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Viewpoints of Classroom Teachers on Educational Issues of Students with Interrupted Formal Education

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Farah Merzier-Baudin

MA, Touro College, 2013

BS, Touro College, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Most research on students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) and English language learners (ELLs) documents their struggle with higher attrition rates and behavioral issues in high school. This qualitative study was conducted to examine high school teachers' perspectives working with SIFE/ELLs in the classroom. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) indicated that students benefit from classrooms with high social interaction among all classroom participants and appropriate scaffolding of learning materials. Although SCT and most research focused on the students' perspectives, this research focused on teachers' perspectives. Data were collected from semistructured, open-ended interviews with 20 participants who teach or work with SIFE/ELLs. Thematic coding was performed within the Quirkos platform and led to seven themes: (a) SIFE/ELLs face challenges and need additional resources and assistance to overcome language barriers; (b) SIFE/ELLs bring diversity, maturity, life experiences, and work ethic to the classroom; (c) teachers have a passion for teaching and a significant impact on students; (d) teaching experience or possessing worldly experience is helpful in working with SIFE/ELLs; (e) professional development focused on working with SIFE/ELLs is important but somewhat lacking; (f) a multilingual co-teacher and exposure to English are crucial needs; and (g) the approach to student learning should be balanced and fair in a mainstream classroom, but this comes with disadvantages. These themes support the idea that, with increased professional development and resources, teachers who work with SIFE/ELLs can create positive social change by building more collaborative and productive classrooms.

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Dedication

I want to Thank God for directing me, leading me to everything, guiding me through all challenges, and pouring out his blessings during my research to enable me to finish the project. God works with us in our imperfections (Malachi 3:1-4)

I am honored to dedicate this to my family. I am thankful to my wonderful hubby Esaie Baudin; your love, inspiration, and support are much appreciated and duly noted when things get tough. I am incredibly grateful for my children Macaulay, Jennaya, and Fanesiah, your love, understanding, and heartfelt prayers for me have kept me going so far.

Also, I want to express my thanks to my extended family Mika, auntie Michele, my father Georgy, my uncles, and my sister and brothers for their love, unwavering guidance, and patience throughout this research study.

I love you all and thank you for always being there with me

Stay Blessed!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Teachers are essential in children's social-emotional development (Shewark et al., 2018). Yet teachers face inadequate training in teaching students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) or students with interrupted formal education (SIFE; Nopriyeni et al., 2019; Rosengren et al., 2018). SIFE are a diverse subset of the English language learners (ELLs) population who share two major characteristics (WIDA Consortium, 2015). These students are usually new to the U.S. school system and have had interrupted or limited schooling opportunities in their native countries (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019). SIFE who enroll in high school are between 14 to 18 years old and are often 2 or more years below grade level in literacy (DeCapua, 2016; Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016).

This qualitative, phenomenological research was conducted to explore the experiences of high school teachers who work with SIFE in their classrooms. An increasing number of immigrant students in secondary schools presents a challenge for the American educational system (DeCapua and Marshall, 2018; Paez, 2008). High school teachers face a lack of training and resources to implement learning techniques to support SIFE (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua & Marshall, 2018; Merga et al., 2020). This chapter covers the background, problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, the nature of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, the scope of delimitations, limitations, significance, and summary.

Background

As mentioned, this research study addressed teachers' perspectives working with SIFE to address their need for academic literacy alongside their cultural, socio-emotional, and physical needs. Academic success is not only predicated on the teachers' work toward developing a reading and writing curriculum but also on supporting social-emotional learning through the creation of a positive and safe school climate (Mok, 2019; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Teachers play a significant role in providing support to assist SLIFE in adjusting to the U.S. school systems (Hos, 2016). Several instructional approaches and interventions already exist to support teachers in meeting students' needs and encouraging academic success: culturally responsive teaching, change theory, scaffolding, language acquisition and literacy training, targeted reading intervention (TRI), critical reflection of teaching, and other research-based best practices. However, the power of these approaches and interventions lies in teachers' having access to professional development and training in these areas.

The mutually adaptive learning paradigm (MALP) is an instructional approach that helps educators address the needs of SIFE and other struggling culturally and linguistically diverse learners by building bridges to formal education (DeCapua, 2016; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). The MALP provides a comprehensive framework that moves beyond the well-intentioned but inadequate initiatives currently aimed at addressing the lack of success of large numbers of SIFE. Culturally responsive teaching, as represented by the intercultural communication framework (ICF), supports the academic success of diverse students. The ICF is a part of the MALP and is designed to

help teachers develop culturally responsive teaching in the classroom (DeCapua, 2016). The ICF provides a guideline to help teachers develop a deep cultural understanding of their students (DeCapua, 2016; WIDA Consortium, 2015). Using the ICF, teachers have established and maintained relationships with their students to build a supportive learning environment.

Fullan's (2007) change theory presents change as a threefold process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. Implementation and institutionalization could be included as a process for teachers to integrate into their professional development and lesson plans (Crary, 2019). Fullan noted that several factors are needed to help create changes in education, such as requiring proficiency in information literacy skills for high school (Crary, 2019). He also identified advocacy from administrators or teachers as another factor needed to create change (Crary, 2019).

Further, scaffolding provides special assistance for learners to move toward new concepts, skills, and understanding (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Prospective teachers need to understand how pedagogy and content interact to implement strategies supportive of learning (Koehler et al., as cited in Nopriyeni et al., 2019, p. 530). Teachers with pedagogical knowledge can strategically build students' knowledge, skills acquisition, and positive thinking habits. Pedagogical knowledge requires an understanding of cognitive, social, and learning theories and how to apply them in the classroom (Nopriyeni et al., 2019).

TRI is a professional program for teachers to help enhance struggling readers' literacy skills in the classroom. TRI promotes rapid reading growth in their struggling

readers. Providing teachers with high-quality professional development that promotes diagnostic reading instruction skills is an important way to improve children who struggle with early reading (Scanlon et al., 2008; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). TRI may support SIFE learning because it uses efficient instructional strategies for early reading development.

Critical reflection requires teacher candidates to examine their thoughts, perspectives, biases, and actions (Slade et al., 2019). The reflective practice facilitates the development of new knowledge, skills, and dispositions in teacher candidates by fostering critical contemplation of actions. Reflective thinking in education enhances students' learning because teachers' contemplation of the nature of teaching occurs during active teaching, leading to connections between knowledge and experiences (Slade et al., 2019).

The need to implement research-based best practices has also become progressively more critical as increasing numbers of ELLs and SLIFE enter schools (Kennedy & Lamina, 2019). For example, Kennedy and Lamina (2019) discovered s that growing awareness of imprecise language use is a significant indicator of improving literacy. Students who are less aware do not fare well in mainstream English classrooms. Based on that observation, they were able to design and implement interventions that accelerated SIFE literacy development by intentionally seeking to make them more aware of their language use (e.g., lessons on pronunciation and the distinction between standard academic English and conversational English; Kennedy & Lamina, 2019).

Problem Statement

There are increased numbers of SIFE entering the U.S. high school system (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Marshall & DeCapua, 2018). About 10%–20% of ELLs are SIFE (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Marshall & DeCapua, 2018). Most SIFE come to schools with little or no prior literacy, low levels of English language proficiency (ELP), and limited academic content knowledge (The New York State Education Department, 2011; Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020). Given this fact, there is concern that their limited schooling will directly hinder their success compared to their peers.

Although researchers have investigated SIFE educational struggles, they have not explored the teachers' perspectives on these struggles. High school teachers face several challenges when teaching SIFE, and adequate training can provide best practices for teachers to be effective in their work with SIFE. One of the problems teachers face is the lack of training (DeCapua, 2016), which prevents them from addressing the SIFE's academic challenges. Teachers are not well-trained and resources (i.e., a well-organized curriculum for ELL, technologies, suitable class sizes, and online programs) are not available to assist teachers in addressing the academic and emotional needs of SIFE (WIDA Consortium, 2015; Zimmerman-Orozco, 2015). This study addressed teachers' lived experiences and challenges teaching SIFE in high school.

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological study addressed high school teachers' perspectives on SIFE and the educational challenges SIFE face in the classroom. This study also explored professional development resources related to educating SIFE. Though most teachers

have high expectations for all their students, including SIFE, others may have lower expectations for these students due to their limited or interrupted formal education (DelliCarpini, 2008). SIFE require specific instructional approaches that are qualitatively different from how educators cater to other students' individual needs (DelliCarpini, 2016; Hos, 2016). To achieve this purpose, 10–20 high school teachers who had worked with SIFE for over a year were identified. Some participants were recruited from the Walden participant pool, and others were recruited from the New Jersey high school. The recruited teachers participated in an open-ended interview and completed a survey.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study to explore high school teachers' experiences with SIFE:

RQ 1: How do teachers describe their lived experiences and challenges of teaching high school SIFE in the classroom?

RQ 2: What educational and professional preparation have high school teachers found to be effective when working with SIFE?

RQ 3: What best practices do teachers believe are associated with SIFE student engagement?

Theoretical Foundation

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) of human development and learning framed this study. Vygotsky's SCT framed this study in the following ways. Teachers might use Vygotsky's theory to support SIFE engagement in the classroom through effective scaffolding that anticipates the types of knowledge SIFE bring to the classroom.

SIFE thus may acquire new language interaction and a set of knowledge that will benefit them for life.

Vygotsky's SCT describes how social interaction plays a fundamental role in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). The social interactions innate in collaborative practices can improve the quality of teaching, learning, and the sense of community among teachers. Social interaction is the basis of learning and development (Shabani, 2016). The SCT is defined by human knowledge, which is mostly a social process. It highlights the interaction between developing people and the culture in which they live (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky suggested that social learning comes before cognitive development, and children learn through social interaction that includes collaboration with peers or adults as well as cultural tools. (Vygotsky, 1978). As such, SCT brings teachers and students together despite diverse social and cultural histories.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the learning process involves three key themes: culture, language, and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is the primary activity space in which learning occurs (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). Learning is a process of apprenticeship and internalization in which skills and knowledge are transformed from the social into the cognitive plane (Shabani, 2016).

Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding is closely related to the concept of the ZPD. The ZPD is where learning takes place with scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978). Scaffolding is one of the most lauded and promoted best practices today, which encourages learning by providing students with all the necessary but temporary supports for learning (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). It will be removed when the learner can learn unassisted (DeCapua &

Marshall, 2011). Scaffolding, then, is an essential element of effective teaching, which is useful in bridging learning gaps. Teachers use scaffolding to provide individualized support by incrementally improving students' ability to build on prior knowledge (Shabani, 2016).

Nature of Study

This study followed the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach to present the most insight into teachers' experiences working with SIFE. An IPA is focused on meaningful experiences and events (Smith & Osborn, 2009). I conducted semistructured interviews exploring how teachers interacted with SIFE. I also collected teachers' responses via a survey.

Definitions

Academic language: Academic language refers to formal English rules, structure, and content for academic dialogue, text, and communicative conventions that allow students to meet the demands of school environments. Academic language consists of vocabulary and discourse structures necessary to elaborate on academic content fluently (WIDA Consortium, 2015).

Bilingual education: Bilingual education is a term that refers to the teaching of academic content in two languages, a native and a second language. Bilingual education allows ELL students to learn grade-level academic skills in their native language until they have acquired enough language to achieve academically in English (WIDA Consortium, 2015).

English language learner (ELL): ELLs come from non-English speaking homes and learn English (New York State Department of Education, 2014). Many ELL students have developed essential communication skills in English, but they struggle with academic language. However, these students may have similar language proficiency levels to native English speakers but may need very different supports to succeed in the classroom (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017).

English learner: English learner refers to students who are learning English. These students come to school with the benefit of speaking a language other than English and acquire English as an additional language (New York State Department of Education, 2014).

First language acquisition: Refers to the way children learn their native language.

High-quality education: High-quality education is about the nourishing of dreams along with the requisite skills and tools. A quality education pays attention to the affective and cognitive aspects of learning. The confidence that comes with achievement must be nurtured and translated into a sense of entitlement and empowerment, of personal agency (WIDA Consortium, 2015).

Language acquisition: The process by which humans acquire the capacity to comprehend or perceive language as well as to produce and use words to communicate. There are three language acquisition theories: imitation, reinforcement, and analogy, which do not explain extremely well how children acquire language (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; New York State Department of Education, 2014).

