicable scaffolds for ELLs. This further substantiates the need for this study.

Research Questions

I sought to explore general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perception of the effectiveness of those strategies on ELL academic achievement. Mahalingappa, Hughes, and Polat (2018) found that many teachers struggled to understand research-based strategies to use within the classroom and would benefit from more support. Mahalingappa et al. also concluded that support with ELL strategies had a positive impact on teachers' self-efficacy. It would be beneficial to explore what reported strategies are used in the classroom and which of these are perceived as valuable by teachers. To understand the reported application of

ELL strategies by elementary general educators, I developed the following research questions (RQs):

RQ 1: What ELL instructional strategies do elementary general education teachers report applying in their classes?

RQ 2: From the perspective of elementary general education teachers, which ELL instructional strategies support ELL academic achievement?

Review of Literature

To review literature about the topic, I utilized multiple resources including ERIC and Education Source databases. I searched primary sources that provided information on current practices for ELLs and achievement rates of students. Keywords utilized were ELL, education achievement, teacher perceptions, teacher application of strategies, teacher training and elementary classrooms. In addition, I searched the Maryland Report Card for testing information and collected background information from teachers and the county website. The school district's strategic plan from 2016-2020, also provided information for this study. These sources provided the context for this study.

What follows is a detailed review based on the literature of the important concepts influencing this study. Research-based strategies to teach ELLs and existing research on teacher perceptions of ELL strategies are presented in this review. Research-based strategies are important to explore because they give a basis for understanding best practices for ELLs and provides context for the interview used in this study (Franco-Fuenmayor, Padrón, & Waxman 2015). Research that has been conducted about teacher perceptions are provided to explain needs that have already been discovered and provide

a basis to understand overall teacher perceptions around teaching ELLs. These reviewed areas are important to understanding and providing context for the study (Guler, 2020).

The phenomena that I explored in this basic qualitative study are the ELL-specific strategies applied within mainstream elementary classrooms and their perceived effectiveness on the academic achievement of ELLs as examined through the lens of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework for this study is based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Krashan's second language acquisition theory.

Sociocultural theory describes the role of social interactions and classroom culture as the primary factors in the development of knowledge (Castrillón, 2017). The sociocultural theory asserts that learning can be considered a social process (Vygotsky, 1978; Sullivan & Ballard, 2015); through peer-to-peer and student to teacher interactions. Krashan's second language theory builds on Vygotsky's theory in that it holds that learning occurs as a means to communicate with the world. The need to interact with others builds language skills (Krashan, 2003). Interactions with the environment helps students to build their knowledge set and develop new language based on their experiences with their primary language. Strength in one's primary language supports the ability to acquire new language, however it is not a prerequisite because the need to interact with one's environment will support language development (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2014).

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the relevant constructs of sociocultural theory and second language acquisition theory. These constructs include (a) teachers' interactions with students, as well as (b) interactions between peers, and (c) the classroom culture (Castrillón, 2017). For the purposes of this study, classroom culture will include routines

and supports such as peer tutoring or other classroom scaffolding that are available to students. Krashan's second language acquisition theory builds on Vygotsky's theory in that it infers basic interpersonal communication precedes academic language. This theory holds that language is first developed with a strong desire to interact with one's immediate environment.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory suggests that learning is a cultural process that is promoted by interactions with one's culture. These interactions are important to developing new knowledge (Castrillón, 2017). Vygotsky (1978) asserted that learning is a social process that utilizes interactions as a catalyst to develop new knowledge. The current study uses the sociocultural theory as a lens to examine the phenomenon of general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perception of the effectiveness of those strategies on ELL academic achievement. For the purposes of this study, classroom culture will include routines and supports such as peer tutoring or other classroom scaffolding that are available to students.

How the theories overlap. Both Vygotsky's and Krashen's theories hold that social interactions are vital to language development because they support students' ability to have confidence in their own academic competency. Krashan's second language acquisition theory builds on Vygotsky's theory in that it infers basic interpersonal communication precedes academic language. This theory asserts that language is first developed with a strong desire to interact with one's immediate environment. Interactions are necessary to meet the needs of communication (Pritchard & O'Hara, 2016). Positive interactions support the development of academic competency and growth for ELLs (Banse & Palacios, 2018). Interactions in one's life support the development of language.

According to the sociocultural theory, children acquire language in order to satisfy their need to communicate with their world around them and schools can tap into this need in order to motivate the learner to use the new language. One way is to use meaningful tasks. This would increase their need to use language to participate in lessons. It can be helpful if teachers are able to engage students with learning that is meaningful and contextually relevant within the students' scope of experiences (Zwahlen, 2018). Zwahlen (2018) suggested there is value in providing students with authentic tasks aligned to the curriculum to increase student engagement. Roessingh (2014) stated that meaningful tasks help young learners gain control of their learning and language development. Another way to encourage students to use the new language would be to encourage academic discourse during lessons (Lan & de Oliveira, 2019). Training teachers to use strategies that encourage ELLs to explore language in a comfortable environment can support teachers in helping their ELLs (Miranda, Wells, & Jenkins, 2019). Teachers' ability to incorporate strategies to promote students' language development or tap into students' need to communicate with their peers would help students be motivated to acquire a new language.

Krashan's second language acquisition theory supports the development of language through the need to communicate with the world. Krashan theorized that strength in one's primary language supports development in their secondary language (Krashan, 2003). Therefore, if a student is immersed into a new language, the student will use their strength in their primary language to learn the new language. Interactions with peers supports ELLs' ability to absorb the new language (Henry, Nistor, & Baltes, 2016). Furthermore, language acquisition could occur seamlessly while students exert

their fundamental need to communicate with their peers (Henry, Nistor, & Baltes, 2016). Familiar and comfortable learning environments support ELLs interest in exploring language and ability to immerse themselves in the new language (Raju & Joshith, 2018). ELLs utilize their experiences with their primary language to gain or transfer vocabulary to their new language. Mesa and Yeomans-Maldonado (2019) found that students who had broad vocabulary in their first language, were able to gain a second language faster. Thus, students' primary language has the potential to positively support their new language development.

Communicational language is attained at a faster rate than academic language. Athanases and de Oliveira (2014) explained that everyone has a language acquisition device functioning in their brains that processes meaningful language input and promotes language development. Pritchard and O'Hara (2016) found that students use their need to communicate to acquire new knowledge. Therefore, BICS develop faster than CALP (Stille & Cummins, 2013, p. 65). Students need to communicate their needs and understand their peer relationships take primary preference over development of academic language. Academic language changes based on subject and context and students need to adapt to appropriately understand and apply the language (Rolstad, 2017). It takes longer to develop academic language skills; therefore, students need more support in this area (Cummins, 2013, p. 65). BICS develop out of necessity to communicate with the world; however, CALP develops with support and exposure. Students need a variety of experiences to promote language development. Connecting academic vocabulary to background knowledge, supports students' ability to acquire language (Echevarria et al., 2012).

Based on second language development theory and sociocultural theory, interactions support academic competency by providing context for meaningful integration of second language and academic language. Based on second language development theory, BICS develop before CALP; however, teachers can integrate interventions within the classroom with a focus on developing academic language (Huerta & Spies, 2016). This method supports the attainment of more difficult academic vocabulary. Interactions also support ELLs practice academic discourse in a safe space with their peers (Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 2016). Teachers can plan for effective interventions with language practice to support ELLs with their vocabulary development (August, Artzi, & Barr, 2016). These methods support students' ability to develop the new language. Students need a variety of experiences to promote language development. Connecting academic vocabulary to background knowledge, supports students' ability to acquire language (Echevarria et al., 2012). Background knowledge uses connections to concepts that students are already familiar with to support new understanding of the academic content and gives students a base to start with for the lesson (Echevarria et al., 2012). This is because students are more comfortable with basic communicational language rather than academic language.

Both theories support the inquiry of this study because their premise is the ELLs gain knowledge through the world around them. The classroom culture is essential to helping students interact with their new skills in a safe space (Lan, & de Oliveira, 2019). In addition, interactions with peers and their support are valuable resources to the academic achievement of ELLs (Bowman-Perrott, deMarín, Mahadevan, & Etchells, 2016). Krashan's theory indicates that ELLs are motivated by the aspect of developing

relationships and having their needs met (Krashan, 2003). Moreover, ELLs thrive in environments that support their development of positive relationships (Sullivan et al. 2015). These interactions and relationships support their need to gain knowledge of the world.

Constructs. The key constructs of the conceptual framework that ground this study are (a) teachers' interactions with students, (b) interactions between peers, and the (c) classroom culture. Interactions are important to developing language and communicating. Different types of interactions support a student's ability to utilize the information they are already familiar with and apply it to new situations and develop new knowledge. This idea is supported by Krashan's theory in that language is the mode in which students are able to communicate with the world around them. Interactions are important to communication and social development. Interactions support social development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Interactions with teachers are important to developing language skills. Sullivan et al (2015) conducted a study that examined the influence of teacher interactions for ELLs. A positive correlation was found between ELL achievement and positive teacher interactions. Teacher promotion of language skills support ELLs language acquisition (Garza et al, 2018). Interactions with teachers and peers support the growth in vocabulary capacity and confidence with the new language. Interventions that utilize interaction-based practices support ELLs (Case, 2015). Positive teacher interactions promote learning for ELLs.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory also states that new learning occurs through interactions with peers. Second language acquisition theory supports this by asserting that

ELLs use interactions with peers to accelerate their language skills (Anthanasēs & de Oliveira, 2014). Peers act as models within the classroom (Kim, 2015). Martin-Beltrán (2017) found that interactions between peers and ELLs were supportive to the development of language. Positive peer interactions offer students confidence and support for new learning (Sullivan et al, 2015; Messiou & Azaola, 2018). Peer interactions support language acquisition for ELLs.

Learning also occurs through interactions with classroom culture. Instructional practices and routines support ELLs ability to function within the classroom and benefit from classroom supports (Bondie & Zusho, 2017). Supports and resources within the classroom can look very different from regular interactions. Some interactions with classroom culture are interactions with the resources such as the online community, word walls, and typical resources the classroom teacher puts in place to support students in varied ways. ELLs had more academic confidence and competence when they understood the classroom culture and routines (Bondie & Zusho, 2017). ELLs' ability to understand where to receive support within the classroom also support their achievement (Elreda et al., 2016). Academic discourse expectations also influence ELLs' language acquisition (Boyd, 2015). These expectations and resources support ELL ability to acquire the new language and academic skills.

How the conceptual framework grounds the research questions. The RQs are guided by the key constructs of the conceptual framework. The nature and content of the instructional strategies will be viewed, in this study, as those aligned to the key elements of the conceptual framework, (a) teachers' interactions with students, (b) interactions between peers, and the (c) classroom culture. The conceptual framework provides a basis

for understanding the information collected. Vygotsky claimed that learning is a socially shared process and important to human development (Stetsenko, 2017; Vygotsky, 1997). Additionally, following Vygotsky's perspective supposes that student learning is a flowing and communicative (Lachance, Honigsfeld & Harrell, 2019). Thus, the constructs of this study serve as a valid lens for examining the data derived.

Instrument development. The data-collection instrument used in this study is an interview protocol. This instrument was created based on the relevant components of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) and Krashan's second language acquisition theory (2003). The questions are purposefully constructed to explore the conceptual framework concepts of (a) teachers' interactions with students, (b) interactions between peers, and the (c) classroom culture. Teachers interactions with students included how lesson strategies are implemented, their interactions with peers include how peer pairing and other opportunities for peer-to-peer language practice occur in the classroom and lastly classroom culture examines how teacher's set up opportunities to gain language within the classroom. Interactions are an important component of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Castrillion, 2016). Students' interactions and the facilitation of these interactions by teachers are important considerations for the development of social language (Davila, 2020). Thus, the instrument was developed to incorporate questions about how interactions are facilitated.

The RQs aim to find teachers' perceptions which it lends itself to interviews (Gaudet & Robert, 2018). In order to investigate general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perception of the effectiveness of those strategies on ELL academic achievement, I conducted interviews with the teachers.

Interviews provide information that support the qualitative methodology selected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The protocol was used to investigate which strategies are used, teachers' perceptions of its effectiveness and the impact of classroom culture on students during lessons.

Teachers' perceptions have the ability to positively or negatively influence the performance of students (Giles, 2019). Percey et al. (2016) found that teachers' perceptions influence their application of strategies for different students including ELLs. Teachers serve a complex roll in collaborating with English for Speakers of Other Languages teachers (ESOL) and providing the majority of instruction for ELLs (Ahmed Hersi, Horan, & Lewis, 2016). Teachers ability and desire to incorporate research-based strategies into their lesson for ELLs, has the potential to increase the performance of ELLs (Kibler et al., 2015). Insufficient use of strategies for ELLs can contribute to a decrease in academic performance of ELLs (Radar-Brown & Howley, 2014). Thus, teachers' perception of ELL strategies are valuable to understand.

Their perceptions are uniquely valuable to different stakeholders because they are tasked with implementing lessons for diverse types of learners in their classroom, including ELLs (Ertaşoglu, 2020). Bozkur (2019) found that teachers' perceptions are important to identify in order to understand how teachers are able to apply the necessary scaffolds for students. Teachers' perceptions provide insight into the practices within the classroom. Lopez and Malfa (2019) found that teachers' perceptions influence the way that teachers employ different practices within the classroom. This indicates a need to investigate teachers' perceptions further.

Lachance, Honigsfeld, and Harrell (2019) studied ELL teachers' perceptions on the importance of academic language development opportunities and framed their study with the Vygotskian principle of learning as a social process. Lachance, Honigsfeld, and Harrell (2019) found that teacher perceptions were valuable to identifying student's language development. Bozkur (2019) examined teacher's perceptions and reviewed the data through the lens of Vygotskian principle of the influence of interactions on learning. Sullivan, Hedge, Ballard, and Ticknor (2015) examined teachers' interactions with ELL and non-ELL students with the lens of the Vygotskian principle of learning through interaction with your environment as important to students' growth. Ali, Khan and Massor (2019) examined ELLs language development motivation through the lens of sociocultural theory and language acquisition theory. Krashan's language acquisition theory (2003) emphasizes the influence of interactions on language development. Therefore, sociocultural theory (1978) and language acquisition theory (1981) have relevant implications for the review of interactions and culture on learning and is appropriate for this study because the purpose of this study is to explore elementary general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perception of how those strategies support ELL academic achievement. Vygotskian principles are largely employed as valid lenses to examine teacher perceptions.

The information was collected with an emphasis on how interactions impact ELLs ability to access the lessons. This includes how teachers facilitated research-based practices and support the use of interactions to promote ELLs academic achievement. The questions are purposefully constructed to explore the conceptual framework concepts of (a) teachers' interactions with students, (b) interactions between peers, and the (c)

classroom culture. They support the deeper understanding of the cultural dynamic of building academic competency of disadvantaged populations.

Data analysis. Data collected from the current study was analyzed using the lens of the conceptual framework concepts. A priori codes were used to analyze the data by examining the logical connections of the interactions between ELLs, their learning with peers and the environment around them. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of interactions on learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Stetsenko, 2017). Data will be analyzed with consideration for the different types of interactions that ELLs have with their peers, classroom and teachers which all influence their language development opportunities. Data about classroom culture were analyzed. Classroom culture influences second language acquisition (Walqui, 2018). Data collected from teacher interviews were reviewed with these concepts, which provide the context to understand the purpose of this study.

Review of the Broader Problem

In the following section, I will present literature about the broader problem in the educational discipline, namely, ELLs instructional strategies. I will review literature about three well-accepted categories of pedagogy. In addition to information about teachers' perceptions of ELL strategies and application of ELL strategies, this literature review will include three subsections that pertain to ELL instructional strategies, (a) hands-on learning, (b) peer support, and (c) differentiation. The purpose of this study was to explore elementary general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perception of how those strategies support ELL academic achievement. The research problem is that little is understood about how

elementary general education teachers apply instructional strategies for ELLs and which strategies they perceive support academic achievement. Feiman-Nemsar (2018) found that there was a lack of opportunities for general education teachers to have quality training sufficient to teach ELLs. General education teachers need the skills and strategies to provide for all of their students including ELLs.

Teachers' perceptions of successful strategies for ELLs. What follows is a review of literature that shows the current state of knowledge in the discipline about teachers' perceptions of successful strategies for ELLs in general education classes. More research is necessary to understand teachers' perceptions on different strategies to support ELLs. Strategies valued by teachers can give insight to district leaders on practices that are effective for the population within the district. Through daily work with students, teachers can identify specific student needs and differentiate strategies to meet students where they need it the most (Hegde et al., 2016). Currently, little is known about the perceptions of elementary general education teachers' perceptions on ELL strategies. Hansen-Thomas, Grosso Richins, Kakkar, and Okeyo (2016) conducted a qualitative research study on teachers' perception about teaching ELLs which utilized a survey method to identify the perception of teachers. Researchers reported that teachers felt ill-prepared to teach ELLs and needed more strategies that would benefit ELLs. Researchers concluded that more research was needed to identify specific needs that teachers have surrounding this area (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016).

Additionally, teachers' awareness of language development in ELLs is limited and needs to be increased to support ELLs with the appropriate strategies (Lindahl, 2019). Nicholas and Wells (2017) collected teacher perceptions to identify how teachers

were affected by their responsibilities to their job. The researchers concluded that teachers' perceptions provided valuable insight into teacher needs and their views of the educational community. This research also provided value to the professional development needs of teachers. Sullivan et al. (2016) examined the influence of teacher interactions specific strategies for ELLs and reported that teachers with more professional development on the needs of ELLs provided more support for ELL language development needs.

Teachers need help to develop a broader understanding of academic vocabulary development of ELLs (Mesa & Yeomans-Maldonado, 2019). Researchers found that improved comprehension of first language helped ELLs to develop second language comprehension. However, not all teachers are equipped to support language development. Yeomans-Maldonado, Justice and Logan (2019) claimed that most teachers need training to improve instructional practices that will affect language development for ELLs. Interactions between ELLs and their classroom environment, including interactions with their peers, influence language gains for students. Most teachers lack the understanding to facilitate this in their classrooms (Ribeiro & Jiang, 2020). Pentimonti, Justice, Yeomans-Maldonado, McGinty, Slocum, and O'Connell (2017) studied teacher scaffolds to support ELLs and claimed that teachers used low-support strategies more than high-support strategies. Teachers can benefit from training to implement scaffolds for ELLs. In this study, I identify current teacher strategies for ELLs to inform efforts to improve teacher training.

Application of strategies. Current research indicates that ELL instructional strategies are applied inconsistently (Roberts, 2020). Mahalingappa et al. (2018) surveyed

teacher perceptions of ELL instruction and found that teachers lacked confidence and consistent practices necessary to support ELLs. But enhanced teacher preparation improved application of support for ELLs (Miranda, Wells & Jenkins, 2019). Gottschalk (2016) reviewed teachers' misconceptions about ELLs and found that teacher misconceptions about ELLs such as lowering the curriculum standard to meet that of a lower grade or requesting the use English only throughout the school, which leads teachers to apply inappropriate scaffolds for ELLs.

Some instructional methods used to support ELLs currently employed in schools include hands-on learning and peer pairing (Pyle et al., 2017; Markova, 2017). Scaffolds and strategies are implemented in class to support students' retention of academic material (Daniel & Conlin, 2017). Teachers well versed in the needs of students and appropriate ways to implement scaffolds can increase student learning (Elreda et al, 2016). However, the lack of knowledge in applying ELL strategies are a hindrance to mainstream, general education teachers and their ability to support ELLs (Guler, 2020). Mahalingappa et al. (2018) found that teachers want to help ELLs but report not having the necessary understanding to apply sufficient strategies to support ELLs. Therefore, ELL strategies are perceived as necessary, yet not applied appropriately.

Teachers application of ELL strategies is inconsistent, which impacts students' ability to maximize their learning (Vanstant-Webb & Polychronis, 2016). Teachers tend to apply or avoid strategies for ELLs based on their personal perceptions (Hansen-Thomas, Grosso Richins, Kakkar, & Okeyo, 2016). This can influence students by providing them with inconsistent strategies which limits may ELLs' opportunities to practice and gain academic language. In addition, teachers often lack understanding of

how to support ELLs (Vanstant-Webb & Polychronis, 2016). This can contribute to the inconsistency in application of appropriate strategies.

One purpose of using ELL specific strategies is to teach academic language which is more difficult to absorb and understand. Academic language is the vocabulary used for different content subjects in school. It is important to understanding the content delivered through lessons (Master, Whitney, & Wyckoff, 2016). Academic language supports ELLs ability to meet the needs of mainstream classrooms (Master, Whitney, & Wyckoff, 2016). Researchers found that lessons that incorporated ELL strategies better supported the acquisition of academic language (Master, Whitney, & Wyckoff, 2016). Mosqueda, Bravo, Solís, Maldonado, and de La Rosa (2019) found that developing academic language for ELLs and promoting peer discourse which helped increase their classroom level performance. ELLs need a functional understanding of academic language, so they can perform well on assessment which rely heavily on application of academic language (Ransom & Esmail, 2016). Miller (2018) discovered that as more states emphasize written responses as part of their assessment criteria for students, academic language development for ELLs becomes increasingly important. Thus, teachers need to support ELLs development in academic language with ELL specific strategies.

Research-based approaches to teaching ELLs. A way to support ELLs' academic growth is to apply appropriate instructional strategies that incorporate students' ability to connect with peers, teachers, and the classroom culture. Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory suggests that learning occurs because of interactions with the environment around learners. The following review explicates three categories of teaching methods that support ELL learning and the value of professional development

for the implementation of ELL strategies. Reviewing research-based strategies provides context for understanding data collected through examining teachers' perceptions of ELL strategies deemed effective. Thus, below some research-based strategies that should be implemented and perceived as valuable for ELLs are presented.

Hands-on learning. Hands-on learning methods are used often to immerse learners in the content (Capitelli, Hooper, Rankin, Austin, & Caven, 2016). These researchers found that hands-on learning opportunities led to a deeper understanding of the content in a more discovery-based approach. This is relevant to the study in that hands-on learning releases some of the language burden on ELLs without decreasing the learning potential (Capitelli, Hooper, Rankin, Austin, & Caven, 2016). Hands-on learning also allows learners to experience learning in a semistructured way. ELLs who use hands-on learning can create their own understanding. In a mixed methods study, Markova (2017) examined ELL use of language during structured and unstructured learning times. Structured learning times included teacher led lessons and guided activities and unstructured times included time in learning centers and exploration. Markova found that ELLs engaged in more language during unstructured times. Unstructured time presented ELLs with more opportunities to gain language. This indicates that there is a benefit in planned, unstructured times, when students can practice their acquired language skills and engagement with the content. Baird, Coy, and Pocock (2015) found that ELLs had more confidence in learning opportunities that involved hands on projects. This supports the value of hands-on instruction for elementary ELLs because confidence and risk taking are important attributes of educational success.

This research is important to the study because hands-on learning is a research-based strategy that supports learning for ELLs. Hands-on instruction is described as a way for ELLs to practice academic content (Short, 2013). Gupta (2019) explained that teachers should modify instructions for ELLs with methods such as hands-on learning opportunities. Huzeiff (2017) reported that hand-on learning opportunities support student learning. Therefore, hands-on learning is an important concept related to the research problem of the current study because it is a valid research-based strategy to increase ELL learning. Research-based strategies such as hands-on learning are beneficial to ELLs' academic achievement (Huzeiff, 2017). The RQ posed by this study is to understand the perceptions of teachers on different ELL strategies and their perceived effectiveness. Therefore, examining research-based strategies such as hands-on learning gives context to the study.

Peer support. Peer support is another way to promote ELL content engagement and learning. Peer support improves ELLs' ability to learn in a comfortable environment with language support (Klingbeil et al., 2017). Klingbeil found that peer support was beneficial to ELLs in learning academic concepts. Peer support is a method used by teachers to promote students helping each other. Students within the class with clear understanding of academic concepts support students with limited understanding of those concepts who focus on strategies that emphasize peer support demonstrate their understanding interactions within the classroom that support ELL academic achievement. Peer support for ELLs increases their engagement with academic content (de Oliveira, Gilmetdinova, & Pelaez-Morales, 2016). The current study aims to explore elementary general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their

perception of the effectiveness of those strategies on ELL academic achievement. It provides insight into use of strategies such as peer support.

Peer support in the classroom can be an effective instructional strategy for ELLs. Pyle et al. (2017) suggested that peer support helped ELL phonological awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. Pyle conducted a study that used a strategy called peer pairing, where ELLs were paired with non-ELLs to complete tasks. This allowed ELLs to view other native speakers and learn language through their peers. Through this strategy, ELLs are able to learn from their native English-speaking peers and students have successful experiences within the classroom. Also, Bowman-Perrott et al. (2016) found that peer support was facilitated use of language models. This is relevant to the current study because peer pairing uses interactions within the classroom to support ELLs academically. Furthermore, Cardimona (2018) reviewed ELL instructional strategies in which ELLs were able to use discourse and communication with peers to support their learning. Cardimona (2018) found that this peer strategy successfully increased ELL content engagement and achievement. Peer support aligns with ELLs' need to connect with the classroom culture, peers, and teachers. It is an important concept for this study because this is research-based strategy the promotes ELLs academic achievement.

Differentiation. Teachers perceptions about the different ELL strategies and their reported application of these strategies are reviewed within this study. Their perceptions of these research-based strategies contribute to the understanding of teaching currently applied in mainstream classrooms. Specifically, differentiation is a key method to teaching and assessing that enables all students an opportunity to display their learning and acquire new knowledge. Application of differentiated materials for students provides

scaffolds for learning (Coppens, 2018). ELLs need support and varied strategies that incorporate their specific needs (Wiley & Mckernan, 2016). Differentiating instructional strategies and student work allows ELLs to exhibit their learning without penalizing them for their lack of knowledge in one area. This is because students are given support to help utilize the language that they have and use supports such as word banks to facilitate areas where they lack knowledge (Coppens, 2018). Instructional strategies that are effective for one student, might not be effective for another. Calderon and Zamora (2014) found that teacher perceptions of the validity and effectiveness of differentiated teaching strategies were a significant predictor of its effectiveness. They stated that this was because they found that if teachers had a positive attitude toward differentiation strategies than they were more likely to apply them and have success with the strategy. This is important to the present study because research-based strategies are important to the academic achievement of ELLs and differentiation has proven benefits for ELLs.

Research-based strategies are important to the academic achievement of ELLs and differentiation is a research-based strategy that can benefit ELLs. Differentiation of instruction can build students' language skills because students have an opportunity to display strengths and get scaffolds to support weaker areas (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). This allows teachers to support students' strengths without penalizing them for language deficits. Differentiated instruction allows ELLs to increase their academic knowledge and connect new learning to their prior knowledge (Brown & Endo, 2017). Differentiated instruction that focuses on discourse and communication can support ELLs' academic achievement by providing opportunities to verbalize their answers to peers or small groups rather than traditional call and response methods used within

mainstream (Cardimona, 2018). Differentiation is a beneficial method to increasing ELLs' academic achievement by supporting their strengths and providing scaffolds for their weaknesses.

SIOP. The SIOP model has 30 features and eight components targeted toward meeting the needs of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The eight components of this model are lesson preparation, building background, comprehensive input, strategies, interactions, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment (Echevarria et al., 2012). Each of the components have features that are examples of how these components can be implemented within the classroom (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). Some districts employ this model as research-based strategies to improve instructional quality for ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

SIOP is widely used to improve teachers' application of ELL specific strategies. These strategies support students' ability to absorb academic language and provide built in scaffolds that fold into best practices. These practices include word banks, building background knowledge, use of pictures to support new vocabulary, and sentence stems (Short, 2013). Koura and Zaharan (2017) found that the SIOP model was widely successful in the classroom and teachers perceived it as effective. William, Pringle and Kilgore (2019), found that strategies specific for ELLs were successful and necessary. Further, hands-on learning opportunities are also a component of the Sheltered Instruction Operational Protocol (SIOP) model that scaffolds learning opportunities for ELLs and provides a path to access academic material in a concrete way (Short, 2013). This is an important aspect of planning and necessary for teachers to be aware and use ELL specific strategies.

Application of this model is beneficial to raising the test scores of ELLs. Gates and Feng (2018) investigated the influence of using the SIOP model with a group of students and compared the reading achievement of those students to a group that was not exposed to the SIOP model. They found that the group with the SIOP model applied performed higher on reading assessments. De Jager (2019) found that effective instruction aided in the improvement of lesson delivery, assessment and review for ELLs. SIOP components place an emphasis on many different areas of teaching including lesson planning, delivery and assessment. This emphasis aids in the overall improvements of strategies. He, Journell and Faircloth (2015) examined the integration of SIOP intentional planning and strategy application in social studies instruction and found favorable increases in the quality of instruction for ELLs. Quality instruction is important to student academic growth. Application of SIOP is beneficial to students.

SIOP training helps teachers perceive teaching ELLs as easier than without SIOP training (Song, 2016). Reints (2019) claimed that professional development on the SIOP model helped teachers improve their instructional quality. It was beneficial to teachers to understand the different components of the model and how to implement them. Research-based strategies such as the ones outlined in SIOP help ELLs access material presented in class. Therefore, research-based strategies should be implemented in mainstream classrooms. This study will investigate teachers' perceived effectiveness of such strategies and which strategies are valued by teachers in mainstream elementary classrooms. If teachers perceive strategies as valuable or easy, then they are more likely to implement them in their instruction (Koura & Zarhan, 2017). Training on SIOP can be

an avenue for teachers to access appropriate strategies to implement for ELLs in their classroom.

Professional development. Professional development may introduce teachers to implementing different strategies for ELLs. Carley (2017) found that there is a need for appropriate professional development about feasible ways to incorporate ELL specific strategies within the mainstream elementary classrooms. General education teachers need the skills and strategies to provide for all their students, including ELLs (Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019). Professional development trainings are advantageous because it enables teachers to learn skills to differentiate instruction to target learning needs and respond to specific issues such as strategies for ELLs (Dixon et al., 2014). Teachers need training and tools to help students. There is confusion on how to incorporate appropriate strategies for ELLs within mainstream classrooms (Song, 2016). Song (2016) further explained that there is a need to incorporate additional strategies for teaching ELLs within general education teachers' professional development to fill in gaps of knowledge not acknowledged in teacher preparation programs. Professional development is empowering to teachers (Franco-Fuenmayor, Padrón, & Waxman 2015). More information is necessary to understand how ELL specific strategies are used within the classroom and their perceived effectiveness.

Implications

I used the findings to develop a 3-day professional development presentation for general education teachers about ELL instructional practices (see Appendix A). The three-day presentation supports teachers' ability to implement strategies for ELLs and view the effectiveness of these strategies (Egbert & Shahrokni, 2019; Song, 2016).

Researchers Nicholas and Wells (2017) collected teacher perceptions to identify how teachers were affected by their responsibilities to their job. Nicholas and Wells (2017) concluded that teachers' perceptions provided valuable insight into teacher needs and their views of the educational community. This research also provided value to the professional development needs of teachers. The findings from the study will increase understanding of the strategies used within the research classrooms and how participants apply research-based strategies for ELLs.

Summary

In summary, the local district has identified that ELLs perform lower than their native English-speaking peers in state standardized testing (Maryland School District, 2015). There is a need to understand how students are taught within the classroom and how it aligns to the district's ideals and research-based practices that have been taught within the district. Teachers' perceptions of strategies that are important to student achievement are important to understanding the discrepancies between practice and outcome. Understanding teachers' perceptions and understanding how strategies are used within their classrooms, can provide an understanding of how ELL strategies are implemented. In the following section, a review of methodology and data collection are presented.

Section 2: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore elementary general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perception of how those strategies support ELL academic achievement. The research problem was the lack of understanding of how elementary general education teachers apply instructional strategies for ELLs and which strategies they perceive support academic achievement. In this section, I will present the design of the study and provide the rationale for its selection. Other aspects of the study such as participants, role of the researcher, and data collection and analysis methods are also presented in this section. Lastly, the methods to ensure trustworthiness are explained.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

I used a basic qualitative methodological approach in this study. This approach was logically derived from the problem and RQs because both focus on teachers' perceptions of ELL specific instructional practices. Qualitative research is appropriate for exploring teachers' perceptions of ELL strategies and their perceived effectiveness (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and collecting data on participants' perceptions (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012) described qualitative research as an investigation of understanding based on distinct methodological procedures of inquiry that can be used to explore a social or human problem. For this study, the problem was the limited understanding of how elementary general education teachers apply instructional strategies for ELLs and which strategies they perceive support academic achievement. This approach is appropriate for investigating perceptions. Qualitative studies are used to investigate a phenomenon that the researcher does not control (Singh, 2007; Mills,

Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010), and I also investigated a phenomenon that I did not control. In addition, qualitative approaches provide the researcher with the opportunity to interpret data as the information is collected (Frey, 2017). Also, qualitative approaches are often used to explore personal thoughts, intricate situations, and to construct themes (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). In this study, I sought to identify common themes within teachers' perceptions. Themes help researchers understand and organize the data collected (Creswell, 2015; Lewis, 2015). Thematic analysis supported my ability to investigate the phenomenon of teachers' perceptions.