Mainstream classroom: A mainstream classroom is a general education classroom that places students with special education needs in the general education classroom for some or most of the day (WIDA Consortium, 2015). The mainstream classroom can serve students in several ways to ensure they receive the same education as their general education peers.

Second language acquisition: Refers to the learning of another language or languages besides the native language.

Sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP): The SIOP offers teachers a model for lesson planning and implementation that provides limited English proficiency and ELLs access to grade-level content and language standards by making concepts comprehensible (New York State Department of Education, 2014). It serves as a lesson plan framework or planning guide that delineates a lesson's necessary features for effective instruction (New York State Department of Education, 2014).

Social and emotional development: Social and emotional development is defined as how children start to understand who they are, what they are feeling, and what to expect when interacting with others. It includes a development of native language skills to facilitate English acquisition (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua, 2016).

Social-emotional learning (SEL): SEL is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel, and show empathy for others, establish, and

maintain supportive relationships make responsible and caring decisions (New York State Department of Education, 2014).

Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE): SIFE are relatively small proportions of those recently arrived in the United States and often represent the neediest of ELLs because of their limited first language literacy, frequent gaps in academic knowledge and skills, and critical social-emotional needs (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Robertson & Lafond, 2012).

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE): Students with limited or interrupted formal education may have had limited or otherwise interrupted formal education due to factors such as poverty, political instability, forced migration, and cultural reason (DeCapua, 2016). SLIFE have limited reading and writing backgrounds in their native language and are below grade level in most academic skills (WIDA Consortium, 2015).

Assumptions

In this study, I made four assumptions. First, I assumed that all teachers face challenges teaching SIFE. Second, I assumed that SIFE may be experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and may be struggling with cultural adjustment, identity issues, and academic literacy. They may need intensive literacy instruction alongside content instruction to help them succeed in the U.S. public school system. Third, I assumed that the participants would genuinely answer my interview questions. During interview sessions, I reassured them that they have the right to opt-out of the interview even at the last minute and confirmed that their personal information would stay

confidential. Finally, I assumed that there would be adequate participants to provide accurate data, categorize themes, and identify biases towards the study.

Scope and Delimitations

For this study, I explored teachers' perceptions of SIFE learning experiences by conducting individual virtual interviews with them. The sampling frame of the study consisted of teachers who teach ELLs/SIFE in high school. The study delimited to approximately 10–20 participants (teachers) in New Jersey high schools who had experience working with ELLs/SIFE. This research used purposive and convenience sampling to equal representation for grade level among the respondents. Teachers were recruited based on their experiences working with SIFE. They were recruited from high school in New Jersey because of proximity and Walden participants' pool to extend the data collection until saturation. The data were based on high school teachers' lived experiences teaching SIFE. Interviews occurred virtually and took between 30 to 45 minutes per participant. There were no vulnerable populations, such as SIFE, in this study.

Limitations

This study included several limitations. First, the study was limited to teachers who teach SIFE and ELLs in the classroom. Further, I faced a limitation in finding high school teachers to participate in a virtual interview about their lived experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of SIFE. I only had access to a small number of teachers due to limited high schools in the city the study was focused on. Third, not all teachers share the same experiences with SIFE. Due to the limited number of ESL teachers and

the COVID-19 shutdown, the curricula for ELLs/SIFE was modified for the students' specialized needs, which impacted how ELL teachers responded to the survey. Another study limitation was that, since 2016, I have served as a school counselor at the high school from which teachers were recruited, which may have led to bias.

Significance

Though previous studies addressed SIFE perspectives, little research exists on teachers' perspectives working with SIFE. Further, most studies have not addressed the lack of professional development and the best practices needed to keep SIFE engaged in the classroom (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017), Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2018; Marshall & DeCapua, 2018). Teachers continue to struggle with their limited understanding of how to provide additional support to SIFE (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). Teachers need additional professional development in educational approaches that support blended learning, such as the flipped classroom (Rosengren et al., 2018).

This study revealed the difficulties teachers face when planning and implementing instructional learning for SIFE and the importance of having teachers participate in professional development. This study's exploration of teachers' experiences working with SIFE promotes the development of a positive school climate for SIFE that enables teachers, administrators, and school staff to work together, emphasizing school policies for every student to feel safe in their school environment. Such a climate may increase students' academic learning and achievement, increase social and emotional learning, decrease absenteeism, increase school graduation rates, and reduce behavioral issues among SIFE that require disciplinary actions.

Summary

This qualitative, phenomenological research study was conducted to explore high school teachers' lived experiences of SIFE in the classroom and their challenges while implementing differentiated instruction strategies to ELLs and SIFE. This chapter introduced the study, supplied background information, highlighted the gap in the literature, and presented the problem statement and the purpose of the study. The theoretical framework identified aligned with the study's approach. The nature of the study provided a concise rationale for collecting data and answering the research questions. This chapter also clarified key terms and identified underlying assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations. Lastly, this chapter explained how the study advances knowledge in the field. In Chapter 2, the literature review will provide an overview of the literature search strategies and review how relevant literature aligns with this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This phenomenological research was conducted to explore how teachers experience implementing high-quality education to SIFE. Using a constructivist lens, this study added to the current literature on SIFE by exploring teachers' experiences with SIFE as social and emotional learners with distinct cultural and physical needs. This chapter includes an analysis of the current and relevant literature on SIFE: teachers' perspectives, teacher and students' relationships, and the challenges teachers face working with SIFE at the high school level. This chapter also addresses the specific challenges entailed in educational policies for teaching bilingual students, especially mainstreaming versus bilingual education. After a brief discussion of the literature review search, I will explain the theoretical framework on which this research is based: Vygotsky's SCT, the MALP, the ICF, and the Danielson framework. Then, I will discuss the research relevant to teaching ELLs and SIFE at the secondary education level. Finally, I will discuss teacher preparation needs and the potential contribution of this research to the body of literature on SIFE.

Literature Search Strategies

In this literature review, I analyzed retrieved sources from peer-reviewed journals, books, and other relevant databases. The Walden University library database provided scholarly articles related to my topic from 2014 to 2020. Some articles published earlier than 2014 were included to support the study. In addition, I used the following databases: Academic Search, Education Source, Sage journals online, EBSCOhost, and PsycARTICLES. I also used Google Scholar, the Department of Education in New York

and New Jersey, WIDA, and the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment site to obtain

further information. Boolean operators such as "and" and "or" facilitated the research

study (Galvan & Galvan, 2017).

The keywords used in the search were *educational issues* OR *behavior* OR

emotional OR *socioeconomic*, and *students* OR *learners*, and *interrupted education* OR

school*interruption. I also searched for *benefits of bilingual education* OR *SIFE* and

ELLs mainstream classroom. The librarian also assisted me in navigating through the

online library by searching for more articles such as *interrupted formal education* OR

limited or interrupted formal education OR teachers' perception OR *SIFE* OR *SLIFE*,

and lastly, *teachers' perspectives* OR *limited or interrupted formal education* OR *SIFE*

OR *SLIFE*. Searches were limited to scholarly literature, but some were international

peer-reviewed in different languages.

Theoretical Foundation

Vygotsky's (1978) SCT, which includes the concept of the ZPD and scaffolding,

provides the theoretical framework for understanding how ELLs and SIFE learn new

languages and formal educational practices. Additionally, the MALP, the ICF, and the

Danielson framework provide a framework for imagining gaps in teacher preparation and

possible professional development solutions.

Vygotsky's SCT

Vygotsky's SCT is one of the dominant theories of education. Vygotsky created

the SCT as a reaction to existing conflicting approaches in psychology (Karpov, 2009).

Vygotsky's theory is valuable for its insights on the "interdependence between individual

and social processes in the construction of knowledge" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Specifically, the SCT theorizes that learning happens first through social interaction and second through individual internalization of social behaviors (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). According to SCT, human learning is primarily a social process, which reflects interactions between developing people and the cultures in which they live (Ma, 2020; Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky argued for the role that social interactions and culture play in developing higher-order thinking skills and cognitive development (Donato, 1994; Karpov, 2009; Ma, 2020; Margolis, 2020). Social learning comes before cognitive development, and children learn through social interaction that includes collaboration with peers or an adult (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978).

SCT has influenced the field of ELL instructional design (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a; Sarikas, 2018; Shabani, 2016), explaining how teachers and students' social interactions and collaborative learning can enhance ELLs' ability to grasp new concepts in their target language (Novita et al., 2020; Shabani, 2016). Specifically, teachers create a suitable classroom environment to help students learn and form relationships based on trust and commitment (Shabani, 2016). The relationships help facilitate social interaction and active participation in the learning tasks even when they are learning English (Karpov, 2009; Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). Students then learn through observing, listening, and talking with their fellow students and teachers. Further, Vygotsky's SCT suggests new context-oriented language teaching-learning pedagogies to help teachers maximize their teaching effectiveness and their student's learning (Sarikas, 2018; Shabani, 2016). Learning a new language is a process of memorization, repetition, and

acquisition of skills and knowledge (Shabani, 2016). Prior research indicates that the language pedagogies and activities developed from Vygotsky's SCT may improve students' language skills and overall cognition (DeCapua, 2016; Sarikas, 2018).

Scaffolding

Vygotsky's SCT includes two key concepts: scaffolding and the ZPD (Sarikas, 2018; Shabani, 2016). Scaffolding is a significant feature of effective teaching in which the teachers continually adjust the level of their help in response to the student's level of performance (Ajabshir & Panahifar, 2020; Azi, 2020; Donato, 1994; Karpov, 2009). Scaffolding promotes student-centered learning by establishing learners' autonomy (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016) and providing students with all the necessary but temporary support until the learner can learn unassisted (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Many children learn by following examples from adults and gradually developing tasks independently (Azi, 2020). When using the scaffolding method, the students become independent and self-regulated learners because of social interaction with peers and teachers' support (McLeod, 2019).

Teachers recognize that gaps exist between what SIFE are supposed to learn and what they are learning (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020). SIFE can benefit from scaffolding in which teachers establish and maintain relationships and create a supportive learning environment by adapting teaching models (Shabani, 2016). Teachers can break down the activities into smaller portions to complete or differentiate instructions based on each student's individual needs (Sarikas, 2018). Teachers can further provide support by explaining the assigned work, modifying the lesson to cater to each SIFE, and engaging

them socially through group participation with their peers (Shabani, 2016). As a result, the students will eventually grow independently and soon achieve their academic learning goals (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017).

ZPD

Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding includes the concept of the ZPD (Ajabshir & Panahifar, 2020; Azi, 2020; Sarikas, 2018). According to Vygotsky (1978), the learning process involves three key themes: culture, language, and the ZPD. The ZPD is the primary activity space in which learning occurs (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). When a student is in the proximal zone for an assignment for which the teacher provides appropriate assistance, the students' ability to achieve the task is enhanced (Azi, 2020). Within the ZPD, three essential components facilitate the learning process: teachers with knowledge and skills beyond the students, social interactions with a skillful tutor (teachers) that allow the student to observe and practice their skills (Shabani, 2016), and scaffolding or supportive activities provide by the teachers, or more competent peer, to support the students as they are led through the ZPD (Ajabshir & Panahifar, 2020; Azi, 2020; Sarikas, 2018).

MALP

The MALP is a culturally responsive instructional approach to help educators address the needs of SIFE and other struggling culturally and linguistically diverse learners (DeCapua, 2016; DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). This culturally responsive approach supports learners in transitioning from their preferred and customary ways of learning to Western-style formal education by balancing key

elements of formal education with the students' needs, preferences, and priorities (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). The MALP extends Vygotsky's theory by empowering teachers with strategies for building bridges to formal education for struggling learners (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b).

Using the MALP to plan instruction means meeting students where they are, introducing new information in conjunction with something students already know to help create a schema, and emphasizing the explicit teaching of academic skills (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010, 2015a). SIFE require "specially tailored programs" to meet their unique "language, literacy, and academic needs" (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010, p. 160). (SIFE come from collectivistic cultures and work best in classrooms that encourage forming a solid network of relationships among teachers, students, and their families (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Instruction using the MALP provides opportunities to move frequently between individual accountability and the sharing of knowledge and responsibilities (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Many teachers have used the MALP activities to integrate oral and written modes, providing SIFE with mandatory scaffolding to develop literacy (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). In the MALP instruction guides, teachers are asked to explicitly teach the academic methods of thinking and school-based duties unaccustomed primarily to the students (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). These tasks must be introduced using familiar language (native language) and content that was previously mastered or learned (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a).