The specific research design I used was the basic qualitative methodology. Researchers conduct basic qualitative studies to understand a phenomenon or perspectives (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). They also use these designs when the research does not clearly identify with the characteristics of more common forms of qualitative research such as case study or grounded theory (Merriam, 2009). This study's research design fell into the basic qualitative category because I intended to understand perspectives through participant interviews only. The appropriateness of the basic qualitative design in the current study is further supported by Song and Del Castillo's (2015) use of the basic qualitative design and interviews to identify teacher perceptions. They were able to identify and use the perceptions of teachers as their primary data point. González-Toro et al. (2020) also used a basic qualitative research design with interviews to investigate teachers' perceptions. The researchers were able to identify themes through participant interviews that provided essential data about teacher perceptions of the student teaching experience. The basic qualitative design is used to discover attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and a process (Worthington, 2013). This design is often used when

the research design does not fall within a single established methodology, yet still falls within the qualitative category, such as in this study.

Furthermore, the basic qualitative design was appropriate to investigate this research problem within the key constructs of interactions between the teachers, students and classroom culture. In this study, the theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Krashan (1981) that interactions support language development served as a foundation. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Krashan's language development theory are premised on the notion that language is developed because of a desire to interact with one's environment. These theories acknowledge of the benefits of interactions for students in school and further justified the use of the basic qualitative design, which is beneficial when the researcher has some previous understanding of the subject (Percey, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015).

I considered but opted not to use other methods such as phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnography. Researchers conduct phenomenological studies to investigate a phenomenon in a person's life (Frey, 2018). This qualitative method did not fit this research problem because I did not investigate a particular phenomenon in a person's life. Grounded theory was considered but rejected because I did not investigate or create a theory. Grounded theory focuses on the creation of a theory (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2015). Last, ethnography was also considered and rejected. Ethnographical studies require researchers to immerse themselves into the research setting and culture (Allen, 2017). This was not be possible for me because the research sites are varied and a prohibitive amount of time with participants would be necessary to provide sufficient depth to the study.

The qualitative approach and basic qualitative design supported the investigation of teachers' perceptions of ELL strategies and their perceived effectiveness. This research design is appropriate for collecting data on participants' experiences and perceptions. Qualitative research lends itself to developing an understanding of an experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which I collected through interviews which investigated teachers' perceptions. Creswell (2015) described qualitative research as an investigation of understanding based on distinct methodological procedures of inquiry that are used to explore a social or human problem. The problem investigated in this current study was that little is understood about how elementary general education teachers apply instructional strategies for ELLs and which strategies they perceive support academic achievement. The qualitative approach and basic qualitative design were appropriate for this particular research study because of the flexibility they offered to investigate elementary teaching practices for ELLs through the lens of teachers' perceptions.

Participants

This study had participation from 11 elementary general education teachers. The teachers had varied years of experience of teaching. Each teacher had at least two or more ELL students within their class, and many of the teachers had more than half of their students identified as ELLs. Teachers selected as participants of this study were mainstream general education teachers. This ensured that participants were familiar with the needs of ELLs and have experience using ELL specific strategies in the general education classroom. This provided the study with valuable insight into the application of ELL strategies in the mainstream classroom.

Sampling and Justification of Sample Size

The sampling strategy was purposeful sampling. I recruited participants who worked with ELLs within their classroom, which provided vital information to contribute to the current study's purpose because of participants' classroom demographics.

Purposeful sampling refers to the researcher's selection of individuals who align with the needs of the study based on certain indicators or qualities (Creswell, 2015; Yin, 2014).

Purposeful sampling is helpful in providing an in-depth understanding of the research topic (Patton, 2015). In order to understand the perceptions of teachers on ELL-specific strategies, it was necessary to recruit teachers who teach ELLs for the data collection.

Eleven participants were an appropriate sample size for this study because it met the data saturation needs for this study. I was able to collect in-depth data and still allow participants to maintain their uniqueness (see Palinkas et al., 2017). This sample size ($N = 11$) is appropriate to investigate teachers' perceptions and their application of strategies that improved academic achievement for ELLs. Patton (2015) explained that qualitative studies generally contain a small sample size to gain the necessary depth to the data and maintain balance. There is no exact number of participants; however, there should be an adequate number of participants to answer the RQs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As few as six participants can provide the necessary data for a qualitative study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Eleven participants met the sampling needs of this study because I was able to collect in-depth perceptions to answer the RQs with enough data saturation to identify patterns.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

What follows are my steps to gaining access to participants. First, I received written IRB approval. Then, I emailed teachers directly to participate in the study. District approval was not necessary because teachers were interviewed outside of the physical school building in a virtual format and outside of the school day. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants could have declined participation at any time (Ross, Iguchi, & Panicker, 2018). I reviewed schools within the district that have high ELL populations and reach out to teachers within those schools. I chose schools with 30% or more ELLs within their school demographic based on the school report card. Within the recruitment email, I explained the purpose of my study as well as the time requirements per interview, which was approximately 45 – 60 minutes. I emailed all general education teachers at five schools within the district. I obtained electronic consent from all 11 participants before I scheduled the interview. I explained that interviews are voluntary and the findings will be valuable and contribute to the educational community (Hu et al., 2014).

Researcher and Participant Relationship

There were no relational conflicts with data collection since I am not an employee at any of the research schools (Alexakos, 2015). I had a previous relationship with three of the participants because I was a previous colleague, however I no longer work with or have any supervisory roles with any participants of this study. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with elementary general education teachers (Pathak & Intrat, 2016). I interviewed the teachers to support the exploration of the RQs through the lens of the conceptual framework (King, Horracks & Brooks, 2018). Before the interview, I offered to answer any questions or concerns participants had about the study

to allow participants to feel more comfortable about the study. During the interview, I developed a good rapport with the participants by reflectively listening and answering questions that they had during the interview. Trust and communication were important aspects of the interview. I wanted participants to know that I valued their time and participation. I ensured that participants were aware of their rights.

Protection of Participant Rights

Although I previously worked with some of the participants, I do not hold and did not previously hold any supervisory role while working with them. I no longer work for the research school. Participants were made aware that participation in the study was completely voluntary, non-evaluative, and not compensated. To protect the participants' privacy, all identifying points were removed from the interview protocol and contact sheet. I provided a consent form that outlined their rights and our confidentiality agreement; and I carefully reviewed it with them (Ben-Shahar, 2014). Participants had the right to opt out of the study at any time, they were be provided with a summary of how the study will be used, and I explained how their identity was protected. Participants were asked all of the questions on the interview protocol but could decline to answer any questions. No identifying questions were asked other than their years of experience and grade level. Participants will also be made aware of the study's findings once completed. For the purposes of this study, each participant was assigned a number to improve confidentiality (Surmiak, 2018). Participants were made aware that their interviews were audio recorded, only used for the study, and disposed of appropriately after the appropriate time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All these factors were explained to each participant and discussed prior to the interview, to develop and maintain trust and an

appropriate researcher to participant relationship (McGrath., Palmgren, & Liljedah, 2019).

Data Collection

Teacher interviews are the only data source to identifying teachers' perceptions for this study. I used a semistructured interview protocol that contained open-ended questions based on the constructs of the conceptual framework (see Appendix B). Data collection for the study is appropriate for qualitative research because interviews are a typical qualitative data collection method (Baillie, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The semistructured interview protocol was researcher-created and closely aligned to the RQs with careful consideration of the relevant constructs of the conceptual framework (Castillio-Montonya, 2016). The appropriateness of this approach is supported by Chandra-Handa (2020) who also used interviews to identify teacher's perceptions and found interviews useful to collecting and understanding teachers' perceptions. The RQs, designed to identify the perceptions of teachers about ELL specific strategies, lend themselves to the method of interviews (Pathak & Intratat, 2016). Qualitative research studies with semistructured interviews often report on perceptions of individuals; likewise, in this study I seek to explore the perceptions of elementary general education teachers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Processes for Data Collection and System for Data Tracking

Before any data were collected or participants are selected, IRB approval was obtained. Then, I emailed different teachers at select schools with large ELL populations in the district to gather participant volunteers. I recruited teachers from school sites with 35 % or more students identified as ELLs based on demographic information provided on

the state report card. This ensured that teachers would have experience teaching ELLs. I created one spreadsheet that I used to organized the participants, their preferred interview platform, interview times, thank you notes and member checks. During the interview, notes were taken on the interview protocol next to each question to support the understanding of the information provided (Lodico et al., 2010). I used a new protocol for each of the participants and stored it digitally. I created another spreadsheet to organize the codes and notes from the data. These sources of data collection supported my understanding of elementary general education teachers' perceptions of ELL strategies and the perceived benefits of the strategies. The interviews with teachers who teach ELLs provided rich and meaningful data (Lodico et al., 2010).

I allowed participants to choose a time to meet that worked best for them within a pre-selected range, conducted the interviews virtually, and gained consent for recording the interview before starting (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014). Each interview was approximately 45 to 60 minutes based on the participant responses. I took notes on the interview protocol during the interviews as well as record Zoom interviews. I had a different protocol sheet for each participant to keep notes as needed (Arzel, 2017). I kept the notes in a digital folder labeled with the participant's number for the document name. I kept all interview notes in the digital folder. The digital folder is on the external hard drive. After the interview, participants were thanked for their time and their openness.

Gaining Access to Participants

In order to gain access to participants, I followed the same procedure as outlined above. I obtained written IRB approval (9-16-20 0580299). I reached out to the district's research and evaluation department and asked if they had a formal procedure for the data

type that I collected for this study. The director of the research and evaluation department from the district stated that a formal application was only necessary if I was going to need the district's help to recruit or use their facilities to collect data. I did not need either for this study. I recruited participants through email. I emailed five schools with 35% or higher ELL population as identified on the state's report card. I emailed each general education teacher at these five schools. I had 11 participants reply and sign the virtual consent form (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014). These 11 participants were used in this study. If more than 11 participants were to reply, only the first 11 would be considered.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, my role was to recruit, select and interview the participants, collect, organize, and analyze the interview data (Creswell, 2016; Cho & Lee, 2014). I established a good rapport with the participants, interviewed them to understand their perceptions and interpreted their answers to the interview questions. I used the interview protocol to ask questions to help investigate the RQs. I audio recorded and transcribed the interviews and the transcripts. I gathered the data and organized their responses. Once I organized the data, I coded and interpreted the data (Merriam, 2009). I used the codes to interpret the data and create themes which answered the RQs. Additionally, I used the themes to understand the research problem.

Although I previously worked at one of the research schools, I no longer work at the research school. I did not have any supervisory roles within the school. I do not have any relationship with any of the participants other than as a previous colleague.

Participants were made aware that they can opt-out of the study at any time and their

participation is voluntary (McGrath, Palmgren, & Liljedah, 2019). Participants did not receive compensation or benefits for participations and were made aware of their rights. In order to mitigate possible biases, I asked each participant to review a portion of the transcript to ensure statements reflected what their responses and practiced reflective listening to ensure that I had interpreted the meaning of their data appropriately. Throughout the interview, I ensured that my personal preconceptions did not interfere with the development of the trust with participants (Nobel & Smith, 2015). Researchers should carefully consider their data collection methods and maintain an appropriate relationship with participants to prevent the adverse effects of participant bias (Livari, 2018). I maintained an appropriate relationship with participants through the previously mentioned methods.

Data Analysis

I used Creswell's (2015) steps for analyzing data to analyze the data collected from the 11 interviews. These steps include (a) organize and prepare, (b) review, (c) code, (d) identify themes and (e) interpret.

Organize and Prepare

I organized the data analysis process in advance by creating an interview protocol for all of the participants and a spreadsheet to organize the interview schedule and participant information. This allowed me to honor my participant's time and keep track of the data that I collected. Keeping important notes during the interview supported my ability to understand the participants' perspectives (Roulston, 2010). For example, when I noticed a participant was excited about a subject or repeatedly mentioned a topic, I noted it on the interview sheet (Young, Zubrzycki & Plath, 2020). I created folders for

each type of data and labeled it based on the participant number and type of data, such as audio, transcript, and protocol. This allowed me to have all the data at one location (Lewis, 2015). All data were collected and stored electronically. Data were backed up on an external drive and password protected. I will store the data for five years. Organizing the data is important to ensure that all the participant's information is accessible to review (Phelps, Fisher & Ellis, 2007). Interviews were recorded with participant permission and transcribed afterwards with the Temi software. I reviewed the transcripts with the audio and revised any mistakes the software made while transcribing the transcripts. I ensured that the audio and transcripts matched through the side-by-side feature.

Review

I reviewed the data by using the following steps. I printed out the transcripts for each participant and labeled the top with their number. I slowly reviewed the transcripts to ensure that I was interpreting the information correctly (Phelps, Fisher & Ellis, 2007). I read and took notes on the interview transcripts. I highlighted each of the a priori codes and emergent codes in different colors. This created a visual representation of the initial codes. I transferred the initial codes to a spreadsheet to keep track of commonalities among the participants. This allowed me to understand common codes (Saldana, 2015). I continued to review the transcripts and audio to immerse myself in the data. This allowed me to clearly understand the information I collected through the interviews (Creswell, 2015). Reviewing the transcripts and audio many times supported my understanding of the information the participants provided through the interview.

A Priori Codes

I constructed some a priori codes based on the conceptual framework and analyzed the interview data with these codes first. These codes included (a) interactions, (b) research-based strategies, (c) beneficial to ELLs and (d) culture (Vygotsky, 1978). Upon the third review of the data, I started to identify these a priori codes and mark them each with a different highlighting color. I noted these a priori codes in margins of the printed transcripts (Lodico et al., 2010). This helped organize these codes and create a visual of the patterns within the transcripts (Saldana, 2015). A priori codes supported my analysis of the constructs of the conceptual framework. I conducted coding by following these steps. While I reviewed the transcripts, I identified initial codes based on the conceptual framework concepts of culture, research-based strategies, interactions and connections. A priori coding allows the researcher to have some preliminary codes in advance of data collection. I based these on the conceptual framework (Swain, 2018). I reviewed the data for the a priori codes first. Then, I put the initial codes into an excel spreadsheet organized by participants and reviewed the commonalities between them and emergent codes. This allowed me to understand the codes that I found in the data because I was able to visualize the commonalities in the data (Saldana, 2015).

Emergent Codes

After identifying the a priori codes within the interview transcripts, I reviewed the transcripts for emergent codes. Emergent codes are codes that naturally occur within the data (Cho & Lee, 2014; Creswell, 2016). I reviewed the transcripts again and created a preliminary table to identify the a priori and emergent codes. Tables create a visual for data analysis. I was able to organize the codes based on frequency in the data set. After

thoroughly analyzing the transcripts for emergent codes, I created a coding table (see Appendix C). The coding table is beneficial to identifying patterns and organizing data (Saldana, 2015).

Categories and Themes

Then, I merged the codes into categories. Once the codes became clearer, I was able to identify the categories of codes (Deterding & Waters, 2018). I refined the codes into categories by combining clusters of codes. For example, the codes connections, native language, and unstructured talk time were combined into the category of interactional supports. Categories organize the data further to create a clear distinction in the types of codes (Saldana, 2015). Creating categories helped identify further connections between the codes (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2009). I was able to identify several categories which I later merged into larger categories. The categories found in this data set are (a) instructional strategies, (b) culture-based supports, (c) interactional supports and (d) perceptions of strategies. I analyzed the categories for alignment with the RQs. Using the coding table, I was able to further merge the categories into themes which helps build my interpretation of the findings.

I put all the codes into a table, an excerpt of which is provided in Appendix C for reference (see Saldana, 2015). Then, I reviewed and refined the codes to create broader categories. I identified themes by refining and collapsing categories that were similar (Braun et al., 2019). I started with a priori and emergent codes. Then, I identified categories such as instructional strategies and interactional supports. Afterwards, I used the categories to identify themes and combined categories to expand to themes that answered the RQs (Creswell, 2016; Lodico et al, 2013). For example, I used the

instructional strategies category and the whole-group strategies to create the initial theme, “teachers use varied ELL strategies for the whole group.” For another example, I started with some strategies that I listed as emergent codes, such as hands-on, peer pairing and visuals. I put those codes into a strategy category. Then, I looked at how the codes connected and created themes. Because teachers only applied strategies that were familiar to them, I created the theme, “teachers applied varied and familiar strategies.” I identified five themes from the categories.

Interpretation

I used the categories to identify themes that answered the RQs. I interpreted the themes based on Vygotsky’s (1978) and Krashan’s (1981) concepts. For example, the initial theme, “teachers use varied ELL strategies for the whole group” was further refined by merging it with the category of best practices. Once done, I created the theme that “ELL specific strategies were referred to as best practices and applied for all students.” I used the sociocultural theory concept of interactions to interpret the theme as essential to answering RQ 1 (Castrillón, 2015). I reviewed all the categories and themes through the constructs of the conceptual framework which are (a) peer interactions, (b) student and teacher interactions and (c) interactions with the culture. Five themes emerged from the data that supported my understanding of the RQs and local problem. These are presented in this subsection.

Evidence of Quality and Discrepant Cases

Ensuring the trustworthiness of the data is important. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data in the current study, I conducted member checking after data collection and practiced reflective listening during data collection. Additionally, I

reviewed the interviews carefully for discrepant cases. Member checking allowed me to validate interview data by checking my interpretation with participants (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Frey, 2015). Reflective listening allowed me to ensure I was collecting the most accurate data by asking participants to validate my collection of their perception during the interview (Yin, 2014). Additionally, reviewing for discrepant cases supported the validity of my findings. Rose and Johnson (2020) referred to discrepant cases as necessary to analyze, revise and broaden the findings in qualitative studies. These methods allowed me to validate the trustworthiness of the data collected.

Data Analysis Results

Data Collection Process

The problem addressed by this study is that little is understood about how elementary general education teachers apply instructional strategies for ELLs and which strategies they perceive support academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to explore elementary general education teachers' reported application of ELL instructional strategies and their perception of how those strategies support ELL academic achievement. I sought to answer two questions:

RQ 1: What ELL instructional strategies do elementary general education teachers report applying in their class?

RQ 2: From the perspective of elementary general education teachers, which ELL instructional strategies support ELL academic achievement?

The data were analyzed through the lens of the conceptual framework, based on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1978) and key constructs of Krashan's Second Language Acquisition theory (1981). These key constructs include (a) teachers'

interactions with students, as well as (b) interactions between peers, and (c) the classroom culture. To investigate the problem and RQs, I interviewed 11 elementary general education teachers.

Data Collection and Recording

I emailed a recruitment letter to prospective participants; and if they expressed interest in participating in the study, I sent the consent form. Once I received formal consent from the participant, I sent them the link to the interview platform. All participants opted for the Zoom platform. Virtual methods for interviews can be beneficial to meeting participants in a convenient location and time away from their workplaces (Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016) Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes. I started each interview with an introduction and informal conversation. This helped to put the participants at ease and build rapport (Weller, 2017). Garbarski and Schaeffer (2016) build positive rapport with their interviewees and found that it was important to their comfort level. During the interview, I listened reflectively to ensure understanding of the participant's responses (Merriam, 2009). This supported my collection of accurate data because participants were able to state if my interpretations were correct (Frey, 2015). I wrote notes on the interview protocol to capture important aspects of the interview (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001; Roulston, 2010). I listened attentively and reflectively to understand the participant's perspective.

Transcript Analysis

The audio was recorded for the study and transcribed using Temi transcription software. The first interview was transcribed and reviewed with my chair to address any areas for probing that were missed. This helped identify areas for improvement for the

rest of the interviews (Oates, 2015). After using the software to transcribe the audio, I exported the transcripts to word documents. I reviewed the transcripts against the audio recording for accuracy (Lewis, 2015). Then, I read the transcripts to familiarize myself with the data. Data familiarity is necessary to start identifying patterns (Kowel & O'Connell, 2014). Upon the third reading of the transcript, I underlined the RQs. I reviewed the transcripts several times which is ideal for data analysis (Cleary et al., 2014).

Coding

I used a combination of a priori and emergent coding. The process that I used was as follows. After reviewing the frequency and commonalities of the initial codes in the first coding table, I created another table with the a priori codes, emergent codes, categories, themes and interview excerpts. This allowed me to organize the data (Saldana, 2015). I reviewed the transcripts many times to identify all of the emergent codes (Cho & Lee, 2014). As I reviewed the data, I was able to add more codes to the table (Lodico et al., 2013). Once all of the codes were collected, I started identifying categories.

The categories were based on the type of code (Lodico et al., 2013). For example, all codes that had to do with strategies, were placed in the category ELL instructional practices. This allowed me to answer RQ 1, which was “what instructional practices do elementary general education teachers report applying in their classrooms.” I continued to identify codes and categories that helped answer RQ 2. Codes were identified from the transcripts. Data were consolidated, reduced and interpreted to identify the themes that emerged (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, all participants were contacted virtually for member checking. Through member checking, I ensured the trustworthiness of the data

(Yin, 2014). I identified themes from the categories that I established during the second round of coding.

I merged the categories to create themes that conceptualize the findings of this study. For example, I started with the category that “research-based strategies for all students” and then was able merge it further with “whole group strategies” and create the theme, ELL strategies were referenced as best practices and applied for all students. I chose categories to merge based on the similarities between the categories. Condensing categories supported building a clearer picture of the data (Saldana, 2015; Creswell, 2016). I merged categories based on their relation to each other. For example, I merged whole group strategies and research-based strategies since they overlapped in participant references and once, I refined the themes further, I was able to identify five themes highlighted below. Braun et al. (2019) suggested that having a smaller number of themes is ideal to keep the finding clear. The themes were applied to building the findings of this study by aligning each theme to corresponding the RQ (Merriam, 2009). Then, I organized the themes based on their alignment with the RQs. Table 1 shows the alignment.

Table 1

Findings From the Research Questions

Findings for RQ 1	
Theme	Number of participants who reported
ELL strategies were referenced as best practices and applied for all students.	11
Teachers use familiar and varied instructional strategies to meet ELLs' academic needs.	11
Findings for RQ 2	
Theme	Number of participants who reported
Elementary general education teachers perceive student confidence as necessary for academic gains and prefer strategies that encourage socio-emotional development.	7
Building connections for ELLs is important for their conceptual understanding.	6
Emergent theme	
Theme	Number of participants who reported
Teachers want purposeful and relevant professional development to meet ELLs' various academic needs.	6

Findings

Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was, What ELL instructional strategies do elementary general education teachers report applying in their classes? Themes one and two address this question and provide insight into the instructional strategies applied in elementary general education classrooms. Themes three and four address RQ 2. Theme 5 does not address either RQ; it emerged from the interview data. The first theme was that participants referenced ELL strategies as best practices and applied for all students. The second theme was that teachers use varied and familiar instructional strategies to meet ELLs' academic needs use varied and familiar instructional strategies to meet ELLs' academic needs.

Theme 1: ELL-Specific Strategies Were Referred to as Best Practices and Were Applied for All Students (Even Non-ELLs). The first theme that emerged from the data was that ELL specific strategies such as visuals, sentence starters, hands on experiences, and word banks were applied for the whole group and regarded as best practices for all students. All 11 participants stated that they apply some ELL specific strategies and apply it for the whole group. Participants within this study applied these strategies as universal scaffolds in teaching and not as a particular ELL strategy. Participant 10 stated "...some of the [ELL] strategies are just best practice for teaching. They help all students." Participant 2 stated "it [ELL strategies] is just best practices for all students. So, it helps all of the students." Furthermore, participant 4 detailed "I will use it [ELL strategies] for the whole class and I think it works with all students, ELL, or special ed or general ed, because it helps them become involved in it [content]."

Participant 7 described ELL strategies as important for all students to gain access to the content and referred to the scaffolds as whole class strategies. She stated “We don't leave them [non-ELLs] out. Everyone gets the scaffolds.” Participant 10 asserted that “It is just good practices. I don't even see it as different strategies for ESOL students. Especially since so much of the class is ESOL, or English language learners...that's the norm, ...” She also went on to say, “And I found a lot of those strategies also work really well with special education students too.” Participant 11 acknowledged that these strategies are best practices for all students and stated “I think the strategies that I use with ELL students, I think it also benefits English-speaking students as well. Specifically, giving them [students] that extra wait time and not just calling on someone right away [helps], because, once you do that, everyone else tunes out.” Thus, applying ELL strategies for the whole class was perceived as beneficial for student engagement and achievement.

This aligns with previous research and the conceptual framework concepts of interactions. Tellèz and Manthey (2015) inferred that teachers preferred whole group strategies for ELLs. Feasibility and reaching all students efficiently are a concern for educators and whole group strategies allow teachers to reach more students at one time (Nagaro, Hooks & Frazer, 2016). Samalot-Rivera, Treadwell, and Sato (2017) claimed that teacher implementation of ELL instructional strategies for the whole class is beneficial. It also supports Krashan's theory of the use of teacher to student interactions to develop language (Lowen & Sato, 2018). Teachers' concerns for feasibility is further validated by Coady et al. (2019) who emphasized teacher's preference for whole group strategies to support students rather than differentiating for specific groups.

Theme 2: Teachers Used Various Familiar Instructional Strategies to Meet ELLs' Academic Needs. Teachers chose strategies based on their preference and familiarity rather than strategies specific for ELLs. All 11 general, education teachers used some strategies within the classroom. Table 2 below displays the various strategies reported by participants. Teachers stated that various strategies worked together to support ELL academic achievement and some strategies at the same time, during the same lesson. For example, all participants reported using visuals to help students understand the directions or the vocabulary, however if the visual was not enough, zero participants report trying a new strategy. Instead, participants reported using the same strategy in a different way. Participants reported using vocabulary strategies, modeling, scaffolding and small groups often within the same lesson. This aligns with the conceptual framework construct of culture supporting language acquisitions. The classroom culture of familiar strategies support students' language development (Badrkhani, 2019). Participant 2 stated "one good strategy for introducing new topics would be to front load some vocabulary. Since that's often an area that the students are lacking. It also helps when you have the visual, like the picture and the word posted on a vocabulary wall in the classroom to help the students. Anchor charts help as well." Participant 6 stated "So I create a lot of images for them, so they know how to log in and complete the work. And, I use a lot of models." Participant 10 explained, "So we use a lot of motions, songs and pictures that go along with pretty much everything [content]. I add in pictures and motions [into the lesson]. It is nice to see students understand the content because of the strategy." Participants described various strategies that they used for both in-person and virtual lessons to support ELLs, such as visuals, sentence frames,

frontloading vocabulary, videos and building connections with prior knowledge as frequently used strategies. Although teachers use different strategies to support ELLs, teachers preferred to use the same strategies and modify the strategy. Teachers applied strategies Participant 7 stated “If the sentence starter didn’t work then I just change the stem, there are so many that you can use.” Additionally, Participant 3 stated, “I use sentence starters, visuals, models, and just those kinds of strategies.” This indicates there is a teacher preference for familiar strategies.

This theme aligns with what one would expect from the findings in the literature review. Participants prefer to use various but familiar strategies and need familiarity with more strategies to implement. According to Hilliker and Laletina, (2019) teachers apply strategies that they are familiar with in their instructional practice and do not intentionally seek other strategies. Researchers go on to say that teachers use similar strategies consistently and time is a hindrance to acquiring new strategies. Murphy and Torff (2018) asserted that teachers prefer to use feasible strategies and modify the curriculum to support ELLs. Most participants applied many strategies that were not specific for ELLs and preferred strategies based on their feasibility with English-speaking students. Mahalingappa et al. (2018) found that teachers lacked consistent practices necessary to support ELLs. According to Krashan’s second language acquisition theory (1981), students need ample opportunities to practice with the new language and support to gain the new language. This theme informs RQ 1 because it identifies that teachers used strategies that they found familiar rather than basing strategies on specific students’ needs.

Table 2

Frequency Table

Strategies Reported by Each Participant	
Strategy	Number of participants who reported
Realia	4
Visuals	11
Build background	9
Sentence frames	9
Scaffolding	6
Peer pairs	6
Vocabulary instruction	3
Unstructured talking	6
Modeling	11
Reduce Workload	4
Songs	3
Translation	8

Findings for Research Question 2

To answer RQ 2, I analyzed the data for patterns and using sociocultural and language acquisitions theory constructs. RQ 2 asked, “from the perspective of elementary general education teachers, which ELL instructional strategies support ELL academic achievement?” The analysis indicated (a) that elementary teachers perceive that when they encourage student self-confidence it can be beneficial to ELL academic gains, and that (b) building connections to the content and their native language for ELLs is important for their conceptual understanding and language acquisition. This indicated that there was a consensus that specific strategies of building connections and confidence were important for ELLs and further training was necessary to effectively support ELLs through those strategies.

Theme 3: Elementary Teachers Perceive Student Confidence as Necessary for Academic Gains. Elementary teachers perceived student confidence as a prerequisite to achievement. Seven participants viewed higher confidence as an indicator of readiness for academic risk taking. Nine out of the 11 participants shared that confidence is important. Participant 3 stated “Confidence can be a concern [for the students] ...So even just going through the words with them and helping them identify those words, that should be bolded and stuff [can help]. I think that helps not scare them as much and helps them understand what's important.” Participant 5 explained a personal situation to validate the learners’ experience with self-esteem. She stated “I want the students to have a love of learning. I don't want them to feel like, ‘everyone else in the class is so much smarter than me’ ...that piece to me is really important. I think if your self-confidence starts going down... and I can speak to myself... it was very disheartening when I was in

school. [For example], geography for a blind student is challenging. I think my teachers just excused me from the tasks. To this day, I still struggle [with geography]. Excusing me didn't help me feel confident." Participant 7 stated "I think it helps with their confidence. I mean, I was not a very confident child. And maybe if I felt more confident, I wouldn't have been so quiet and I would've been able to use my academic language. I want [students] to feel like school's a safe spot. I want them to be successful. I want them to be excited. I want them to be proud of their work. today [for example, I told my students] 'you guys did an awesome job. Say 'I did an awesome job'. And [they repeated] 'I did an awesome job!.'" She went on to repeatedly reference building confidence in ELLs and encouraging academic risk taking. Participant 8 described "before you start to see a complete change in terms of the skill that they're learning is a change in their behavior, [they change because], they're more apt to try it." Participant 9 shared "we do a lot of the KWLs and I think it gives them ownership over their learning because they [think], 'Oh, well I already know about some of this'. So, it gives them that confidence as we go into something [new]." Participant 10 described one particular student reacting to scaffolding with gains, "[some strategies add] to them feeling more confident and being able to make those connections." Student confidence was perceived as an indicator of the effectiveness of the instructional strategies and increased readiness for language acquisition.

This theme aligns with the conceptual framework construct of classroom culture that builds confidence. It is used as a support for language development (Castrillón, 2017). Murphy (2018) asserted that language acquisition is interconnected with confidence. High confidence then plays a critical role in ELLs desire and motivation to

take academic risks. This is further evidenced by Ingraham and Nuttall (2018), who discussed the connection between ELLs confidence and risk taking as important factors in academic gains. Researchers go on to (Ingraham & Nuttall, 2018) indicate that openness and encouragement from the school and teachers have allowed students to feel more confident and take more risks, which led to more academic gains. Participants within this study also asserted that openness and encouragement increased ELL engagement and performance. Spencer and Balmer (2020) agreed that self-confidence is an important area to address for ELLs. Promoting student self-confidence increases the engagement with academic language and class content. This indicates that increased ELL self-confidence is meaningful to academic achievement.

Theme 4: Building Connections to ELLs' Native Language Is Important for Their Conceptual Understanding and Language Acquisition. The fourth theme from this data is building language connections between their first language and second language is important for ELLs' conceptual understanding and language acquisition. This finding is supported by the conceptual framework of this study which asserts that people learn language through their need to interact with their environment. Nine out of the 11 participants indicated that building connections from their first language supported students' ability to transfer to the new language. Specifically, all nine participants mentioned that translating and allowing students to speak or hear the prompts in their native language was beneficial for students' academic performance. For example, participant 7 shared, "It's like the BICS and CALP. They need that language with peers or one on one time in my group." Another participant (10) shared, "Students link their primary language to their secondary language to answer questions. It's really nice to see

how they're able to make the connections, and they also use it as a connection piece between themselves, like socially.” Teachers were using students’ ability to make connections with their primary language to support teaching the content in the new language. In addition, participant 1 explained “I allow my children a lot of talk time in their native language and English.” In addition, participant 5 stated, “it's important that we, we let the children speak their first language in the classroom. Over the years, I've just seen so many teachers say, no, we're speaking English and that's always in my heart. I've always thought that was wrong. And it always upset me.” Teachers viewed creating first to second language connections and opportunities to work with their first language as positive supports for language acquisition.

This theme aligns with the guiding principles of teaching English to students of other languages, in that building on the first language is beneficial to support attainment of the new language (Cummins, 2011). This also directly relates with Krashan’s second language acquisition theory (1981) in that second language is built on the native language and develops based on the need to interact with one’s environment. Building connections to student’s primary language allows students the opportunity to transfer knowledge to their new language. Mitterer, Eger, and Reinisch (2020) emphasized encouraging the primary language of a student to increase second language acquisition. Participants in the study viewed encouraging students to use their primary or first language as beneficial for their academic and language gains.

Emergent Theme

Theme 5 emerged from that data and describes teachers' perception of the value of professional development as an opportunity to learn and engage in creating better instructional practices. This theme does not address either RQ. However, this indicated some varied perceptions of training. Five teachers want a review training and three teachers want full training. This aligns with the research in that teachers have varying professional development needs based on their previous experiences. Asmari (2016) stated that continuous professional development is beneficial to teachers. This allows teachers to get more information on the professional development concepts over the course of an extended period. Parrash et al. (2020) asserted that there is a level of various in the desires of teachers on professional development. Tantawy (2020) claimed that teachers have different professional development needs. This aligns with the research in that professional development is helpful to the instructional practice of teachers and teachers have different professional development needs (Horan & Merrigan, 2019; Bana & Cranmore). Teachers are able to gain valuable information from professional development and is beneficial to their practice.