Though there are numerous challenges to educating SIFE, students with limited or interrupted schooling can succeed if their school commits to supporting them (Custodio

& O'Loughlin, 2020). Teachers can create a model to implement different learning styles that could support SIFE throughout the school and classroom (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Other researchers found that when appropriate scaffolding and the MALP are in place for SIFE, the dropout rates were lower than ELLs raised in the United States (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Gahungu et al., 2011). The students' outcomes also improve by providing appropriate support, such as bilingual teachers with technology and translated material (DelliCarpini, 2008; Ross & Ziemke, 2016; WIDA Consortium, 2015).

Intercultural Communication Framework

The MALP began as a pathway to academic success for these populations; however, the MALP evolved into a comprehensive framework, the ICF, that moves beyond the well-intentioned but inadequate initiatives currently aimed at addressing the lack of success of large numbers of SIFE (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). The ICF provides a guideline to help teachers develop a deep cultural understanding of their students' thinking and learning (DeCapua, 2016).

Danielson Framework

The Danielson framework for teaching is a universal language for instructional practice grounded in a philosophical approach to and understanding of excellent education and the nature of learning (Danielson, 2007). The framework was developed to define more effective teaching methods, elevate the profession, and summarize a comprehensive approach to professional teacher learning (Danielson & Willgerodt, 2018). Administrators have used the Danielson (2007) framework to evaluate teachers on

how well they planned and prepared to teach the students. The teaching framework provides several components based on the teachers' evaluation, including component 4e, growing and developing professionally, establishing such activities squarely within teaching responsibilities (Danielson, 2007).

<div align="center">**Literature Review Related to Key Concepts**</div>

English Language Learners

ELLs are diverse students with different language backgrounds, academic, and social-emotional needs (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). ELLs either immigrated or have lived with parents whose second language is English (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). They may have come to the United States with limited English proficiency, no literacy skills, and little to interrupted formal education (New York State Department of Education, 2014a). ELL is often used interchangeably with English learner (EL). This paper will use the term ELL or ELLs for consistency.

ELLs are among the fastest growing population of students in the United States over the past decades (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), California has the highest percentage of ELLs enrolled in public schools. In New Jersey, in the fall of 2016, they received approximately 5.0% of ELL students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). The percentage of public school ELL students in the United States was higher in fall 2017 (10.1%, or 5.0 million students) than in fall 2000 (8.1%, or 3.8 million students; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

ELLs can be categorized in several ways. New York's Department of Education pointed out several ELL subgroups such as newcomers, developing ELLs, long-term ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and SIFE (Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016). Only some meet the criteria of SIFE (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016). According to Education Week (2020), there are an estimated of 4.9 million of ELL students in U.S. public schools learning the English language; however, only 10% of the ELLs are SIFE enroll in school (Ed Week, 2020). New York further breaks down its ELL population into three additional different subgroups defined by distinct educational needs: special education students, gifted and talented students, and SIFE (Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016; New York State Department of Education, 2014a).

Special education students are those who are classified and identified as special needs. The school that the child enrolls in will do a free evaluation process to determine if students are eligible for special services (Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016; Montero, Newmaster, & Ledger, 2014). An evaluation can clarify the student's challenges and shed light on their strengths (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Special education ELLs need exceptional assistance in multiple areas, such as English language skills and bilingual services, cognitive development, health issues, and learning and thinking differences (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a; WIDA Consortium, 2015).

Most gifted and talented ELLs need to learn English because they had formal education from their native country, and they fluently speak their native language

(Merga, Roni, & Mason, 2020). Gifted and talented ELLs grasp the language more rapidly and exceed other non-language areas (Gubbins et al., 2018). They can graduate along with their peers, mastering the English language quickly while receiving resources to keep them abreast (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). Lastly, gifted and talented ELLs can excel in all subject areas, only need to comprehend English and outshine their peers in English and the core subjects (Gubbins et al., 2018). The U.S.s Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2014) indicated that 2% of ELLs are enrolled in gifted and talented programs compared to 7% of non-ELLs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; New York State Department of Education, 2014).

SIFE

Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) are often equated to students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). For consistency, I have used SIFE to refer to both groups. About 10% of all ELLs are SIFE (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). According to Custodio and O'Loughlin (2020), SIFE represent the most challenging of ELLs because of their limited first language literacy skills, frequent gaps in academic knowledge, and social emotional needs. They also pointed out that most SIFE in the United States are from Latin America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). These students did not attend preschool or primary school in their native land due to impermanence or disastrous conditions in their home country, such as war, environmental catastrophes, and financial hardships (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Robertson & Lafond, 2012).

ELLs Versus SIFE in Terms of Learning

Researchers agree that ELLs face the dual challenge of language acquisition and academic content (DelliCarpini, 2008). DeCapua and Marshall (2010) argued that ELLs face the "dual challenge of having to master English and learn grade-level content in a language other than their own" (p. 160). ELLs have limited English proficiency and background literacy from their native country (Ross & Ziemke, 2016). ELLs went to schools, met their academic needs, and mastered their native language. They need additional English support to succeed in mainstream classrooms and other bilingual support subjects (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020), and they can easily participate in language assistance programs (bilingual intervention) to ensure students receive assistance (Merga et al., 2020). With these resources, they can attain English proficiency and meet the academic content and achievement that all students are expected to reach (NCES, 2019).

Though DeCapua et al. (2007) demonstrated that many school staff members think all ELLs have limited formal education and confuse them with SIFE, SIFE are different from most ELLs. DeCapua and Marshall (2011) mentioned that many SIFE face more significant challenges, especially at the secondary level. These students have little time to master the academic content, develop literacy skills, and build English proficiency (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011).

Many SIFE are from homes where their parents' reading levels and practices are low (Lupo et al., 2019). Some SIFE have speech, language, and hearing handicaps that place them at increased reading failure risk (Lupo et al., 2019). Some students speak

dialects from their villages or have lower language proficiency levels and need additional support to succeed in the classroom (Robertson & Lafond, 2012). By contrast, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found that children who are reading three or more times a week are more likely to know their letters (NCES, 2019). The NCES also found that White children read more often than Black or Latino children (NCES, 2019). Lupo et al. (2019) stated that the outcomes found on struggling readers are originated from children raised in poverty.

SIFE need extra help because of their limited first language literacy, frequent academic knowledge gaps, and skills (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Ross and Ziemke (2016) stated that SIFE have more to learn than English, academic literacy, and social needs. DeCapua (2016) mentioned that these students might not know how to "do school," knowing that the handling of a notebook or engaging in academic tasks (p. 225). DeCapua and Marshall (2010) focused on the challenges that the English language learners (ELLs) without age-appropriate formal education and lack of first language literacy face in US classrooms.

SIFE are not readily available to start learning because they lack strong literacy skills and content knowledge (Browder, as cited in, DeCapua, 2016). SIFE have suffered in academic performance due to poorly equipped and sporadic schooling in their native countries (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). They arrived with a learning gap, became anxious, and experienced acculturative stress, migration stress, and stress learning a new language (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Hos, 2016). These students may have

experienced more significant losses, trauma, and difficulties in adapting to this new life (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020).

Students feel frustrated and overwhelmed with their lost education time and a host of social, emotional, and psychological problems resulting from being abruptly uprooted from familiar surroundings (DeCapua et al., 2007). SIFE often need their emotional, psychological, and physiological needs to be met before engaging fully in the educational setting (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). SIFE are struggling readers often attribute their problems to the difficulty of the task, interference, too much noise, vision problems (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017), or unfair teachers; they rarely acknowledge that their lack of skill is at the heart of the issue (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Therefore, SIFE withdraw from trying to improve altogether because they believe it is hopeless for them to stay in school (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017)

Schools often fail to address these needs before tackling the academic ones (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua et al., 2007). Many US schools will argue that they do not have enough funds to hire a counselor/therapist to work with these students (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020). Some US school districts are concerned about academic needs rather than psychological needs (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). Further, many schools are still struggling to identify the characteristics of SIFE, they lack resources to support SIFE, and teachers are not prepared to meet the needs (DeCapua, 2016; Robertson & Lafond, 2012).

Ziemke and Ross (2016) stated that SIFE's weak educational backgrounds and limited literacy in their native language place them at a disadvantage compared to their

English-speaking peers. According to Berman, developing a full English proficiency takes at least a decade of schooling, if not longer (Berman, as cited in Ziemke & Ross, 2016, p. 49). Not all SIFE will need a decade of schooling if they arrived in the US during their childhood years, but high school years from 15 to 18 years will need a decade of education with at least five years of support (Ross & Ziemke, 2016).

All of this contributes to the reality that SIFE have a higher risk of dropping out of high school, given the precarious nature of their relationship with the school (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016). Custodio and O'Loughlin (2017) pointed out that at-risk Hispanic students aged 16-19 who identified themselves as non-English speakers were four times more likely to drop out of high school than their peers who learn and apprehend English. SIFE are at risk of failing and dropping out of schools because they are not currently receiving adequate resources to meet their needs (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016; Ross & Ziemke, 2016). SIFE's purpose in migrating was to seek employment rather than school, due to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), they must enroll in school (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020). Custodio and O'Loughlin (2020) stated that 40% of male chose to work on agriculture and construction industries because they have prior experiences in their native land (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016).

SIFE and Individualism Versus Collectivism

SIFE face another challenge in US education: adapting to an individualist orientation (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Many schools in the US suggest that individualistic values are part of the dominant culture (DeCapua et al., 2007). The US

classrooms foster individualistic expectations as students complete their work, and individual accountability is highly valued and required from them (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011).

Teaching SIFE to become independent and strive for individual success is a challenge because many SIFE come from collectivist cultures (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Many immigrant families socialize their children to be more collectivistic (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Teachers should build collectivist strengths while introducing scaffolding concepts, restorative practices, and Kagan strategies in the classrooms (Kagan & Kagan, 2017). Over time, the US school system has adopted some aspects of collectivism with students working in groups rather than individually (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua, 2016). Students become accustomed to working together to help others with their tasks even before considering their own assignment (Danielson & Willgerodt, 2018; Kagan & Kagan, 2017). Cooperative learning has become popular in K-12 teaching and is based on different cultural values, stemming from the collectivistic and individualistic dichotomy (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b).

In a collectivistic classroom, students help each other in many ways, such as round Robbin, circle time, think, pair-share, and team building rather than individual achievement as the goal (Kagan & Kagan, 2017). SIFE and ELLs collaborate when they are placed in groups. They have learned to rely on their support system, ask questions, engage, and learn to communicate with their peers before addressing their teacher with questions (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b; Merga et al., 2020).

Teachers use the recent strategies in-depth to teach students new learning tools, as Rogers (1959) referred to an empathic understanding of how students process learning and how they can freely communicate their point-of-view without fears and anger. Rogers (1959) also pointed to improve the use of student-centered learning in the classroom, and students must have the active role to interact with their peers using Rally Robin and Round Robin in the classroom to improve more learning between students to students and students to instructor (Kagan & Kagan, 2017). From the individualistic point of view, each student has the urge to compete and excel as an individual; by the same token, they want to be responsible and accountable for their performance (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). From a collectivistic perspective, students are working together for the group's benefit is primary (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b).

Teachers Working with SIFE

Teachers face major challenges when teaching SIFE in high school: they do not have bilingual or sheltered English training; they are not part of school districts that test or track SIFE effectively; they are overwhelmed with class sizes; they do not have the technological ability to implement new programs; the school district is overly focused on standardized testing, or the school district is experiencing funding issues.

Lack of Bilingual or Sheltered English Programs

Not many schools offered bilingual or sheltered English programs for SIFE (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020). However, Robertson and Lafond (2017) stated that increasing sheltered instruction helps SIFE and may provide a viable alternative to remedial instruction. Sheltered instruction strategies may include improved visuals,

collaborative learning activities, and demonstrations (Robertson & Lafond, 2012). Without these programs, teachers struggle to meet SIFE's academic and language needs. DelliCarpini (2016) stated that mainstream secondary-level teachers are often unprepared or underprepared to address ELLs' needs in their subject area classroom. Educating adolescents who have never attended school or who have less than a middle school education might be challenging for regular teachers who do not complete bilingual education training (Gahungu et al., 2011). These students may lack too much background to be mainstreamed with regular 9th graders (DeCapua et al., 2007; Gahungu et al., 2011).