Theme 5: Teachers Want Purposeful and Relevant Professional Development to Meet ELLs' Academic Needs. Participants had positive views on professional development as an opportunity to learn different instructional practices to use to best support students. Six out of the 11 participants expressed a need for more relevant professional development on ELL strategies. Two participants wanted full training and four participants wanted a review training. Participant 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9 were all SIOP certified through the district. They referred to this as a positive experience to enhance

their practice. However, participant 4 stated that “I forgot all about SIOP, I took the training years ago but I’ve forgotten a lot of it. It would be nice to get a review.”

Participant 3 recalled, “But so I didn't really like buy into language objectives until last year. I was in a course that [explained it well and now] I actually [feel] was helpful”

“extra refresher training would be helpful every few years.” Participant 9 stated, “I forgotten a lot of it [SIOP], so I feel like there should be like a refresher.” Participant 11 emphasized, “I think not only learning what the ESOL teacher actually does, but also just kind of collaboration with the ESL teacher. So, kind of co-planning and even honestly, learning about co-teaching, would be helpful.” This brought to attention the need for training that reviewed some SIOP components and connected ESOL teachers with general education teachers for an opportunity to collaborate would be beneficial and received well by teachers.

This theme aligns with the literature in that professional development is considered an essential support to educators. Professional development with all stakeholders can increase teacher buy in and support instructional practices. Avci, O’Dwyer and Lawson (2020) found that professional development on a topic can provide teachers with resources and skills to support instructional best practices. Additionally, the facilitators of the training need to position the content in a way to increase teacher buy-in and implementation (Roberts, 2020). Furthermore, professional development can support teachers to confidently apply learned strategies (Rutherford-Quach, Kuo, & Hsieh, 2018). Professional development is an important tool to support educators and stakeholders.

Evidence of Quality

I conducted member checking to ensure the trustworthiness of the data that I collected. Member checking is a qualitative process during which the researcher solicits one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the data collected (Candela, 2019; Creswell, 2016). During the participant interviews, I frequently practiced reflective listening, a form of member checking (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016). Through restating and summarizing participants' interview information, I verified precise understanding of the participants' statements. Reflective listening during interviews ensures the validity of the data collected by checking the data as it is collected (Merriam, 2016).

Member checking. I conducted member checking to improve trustworthiness of the findings (Candela, 2019; Creswell, 2015). First, during the interview, I reflectively listened to make sure that I interpreted the interviewee's comments appropriately (Arzel, 2017). Throughout the interview process, I asked participants to validate my understanding of their answers. I summarized participants' statements and asked them if my summary was what they meant (Deterding & Waters, 2018). Next, after the interviews but before I finalized the analysis, I provided participants the opportunity to review the preliminary findings. For example, I emailed participant one some of her transcript and my interpretation of her transcript. I asked her to email me if she found any discrepancies and she emailed me that she did not find anything wrong with my interpretation. I asked all participants to identify if the data interpretation was accurate to the narrative that they provided during the interview. Member checking is often used in qualitative studies to rule out misinterpretation and thus is an appropriate way to for researchers to ensure trustworthiness of their findings (Frey, 2015). These sources

provide an opportunity to improve the trustworthiness of the findings. Once the teachers responded-that I interpreted what they said as they intended, I conducted data analysis. For this study, member checking did not reveal any discrepancies and provided confirmation of accurate interpretation.

Discrepant cases. Throughout the data analysis process, I looked for patterns within the raw data that did not support the findings. These can be termed discrepant cases. There were some participant views that provided contradicting responses. According to Gibbert et al. (2020), discrepant cases can agree with parts of the data collected but not completely with other data. Although most participants agreed that ELL-specific instructional strategies are beneficial in the classroom, two participants (11 and 9) were not so sure. They doubted that ELL-specific strategies are always helpful to ELL language and academic development. Participant 9 stated, “It’s all right. Some days the strategies are good. Some days I don't get anything out of them [ELL strategies].” In addition, Participant 11 shared, “I think it [strategies for ELLs] helps, again, I’m not sure, the first time we do it or anything new. I know I get frustrated with myself. If it doesn't turn out the way I want it to.” Participant 4 stated, “Um, I think it depends on the, on the subject, but I want to say yes, but then in some instances I don't think it is, but getting them up and moving.” However, nine out of 11 participants felt that varied strategies were beneficial. Two participants believed that their strategies were sometimes beneficial or were not applied correctly. This aligns with the research that teachers are unclear of how to apply strategies to support ELLs (Roberts, 2020). The training is lacking in facilitating instruction for ELLs in the mainstream classroom (Peercy et al, 2016).

These discrepancies did not change findings of this study but added to the findings. These discrepant cases did not cause a significant deviation from the consensus that ELL specific strategies are beneficial to ELLs. It indicates that there are variations to the belief in benefits provided by the strategies. Additionally, it highlighted the need for teacher training support the appropriate use of ELL specific strategies. Nine participants reported that confidence increased students' ability to gain language and perform academically. In addition, nine participants viewed allowing connections to the native language in the classroom supported students academically. Academic vocabulary is obtained after conversational language (Fitzgerald et al., 2020; Volodina, Weinert, & Mursin, 2020). Thus, these discrepant cases provide depth and agreement to the need for differentiated professional development that builds teacher capacity to facilitate instruction for diverse learners (Broemmel et al, 2019).

Conclusion

Based on the data from this study, I developed a 3-day professional training. This project will support elementary general education teachers', school staff and paraeducators' ability to support academic achievement for ELLs. All stakeholders will be included in this training. Paraeducators can provide valuable, target instruction if given the opportunity (Stacey, Harvey, & Richards, 2013). Karabon and Johnson (2020) found that early educators can benefit from training on support ELLs in the classroom. Researchers went on to state that teachers' need the perception that ELLs can do well on the content through various scaffolds and supports in order to influence the achievement of students (Karabon & Johnson, 2020). This project can benefit teachers' ability to

adequately help ELLs. A detailed description of the project is presented in the next section.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In this doctoral project study, I investigated the perceptions of general education teachers on ELL strategies and their perceived effectiveness. Using a basic qualitative study approach, I collected data through 11 semistructured interviews with general education teachers with experience instructing ELLs in their classroom. The findings suggested that there is a need for high quality professional development for general education teachers and stakeholders with ELLs in their classroom. This training will support their ability to (a) effectively apply scaffolds for ELLs and (b) use interactions to support ELLs in the classroom, as well as (c) increase their understanding of ELL pedagogy to engage and understand students. Through this professional development, teachers may be able to increase their use of effective strategies to promote academic achievement for linguistically diverse students. In this section, I expand on the project, explain the rationale, review the literature on professional development and adult learning, provide a project description, and discuss the implications of the project.

Project Purpose

Findings of the study indicate that there is a need for professional development to address differentiation for ELLs and enhanced understanding of ELL pedagogy. Professional development has the potential to support teachers' professional practice (Maganda, 2016). The project is a 3-day professional development for elementary teachers. The purpose of the project is to help general education teachers meet the needs of ELLs. It will provide deeper understanding of ELL pedagogy and practical strategies and explain best practices for ELLs. Teachers will understand how to support their ELLs

through interactions based on Vygotsky's and Krashan's theories. They will leave the professional development with a lesson plan created with their team ready to implement as well as resources and strategies to support their practice.

I created this 3-day professional development for teachers and administrators based on the findings which indicate that teachers need to (a) effectively apply scaffolds for ELLs, (b) use interactions to support ELLs in the classroom, and (c) increase their understanding of ELL pedagogy. This project is to be delivered as teacher training during preservice or during the middle of the year training (see Appendix A). This will maximize teachers' opportunities to apply the learning to their practice.

General education teachers do apply some research-based ELL strategies, and teachers have various ideas of how to implement strategies for ELLs; however, additional training may ease teacher frustration and provide needed support. Thus, this training provides various ways to support adult learning and focuses on ways to support general education teachers and paraeducators to increase ELL achievement. Specific topics included in the professional development include strategies on how to (a) incorporate peer interactions to maximize opportunities to practice language, (b) use the classroom culture to support student learning, (c) implement scaffolds for ELLs, (d) integrate opportunities to develop academic language, (e) differentiate instructional materials to support ELLs while still working on grade level concepts, and (f) improve practices for ELLs in the mainstream classrooms.

Here is the daily breakdown of the 3-day training. Day 1 will focus on ways to successfully use meaningful tasks, collaborative work, and practical applications to teach ELLs to help ELLs to improve their academic proficiency. Day 2 will focus on ways to

(a) successfully help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson; (b) help ELLs to use interactions with peers, teachers, and culture to support their learning; (c) facilitate unstructured talk times to practice language environments for ELLs based on the Krashen conceptual model; and (d) support students' ability to engage with digital learning. Day 3 will focus on (a) integration of opportunities to develop academic language, (b) differentiation of instruction for ELLs to access the curriculum, (c) language acquisition, and (d) improved instructional practices through lesson intentional planning for stakeholders. This training will support teachers' professional practice.

Rationale

The rationale for this 3-day professional development is to develop teachers' understanding of ELL pedagogy to promote equitable practices for ELLs that can support their growth in the mainstream classroom. Based on the findings from the interviews, I found that participating teachers were using various strategies and resources when working with ELLs, such as the use of visuals and sentence starters. These scaffolds and strategies were consistently used as universal accommodations rather than specific targeted strategies for ELLs. This professional development will focus on appropriate strategies and models that will give a frame of reference to improve ELL academic achievement. Teaching ELLs by providing appropriate scaffolds and gradual release of scaffolds is challenging to implement for general education teachers (Lemonidis & Kaiafa, 2019). Targeted professional development opportunities for educators have been shown to build educator confidence as well as student performance (Estrella, 2018; Turkan & Buzick, 2016). It follows that confident educators can support their students more effectively. Therefore, building educator confidence through professional

development supports educators in their challenging tasks of applying scaffolds for ELLs (Mesta & Reber, 2019).

Review of the Literature on Professional Development

The problem addressed in this study was that little is understood about how elementary general education teachers apply instructional strategies for ELLs and which strategies they perceive support academic achievement. This lack of understanding propelled the investigation of the instructional practices of elementary general education teachers of ELLs and how those teachers perceive their practices support ELLs' academic performance. This literature review supports the purpose and necessity of developing a 3-day professional development project that meets educators' and stakeholders' needs to support ELLs based on the teachers' perceptions. Professional development is appropriate to address this problem because professional development supports mainstream general education teachers' instructional practices (Brown & Aydeniz, 2017). Additionally, the findings indicated that teachers want more professional development on instructional strategies for ELLs and viewed ELL strategies as beneficial for all students. This literature review presents an explanation of the benefits of professional development (PD) to support ELL instructional practices in the classroom (Gándara & Santibañez, 2016). The theory of adult learning is based on professional development and the benefits of collaboration among stakeholders (Roberston et al., 2020). These are key components of the project deliverable.

I reviewed peer-reviewed articles concerning the findings and project deliverable. I used Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, Eric, Education Source, and Teacher Reference Center. The keywords used to identify articles included *professional*

development, English Language Learners, teacher training, best practices, effective practices, diverse learners, and academic achievement. This review consists of peer reviewed articles published within the last 5 years. In the following review, I present information on (a) how professional development can support educators including aspects of the professional development from this study, (b) how adult learning theory directed the development of the professional development, and (c) how collaboration enhances achievement for students.

Professional Development Is Appropriate to Address Instructional Practices

Professional development (PD) benefits educators and students and is the mode I chose to address the problem investigated in this study. Relevant PD provides strategies, resources, and knowledge to increase ELL engagement in learning and access to the curriculum content (Irby et al., 2020). Davin and Heineke (2016) found that teachers benefited from targeted professional development on supporting ELLs. In their analysis of student performance, Davin and Heineke also found that PD had a positive influence on ELL academic performance. Davin and Heineke went on to state the gap between ELLs and non-ELLs were narrowed after the PD. Professional development can help teachers to build their bank of strategies, influence their perceptions on a subject, and help them implement differentiated instruction to improve student academic performance (Li & Peters, 2020). The three main components of the PD for this study were (a) effectively applying scaffolds for ELLs (Ruiz & Gallagher, 2020), (b) using interactions to support ELLs in the classroom and (Walqui & Heritage, 2019) and (c) increasing their understanding of ELL pedagogy (Guerrettaz, Zahler, Sotirovska, & Boyd, 2020).

Differentiation and scaffolds for ELLs. Professional development can be a key component for ELL success, and teachers learn how to differentiate strategies to support the varied needs within the classroom (Ruiz & Gallagher, 2020). Scaffolding instruction and targeting skills such as vocabulary yields positive results for students (Schachter, Hatton-Bowers & Gerde, 2019; Li & Peters, 2020). Professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge of applying differentiated scaffolds, which increases their confidence and likelihood to applying the strategies (Basma & Savage, 2018). According to Lynn, Hunt and Lewis (2018), differentiating strategies is important to ELLs' academic success because it allows for multiple ways to access the curriculum. Thus, effective professional development is critical to influencing ELLs' success in the classroom.

Interactions support ELLs. Teacher, peer, and classroom cultural interactions support ELLs' ability to gain language. Walqui & Heritage (2019) found that classroom interactions were support ELLs' language acquisition. Tilbe and Gai (2020) found that ELLs' classroom interactions were vital to their language gains. Furthermore, Wigham et al. (2018) stated that classroom interactions with peers and teachers support ELLs academic and language gains. Interactions are an important factor in ELLs' language aquisition process. Krashan (1981) theorized that language develops as person's need to interact with the world around them. Classroom interactions are an important part ELLs language development.

Increasing teachers' understanding of ELLs is beneficial. Specific and topic based professional development can support teachers' understanding of ELLs. Teachers' perceptions of students can influence ELLs' academic performance and teachers'

implementation of ELL strategies (Szymanski & Lynch, 2020). Szymanski and Lynch, (2020) found that teachers' understanding of diverse learners influenced their ability to understand and apply specific instructional practices. Through specific professional development such as this project (see Appendix A), educators can increase their understanding of diverse learners. Furthermore, Capitelli (2016) stated that teachers' perceptions of students' abilities influence ELLs' academic performance. The teachers' ability to create a positive environment by conveying their belief in the students, influences the child to build self-confidence and feel positive about their abilities, which increases students' desire to participate in lessons. Specific professional development about creating a positive student environment with understanding for ELLs, can increase ELLs ability to perform academically (Zangora & Frazer, 2017). For example, this professional development (see Appendix A) contains components that explain the pedagogy of ELLs and theory behind language acquisition. This can support teachers' understanding of ELLs and help teacher's build positive learning environment for ELLs. Thus, professional development which focuses on building understanding of ELLs such as this project can positively influence students' achievement.

Adult Learning Theory

Marcus Knowles (1980) adult learning theory suggests that adult learners have different needs than children. According to the U.S. Department of Education's sub-department, Teaching Excellence for Adult Literacy (2011), adult learners have distinct characteristics such as (a) increased self-directedness, (b) life experiences to support learning, (c) awareness of their own readiness to learn, (d) need for immediate applicability of the new knowledge and (e) need for intrinsic motivation to learn. This

varies from young students' motivations for learning in that they are extrinsically motivated to learn and have limited life experiences to draw from to support their learning (Brady, 2015). Young learners often learn for the future and adult learners desire learning for the present with immediate applicability. Knowles' theory indicates supporting adult educators is widely different than supporting young students.

So, teachers, as adult learners prefer to have some control over their learning experiences. Thus, surveys of professional development needs can be applied to gain a sense of the needs of educators (Broemmel et al, 2019). Learning is most effective for educators when there is a sense of choice and control ("Using Social Learning," 2017). Tosaka, & Park (2018) indicated that choice is an important expectation of adult learners. Furthermore, this project will have many components where teachers will have control over their learning and opportunities to apply their learning. Dasoo and Muller (2020) claimed that teachers prefer to have a role in the decision-making process of choosing their own learning opportunities. Thus, professional choice is an important factor to include in teacher's learning experiences. This can have positive benefits as it supports their expectations of choice in learning opportunities.

Teachers prefer learning opportunities that they perceive as practical and applicable to their current situation. Erarslan (2020) asserted that teachers have gaps in their practical applicability from teacher preparation programs, which are the areas they advocate for more training. Teachers desire training to support their daily instructional practice. Jackson et al (2020) stated that teachers request useful experiences in learning to apply to everyday instruction. This allows teachers to build on their bank of knowledge to best complete their responsibilities for their students (Francois, 2020). It was important

that this professional development incorporated different aspects that were practical and immediately applicable such as the development of a shared collaborative drive and resources. Therefore, their learning is important to their current situation and more readily accepted and used.