Inadequate Testing or Tracking of SIFE

Many school districts do not track or test students to determine how much education they have received in their native country (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). The testing results can report their first-language literacy and how much they apprehend (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Research shows that few US school districts test these students before scheduling them for classes and placing them in a grade level (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Few parents stated that their children have six or eight years of schooling (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Gahungu et al. (2011) pointed out that fewer students may have documents proving high school credits completion or some transcript from their previous school. Many students did not have a chance to attend high school; however, those who could not provide transcripts are automatically placed in 9th grade (Gahungu et al., 2011).

Class Sizes

Class sizes also pose several challenges for teachers in some high schools. Teachers complained that the classroom is full of 20 to 30 ELLs and SIFE, impacting student learning. DeCapua and Marshall (2011) stated that if the classroom is smaller between 10 to 15 students, teachers will have the ability to give each student more one-on-one attention and offer more regular feedback on their performance. Class size is over the limits when teachers play the role of a social worker, a counselor, a paraprofessional during the day (DeCapua et al., 2007; Novita et al., 2020).

Lack of Technological Training

Although teachers may have access to technology, most of them are not tech-savvy enough to teach or provide instruction using technology (Mellom et al., 2018; Mok, 2019). However, SIFE rely on technology because they translate their work via Google. Teachers complained that there are not enough Chromebooks for students to operate in their classes (Merga et al., 2020). Merga et al. (2020) revealed that many students love using technology, but it also distracts them from learning and doing their schoolwork.

Focus on Standardized Testing

Many schools are concerned with standardized test performance, which influences funding decisions for the schools (Hemphill & Marianno, 2021; Mutnick, 2018). The administration put more pressure on teachers to teach standardized testing content to their students and understand that testing will prove their intelligence (Ross & Ziemke, 2016; Slade et al., 2019). During this pandemic, school members change the focus on social and

emotional learning rather than standardized testing. Moreover, the teach-to-test mentality has been diminished due to distance learning but can return when all students head back to school (Merga et al., 2020). Many problems arose in public schools today, but teachers suffer through the challenges because they have more students to teach, no room for rigor, a teach-to-test mentality, fewer services, and resources (Hemphill & Marianno, 2021).

Budget Cuts

Teachers are also affected by budget cuts in the school system. They have to buy their printing paper, their software with discounted prices, and other additional resources to provide to their students (Mutnick, 2018). Budget cuts have created numerous issues in most public schools in many ways that affect the students and their parents (Mutnick, 2018). Due to budget cuts in some schools district in the US, teachers are faced with the prospect of applying to a new position at other districts or retiring from the position, or possibly being laid off from work (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020). Though teachers want to provide the best support to their students, they argue that the salary is not enough (Mutnick, 2018). Also, students suffer the most from budget cuts because they are at a loss. Budget cuts affect these students because they do not receive additional tutoring programs, summer enhancement programs, and other resources related to ELLs.

Researched Attitudes Toward SIFE

Beyond these explicit challenges, teachers' attitudes toward SIFE may influence their experience working with SIFE in the classroom. Teachers and students have their perspectives and perceptions of learning in the classroom (Awang et al., 2017; Truong,

2016). Nopriyeni et al. (2019) stated that pedagogical knowledge is related to students

learning, classroom management, development and implementation of learning plans, and

evaluation. Many teachers have a unique perception of their teaching role, which involves

promoting students' social-emotional skills, developing stronger relationships,

participating in professional development to enrich their learning, and implementing best

practices and strategies learned from professional development (Kirschner, 2017; Truong,

2016). Teachers are responsible for instructing their students in a way their students can

learn and understand (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2004-2005). DeCapua (2016) stated that

teachers must develop the ability to suspend judgment by building deep cultural

knowledge of SLIFE/SIFE. Therefore, they can modify curriculum and pedagogical

practices that best support SLIFE/SIFE in their transition and adaption to formal

education (DeCapua, 2016).

In everyday learning, teachers interact with students with different personalities,

learning styles, and preferences (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015; Rosengren et al., 2018). There

are various learning styles that students possess. With all students' various learning styles

and preferences, teachers continue to find ways to teach new concepts and strategies to

diverse students, and each student can become successful learners (Dagli & Öznacar,

2015; Rosengren et al., 2018). Teaching concepts and strategies integrate various

methods and techniques, appealing to students' diversity while allowing teachers to

maintain relative flexibility and adjust to various classroom situations (Maqsood et al.,

2020). Teachers need to understand students' perspectives and perceptions in the

classroom (Williams et al., 2018). Each student differs from the other in their learning

styles (An & Carr, 2017). If their ideal learning styles are not recognized in the classroom, studying becomes a grind, and SIFE who have a hard time learning tend to lose their motivation (An & Carr, 2017; Sternberg & Zhang, 2014).

Some students thrive using technology or traditional papers and pencils to learn; however, others prefer collaboration, group work, and even hands-on activities (Code et al., 2020). Novita et al. (2020) pointed out that even teachers have difficulties conducting collaborative learning while investigating students' challenges. They also claim that collaborative learning encourages meaningful learning, in which learners connect in high-quality social communication, such as talking about differing information (Novita et al., 2020). High school teachers, in particular, seem to be blamed for many of the problems related to developmental education (Williams et al., 2018). High school teachers' perceptions regarding the factors that affect recent high school graduates' placement into developmental courses at the community college (Williams et al., 2018) have a tremendous impact on those teachers. Teachers should have a voice in this topic's scholarly discussion and enhance the relationship between community college leaders and instructors and high school administrators and teachers (Williams et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, developmental education in the US today presents several dilemmas for educational leaders (Williams et al., 2018) because students are underprepared to attend colleges or universities even when they pass the state test that indicates competence to graduate from high school (Novita et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2018). Although the collaborative learning approach provides a bridge to promote participation, cooperation, and responsibility in an active dialog to complete the purposes of learning

for these students, students need to be college-ready to avoid these dilemmas (Novita et al., 2020). Collaborative learning is related to Vygotsky's SCT and his beliefs that learning happens first through social interaction and second through individual internalization of social behaviors (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers' perspectives have shifted through the years because they are underrepresented; teachers need to have a voice in testing and implementing the curriculum matched with college readiness (Williams et al., 2018).

Co-teaching has been generally understood to be the collaboration between general and bilingual education teachers for all teaching responsibilities of all ELLs assigned in the classroom (Carty & Farrell, 2018). Co-teaching can also increase students' task behavior and increase the implementation of individualized instructions (Carty & Farrell, 2018). However, bilingual teachers co-teach with the general teachers to ensure successful strategies to enhance the students learning experience (Carty & Farrell, 2018). Teachers expect to implement a higher quality of education to SIFE and ELLs using technologies because the instruction involves a technology device (Code et al., 2020). It is becoming a challenge for bilingual teachers to interact individually with students while conducting computer learning (Code et al., 2020).

Many teachers have different perspectives and perceptions towards the school system. Williams et al. (2018) emphasized that teachers were eager to voice in the debate on developmental education issues in college. Many teachers expressed their vexation at being blamed for increasing numbers of students who require developmental college courses even though college testing scores show that these students are not college-ready

(Williams et al., 2018). Many teachers have high expectations for their students, and some do not have any hopes for others (Code et al., 2020). Those students who receive high praises from their teachers are more likely to demonstrate high academic achievement and work to succeed (Campbell et al., 2014; Timmermans & Rubie-Davies, 2018).

Unfortunately, when teachers have low expectations for students who do not complete assignments or homework, the students do not perform up to their potential and develop low self-esteem and self-doubt (Harris, 2017). Teachers' perspectives should always be positive to engage students and help them thrive for excellence (Campbell et al., 2014; Timmermans & Rubie-Davies, 2018). The types of lessons plan and activities drive teachers' perceptions of learning regarding classroom interaction and engagement (Campbell et al., 2014). When it comes to teachers' collective learning, teachers did not feel responsible for organizing collective work because the communication problems in collaborative learning implementation lack collaborative skills (Novita et al., 2020). Teachers will always promote positive perspectives and perceptions in their classrooms and develop a strong relationship with their students (Carty & Farrell, 2018).

According to Rosengren et al. (2018), research has described the development of an academic course in person-centered care involving students and teachers from multiple disciplines to bridge the gap between professions and academics. Dagli and Oznacar (2015) also pointed out that teachers stated that students who spend excessive time in the resources room may need to be in regular classes learning with other students. Teachers are always part of the support system in collaboration with other teachers to

provide a smooth transition to students (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). Understanding teachers' perspective is crucial for designing targeted professional development programs and evaluating the extent to which a curriculum reform is effectively implemented (Xenofontos, 2019). Professional development is more likely to bring out a long-term change in teacher performance.

General Training Needs

Beyond the challenges stated above that impact teachers' ability to work with SIFE, poor teachers' preparation programs, degrees, and certifications, lack of SIFE-specific training and resources, poor classroom management preparation, and low teacher salaries may also have an impact on student learning (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019; Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DelliCarpini, 2016). All of these areas where teacher training and support are needed.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Teachers' preparation programs, degrees, and certifications are the number one factor that impacts student learning (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019). Previous research suggested that teachers must earn an advanced degree and positively impact teaching students at the high school levels (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019). Another study demonstrated the positive effect of certified teachers, and it proposed regulations require teacher preparation programs in specific subject areas to offer at least three semester hours of study in language acquisition and literacy development of ELLs and all students (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019; New York State Department of Education, 2014). The Commissioner of Education regulations also proposed a three-semester hour course in

language acquisition and literacy development of ELLs/SIFE would address some topics, such as ELL instructional needs, co-teaching strategies, and integrating language content instruction for ELLs/SIFE (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019).

Furthermore, the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages provides educator resources on its website for Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLLs/ELLs) (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019), including tools and best practices that could be used by teacher preparation programs development of their course (New York State Department of Education, 2014). The teacher preparation programs prepare teachers for early childhood education, middle childhood education, and adolescent education (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019). The teacher preparation program would apply to the newly registered candidates who enroll in the fall 2022 semester and thereafter (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019).

In this new program, the first cohort of candidates in a four-year program that will complete a three-semester hour course in language acquisition and literacy development of ELLs will graduate in spring 2026 (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019; Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016). This timeline provides teacher preparation programs with ample time to make revisions, if needed, and to align the program requirements with the proposed amendment (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019; WIDA Consortium, 2015). The Department of Education in New York required a teacher candidate to earn a Masters's degree and passed the state exam to be certified as a teacher (Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016; New York State Department of Education, 2014). The Department is proposing a change of the pathway requirements for the teachers'

certificate, which are based on the educational study requirements for New York (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019).

Lack of Training and Resources

One of the main problems teachers face is the lack of training and resources to implement learning techniques with SIFE. Secondary teachers' academic preparation likely emphasizes teaching their specific subject areas, not fundamental language development (DelliCarpini, 2008; Hos, 2016). Though some teachers are adequately prepared to teach the students extensive in-depth studies of languages and other core subjects (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019), secondary teachers found it a little overwhelming to consider both language instruction and content instruction (DeCapua et al., 2007). Merga et al. (2020) pointed out that teachers have a working knowledge and understanding of language as a system and the role of language and speech components, sounds explicit, grammar, meaning, coherence, communicative strategies, and social conventions.

Secondary teachers are not equipped to meet SIFE's educational needs (DeCapua, 2016). Custodio and O'Loughlin (2017), DeCapua and Marshall (2015b), and Hos (2016) revealed that the US school system has not prepared to implement learning to these students because teachers are not prepared to face the challenges. Montero et al. (2014) stated that teachers mention that they received little or no professional development on assisting SIFE for educational rigors. ELL teachers at the high school have inadequate resources to implement learning in the classroom (DelliCarpini, 2016). In some cases, teachers are frustrated and untrained to serve their students and their parents (DeCapua et

al., 2007). The challenges of teaching SIFE are not only in the classroom but also in the students' lives in the school, during lunch, physical education, and other electives (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; Hos, 2016).

Every student is different, but SIFE present specific and unique learning challenges (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua et al., 2007). According to DeCapua and Marshall (2010), SIFE learn differently, and they have their ways of learning and remembering. They come to school unprepared or unable to understand the required material (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; WIDA Consortium, 2015), and as DeCapua (2016) pointed out, many school districts apply their curriculum to a challenging standard for both teachers and SIFE.

Teachers assist students in academic and emotional development by maintaining a safe and supportive environment (Shewark et al., 2018). Teachers are tasked with fostering and maintaining positive classroom climates while meeting their students' health, safety, and social-emotional needs (Shewark et al., 2018). Therefore, teachers must have a smaller class, working technology with learning software compatible with SIFE, and the ability to test students based on their learning comprehension (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020). They may also apply the MALP and the SIOP model to their lesson and differentiating the curriculum to meet their students' needs (Jolliffe & Snaith, 2017; Koura & Zahran, 2017).

More problems arise when teachers are expected to implement a curriculum for SIFE with different needs (Jolliffe & Snaith, 2017). Differentiating lessons for SIFE and modifying the content to their needs is a slow process. On top of implementing and

differentiating instruction to SIFE, the administration urges teachers to support the students (Shewark et al., 2018), communicating daily or weekly with parents (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010), and offering tutoring hours after school to students who need more attention to succeed (Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016; Robertson & Lafond, 2012). Many teachers use their time at home to prepare the lessons because they have more administrative work to do while in the school building (Slade et al., 2019). The challenges of teaching SIFE are not only in the classroom but also in the students' lives in the school, during lunch, physical education, and other electives (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; Hos, 2016).

Classroom Management

Classroom management is an issue for all teachers and impacts how students behave and how much they learn (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). The classroom has become diverse, and many teachers are not trained to meet the demands of diverse student populations (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; WIDA Consortium, 2015). Classroom management has been identified as a significant influence on teachers' performance. Teachers are the head of the classroom, and they manage the flow and the traffic in the classroom (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). The way teachers manage their classrooms can have a tremendous impact on how students adhere to the rules (DelliCarpini, 2016). Some teachers are vague about their classroom rules and lack focus; students are unclear of the rules and what to expect in the classroom (Blanchard, 2016). Some teachers are unprepared to teach the class, students are bored, and the lesson plan is not age or grade appropriate (Hos, 2016; Lukas & Samardzic, 2014).

Classroom management creates expectations and rules and facilitates social and emotional learning (Shewark et al., 2018). Teachers create daily and weekly routines, consequences, and ways to earn rewards for good behavior. When teachers establish effective classroom management, it engages students in learning and other classroom activities (WIDA Consortium, 2015). Shewark et al. (2018) stated that well-managed classroom climates are marked by supportive teachers who are sensitive to the students' academic and emotional needs. Teachers encourage positive behavior, build meaningful relationships, and maintain a supportive emotional classroom. Teachers can cultivate the classroom environment in many ways, such as (a) nurturing caring relationships with all students, (b) facilitating positive peer interactions (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b), (c) supporting and catering to students' individual needs, and (d) building respect between you and your students (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Shewark et al., 2018).

Effective classroom management promotes positive interaction among peers, supports awareness, manages students' success, and engages students in ways that benefit them (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Teachers can build a stronger relationship with students through various strategies such as getting to know the students and their culture, using appropriate language, address them by their first name, discussing the rules with them and explain why those rules are matter, and lastly, meeting with them one-on-one to better understand their needs in the classroom (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua, 2016; Merga et al., 2020). Shewark et al. (2018) pointed out that socially and emotionally competent teachers are integral to the classroom's successful management and high-quality social-emotional teaching. These teachers are aware of their impact on their

emotions and behaviors strive to build caring relationships within their classroom (Shewark et al., 2018).

Furthermore, teachers are foremost the best individuals engaging with students, spending the most time, and building a robust relationship in the students' daily lives. Teachers make a difference in being prepared to manage the classroom with all students (Merga et al., 2020; Shewark et al., 2018). With the growing numbers of SIFE, classroom instructions vary depending on the state law; however, teachers still manage the classroom, make it more comfortable, and welcome SIFE in the class (Samson & Collins, 2012). Koca (2016) stated that teachers' student relations play a prominent role in developing competencies in the students' years. Poor classroom management affects students and the community; an effective classroom is authentic, empathic, and supportive of good behavior (Samson & Collins, 2012).

Teachers' Salaries

Teachers' salaries are also factors that affect their performance in the classroom and student's achievements. Many federal government officials or lawmakers do not understand that reducing teachers' wages significantly affects students' educational achievements and impacts the communities (Lukas & Samardzic, 2014). Teachers' role in students' achievement outcomes is unquestionable. However, higher pay is linked to accountability, and it attracts and retains high-quality teachers to perform their best with students (Lukas & Samardzic, 2014). There is increasing concern about student performance and the teacher quality in our nation's schools. Therefore, policymakers at

the state and local municipalities should improve teachers' salaries to enhance students'
learning (Lukas & Samardzic, 2014).

The teachers are undervalued, which is likely to impact the future of the education
system (Lukas & Samardzic, 2014). By increasing teachers' starting salaries, student
performance will improve because teachers can better plan and implement instruction in
their classrooms. It will improve teacher retention and a more significant percentage of
high-achieving students taking education courses (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020). Some
school districts generally pay their teachers based on their education level and longevity
(D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019). When school districts cannot identify teachers' quality,
one would expect to investigate where they went to school or earn a degree to be certified
as teachers (Hemphill & Marianno, 2021; D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019). Even with a
random selection from the pool of resumes with potential teachers, teachers' average
quality should increase, as do the educational costs associated with becoming a teacher
(Mutnick, 2018).

Many reasons are presented when increasing teachers' salaries, such as teachers
working one job rather than two, which reduces their energy of teaching students (Lukas
& Samardzic, 2014). Secondly, teachers will improve their learning, decrease
absenteeism, and increase students' learning because teachers will have more energy to
concentrate on teaching (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020; Hemphill & Marianno, 2021).
Higher salaries can keep some teachers in the classroom and likely improve their
students' learning outcomes (Hemphill & Marianno, 2021). Low salaries affect teachers
and students, and teachers will look for other paying jobs though students suffer from

their education (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020). Therefore, increasing teachers' salaries will increase students' learning, improve classroom management, and boost students'/teachers' relationships (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020). Other essential factors that enhance teachers' ability to instruct and implement high-quality education are discussing ahead.

Encouraging Teacher and Student Relationships

Teachers can engage these students to feel part of the community by participating in clubs, joining the athletics such as sports that they like, and other school activities (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). DeCapua et al. (2007) stated that teachers could build a welcome culture for the student, take them on field trips, and provide productive experimental learning. After receiving additional support in social and emotional needs, it will be a step-by-step process to help them achieve. Some US school districts have bilingual teachers who are designated to help students build literacy skills in their home language and in English (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua, 2016). These teachers are available to help them fill in the gaps, build content knowledge, and support their social and emotional needs (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010; Ross & Ziemke, 2016; Zimmerman-Orozco, 2015).

Teachers build positive relationships with students in the classroom and outside the classroom in many ways (Hagenauer et al., 2015). Most teachers treat their students with respect, love, affection, and empathy (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Koca, 2016). First, Mailizzar et al. (2020) pointed out that teachers need to allow students time to know each of their peers and their teacher using discussion games, sharing ideas,

implementing Kagan strategies, and restoratives justices. Online teaching and learning are an unprecedented experience for most teachers and students; teachers learn to develop a virtual relationship with their students via Google Meet, Zoom, or Microsoft Team (Mailizzar et al., 2020). Second, teachers speak to students with kindness, compassion, and less sarcasm (Awang et al., 2017). Thirdly, teachers prepare a survey to collect information about their students at the beginning of the school year and understand each student's culture (Mailizzar et al., 2020). According to Vygotsky (1978), the relationship between the student and the teacher is central to learning that involves social interaction and culture, which plays a vital role in developing higher-order thinking skills.

A strong relationship between a teacher and their students can substantially impact the academic success (Koca, 2016). When students view their teachers as partners rather than adversaries, they are more open to learning (Koca, 2016). Buehl and Beck (2014) shared that a relationship can turn classrooms into a collaborative environment where students are more willing to listen to both the teacher and each other. Teachers have a safe classroom, learning-friendly environment where students feel more confident taking risks and showing engagement in learning while behaving and achieving higher academic levels (Buehl & Beck, 2014; Shen et al., 2015). Teachers play a vital role in students' life, and they understand the importance of being in a relationship and having a social-emotional connection to the students to create a safe learning environment for them to succeed (Campbell et al., 2014; Turner et al., 2015).

Building psychological safety is more complex with some students than others, especially with SIFE (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). SIFE are more introverted than

overreacting in a classroom with teachers (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua, 2016). If SIFE demonstrate unwanted behavior in class, this behavior may result from trauma or chronic stress such as having learning or thinking differences, frustration, or negative home culture. They may feel threatened by the situation of not participating or doing the work in class due to their illiteracy that other students find harmless (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Teachers must communicate with the student by asking about their hobbies, a little glimpse of the culture they had in their native land, their interests, and how teachers can help ease the pain (Mailizar et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2015).

By building stronger relationships with SIFE, teachers can overcome many behavioral issues by assisting them in grouping in the classroom (Mailizar et al., 2020; Spilt et al., 2011). When teachers establish trust among SIFE, positive interactions include greeting students by their name, using eye contact when speaking to the students, giving positive praise for working hard, participating in class discussions, asking questions, raising hands, and being an advocate in the classroom climate (Mailizar et al., 2020). Teachers can significantly impact students and families by allowing students to be themselves and by enforcing positive behaviors with compassion (Spilt et al., 2011). Koca (2016) stated that most students believe their ability and effort are the main reasons for school achievement, and they consider themselves intelligent. As a result of teachers' students' relationship and understanding, it can lead to a warm classroom environment that facilitates successful adaptation in school and increases students' motivation to learn (Koca, 2016).

Positive teacher-student relationships draw students into learning and engaging in classroom activities such as assignments and classwork (Hagenauer et al., 2015; Mailizar et al., 2020). Students become more involved in learning; their test scores increase rapidly, they tend to have more self-fulfilling visions and take pride in their accomplishments (Hagenauer et al., 2015). Relationships help most students participate in learning, encourage best behaviors, develop various clubs or hobbies to share interests, and get them involved no matter how difficult it might be (Jolliffe & Snaith, 2017; Shen et al., 2015). Most students understand that teachers recognize their values, emotions, and actions (Koca, 2016). Many students will be more motivated to attend class when they know their teachers care about them and help them succeed (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). However, teachers can communicate empathy by telling their students that what they do was inappropriate but next time, ask for assistance (Koca, 2016).

One of the challenges teachers' students' relationships face in class is that many students are not going to class, and they are not logging into Zoom, Microsoft Team, or Google Meet class for instruction (Hancock et al., 2020; Mailizar et al., 2020). Chronic absenteeism is increasing among students before and during these unprecedented times (Mailizar et al., 2020). Students from low-income families or at-risk students are most likely to drop out of high school (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). They have issues trusting teachers due to poor experiences with adults in their life (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). They develop trust issues connected to either abusive or neglectful homes, and they were mistreated (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017;

Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016; Gahungu et al., 2011). Another challenge that affects teachers' students' relationships is that students who have learning disorders that are not yet diagnosed can limit their span and frustrate their teachers (Koca, 2016; WIDA Consortium, 2015). Koca (2016) mentioned that educators should be mindful of students who have learning disorders when engaging them in class activities, projects, or group work.

Furthermore, teaching through relationships encourages positive experiences and demonstrates caring with students. A research review displays that many researchers have a lot to say about positive teachers' students' relationships. DeCapua and Marshall (2015b) stated that teachers know how to engage SIFE in the classroom through positive and respectful relationships. Custodio and O'Loughlin (2020) pointed out that building resiliency among students and parents is significant that parents and students learn how to adapt to change. Resilient learners developed the resources to cope, demonstrated flexibility to adjust to learning challenges, and discovered that teachers build positives relationships with students and parents (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020). Koca (2016) shared that positive teacher-student relationships can lead to a warm classroom environment that facilitates successful adaptation to school and increases students' motivation to learn.

Teachers can also adapt their classroom activities and implement SEL in the lesson plan better to meet the needs of SIFE and all other students (Koca, 2016). The goal is to help students take pride in their accomplishments, display students' work in the classroom like a museum to invite other school staff to see your students' achievements,

and applaud positive behaviors (Campbell et al., 2014; Mailizar et al., 2020;

Timmermans & Rubie-Davies, 2018). Therefore, the students will have confidence in

doing their work, participate in classroom discussions, and have a positive relationship

with their peers. Lastly, teachers' -students' relationships can promote growth such as

emotional, academic, and physical growth (Buehl & Beck, 2014; Hagenauer et al., 2015).

Many teachers expand their ability to help their students grow academically, physically,

and emotionally because they grow in various aspects of their lives (Buehl & Beck, 2014;

Hagenauer et al., 2015).