Teacher Collaboration to Support Teacher Learning

Teacher collaboration is an important aspect of teaching and a main component in the project of this study. It is beneficial to include collaboration opportunities in professional development because it creates a more engaging experience for teachers (Acur & Yildizi, 2020). The participants that wanted the full training, referenced the idea of collaborating and learning from other teachers as valuable to their personal practice. Forming professional learning communities (PLCs) has a positive influence on teachers' relationships with one another and with the learning (Murphy, Haller & Spiridakis, 2019). This supports their ability to rely and learn from each other. It gives them the opportunity to practice shared responsibility for students within the school. Gwinn (2020) asserted that forming professional development PLCs support collaborative practices and focus on student achievement. Fred et al. (2020) suggested that PLCs increased teachers' capacity to apply the content from training. Additionally, Widodo and Allamnakhrah (2020) claimed that PLCs supported teachers in sustaining their learning efforts. Teacher collaboration supports educational efforts.

Professional development that facilitates mentoring and collaboration are viewed as effective to support the understanding of strategies to implement for diverse learners, which are main component of this professional development project (Roberston et al., 2020; Murphy, Haller & Spiridakis, 2019). Collaboration and mentoring allow teachers to

have a sustained model of effective professional development with increases their confidence in using the new strategies with students. This professional development (see Appendix A) includes opportunities for teachers to become mentors and collaborators. This will allow teachers to support each other while refining their instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners. Additionally, Parkhouse, Lu, and Massaro (2019) found that when teachers are confident and adequately prepared, ELLs benefit. ELLs demonstrate higher levels of motivation and academic gains with trained educators (Parkhouse, Lu, & Massaro, 2019). Through this professional development teachers are able to mentor each other and collaborate on best practices for ELLs which can build their confidence and provides peer-based training on ELL instructional practices. This is an integral part of effective professional development leading to student success.

Teachers need high quality professional development that meets their needs as a learner and a practitioner, and this was an important factor in developing this professional development. High quality professional development supports teachers in gaining various instructional strategies that they can use to increase student engagement and achievement. In addition, Stevenson (2020) found that professional development needs to be viewed as high quality to be perceived as valuable and attractive to teachers. Desimone and Pak (2017) claimed that in order for a professional development to be perceived as high quality, it needs to have five components (a) content focus, (b) active learning, (c) sustained duration, (d) coherence and (e) collective participation. Researchers go on to state that coaching is a supportive method to increasing teaching capacity and investment into the professional development (Desimone & Pak, 2017). Therefore, it was important for me to create a PD that was high quality to support educators. Song, Eun-Jung and Bo

-Young (2018) found that high quality professional development that met teachers' needs as a learner increased their implementation of diverse strategies. High quality professional development is necessary to meet teachers' professional needs.

Teacher collaboration has positive influence on teachers and students. According to Lee (2020), teacher collaboration support teacher's ability to apply the curriculum effectively. Rahayu Abdul & Suherdi (2020) suggested that teachers' ability to use assessments in instruction is enhanced by participating in collaborative efforts with other teachers. Learning collaboration strengthens teacher's ability to differentiate and support individual students' needs (DuFour, 2016). Teachers are able to learn from their colleagues and apply it to enhance their practice through collaboration and throughout the professional development from this study, teachers will have many opportunities to collaborate and create PLCs. This enhances learning opportunities for students and increases teacher's ability to support their students. Teacher collaboration is a critical component of the professional development developed for this project study. Thus, teacher collaboration support teachers and their students.

Summary

Teacher learning is different from young students' learning. Their learning needs are different and desires for their learning are different. Therefore, professional development should address teachers' needs and desires and provide opportunities for collaboration. This will allow for teachers to create communities to learn along and share their learning. It will promote shared responsibility and student focus, which positively influence student achievement. Professional development that meets the real-world needs

for teachers is beneficial to students and teachers, which what I hope to deliver through this project.

Project Description

This professional development (PD) will consist of three days. The targeted audience for the PD is elementary general education teachers and other elementary stakeholders such as administrators and paraeducators. The sessions will consist of three main goals to support educators in (a) effectively applying scaffolds for ELLs (Ruiz & Gallagher, 2020), (b) using interactions to support ELLs in the classroom and (Walqui & Heritage, 2019) (c) increasing their understanding of ELL pedagogy (Guerrettaz, Zahler, Sotirovska & Boyd, 2020). This project can be funded through school professional development budgets or district budgets. I will ask for project resources such as teacher volunteers to help facilitate the training and financial resources to fund workshop pay for attendees. The PD will use multiple methods of delivery such as Google Slides (see Appendix A), flipgrid, padlet and participant collaboration (Gunter & Reeves, 2017). These methods support the goals of this PD by providing different ways to participate in the training. The potential resources this PD will need to successfully implement it are: laptops and WIFI. Participants will be able to review and share information from the training through google slides and recording of the training (Yurkofsky, Blum-Smith, & Brennan, (2019). The padlet will be available for collaboration throughout the training time period.

Potential Barriers and Potential Solutions

There are various obstacles to providing professional development at the district level. Potential barriers to this project include implications of training overload from

COVID-19 and distance learning, according to the ESOL chairperson at one of the research schools. Other possible barriers are limited physical trainings offered and focus on digital student success measures (Dietrich et al., 2020.) Potential solutions to this, would be to allow teachers to view the training as a webinar, include digital components to the strategies and provide flexible ways to receive the content and support (Salley & Bates, 2018). These solutions would have to be approved at the district level. However, this is relevant to instructing diverse students and is necessary for 21st century educators (Gunter & Reeves, 2017).

Implementation and Timetable

This professional development plan will span 3 school days. The audience for this learning experience is elementary general education teachers, administrators, and paraeducators. The training plan will be presented to the ESOL department, administrators and with approval, the training will be scheduled. The administrator would then include it on both the school calendar and the building level professional development plan. The PD would be presented on the training days built within the school calendar. The ESOL, special education and supporting staff will also be invited to join the training. Each day will start with the agenda and objectives and end with a padlet to write one take away from the training. Each day will also have an evaluation and question and answer portion. This will allow all participant voices to be heard and supported.

Roles and Responsibilities

My role in this project would be that of the lead trainer and I would present the training and facilitate participant learning. I would present my project to the ESOL

department at the district and ask to present the project at any locations for the summer or during the school year. I designed this training to have technology components and possibly be given as virtual or face to face. Virtual trainings are beneficial to the district since they would be able to reach large groups of people and would allow for recording for future viewing opportunities (Binmohsen & Abrahams, 2020). Virtual trainings are effective in supporting attendees (Fernández et al., 2016). Face to face would be beneficial to staff by allowing for in-person collaboration, sharing ideas and direct feedback. This type of traditional training allows for interactive learning (Thorn & Brasche, 2020). I would be available to participants to ask questions and receive feedback in either format.

Project Evaluation Plan

Professional development evaluation will be an important component to assess the benefits and limitations of the trainings. It will provide information for training improvement and feedback for future trainings. For this project, there will be a participant evaluation for each day. The stakeholders of this professional development are the teachers, support staff and school leaders. They will attend the training and fill out the evaluation at the end of each day. This summative evaluation (see Appendix D) will be implemented after each day and will give the general information on the effectiveness of outcomes of the professional development. It will provide information on the strengths and weakness. Evaluations provide feedback to facilitators (Hall, Freeman & Colomer, 2020; Alemdag, Cevikbas, & Baran 2020). Thorn and Brashe (2020) used evaluation as a part of their pilot program and found the information provided was useful to understand the effectiveness of the program. Specifically, I will evaluate the project outcomes based

on the evaluation each day. The project goals are (a) effectively applying scaffolds for ELLs (Ruiz & Gallagher, 2020), (b) using interactions to support ELLs in the classroom and (Walqui & Heritage, 2019) (c) increasing their understanding of ELL pedagogy (Guerrettaz, Zahler, Sotirovska & Boyd, 2020). Additionally, this summative evaluation can provide information on the benefits of the program. The evaluation provides teachers an opportunity to share the strategies they plan to use, explain how prepared they feel to apply scaffolds and facilitate interactions in the classroom to build opportunities to support language acquisition and how well the PD supported their understanding of ELL pedagogy.

Project Implications

This project is beneficial to district leaders and the educational community. The findings from this study, indicated a need for further understanding in key areas of ELL instruction and a need to facilitate shared responsibility of students. Thus, this professional development project has the potential to support teacher and stakeholder practice. Improved instructional practices are important for students' achievement (Landin, 2019). In addition, facilitating and highlighting researched-based practices for ELLs can improve teachers' confidence with teaching diverse learners (Roberts, 2020). The findings indicated that although teachers are tenured and teaching in predominately ELL schools, further training and modeling would be beneficial. Professional development at all stages of teaching experience can be supportive to instructional practice (Basma & Savage, 2018). This project has the potential to improve teacher practices and increase student achievement within the district.

Summary

In Section 3, I outlined the project deliverable and presented the rationale and literature surrounding the project. The project for this study is a three- day professional development. This was selected because it would adequately support the efforts to improve general education teachers' instructional practices for ELLs (Roberston, et al., 2020; Gándara & Santibañez, 2016). Each day consists of new topics to increase teachers' knowledge base on ELL instructional practices. This allows educators to have a meaningful and engaging learning opportunity (Carley, 2017). The literature review presented in this section, explains how professional development is beneficial to addressing the needs of educators. This section concludes with the implications for this study. My reflections and conclusions are presented in the following section.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this doctoral study was to investigate the perceptions of elementary general education teachers on ELL strategies and their perceived effectiveness. The gap in instructional practices was illustrated in the literature review in Section 2. This gap emphasized the need to understand teachers' application of ELL strategies and perceptions of the benefits of these strategies. What follows is a review of the project's strengths and limitations; recommendations for alternative approaches; and a discussion of my development as a scholar, project developer, and leader. The implications of this study and my conclusions are also presented.

Project Strengths and Limitations

This PD plan is intended to help district leaders, teachers, and stakeholders support ELLs within the district by addressing necessary ways to increase understanding of ELL best practices. Teachers' competency to navigate the application of ELL practices and differentiation supports their ability to increase ELL achievement and reduce the achievement gap (Li & Peters, 2020; Roberson et al., 2020). Through this PD, teachers can learn how to (a) effectively apply scaffolds for ELLs and (b) use interactions to support ELLs in the classroom and (c) increase their understanding of ELL pedagogy. The findings of this study indicate that teachers need more training on ELL practices and that teachers perceive practices that are easy to implement as more effective. These findings indicated a greater need to developing teacher "buy in" to apply appropriate scaffolds and practices for ELLs (Lee et al., 2020). Through this PD training, teachers may develop a deeper understanding of how to implement support for ELLs in a practical way.

Professional development enables teachers to increase their self-efficacy.

Professional development is an effective way to support teachers' capacity to support diverse learners (Leighton et al., 2018). This supports teachers to feel empowered to apply best practices for ELLs. Their confidence in themselves as a practitioner enables them to more apply more appropriate practices that increase ELLs' achievement (Daniëls, Hondeghem, & Heystek, 2020; Thorn & Banche, 2020). Empowered teachers are able to confidently support their students.

There are many benefits of administering this PD; however, there are some limitations to this project. Application of this PD with fidelity requires an ESOL lead teacher or trainer, which might not be available at all of the district's schools (see Becuwe, 2016). In addition, PD can cause some concerns for teachers who already have full schedules of trainings (Yoon, 2016). They may view it as a burden, which may lead to their not fully buying into the learning. Teacher buy-in is an important component to the success of PD (Saran, 2019). Also, the district is bound by the teachers' union guidelines on workshops and PD, which requires teachers to be compensated for trainings outside of their duty day. This creates an added layer of complexity to administer this training. District leaders need to creatively include this training into the duty day or fund workshop pay for teachers. Additionally, a 3-day PD alone might not fully address the problem from this study. Professional development to address teaching practices has some limitations. For example, this is a specific PD and district leaders might want broader strategies. Some teachers might already be proficient in these strategies and might not have buy in (Saran, 2019). District-wide initiatives or changes in teacher training programs could also change instructional practices (Genç, 2016). However, PD is

still an effective way to address this problem (Franco-Fuenmayor, Padrón, & Waxman 2015).

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

I created a 3-day professional development to address the needs of teachers after considering the literature and findings of this study. The purpose of this PD is to support teachers' ability to address the needs of diverse learners and support the implementation of differentiated strategies. Teachers can benefit from the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues (Rahayu Abdul & Suherdi, 2020). They can also benefit from creating school-level learning communities to support the implementation of strategies (Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2019). On the other hand, there are other possible ways to address this need that can be considered.

Alternatives to this project could include an online training cohort. Online training would be offered over the course of several weeks and could be credit-bearing. The online training course allows teachers to access their learning at their own convenience and supports their need to have choice over their learning (Elliot, 2020; Teaching Excellence for Adult Literacy, 2011). However, the synchronous opportunities would be limited because the format would be self-paced. Teachers' opportunities to collaborate in real-time would be limited (Fiel, Lawless, & Brown, 2018). Still, online training can be as effective as in-person professional development (Philipsen, Tondeur, McKenney, & Zhu, 2019).

Another option would be to conduct a PLC to study best practices through a book on best practices for ELLs. Book studies are effective in supporting educators in collaborating with one another within the PLC (Cameli, 2020). A limitation of this

method would be the lack of diverse information presented to support various needs within the PLC and the loss of directed learning opportunities (Korthagen, 2017). Book studies are also limited in their learning capacity because they focus on one text (Blanton, Broemmel, & Rigell, 2020). Yet, a book study PD would be another way to address the problem. These are alternative ways to address the problem.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Although my journey at Walden University has been difficult at times and longer than I anticipated, it has been meaningful to my growth as scholar, educator, and aspiring administrator. I have gained the skills to research and disseminate data and recommendations to district leaders (see Sala-Bubaré, Peltonen, Pyhältö, & Castelló, 2018). Additionally, I have expanded my ability to synthesize and analyze data (see Van et al., 2019). My personal experience as an ESOL and general education teacher provided me with a different viewpoint than my participants. Their perceptions and desires illuminated the concerns within mainstream classrooms. This study has supported my appreciation for the compassion of mainstream educators and increased my understanding of how training supports adult learning and strengthens collaboration between stakeholders.

Conducting this study also supported my growth as a scholar-practitioner. I have learned how to synthesize multiple data points in my literature review (Keily, 2017). As a scholar, I learned how to convey read, interpret, and analyze research to reach saturation. Additionally, the more knowledgeable I became on collaboration and ELL strategies, the more I intertwined it within my own practice to support students (see Leighton et al., 2019). Through the research study and literature review the glaring gap in achievement

and appropriate support for ELLs and mainstream teachers became illuminated. This gap compelled me to gather and analyze different pieces of peer-reviewed literature, which allowed me to mature as a scholar, and confirmed my resolve to support ELLs and mainstream educators.

Leadership and Change

This doctoral program has developed my leadership skills and helped me find my voice. I have always been vocal in advocating for my students; however, now I feel empowered to advocate for myself and fellow educators. I also believe that this study will bring social change. Although my participant sample had experience supporting ELLs, they were largely tenured, experienced educators. This is not the case throughout the district. The elementary teachers in the district vary in their years of service, according to one assistant principal in the district. Many teachers need various opportunities to gather the relevant training to support their students (Allen, Robbins, & Payne, 2016). The skills that I have gained through Walden University's doctoral program can support my endeavors to advocate for the needs of educators. The university mission is to encourage students to promote social change (Walden University, 2020). I plan to encourage social change by support educators in my district and state.

The doctoral process of working in a committee was a challenging and rewarding endeavor. My chair, second member and URR offered valuable advice to support my efforts to create a study that evolved from an idea to full project study. This collaborative effort supported my ability to understand leadership and how to be a change agent within my discipline. My chair supported my scholarly development of literature review and data analysis to understand problems within my local setting. I learned how to examine

local problems, write concisely, review and interpret literature and create pathways to meaningful change in my local setting. The education field is constantly changing because of the demographics and political changes (Truscott & Stenhouse, 2018; Royal & Gibson, 2017). Change agents are necessary to support the diverse student population (Borrero & Sanchez, 2017). I will continue to support and serve diverse student populations with the knowledge and skills that I have gained at Walden University.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

This study provides a possible solution to the local problem. The local problem is not unique to the school district. It is unclear how elementary general education teachers apply ELL specific strategies to support student achievement in the mainstream classroom (Daniel & Pray, 2017). According to the state department of education only 12.6% of ELLs scored proficient in math and 15.2% of ELLs scored proficient reading standardized assessment in 2018 compared to non-ELLs who scored higher percentages in both reading and math. Though this study I highlighted an analysis of teachers reported application of strategies for ELLs and their perceptions of those strategies. This project illuminates the lack of appropriate training for mainstream educators locally and nationally (Reyes & Gentry, 2019). Additionally, this project allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the local problem and supported my ability to speak to the issues surround teacher training. Through this doctoral journey I have increased my ability to think critically, write concisely and research efficiently. I have gained knowledge on elementary instructional practices and their influence on diverse learners (Hadjioannou, Hutchinson, & Hockman, 2016). I plan to use this knowledge to support training and leadership efforts to minimize the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. The

process of reviewing the literature and rewriting has provided me with the background on ELL pedagogy and the knowledge of the issues surrounding diverse learners (Kaur, Noman & Nordin, 2017). This supports my goals as a scholar practitioner and change agent for diverse student populations.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The influences for positive social change from this study include understanding of elementary general education teachers' classroom practices and perceptions of those practices. It is vital to recognize the application of student-based supports within the classroom to truly understand the gap in achievement between ELLs and English-speaking students. ELLs are one of the fastest growing populations within the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). It is critical to understand the practices that best support ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This study's findings illuminated the practices and preferences of elementary general education teachers. The results can support district leaders in catering training to provide for the gaps in teacher knowledge (Hestness, Ketelhut, McGinnis, & Plane, 2018). It can also further efforts to facilitate collaboration between all stakeholders and address paraeducator training needs (Song et al., 2018). Additionally, teacher preparation programs may gain understanding regarding the importance of including ELL focused courses to address the changing educational landscape (Erarslan, 2020).