Extensive research has revealed that it takes some ELLs and SIFE longer than

their non-ELL peers to become proficient in academic language (DeCapua & Marshall,

2015b; Samson & Collins, 2012). Classroom teachers are prepared to teach the students

the academic tasks' linguistic and demanded skills to address academic language's role in

their instruction (Merga et al., 2020). Even though most SIFE with limited schooling

have much caught up to do, they can achieve quickly if their work begins at a lower level

they can understand (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). However, teachers prepared and

differentiated instruction to meet the needs of SIFE while understanding the culture's role

in language development and academic achievement (Merga et al., 2020; Ross &

Ziemke, 2016). The importance of meeting the needs of SIFE in secondary school does

not diminish as students moved through years of schooling (Merga et al., 2020).

Teachers understand and appreciate the various resources provided to them to

assist SIFE in the classroom learning environment (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b;

Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020). Teachers must be prepared to meet the unique needs of

SIFE because these students need extensive support of literacy (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Merga et al. (2020) stated that teachers lack understanding about how to accommodate students from diverse backgrounds and struggle to provide additional support for SIFE. According to NCES (2019), teacher preparedness incorporates what the teachers bring to the classrooms; professional development contributes to knowledge and better teachers and teaches classroom management.

Informal learning takes place in close relationships, and it is a form of interpersonal communication among students and teachers (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a). Merga et al. (2020) stated that most research debates about learning literacy and teachers' relationships with students are ongoing concerns. However, secondary teachers were confident about their relationship to work with SIFE (Merga et al., 2020). SIFE developed relationships or attachments with their teachers who understand and speak the same language (DeCapua, 2016). According to DeCapua and Marshall (2015), Custodio and O'Loughlin (2017) pointed out, SIFE developed more robust bonds with empathetic teachers who worked with them at their pace. Teachers' understanding and appreciation could help SIFE performed with appropriate support (Merga et al., 2020).

Teachers mentioned that increasing student access to learning technology programs in both languages, print materials in English with vocabulary and visuals, by unifying language and content instruction would help them in any part of the learning process (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DelliCarpini, 2008). SIFE can also benefit from increased time in language development software such as Read 180, Starfall, and ESL reading smart (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua et al., 2007; WIDA Consortium,

2015). If the class sizes are small, teachers have more time to sit with the student,

providing differentiated instruction to each student (DeCapua et al., 2007; Merga et al.,

2020). During this unprecedented time, many educators have implemented new programs

that teach ELLs and SIFE the basics of literacy in reading, speaking, comprehension, and

understanding (Merga et al., 2020).

Combining multiple instructional components with teaching strategies ensures

that SIFE's content and language needs are met in mainstream classrooms. Secondary

teachers revealed using teaching strategies to construct language approach, differentiate,

and content instruction, such as the SIOP model (Sheltered Instruction Observation

Protocol), structured immersion programs, and the MALP. The SIOP model is a research-

based method of instruction targeted toward meeting the academic needs of SIFE

(DeCapua et al., 2007). Some teachers use the SIOP model as a comprehensive model of

sheltered content instruction because empirical research shows that when teachers

implement it well, they provide consistent, high-quality teaching to English learners,

resulting in gains in student academic literacy (Echevarria et al., 2011; Polat & Cepik,

2016). The SIOP model provides a framework for organizing the instructional practices

essential for good, sheltered content instruction (Echevarria et al., 2011; Koura & Zahran,

2017). The SIOP model incorporates and systematizes many techniques that teachers use

to provide students with access to core content and adds features that develop students'

academic English skills (Polat & Cepik, 2016; What Works Clearinghouse, 2009). The

SIOP model eliminates the student separation in the classroom to receive their content

and language needs (What Works Clearinghouse, 2009). If there will be a change to the

SIOP model, it should be monitored carefully to determine student language performance (Koura & Zahran, 2017).

Teaching SIFE learning strategies can be challenging, and teachers should become familiar with these students' cultural backgrounds and academic histories (DelliCarpini, 2016; WIDA Consortium, 2015). Teaching them these strategies may include vocabulary words in languages, oral language, and literacy, reading exercises, using a dictionary to search for the words, and taking valuable notes (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; WIDA Consortium, 2015). Custodio and O'Loughlin (2020) stated that SIFE had not learned the fundamental skills that many students their age have learned and may not be intellectually savvy. SIFE need to develop these strategies to learn and apply academic thinking, reading, and writing. Therefore, SIFE should be learned these strategies in the classroom with their teachers scaffolding the lessons while implementing and differentiating for each student (Koura & Zahran, 2017).

Advocating for Bilingual Education

Currently, most programs for bilingual education argue for mainstreaming ELLs. The mainstream classroom can be a challenge for SIFE who just started formal education in the US (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). In some school districts, SIFE attend ESL classes with their ELL peers in bilingual education classrooms (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). However, the federal government mandates mainstreaming (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). In the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) program, schools oversee a concept called "LRE" or Least Restrictive Environment (Infante-Green & Colon-Collins, 2016; New York State

Department of Education, 2014). According to DeCapua & Marshall (2015), students must not be discriminated against for their lack of education and have the right to be educated with the general education population. Therefore, all SIFE are placed in a mainstream classroom with other students. Still, most mainstream course teachers are not trained to work with ELLs/SIFE (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b) though some are trained to work with special needs students and are licensed.

The mainstream classroom goal is to include the students within the traditional classroom with a co-teacher who knows the students and can provide the attention they need for their specific challenges (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016). Mainstream classroom improves academic achievement, self-esteem, and social skills (Scholten et al., 2016). Teachers do not receive the same support with the special needs students when they have a mainstream classroom with SIFE (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Special needs teachers receive specialized learning materials, classroom accommodations, and paraprofessionals to work one-on-one with the students (Blanchard, 2016). Further, SIFE teachers may only receive classroom accommodation, such as a special desk and maybe computers for the student to use. Teachers should work independently or collaborate with other teachers during common planning to prepare lesson plans (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). The mainstream classroom has advantages and also disadvantages for students and teachers.

The advantage of placing SIFE in the mainstream classroom for at least a year is to start planning their literacy level of relocating to a regular classroom environment (Blanchard, 2016; Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). The mainstream classroom environment

helps students gained self-esteem and social skills (Blanchard, 2016). General education classrooms provide more academic resources and grouping students with their peers to interact and learn (Scholten et al., 2016). Increasing SIFE with diverse backgrounds in a content classroom can influence the flow of everyday instructional practices, and teachers could find having those students in their classes as disruptive or unfocused to their class (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DelliCarpini, 2016). These teachers believed that these students should be reprimand for their behaviors (Blanchard, 2016).

The disadvantage of placing SIFE in a mainstream classroom is that they need more assistance from their teachers, taking time from other students (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). The regular teacher may not have the necessary training to work with SIFE (Blanchard, 2016). These students encountered social problems like rejection that arise from being included in a mainstream class and may become bullying targets (Scholten et al., 2016). Another disadvantage of the mainstream is the cost of maintaining SIFE with additional school support (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). A mainstreamed student's effect on the whole class depends on the prior knowledge of education they receive in question and the resources available for support (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). In many cases, this problem can be mitigated by placing an aide in the classroom to assist the student, although it raises the costs of educating a child. (Blanchard, 2016).

DelliCarpini (2008) pointed out that mainstream teachers have had little to no formal coursework that addresses SIFE's needs in their classrooms. By the same token, when SIFE do not have access to bilingual or sheltered English programs, the mainstream

teachers are responsible for meeting both the academic and language needs of these students (DelliCarpini, 2008).

Bilingual Education

Bilingual education is the process of teaching students using two languages. Bilingual education is an extensive term that refers to two languages in instructional settings, such as the native language of the students incorporate with English the language of instruction (Robertson & Lafond, 2012; Samson & Collins, 2012). Nieto (2017) pointed out that many emergent bilingual students are immigrants or refugees, or others born in the US and speak only their parents' native language until they start school. Lopez and Santibanez (2018) shared that bilingual education has been a political hot-topic issue in many states such as Arizona, California, and Texas (to name only a few states) have sought to curb the use of bilingual programs for ELLs' instruction and to replace these programs with English immersion. However, not all students may need a bilingual emersion program because they are born in the US, but their parents are native speakers who only communicate with students in their native language (Nieto, 2017).

Bilingual education is suggestively more effective at improving SIFE achievement in the classroom and their lives. Lopez and Santibanez (2018) found that bilingual programs' effectiveness improves student reading, students' literacy, and social-emotional development. They also suggested that teachers can take advantage of the bilingual education program to better transition in class with their SIFE (López & Santibanez, 2018). Students taught to read both in their native language, and English outperformed their peers in English-only programs on reading achievement tests

(DelliCarpini, 2016). Teachers instruct students in both languages, and students must comprehend what they learn and answer questions in their native languages (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Teachers use picture books, vocabulary, words wall, mathematics concepts, and science principles to introduce advanced thinking skills with SIFE in the classroom (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017).

Bilingual education has been proven as the best instrument in boosting students' learning and even changing the structure of the human brain (The New York State Education Department, 2011). Many school districts that have an increasing SIFE population propose bilingual education in their school, it is an essential part of the curriculum in setting SIFE up for long term educational benefits and a lifetime of learning (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; López & Santibanez, 2018). Students in the bilingual program have a few privileges, making them brighter and increasing their brains outstandingly (DelliCarpini, 2016). According to Merga et al. (2020), students continue to take literacy and language improvement classes in both languages since it has been proven that skills learned in these classes can be applied to classes where students receive instruction in English only, such as ESL class, physical education, and electives.

Many school districts that have incorporated bilingual education in their curriculum have core classes with bilingual teachers, such as science, history, and math (The New York State Education Department, 2011). Therefore, students enrolled in these core classes are taught in both languages (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Zimmerman-Orozco, 2015). As they will continue to be taught these subjects in both languages,

students will receive grammar and language instruction in English and their native language, which will benefit them a long way (Nieto, 2017). Some districts believe that all students must follow the state guidelines and standards for SIFE based on their age, regardless of their English proficiency and prior schooling (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Even though SIFE receive bilingual education in the school, SIFE cannot meet the state guidelines and standards due to their limited schooling (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua et al., 2007).

Research shows that students from minority backgrounds have higher dropout rates, lower achievement scores, attendance issues, and academic disengagement (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Mutnick, 2018). The advantages of bilingual education in the classroom are boosting academic engagement, increasing attendance, and improving standardized test scores (Lindahl et al., 2020). It is also the most effective and successful way to teach SIFE native and English language (Subtirelu et al., 2019). Students can master both languages and become proficient (DeCapua, 2016). Many high schools offer students the opportunity to take the Seal of Biliteracy's certificate certified as bilingual (Davin et al., 2018; Hancock et al., 2020).

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school district or state to recognize students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation (Colomer & Chang-Bacon, 2020; Hancock & Davin, 2021). The benefits of Biliteracy are to help students recognize the value of their academic success and see the tangible benefits of being bilingual (Davin et al., 2018). Teachers need to learn sociocultural knowledge about their students and families because they will become

familiar with research in first and second language acquisition (Nieto, 2017). Bilingual teachers have been a bridge connecting students' worlds of home and school in meaningful and constructive ways (Nieto, 2017). Therefore, some students become bilingual and volunteer to take the Seal of Biliteracy (Bilingual Multilingual Education, 2016; Hancock et al., 2020). ELLs and SIFE learn that their culture is worthwhile and learn to be fluent in both their primary and English language (López & Santibanez, 2018; Nieto, 2017).

Some people believe that bilingual education programs cost too much, and students living and educated in the US should learn English (Subtirelu et al., 2019). Many people argue that using bilingual education and teaching world languages as secondary languages in the public school system is not only out of component with the tradition of using English, but it is overwhelmed with more instruction (García-Nevarez et al., 2005; Velasco & García, 2014). In favor of bilingual education in American public schools, argue that to be effective, it must be immersive, and language immersion is expensive (Bialystok, 2018). The only alternative to bilingual education is immersion, and studies have shown that immersion is not cheap either (Flores, 2016). Advocates of bilingual education also argue that bilingualism in the US is associated with immigration and embraced a stigma for those students who would benefit by learning in bilingual classrooms (García-Nevarez et al., 2005; Subtirelu et al., 2019).