For this study, I reviewed elementary general education teachers and their perceptions and application of ELL specific strategies. Five themes emerged from this study. Participants agreed that they prefer to use familiar and varied ELL specific strategies (Andrei, Ellerbe, & Kidd, 2019). Some participants discussed using the strategy

even if it did not work the first time as well as applying various strategies at the same time. Another theme that emerged from the data was that teachers prefer to implement strategies whole group rather than for specific groups of students (Umansky, Hopkins, & Dabach, 2020). This is substantiated by the literature in that teachers choose strategies based on feasibility (Knight & Gilpatrick, 2019). This further elevates the need for quality professional development that address how to appropriately address ELLs' needs in the mainstream elementary classroom (Edwards, 2016). Future research could expand to understanding the application and perceptions of ELL strategies in the middle and high school levels. Expanding the research population can increase the perspectives on ELL specific strategies and provide insight on best practices for ELLs across different age groups. This would allow a broader picture of the instructional practices for all K-12 ELLs. Additionally, future research can also investigate the perceptions of ESOL and special education teachers on the efforts and implementation of strategies for dually identified students. Further research can identify how to support this specific population (Zetin, 2011; Barwasser, Knaak & Grünke, 2020). These topics can add to overall body of research supporting best practices for ELLs in the classroom. Expanding the population of teachers would be the next step based on this research because this study had a narrow focus with only the perceptions of elementary general education teachers. An expanded teacher population would provide a broader perspective of teachers on ELL strategies. These topics can add to overall body of research supporting best practices for ELLs in the classroom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided me the opportunity to reflect on elementary general education teachers' practices and their perceptions and how those influence students' experiences. Students' ability to perform to their best ability is influenced by teachers' practices. Elementary teachers need adequate training to provide strategies that support student learning. Although the data from my study indicated that teachers apply strategies for ELLs, data from the literature review and the current U.S. trend of the achievement gap between ELLs and native speakers reflects on the lack of teacher understanding on scaffolds and appropriate strategies to support ELL students. In addition, the data from this study was collected from was collected from teachers who has received some trainings on ELLs and found it beneficial in their practice. This further implicated to me that teacher training is an essential component to teacher and student growth. Teachers are required to support diverse student populations and they need support to adequately provide for students.

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Appendix A: Project Deliverable

This project deliverable presented below addresses the needs of primary general education teachers to increase their confidence, strategies and tools to support ELLs within the classroom in conjunction with the ESOL teacher. I developed this project based on the result of the study, which discovered there was a need within the education community for more understanding of ways for teachers to support tier ELLs. In order to address this need, a three-day professional development workshop was developed. Specific topics included in the professional development include strategies on how to incorporate (a) peer interactions and culture to maximize opportunities to practice language, (b) use the classroom culture to support student learning, (c) implement differentiated scaffolds for ELLs, (d) integrate opportunities to develop academic language, and (e) differentiate instructional materials to support ELLs while still working on grade level concepts. The specific plan for delivery is presented below.

ELL Professional Development Plan

Session Timeframe: SY 2021 -2022

1. **Purpose:** Based on the findings from this study and evidence from the literature a three-day professional development plan was developed to support general education teachers and other stakeholders in supporting ELLs in the general education classroom. Some teachers do not feel adequately prepared to support and differentiate for ELLs in their mainstream classrooms (Lee, 2019). Additionally, the participants from the study reported a need for training to support the needs of various ELLs in their classroom. This professional development will also include review of SIOP and co-teaching which are effective in support ELLs in general education classes (Echevarria et al., 2012). This

training will allow teachers to receive training at their local setting, understand ELL pedagogy, create collaborative conversation with their colleagues, practice implementing ELL strategies, and hone their instructional practices to support diverse learners in their classroom.

2. Goals:

The main goal of this professional development is support teachers' understanding of various ways to support ELLs in the classroom based on research based best practices.

Additionally, this PD will focus on:

- build teacher knowledge of ELL pedagogy
- increase teacher knowledge of instructional strategies for ELLs
- support teacher's ability to integrating strategies for ELLs into their lessons
- facilitate the development of a professional learning community at the school site

3. Learning Outcomes: This professional development will be conducted over the course of the school year. The first and second sessions will be in the beginning of the year and third session will be mid-year. Outcomes are described based on the day of the training below.

Day 1 Outcomes:

- Review findings from the study
- To understand English Language Learners (ELLs)
- To address common assumptions made about ELLs
- To find out about resources you can use to support content and language learning in the classroom

- Work with grade level PLCs to support differentiation based on curriculum materials

Day 2 Outcomes:

- Support the understanding of information retention and language acquisition process
- Review the Krashan's and Vygotsky's theories to support knowledge of best practices
- Support the understanding of creating a classroom culture to facilitate peer interactions
- Review ways to support students' ability to interact with digital learning
- Schedule modeling and observing opportunities (peer modeling)

Day 3 Outcomes:

- Review outcomes of modeling and observing opportunities
- Learn about and plan vocabulary strategies
- Review strategies to support language development during lessons
- Create a lesson plan to integrate strategies into lessons with grade level peers

Day 1 Agenda

Time	Activities
8:45 - 9:00	Sign in and welcome question Review meeting norms
9:00 - 9:15	Announcements, review agenda, and learning goals Icebreakers
9:15-10:10	Review Study findings and ELL trends
10:10-11:00	Review Sociocultural theory
11:00-11:10	10-minute break
11:10-12:00	Why do interactions matter and how to emphasize learning through interactions? Kahoot
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:30	Review Second Language Acquisition and group work
2:30-2:45	Break
2:45-3:15	SIOP Strategy Discussion
3:15-3:30	Q & A
3:30-3:45	Closing and evaluation

Day 2 Agenda

Time	Activities
8:45 - 9:00	Sign in and welcome question Review meeting norms
9:00 - 9:15	“Put yourself in their shoes” Language Activity
9:15-10:10	Review best practices for vocabulary retention
10:10-11:00	Discuss language levels
11:00-11:10	10-minute break
11:10-12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a classroom culture to facilitate peer interactions • Discuss conversation language versus academic language • Kahoot
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:30	Review ways to support students’ ability to interact with digital learning and build an activity for a new comer with grade level team
2:30-3:15	Support the understanding of information retention and language acquisition process
3:15-3:30	Schedule modeling and observing opportunities (peer modeling)
3:30-3:45	Closing and evaluation

Day 3 Agenda

Time	Activities
8:45 - 9:00	Sign in and welcome question Review meeting norms
9:00 - 9:15	Announcements, review agenda, and learning goals Icebreakers
9:15-10:10	Debrief peer observations
10:10-11:00	How can we support vocabulary instruction? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct vocabulary instruction • language objectives • Realia
11:00-11:10	10-minute break
11:10-12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to incorporate project-based learning without frustrations • Jamboard
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Review Second Language Acquisition, group learning and discussion
2:30-3:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifying lessons to facilitate peer interactions, peer modeling and scaffolding • Create a collaborative folder for resources • Review co-planning and co-teaching models for instruction with ESOL teacher
3:15- 3:30	Question and Answers
3:30-3:45	Closing and evaluation

Supporting Diverse Learners Strategies and Pedagogy

Jiji Olds
Day 1

Agenda

Time	Activities
8:45 - 9:00	Sign in and welcome question Review meeting norms
9:00 - 9:15	Announcements, review agenda, and learning goals Icebreakers
9:15-10:10	Review Study findings and ELL trends within the district!
10:10-11:00	Review Socio cultural theory
11:00-11:10	10-minute break
11:10-12:00	Why do interactions matter and how to emphasize learning through interactions? Kahoot!
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:30	Review Second Language Acquisition and group learning
2:30-2:45	Break
2:45-3:15	STOP Strategy Discussion
3:15-3:30	Q & A
3:30-3:45	Closing and evaluation

- ### Outcomes:
- Review findings from the study
 - To understand English Language Learners (ELLs)
 - To address common assumptions made about ELLs
 - To find out about resources you can use to support content and language learning in the classroom
 - Work with grade level PLCs to support differentiation based on curriculum materials

How much do you know about ELLs?

The Sponge Theory

ELLs learn English easily and quickly simply by being exposed to and surrounded by native English speakers.

Decorative graphic of a sponge

The Conversational Theory

When ELs are able to converse comfortably in English, they have developed proficiency in the language.

Decorative graphic of a person speaking

Findings

5 Themes were identified from this study:

- ▣ ELL strategies were referenced as best practices and applied for all students
- ▣ teachers use familiar and varied instructional strategies to meet ELLs' academic needs
- ▣ Elementary, general education teachers perceive student confidence as necessary for academic gains and prefer strategies that encourage socio-emotional development
- ▣ Building connections for ELLs is important for their conceptual understanding
- ▣ Teachers want purposeful and relevant professional development to meet ELLs' various academic needs

ELL Trends

- ▣ ELLs are one of the fastest growing student populations in the U.S. (NCES, 2018).
- ▣ 12.6% of ELLs scored proficient in math and 15.2% of ELLs scored proficient reading within the district (MSDE, 2019)
- ▣ ELLs also scored lower than non-ELLs on the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career in 2017, 2018 and 2019 (PARCC) assessment (Maryland State Department of Education, 2019)
- ▣ ELLs have specific needs that support their academic achievement

Sociocultural Theory

- ▣ This theory infers that learning is a social process guided by interactions with one's environment, people, and culture (Vygotsky, 1978).
- ▣ The role of social interactions and classroom culture as the primary factors in the development of knowledge (Castrillón, 2017).
- ▣ Learning can be considered a social process (Vygotsky, 1978; Sullivan & Ballard, 2015)

BREAK TIME

How can we use interactions to support student learning?

- ▣ Peer interactions
- ▣ Student and teacher interactions
- ▣ Classroom culture

Peer Interactions

- ▣ Peer interactions and support improves ELLs ability to feel comfortable and learn in a comfortable environment with language support (Kingbeil et al, 2017).
- ▣ It can increase student engagement (de Oliveira, Gimetdinova, & Pelaez-Morales, 2016)

You can enhance student learning experiences by including:

- Peer support in High/ Low pairs
- Project-based learning
- Group work

Student and Teacher Interactions



Teacher student interactions such as portfolio building and community building processes support students' ability to absorb language (Donroe, 2020).

Classroom Culture

Sociocultural theory suggests that learning is a cultural process that is promoted by interactions with one's' culture.

How can our routines and classroom support help students with their language development?

Anchor Charts, Word Walls, Language Dictionaries, class jobs and routines all support students create a classroom culture they can rely on to support their ability to access the content.

What is something that you already do?

What is something you could include more of in the instructional period?

What is something you would like to learn more about?



Why do interactions matter?


- Peers act as models within the classroom
- These models act as content and language support
- Interactions between peers and ELLs were supportive to the development of language (Case, 2015)
- Interactions with peers to accelerate their language skills (Anthanasios & de Oliveira, 2014)
- Interactions with teachers and peers support the growth in vocabulary capacity and confidence with the new language
- Peers help build confidence (Messiou & Azaola, 2018)

How to emphasize learning through interactions?

- Predictive routines and procedures help build confidence and understanding (Bondie & Zusho, 2017)
- ELLs need lots of practice with the classroom routines and repetition to understand the functions of those classroom supports
- Peer buddy systems can support ELLs to get comfortable with the classroom environment.
- Project-based learning allows for organic peer relations to occur
- Unstructured talk time provides ELLs with a relaxed opportunity to develop language (Boyd, 2015)

Kahoot

https://kahoot.it/challenge/03614067?challenge-id=2574995a-0d15-4d39-8215-8b4973444985_1604019966073



LUNCH TIME

Be back at 1pm

Second Language Acquisition

Krashen's language acquisition theory (2003) emphasizes the influence of interactions on language development.

Krashen theorized that there are 5 phases of language acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1983):

1. Preproduction
2. Early Production
3. Speech Emergence
4. Intermediate Fluency
5. Advanced Fluency

Through each of these stages, students are learning more language skills. In the early stages, students are developing their understanding of the new language and building their vocabulary. This proves to be a difficult task, as students are learning this as they are expected to learn academic vocabulary (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

1. Language practices should be emphasized
2. Copying in early stages is normal and should be encouraged
3. Explicit vocabulary teaching is necessary to support students' ability to gain academic language

Write around the room

Use the posters around the room to answer the question with your grade level group, return to your seats when the timer is up and pick one person to present from your group.

BREAK TIME

SIOP Strategies

- The SIOP model has 30 features and eight components
- The eight components of this model are lesson preparation, building background, comprehensive input, strategies, interactions, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013).
- These practices include word banks, building background knowledge, use of pictures to support new vocabulary, and sentence stems (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013)
- Application of this model is beneficial to raising the test scores of ELLs
- SIOP model is widely successful to help ELLs understand the content

Time Work in Groups

Let's take some time to meet with our grade level teams to review some strategies that we can incorporate into our readings lessons for next week.

Question and Answers



Please fill out the evaluation

Participant Name: _____ Date: _____

A. How likely are you to implement the strategies that we discussed during this training?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not likely				Somewhat					Likely

B. How effective was the presentation in helping you to understand the material presented?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not effective				Somewhat					Effective

C. How valuable was the information presented today?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not valuable				Somewhat					Very valuable

D. What is one strategy that you can use with ELL students this week?

E. How could the professional development experience be improved?

F. What future professional development topics would support your ability to guide ELL students?

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Supporting Diverse Learners

Session 2 -----Jiji Olds

Time	Activities
8:45 - 9:00	Sign in and welcome question
9:00 - 9:15	Review meeting norms "Put yourself in their shoes" Language Activity
9:15-10:10	Review best practices for vocabulary retention
10:10-11:00	Discuss language levels
11:00-11:30	10-minute break
11:30-12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a classroom culture to facilitate peer interactions Discuss conversation language versus academic language lunch
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:30	Review ways to support students' ability to interact with digital learning and build an activity for a new comer with grade level team
2:30-3:15	Support the understanding of information retention and language acquisition process
3:15-3:30	Schedule modeling and observing opportunities (peer modeling)
3:30-3:45	Closing and evaluation

Agenda

- ## Outcomes
- o Support the understanding of information retention and language acquisition process
 - o Review the Krashan's and Vygotsky's theories to support knowledge of best practices
 - o Support the understanding of creating a classroom culture to facilitate peer interactions
 - o Review ways to support students' ability to interact with digital learning
 - o Schedule modeling and observing opportunities (peer modeling)


- ## Language Activity
- Take 3 minutes to look at the passage at your table.
- What do you notice?
 - How does this relate to ELLs?

- ## Vocabulary Retention Strategies
- Contextualization**
- connect vocabulary to prior knowledge
 - reliable situations
 - connection to words roots of words
- Visualization**
- Allow students to see the definition of the words
 - Develop their own meaning
 - Color, sound and smell support retention of vocabulary
- Repetition, repetition, repetition**
- Review words multiple times
 - Use words in games
 - Match vocabulary to pictures
- Certain strategies can support the retention of vocabulary for ELLs (O'Brien, 2020). ELL strategies used within the classroom are important components to addressing the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs (Chen & Chalhoub-Deville, 2016).

- ## WIDA Language Levels
- There are 6 WIDA levels (WIDA ACCESS, 2020):
1. Entering- This stage is considered the "newcomer" stage, they often have a silent period
 2. Beginning- During this stage, students are starting to understand more and need lots of scaffold and support.
 3. Developing- Students within this stage are developing more language and still need many supports and scaffolds.
 4. Expanding- Students in the expanding stage have gained a lot of language and can use some supports to perform on grade level.
 5. Bridging- During this stage, students have a significant amount of English and can use the many grade level supports.
 6. Reaching- During this stage, students have exited formal ESOL services. Students in the Reaching level can read, write and understand text on a grade level without scaffolding.
- Let's log into the WIDA website to view the "can do" descriptors for your grade level.



How to support students through distance learning?

Digital annotations for modeling and assignments through online leveled readers.