Some teachers argue that bilingual education allows students who speak their native language to resist assimilation, avoid learning, and become fluent in English (Subtirelu et al., 2019; Velasco & García, 2014). Although opponents believe that

minorities are not motivated to learn English fluently, being fluent in two languages instead of one provides various professional opportunities to the immigrants (Flores, 2016; Velasco & García, 2014). Some school districts do not offer bilingual education curricula at the high school level, and they only recommend bilingual education programs in elementary and middle school (DeCapua et al., 2007; Lindahl et al., 2020). As a result of this conflict, many students may have difficulty becoming fluent in both languages and score lower on achievement tests. Further, their attendance may decline as behavioral problems increase, and parental involvement does not meet the schools' goal (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Many teachers struggle to meet the minimum requirements in many subjects (Slade et al., 2019); however, bilingual teachers must have patience, but firm expectations, for their students to be advanced (Bialystok, 2018). Bilingual education is effective when instruction continues throughout the students' academic careers and achievements (Bialystok, 2018; Flores, 2016).

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) is a way for individuals and teams to expand and deepen their skills as educators and professionals (Hughes et al., 2018). Mizell (2010) defined professional development as many educational experiences related to an individual's work and learning how to apply new knowledge and skills to improve teachers' performance. Most school districts in the US required professional development hours for educators (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016). Although there is no professional development requirement to obtain a teaching license, teachers usually attend teaching-related conferences, seminars, workshops, and webinars (Baguley et al., 2014; Mellom et

al., 2018). Building professional capacity with teachers is an essential factor in professional development, curriculum development, and student success plans (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). Professional development is significant for all teachers to observe, collaborate, and increase understanding of teaching and serve the population better (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016).

Zimmerman-Orozco (2015) mentioned that many school districts in the US do not have adequate resources to meet the academic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of SIFE population (p. 50). Therefore, teachers can provide the necessary assistance if they attend professional development, enhancing their learning and the instructional curriculum (Mizell, 2010). In addition, professional development offers ongoing opportunities for educators to continue improving their knowledge and skills to help students achieve (Mizell, 2010). On the other hand, professional development may not address these learners' needs (Mizell, 2010). However, bilingual teachers who will benefit from professional development learning can assist their SIFE and ELL students in classroom instruction and implement high-quality education to SIFE and ELLs (The New York State Education Department, 2011).

Research suggests that professional development in teacher education circles has brought various programs to teachers (Forte & Blouin, 2016). These programs are sociocultural issues, SEL, mindfulness, blended learning, and implementing restorative justice circles in the classroom (Akinyemi, 2018; Nelson, 2020). Educators always find ways to discover new teaching strategies through professional development, such as they can go back to the classroom, make changes to their lesson plans, and curricula to suit the

needs of their students better (Hughes et al., 2018). However, some of these changes are challenging to evaluate because they are implemented progressively to SIFE demanding and needing extra support to grasp the learning (Kong, 2018).

Professional development makes educators more efficient in their presentations and course evaluations by exposing educators to new methods, curriculum strategies, evaluation styles, and record-keeping strategies (Hughes et al., 2018; Molle, 2013). Professional development training is aimed to help teachers become better at planning their time and staying organized (Mellom et al., 2018; Moser et al., 2018). Also, professional development programs enable teachers to expand their knowledge base in different subject areas they teach, the types of students, and what they need to do to influence student achievement (Kong, 2018). Dos Santos (2018) also pointed out that teachers' beliefs are more about instructional behaviors and attitudes than research knowledge of professional development. Hill et al. (2020) also said that building relationships with students during this pandemic was an opening for more learning and teaching methods. However, professional development becomes the new norm for educators to adapt and learn different techniques to accommodate these students (Hill et al., 2020). Teacher education post-pandemic must prepare educators to redevelop the current curriculum in which the natural world is viewed as a resource to be extracted towards knowledge (Hill et al., 2020).

Implementing professional education development has benefits for teachers, administrators, school staff, and students, but most highly, it improves teachers' knowledge on becoming better educators and develops into competent future school

administrators (Forte & Blouin, 2016). Professional development is tackled a different topic related to students in the classroom, and teachers gain knowledge to engage students' learning (Santos, 2019). Educators who participate in professional development put their knowledge and skills to work by planning and ensuring students' highest-quality learning (Mizell, 2010). Kong (2018) acknowledged that the effective implementation of the ESL teachers' teaching and research ability enhances the teacher community of practice and strengthens the exchange and interaction. Professional development of teachers' community of practice creates a positive, sharing, encouraging, and harmonious teacher group culture (Kong, 2018). Every educator has at least one story of a professional development session that was unpleasant or unproductive to the topic (Hughes et al., 2018; Tannehill et al., 2013). When professional development is ineffective, the host did not prepare to engage or address what needs to be tackle (Mizell, 2010).

Teachers, administrators, and school staff are trained on SEL that empowers students with abilities that directly impact their learning academic, success, and happiness (Greenberg et al., 2017; Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Schonert-Reichl (2017) mentioned that teachers are the engine that drives SEL programs and practices in schools and classrooms, and their social-emotional competence and well-being strongly influence their students. However, figuring out how and when to teach and assess SEL skills in the classroom can be overwhelming when educators receive various professional development programs (Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, 2023; Mok, 2019). According to Schonert-Reichl (2017), classrooms with warm teacher-

student relationships support higher learning and positive social and emotional development. However, when teachers inadequately manage the social and emotional demands of teaching, students' academic achievement and behavior both suffer because teachers have not successfully understood their social-emotional well-being and how they can influence students' SEL (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Several kinds of research show that teaching is one of the most stressful and demanding occupations in the world (Greenberg et al., 2017; Schonert-Reichl, 2017); moreover, several interventions required exactly to improve teachers' social-emotional competence and stress management in school (Gregory & Fergus, 2017), and also professional development will allow them to shine delightfully and implement SEL programs in the classroom (Greenberg et al., 2017; Mok, 2019). Greenberg et al. (2017) stated that evidence-based SEL programs, when implemented effectively, lead to measurable and potentially long-lasting improvements in many areas of students' lives. Teachers learn that SEL programs can enhance students' confidence in themselves; increase their engagement in class, along with their test and achievement scores and grades; and reduce behavioral problems while promoting desirable behaviors (Greenberg et al., 2017). In addition, teachers are trained to understand that students with outstanding social-emotional competence are more ready to attend college, succeed in their careers, have positive relationships with better mental health, and become engaged citizens in society (Greenberg et al., 2017; Gregory & Fergus, 2017).

Summary

Professional development and additional resources are essential for teachers to extend their learning and improve their overall ability to work with SIFE. Shabani (2016) argued that Vygotsky's SCT emphasizes how social interaction drives learning and human developmental changes. Research indicates that teachers are unprepared and unsure about SIFE and how to support their social-emotional learning, academic learning, and well-being.

In this study, I explore teachers' experiences working with SIFE in the classroom to a) build teachers and students' relationships; b) support students in building relationships with other students; c) create a positive classroom environment, and d) allow all students to feel complete, respected, and trustworthy. This study built on existing research on SIFE that focused on observing the students themselves, yet this study filled a literature gap through interviewing teachers who are working with SIFE. That is, I explored teachers' experiences working with SIFE to understand how best to implement professional development and resources that would support SIFE in high school classrooms.

In chapter 3, there will be an overview of the research design, the rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology, which includes the participant selection logic, instrumentation, participant recruitment process, data collection, data processing, and data analysis. This chapter will conclude by discussing issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological research was to gain an understanding of the challenges that teachers face when implementing high-quality education to SIFE. Despite existing research, teachers continue to struggle with their limited understanding of how to provide additional support to SIFE. Further, although researchers have investigated academic challenges for SIFE (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015a; Hos, 2016), this topic has not been explored based on teachers' perspectives and experiences (Merga et al., 2020). This study included three questions to explore teachers' lived experiences and challenges of teaching SIFE in high school. First, what best practices they believe allow for better SIFE engagement, which directly contributes to working with these students. Second, how teachers describe their lived experiences and challenges of teaching high school SIFE in the classroom. Finally, the educational and professional preparation high school teachers found effective when working with SIFE. This study explained why many SIFE from third-world countries have limited access to education and the challenges facing immigrant children with limited or interrupted formal education since they migrated to America. E.

The chapter will cover a detailed discussion of the research design and rationale; the role of the researcher; the methodology, which includes participant selection logic, the instrumentation, the recruitment process for participants, the data collection, processing, and the data analysis plan that demonstrates alignment and consistency among each element of the study. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The study's central concept is teachers' perspectives, lived experiences, and challenges with SIFE, as well as teachers' assessments of best practices associated with SIFE's engagements. Three main research questions are at the center of the study:

- RQ 1: How do teachers describe their lived experiences and challenges of teaching high school SIFE in the classroom?

- RQ 2: What educational and professional preparation have high school teachers found to be effective when working with SIFE?

- RQ 3: What best practices do teachers believe are associated with SIFE engagement?

s Teachers are tasked with fostering and maintaining positive classroom climates, meeting their students' health, safety, academic, and social-emotional needs (Shewark, Zinsser, & Denham, 2018). Teachers believe that best practices are associated with SIFE engagement implementing a culturally responsive instructional model and the MALP (DeCapua, 2016). By addressing the needs of SIFE, teachers must understand, accommodate, and incorporate different ways of thinking to make learning accessible for these students (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b).

I chose to do a qualitative research study because it provided an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences and challenges in high school while implementing education to SIFE. This qualitative research was conducted to understand the challenges teachers face in the classroom due to cultural differences. The purpose was to acquire information on teachers' viewpoints of the mainstream classroom and conduct teachers'

interviews to highlight ways to assist them in the future. I used a phenomenological approach to understand teachers' attitudes toward SIFE and how teachers adjust their classroom behavior when working with SIFE. An IPA is used to explore how participants make sense of their personal and social world to understand their view of the phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2007; Tallman, 2019). The phenomenological analysis uses an individual's account of an event to produce a subjective view instead of a researcher creating an event's objective statement (Smith & Osborn, 2009). An IPA emphasizes that the research exercise is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher. A two-stage interpretation process was involved: (a) the teachers trying to make sense of their world and (b) me as the researcher trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role is to gather, organize, and analyze the perceptions of people who have experienced a phenomenon (Dawidowicz, 2016). As a researcher in this study, I needed to collect in-depth and trustworthy data through virtual, semistructured, open-ended interviews with several high school teachers. I used Google meet or Zoom during the COVID-19 crisis. I had a study outline prepared to engage the participants and a set of interview questions. A few of the questions were open-ended to encourage detailed dialogue with the participants. The interview questions will consist of detailed discussions, gather as part of respectful interactions in learning the experiences and challenges teachers face, and ensure that I have the primary element contributing to the

research during the transcription of results. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and transferred to the software that I used to continue sampling until reaching saturation.

I am a high school counselor, a PhD candidate, and my role as a researcher is not to make participants feel pressured or vulnerable but to make them feel at ease and open to the conversation. My background experience is similar to most of the teachers I have met during this journey. Based on my experiences, I noticed that SIFE are not adequately placed, and teachers are overwhelmed with stress due to a lack of resources to teach SIFE. Many teachers are implementing their techniques to accommodate SIFE and engaging students and parents in learning. I allowed the teachers to freely volunteer to be participants in the research and have the freedom to leave without any harm. I also listened to the participants' viewpoints by giving them the autonomy to express themselves without judgment with intrusive questions or bias.

Methodology

The qualitative research methodology used in this study, phenomenology, is used to gather information and understand participants' perspectives. The study was intended to (a) explore teachers' experiences with SIFE at the high school level and (b) address the educational issues that challenge SIFE in high school classrooms. This research also explored professional development resources related to educating SIFE. I used the IPA approach to present the most insight into teachers' experiences working with SIFE. An IPA is used to explore in-detail how subjects make sense of their personal and social world (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Data were collected from two separate sources for a period of time. First, data were gathered from virtually semistructured, open-ended interviews with several teachers in high schools. The second set of data was a survey created using Google Forms, sent electronically to the teachers who participated in the virtual interviews. This survey was designed to gain a broader understanding of teachers' perspectives, perceptions, and needs surrounding the education of SIFE in high schools. Upon receiving the superintendent of schools' approval, I gathered the information, interview questions, notes, and the Google Forms survey and started the interviews. Schools were selected based on the community's immigrant status and SIFE enrollment in public schools.

Participant Selection Logic

In phenomenology, the participants are usually chosen by purposive sampling, and the goal should be to obtain enough data for the study (Dawidowicz, 2016). Purposive sampling is characterized by incorporating specific, preselective criteria met by the participants at the moment of selection (Dawidowicz, 2016). Participants were identified and chosen through purposive sampling according to their academic background and experiences with ELLs and SIFE. Eligible participants were certified as teachers, over the age of 18, and retired teachers with over 30 years of experience. Teachers were expected to have at least 1 year of experience teaching SIFE. The participants identified their group of students and their issues during their first year in their school district. Participants also determined how long they have been teaching ELLs and SIFE and the strategies/best practices that have helped SIFE become literate in English. I explained the purpose and processes of the study to high school teachers who

met the standards included in the consent form, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. I assembled about 10–20 participants relevant to the study topic and moderated a discussion with each of them guided by the interview questions.