Targeted vocabulary instruction during live digital instruction

Digital reader's theater with flipgrid or other recording features in Google Classroom or Canvas

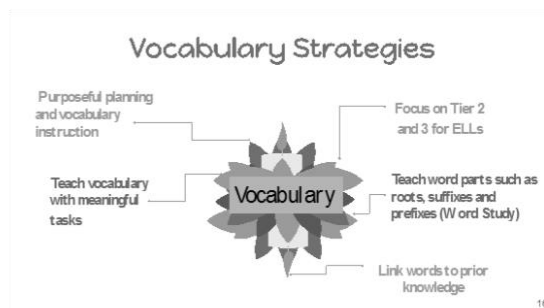



Let's work in our grade level team to build an activity for a new comer with digital tools.


Information Retention

Practicing and applying vocabulary and language while learning helps to support the retention of concepts (Hopman & MacDonald, 2018). Some ways that we can support this during lessons:

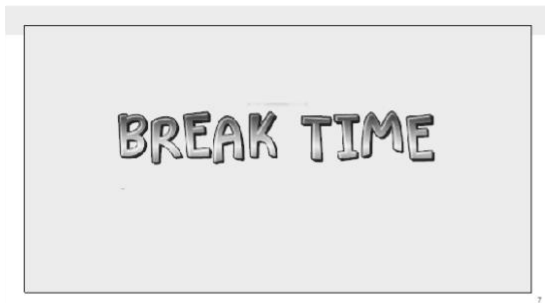
- Dictionary
- Charades
- Acting out the story or concept
 - Create jokes or riddles
- Have students make their own quizzes and dictionaries



BREAK TIME



Peer modeling is not only for students. In the following weeks we will have an opportunity to practice some of the strategies that we have learned. We will pick names of the colleague that we will observe in the next few weeks.



Creating a classroom culture to facilitate peer interactions

Learning occurs through interactions with classroom culture. Instructional practices and routines support ELs ability to function within the classroom and benefit from classroom supports (Bodie & Zusho, 2017). Supports and resources within the classroom can look very different from regular interactions.

- The online classroom provides interactions
- Discussions provide peer feedback
- Peer writing conferences
- Seating arrangements with intentional pairing allow for more quality interactions
- Group work

Discuss conversation language versus academic language

Conversation language is informal language needed to address basic needs.
Academic vocabulary is content rich and specific to the learning.

Vocabulary Instruction

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
This is the most common vocabulary that students will encounter. This types of vocabulary include words that are typically sight words. Students in primary grades will read this in 50-70% of the words in their level texts (Advancement Courses, n.d.)		This type of vocabulary is content specific and is often the words from the glossary or index (Advancement Courses, n.d.)

Learning new words and concepts helps the brain be able to grow. Vocabulary instruction is important to support students ELA growth.

Kahoot

https://kahoot.it/challenge/036140677?challenge-id=43769938-8d15-4d39-8215-d84973434085_1604019896673

Be back at 1pm

Observation procedures

1. Pick up your folder from office at your designated time
2. Sit in the back of the classroom and do not disrupt the class
3. Take notes on the ELL strategies with the capture sheet in the folder
4. Leave a thank you note
5. Be ready to share at our next session

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Question and Answers

20

What is one piece of learning that you will take from this training today?
Made with Canva

<https://padlet.com/jjholdrslgczpmz0n4-dg>

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Please fill out the evaluation

Participant Name: _____ Title: _____

6. How likely are you to implement the strategies that was discussed during this training?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not likely					Likely				

8. How effective was the presentation in helping you to understand the material presented?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not effective					Effective				

9. How valuable was the information presented today?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not valuable					Very valuable				

10. What is one strategy that you can use with ELL students this week?

11. How could the professional development appear to be improved?

12. What future professional development topics would support your ability to guide ELL students?

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Supporting Diverse Learners

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Session 3 -----Jiji Olds

Time	Activities
8:45 - 9:00	Sign in and welcome question
9:00 - 9:25	Review meeting norms Announcements, review agenda, and learning goals Icebreakers
9:30-10:30 10:30-11:00	Debrief peer observations How can we support vocabulary instruction? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct vocabulary instruction Language objectives Debits
11:00-11:30 11:30-12:00	10-minute break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to incorporate project-based learning without frustrations Distraction!
12:00-1:00 1:00-2:00	Lunch Review Second Language Acquisition, group learning and discussion
2:30-3:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifying lessons to facilitate peer interactions, peer modeling and scaffolding Create a collaborative folder for resources Review co-planning and co-teaching models for instruction with ELLs
3:30 - 3:45 3:45-3:55	Question and Answer's Closing and evaluation

Agenda

- ## Outcomes
- Review outcomes of modeling and observing opportunities
 - Learn about and plan vocabulary strategies
 - Review strategies to support language development during lessons
 - Create a lesson plan to integrate strategies into lessons with grade level peers

ICEBREAKER

—

What has been a challenge for you while working with ELLS?

What has been a strength while working with ELLS?

How would you respond to these statements?
True or false...

Understanding who my ESOL student is and his/her culture is beneficial to learning outcomes.

- No two ELLs are the same, even if they have the same overall proficiency level. When we make personal connections with our students, learning outcomes are higher (Claypool & Moore, 2020).

Students should be strongly encouraged to speak only English at school.

F - Some language learners begin in a "silent period" and may have significant anxiety about taking risks speaking in a second language (Cummins, 2013).

Parents of English language learners should be encouraged to speak as much English at home as possible.

F - Students' primary language supports the development of their secondary language. We want children to maintain their home languages and learn English! (Creagh-Kettle, Alford, Comber, & Shield, 2019).

The education of an ELL's parent is the most significant variable as to the length of time it takes for a student to learn English.

F - The amount of formal schooling the STUDENT has received in their first language is the most significant variable. It may take seven to ten years for ELLs to catch up to their peers (Creagh-Kettle, Alford, Comber, & Shield, 2019).

Let's Discuss

Now that we have all had a chance to visit our peer models and be a peer model, let's share things that we have gained and learned during this process.

Supporting Academic Vocabulary Development

Supporting ELLs' academic vocabulary development is critical to their ability to access the curriculum. Another way to encourage students to use the new language would be to encourage academic discourse during lessons (Lan & de Oliveira, 2019). Using strategies that encourage ELLs to explore language in a comfortable environment can support ELLs' gain vocabulary (Miranda, Wells, & Jenkins, 2019). Teachers' ability to incorporate strategies to promote students' language development or tap into students' need to communicate with their peers would help students be motivated to acquire a new language.

Language Objectives

What:

Language objectives are the specific language, vocabulary, speaking or listening goal that students will work on during the lesson (WIDA, 2020).

Why:

This helps frame the lesson for language goals as well as content goals.

How:

They are displayed, explained and reviewed the same way as the content objective.

Realia

- Realia is real-life materials provided during lessons to help students visualize the content or concept taught (Kinard & Gainer, 2015).
- This helps ELLs engage more intently with the lesson.
- It reinforces the vocabulary.
- It creates connections for learners.
- It helps students create their own definitions of the vocabulary.

Direct Vocabulary Instruction

- Using visuals
- Using realia
- Repeat
- Review
- Pre-Teach

BREAK TIME

Project Based Learning

- Project-based learning is connecting learning to real-world applicability for students
- Students create a project to demonstrate their learning
- Students are able to have a choice in their learning
- Students are able to work independently or with peers
- It increases pride in their work (Chen & Yang, 2019)

JAMBOARD

What is one type of activity that you would like to try in your classroom and why?



Review of Theory

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory states that new learning occurs through interactions with peers. Second language acquisition theory supports this by asserting that ELLs use interactions with peers to accelerate their language skills (Anthanasios & de Oliveira, 2014). Thus, classroom interactions play a vital role in language development.

Review of Theory

Use the chart paper that you have at your table to write one take away of how language develops for students.

Modifying lessons to facilitate peer interactions, peer modeling and scaffolding

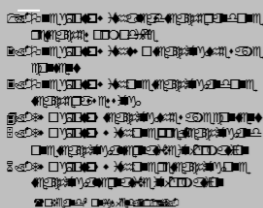
- One of the most effective ways to support ELLs' learning is through peer modeling. These peers act as models and tutors (Cardimona, 2018).
- Peer support improves ELLs' ability to learn in a comfortable environment with language support (Kingbell et al., 2017).
- Scaffolding supports students' learning at their level.
- Modifying their work without changing the integrity of the task is important to allow for adequate support for students.

Create a collaborative folder for resources

In the next block, we will navigate google drive to create a shared place to collaborate. We have some of the resources from this training available to review. We will also store and organize the materials other materials in this drive.

BREAK TIME

Co-planning and co-teaching models for instruction with ESOL teacher



- Various co-teaching models are effective while supporting ELLs
 - These are examples of 6 popular methods
 - These models might have to change based on your students, lessons, or other reasons
- The least effective model is one teacher and one observer (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2017).
- None of these models can be used if there is no intentional planning
- Even if common planning times cannot be determined, ESOL teachers should enter into the classroom knowing which lesson are being taught for that particular day.
- Intentional planning is key to shared responsibility of students.

Let's work in our grade level team to build an activity for a new comer with digital tools.

Review of Theory

While thinking of learning a second language, we can refer to Krashan's Second Language Acquisition theory. This theory refers to a student's need to communicate with the world around them as their largest motivator in developing language. Additionally, Vygotsky (1978) shares that learning is interactional. Motivation for learning the new language is supported by the quality of interactions that are presented with the child. This includes interactions within the classroom cultural norms (non-verbal), peer interactions and teacher-student interactions.

Question and Answers



Please fill out the evaluation

Participant Name _____ Date _____

A. How likely are you to implement the strategies that we discussed during this training?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not likely				somewhat					likely

B. How effective was the presentation in helping you to understand the material presented?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not effective				somewhat					Effective

C. How valuable was the information presented today?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not valuable				somewhat					Very valuable

D. What is one strategy that you can use with ELL students this week?

E. How could this professional development experience be improved?

F. What future professional development topics would support your ability to guide ELL students?

Reference

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Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

An Exploration of Instructional Strategies for English Language Learners in Elementary Classrooms

Participant # _____

Year of Service _____ Position _____

Opening Statement: First, I would like to thank you for your time and cooperation to help me with my doctoral research study. Thank you for signing the consent form. I would like to remind you that I will be recording the entire interview. With your permission, may I please start the recording? I would like to gain deeper understanding about your perceptions as a teacher of English Language Learners. Through this interview, I would like to gain insight into what instructional strategies you use in your classroom and your perceptions of those strategies.

RQ#1 - What ELL instructional strategies do elementary general education teachers report applying in their classes?

RQ#2 - From the perspective of elementary general education teachers, which ELL instructional strategies support ELL academic achievement?

Interview Protocol	Questions
General Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can tell me about the students in your classroom? (how many, grade level, language background, etc) 2. Describe the ELL students within your classroom. (Such as language levels, how many ELLs) 3. Can you tell me about your educational background?
Lesson Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What strategies do you embed within your lesson plans for ELLs? How do you prepare for ELLs in your lessons? Are there any specific considerations that you have during your planning?

	<p>5. How do you prepare for misconceptions that ELLs have during lessons?</p>
	<p>6. Please describe some of the instructional strategies that you use to scaffold for ELL students? How does this particular strategy support students' understanding?</p> <p>7. How do you choose specific strategies for introducing new topics? (preference, perceived effectiveness, school initiative, personal or scholarly research based, etc)</p>
Lesson Delivery	<p>8. How does what you plan on implementing for ELL learning work out? How do they change, if they change?</p> <p>9. What specific strategies do you use for lessons? Does it change based on the subject? How does it change?</p> <p>10. How do you believe that modifying the strategies are supportive for ELL learning?</p>
	<p>11. What, if any aspects of the classroom can students utilize as resources for independent work? How supportive do you feel the classroom resources are to helping ELLs with academic content?</p> <p>12. What types of student-based learning opportunities exist to support ELL learning? (project-based learning, peer partnering, etc) Are any of these more supportive than the others? How so? How beneficial do you perceive these to be in supporting ELLs access the curriculum?</p>
Assessment	<p>13. What types of preparations do you have for ELLs before or during assessments?</p> <p>Do you feel that this is supportive for students? How so? Is there anything that you implement or do not implement that would be more supportive?</p>

Additional	14. Is there anything that I did not ask, but you would like to share with me about ELLs, SIOP, or effective strategies?
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Closing Statement: Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to interview you and for donating your time for my study. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Appendix C: Data Audit

Excerpt from data table:

Coding Table:

A priori codes	Open codes	Categories	Themes	Participants	Excerpts
Research Based Strategies	Realia	Instructional Strategies that best support students	Many elementary, general education teachers use some research-based strategies within the classroom.	1 5 6 7 11	1- "Realia is a big one. It, it brings it home and makes a connection for the student in their brain." 5: "I just bought a three D printer. So, when I get actually into the classroom, I want to try and use that for, for models of different things" 11: "bring in that real-life example or ask them like personal experiences and kind of correlate the language to the concept."
	Visuals, Vocabulary instruction			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	1- "A two-minute video can provide so much vocabulary and vocabulary building to a child." 2 "one good strategy for introducing new topics would be to front load some vocabulary. Since that's often an area that the students are lacking" "It also helps when you have the visual, like the picture and the word posted on a vocabulary wall in the classroom to help the students are anchor charts, definitely help as well." 4: "So I'll use visuals for everyone, but maybe the visual for my ELL students will have the word underneath so that they can connect the letters or that word to the picture." 5: "I even had a student tell me that it's helping them build vocabulary and I almost fell on the floor!" 6: "So I do a lot of images for them." "I do explicit vocabulary teaching" 7: "But I like to show a lot of visuals"" visuals, like I

I also do a lot of modeling. I use my document camera for almost everything, even now it's kind of challenging. Cause I have to use my phone as my document camera. Cause for whatever reason, the ones we have, like don't sync with our new device. I don't know. It's some weird technological thing. It's a new device. That's our document. Cameras are super old. So the software doesn't work with our computers for whatever reason. So it doesn't configure. So I've been using a lot on my phone as like a second zoom account and I like sign it on that. So a lot of modeling I definitely repeat the directions a lot and if I know they feel comfortable speaking, I ask them to repeat them back to me. But if I know they're not at that stage and I was, I don't put them on the spot cause I know they'll feel kind of, you know, anxious to speak and feel that pressure. teacher understand / class culture

(05:15):

I do a lot of chunking as well. Like once, you know, please ask, I'd rather, you ask me now as opposed to, you know, going 20 minutes into the activity and being like, Oh, I don't know what to do. So I always say like, I don't mind, you know, spending that extra five minutes or 10 minutes explaining it again, or a different part, explaining it in a different way. Okay. I think that's so important to like give them as much as they can upfront. I think that's so great. I feel like that really probably benefits students to be able to complete the task. How do you see it benefits students when you do chunk those directions and take that work load? I think it benefits them when I'm able to monitor them as much as I can, but I feel like even though sometimes if I do model and I send them to do it off by themselves, they, some of them still struggle depending on their English proficiency.

(06:17):

Yeah.

(06:20):

Q: How do you see, what do you see when they're struggling? What do you notice? When they're struggling, either some stuff I'm just like shut down and put the pencil down and just sit there and they don't ask me for help. They just like sit and wait for me to come over to them to notice. Sometimes there's tears depending on and I feel really bad. I'm like, Oh, like, I don't want you to be upset, but sometimes it's more to like, they'll just pretend to be working and I'll be like, Oh, there were, you know, if I'm walking around quickly, they'll they're working, but they're not really doing anything, but they don't want to say they're struggling. Or the one that I see most often is that they're kind of like looking to see what their peers are doing and they just kind of take what they're doing and just kind of put it on their paper. Cause I do try to like when I do seating arrangements to kind of put them with the higher performing peers so that if they feel more comfortable asking them as opposed to asking me for help they can kind of be that, you know, buddy work if they need that extra help. Yeah. Friends are so important, especially in kindergarten, I taught kindergarten for 10 years. So I'm all about early childhood.

(07:31):

Q: How do you prepare for like those misconceptions? Like when you're planning, how do you prepare for what they're, you know, like language deficits may fall? I try to use real life examples. Whether that be visuals or pictures or trying to kind of bring in that real life example or ask them like personal experiences and kind of correlate the language to the concept. I guess it depends not so much of Albanian or African, but we've had some Spanish speaking students in the past, like try to, I know a little

Appendix D: Summative Evaluation

Participant Name: _____ Date: _____

A. How likely are you to implement the strategies that we discussed during this training?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not likely

somewhat

Likely

B. How effective was the presentation in helping you to understand ELL pedagogy?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not effective

somewhat

Effective

C. How valuable was the information presented today in supporting your understanding of scaffolding and differentiation for ELLs?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not valuable

somewhat

Very valuable

D. What is one strategy that you can use with ELL students this week?

E. How could this professional development experience be improved?

F. What future professional development topics would support your ability to guide ELL students?