Instrumentation

The interview guide (Appendix A) was used as an instrument for data collection. In a semistructured interview, the interview questions were posed to each participant, and probing questions were used to follow-up and gather more in-depth information. Probing questions can be used concerning the participants' initial responses (Crawford & Lynn, 2016). The interview guide included nine self-developed questions grounded in the research study. I formulated the interview questions to be semistructured, insightful, reflective, and vivid and to avoid judgmental and biased problems. The interview questions were open-ended to allow participants to express their thoughts and feelings about the topic. A follow-up survey was then sent via Google Forms (Appendix B). r Interviewing is not a simple task and requires attention to detail (Crawford & Lynn, 2016), which is time-consuming but enables personal interpretation of the meaning of participants' experiences.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

As part of the process, first, I completed the IRB form for approval to conduct research. Upon receiving the approval from IRB, a letter was sent to the Superintendent of schools to ask for permission (see Appendix B) to conduct research with teachers. Once IRB approval was received, participating teachers were sent the flyer (see

Appendix E), which detailed pertinent information needed for their participation. Based

on the responses from teachers who expressed interest in participating, a brief meeting

was scheduled to provide a quick overview and to answer any questions or concerns.

Then, a virtual one-on-one session with participants was scheduled at their convenience

to conduct formal interviews of open-ended questions. Data was collected through virtual

semi-structured interviews due to COVID-19 restrictions. Virtual interviews were

scheduled for approximately one hour.

In the interview selection process, participants were analyzed based on expertise

and experience. Participants' data was safeguarded for their privacy. Once the interview

concluded, the notes and recorded meetings were transcribed to analyze the data better.

Moreover, participants received an anonymous survey (see Appendix H) in Google forms

to complete as a final step in the interview process. Interviewing ELL teachers in several

content areas created data triangulation to contrast and validated the data.

Data Analysis

IPA researchers wish to analyze how participants perceive and make sense of

things happening to them (Smith & Osborn, 2009). In this stage, researchers gather notes

and comments while transcribing interview data, revise the interview video to link to the

relevant interview data, and rearrange it by participants. This pre-analysis period

develops into a six-step approach to substantial analysis. Transcription is the first step of

the data analysis plan to be collected and transcribed during the interview (Smith &

Osborn, 2009). Transcription transfers audio-recorded statements from the recording to a

printed text (Crawford & Lynn, 2016). In qualitative research, data analysis consists of

preparing and organizing the data for examination, then reducing the data into themes

through coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures,

tables, or a discussion (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Crawford and Lynn

(2016), researchers have different options for transcribing interviews, such as using

software to transcribe the interviews or hiring professional manual transcription services.

The benefit of using software to transcribe the interviews is to become more intimately

accustomed to the participants' voices and get acquainted with their utterances.

The second step of data analysis is note-taking. This step helps identify areas of

concern if the participants express and explain how they feel about teaching SIFE in the

classroom. Smith and Osborn (2009) stated that these first two steps would merge

naturally. At this stage, three kinds of comments will be made: descriptive comments,

which is the rephrasing of the participant's account; linguistic comments, which include

paying attention to the words and expressions that the participant use; and conceptual

comments that involve the knowledge from the literature and life experience (Smith &

Osborn, 2009). This step will relate to how the participants express their feelings and

their challenges among SIFE.

The third step of data analysis is developing emergent themes, which refers to the

three kinds of comments discussed in the previous steps (Alase, 2017). When reviewing

the linguistic and descriptive comments and the source, I can develop themes centrally

from conceptual comments, mostly in the form of a phrase and sometimes in a sentence

or a word. Following the advice of Smith et al. (2009), the themes should be concise and

compressed, but at the same time still expressive enough to remind me of the sources

from which the themes emerged, rather than using abstract codes (Smith & Osborn, 2009). I should both retain the original data sources and be informed and guided by the specific themes in the research questions and the literature.

The fourth step of data analysis is searching and identifying connections among emergent themes by analyzing everyday experiences among participants and assigning them to similar themes. The researcher interprets and creates connections among the themes. The themes should be grouped into different superordinate themes, which are based on subordinate themes, but at the same time, they should be guided by theoretical knowledge.

The fifth step of data analysis will be on the findings. This step is repeating and finding links through the data analysis process. During the process, the researcher will be influenced by the themes and must acknowledge new emergent themes when analyzing new themes. Therefore, by identifying new superordinate themes for each core participant, the other participants' subordinate themes will be grouped into the same superordinate themes.

The sixth step or the last step of data analysis will identify and develop patterns from each participant. These patterns will become grouping themes between the superordinate and subordinate themes (Jeong & Othman, 2016). A table of themes will be created to organize the superordinate, grouping, and subordinate themes (Jeong & Othman, 2016). I should pay closer attention to convergences and divergences in the themes in all cases. A final table of superordinate themes should be produced by looking

for patterns across all instances. The table would contain the superordinate themes that captured higher-level concepts shared by all or most participants.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a research study is essential to evaluate the research and the data collected. Trustworthiness is one way researchers can persuade themselves and readers that their research findings are worthy of attention (Alase, 2017). Lincoln and Guba (1985) enhanced the concept of trustworthiness by introducing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to parallel the conventional quantitative assessment standards of validity and reliability (Nowell et al., 2017). The procedures for achieving the trustworthiness criteria are familiar to many, even those with differences in epistemology and ontology, depending on methodological arguments and techniques (Green, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that these trustworthiness norms are pragmatic choices for researchers concerned about the acceptability and their research value for various stakeholders. Developing trustworthiness in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba initially presented four criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1994) claimed that a study's credibility is concluded when co-researchers or readers are challenged with the experience, they can identify it. Credibility tackles the "robust" between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them (Cope, 2014). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), several techniques address credibility, including prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection

triangulation, and researcher triangulation (Nowell et al., 2017). They also advised peer debriefing to provide an external check on the research process, which may increase credibility and examine referential adequacy to check preliminary findings and interpretations against the raw data (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility can also be operationalized through member checking to test the participants' findings and interpretations (Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher can describe credibility as the truth of the data (Cope, 2014).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the inquiry's generalizability (Nowell et al., 2017). This qualitative phenomenological study has met this criterion if the results have meaning to participants who are not involved in the research (Cope, 2014). Other contributors can associate the results with their own experiences (Cope, 2014). The criterion of transferability depends on the aim of the qualitative study (Cope, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017) and may only be relevant if the research intends to generalize the subject phenomenon (Cope, 2014). The researcher is responsible for providing thick descriptions of the interviews (Nowell et al., 2017).

Dependability

Dependability refers to the constancy of the data (Cope, 2014). However, to achieve dependability, researchers must ensure that the process is logical, traceable, and documented (Nowell et al., 2017). When readers examine the research process, they concur with the decision trails and appraise the research's dependability (Cope, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017). The research study demonstrates the dependability method to be

audited (Nowell et al., 2017). I ensured that the findings reflected the data collected from the interviews with teachers. The interview process should also be well-defined for anyone to understand the study. Each process should be reported in detail to ensure the reliability of the interpretation to be accurate. Dependability is defined by checking the consistency of the study process. Many other techniques establish dependability inquiry audits, such as using code-recode strategy, expert review, flexibility, and triangulation (Cope, 2014). A study would be deemed dependable based on the researcher's process and descriptions of the study findings that can be repeated with similar participants in similar conditions (Nowell et al., 2017).

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how results can be confirmed or validated by others (Cope, 2014). Confirmability is related to establishing that the researcher's interpretations and findings are derived from the data, expecting the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been communicated (Nowell et al., 2017). The participants' responses must be based on the understanding that they are varying views on how and why decisions were made. Guba and Lincoln (1985) stated that confirmability is created when credibility, transferability, and dependability are achieved and exemplified from the data (Cope, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher can demonstrate confirmability by describing how conclusions and interpretations will develop and exemplify the data's findings. The process is to establish whether the researcher is biased during the study (Cope, 2014) or the assumption is that qualitative research allows the researcher to bring a unique perspective to the study (Cope, 2014;

Nowell et al., 2017). Confirmability examines how the research findings are supported by the data collected, which can be exhibited by reporting qualitative research, such as providing rich quotes from the participants that depict each emerging theme (Cope, 2014).

Ethical Procedures

This study was conducted to explore high school teachers' perspectives on the experiences of students who are classified as SIFE. The teachers' viewpoints of the classroom were communicated via a virtual semi-structured interview. The coded data was grouped into themes, and answers were analyzed according to each research question. The data was then evaluated to determine if the results adequately reflected the responses provided by the participants. This research study met ethical challenges in different aspects of the study, such as anonymity, confidentiality, researcher's bias, informed consent, and participants. I obtained approval from the IRB from Walden University and the Superintendent of schools (See Appendix C). Once I received the IRB and the Superintendent of schools' approval, I started collecting data. First, I emailed the research flyer (see Appendix E) to select participants who have taught SIFE in high school. For those willing to participate in this study, I contacted each participant to schedule a meeting to provide additional information. I also emailed each participant the informed consent, (Appendix A) the research study (Appendix F), and the flyer (Appendix E). All IRB protocols and procedures were followed to ensure each study participant's safety, confidentiality, and protection.

When considering the study's nature, researchers and participants' interaction can be recognized as ethically challenging. Researchers must be clear, consistent, and well-informed of all aspects of their roles, the participants' role when conducting research, and anticipate any ethical issues during the process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I communicated with the participants via email, phone calls, or Google Meet as long as it was within this research's parameters and each participant's preference. I allowed participants to share their experiences teaching SIFE in the classroom. During the interview, I kept the process organized by reminding each participant of their flower name that they chose during our first phone call/meet.

The interview sessions were virtual via Zoom or Google meet, and they were recorded. I verbally reminded each participant to sign the informed consent form (see Appendix A) before starting the interviews. Informed consent forms were sent as a link on Google Forms to retrieve signatures from participants. My personal computer was locked and protected, and I saved the interviews on an external drive, stored somewhere safe, whereas I was the only person with access. As per IRB requirements, the researcher and informed consent document should emphasize the participants' rights to decline to participate or remove from the study at any given time. The participants' full names were not revealed to ensure confidentiality. Each picked a flower name to be used in this study. I only included their age, years of experience in the education system, and the school's name for the research study. I understood that each participant was different, and I treated all of them with utmost respect during the interview. I also reminded them about their rights during the interview.

My intention is to keep the data safe in a secure location for the next 5 years, and then I will destroy it. I did not provide any incentives or rewards for participation in the study. I was not personally familiar with any participant in the study; therefore, there was no conflict of interest in this research.

Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study explored teachers' perceptions working with SIFE by conducting individual virtual interviews with teachers. In this chapter, I described the research method, the design, the rationale, and the role of the researcher. I discussed the methodology, the participant selection logic, the instrumentation, the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and I explained how the data analysis demonstrated alignment and consistency among each study element. I addressed the issues of the study's trustworthiness and the ethical procedures that I followed step-by-step during the study, including the significance of informed consent.

In chapter 4, I will discuss the actual research, including the setting of the study, the participant's demographics, and the data collection and analysis processes. I will provide evidence of trustworthiness. I will then conclude by discussing the results and the emergent themes.

Chapter 4: Results

Teaching students with little or no educational background is a challenge for educators. Teachers face additional challenges when teaching SIFE/ELLs in high schools. This study focused on teachers who taught SIFE in high schools. The source of data was virtual, semistructured, open-ended interviews with high school teachers and an online survey after their interviews. This chapter addresses the setting of the study, which took place virtually in my office or at home; the participants' demographics; and the data collection and analysis processes. Also discussed are the evidence of trustworthiness and the results.

Setting

The study was primarily conducted via Google Meet. However, some participants were interviewed face-to-face due to internet issues in their classrooms. Some participants in other states participated in the study as they were from the Walden participants' pool. The participants responded to the flyer by calling, texting, and emailing me during the recruiting process. Participants were informed about the study and given a chance to ask questions before giving their consent. All participants were given a pseudonym—a flower name—to protect their privacy during the interview process, and they also supplied their email addresses and the day and time they were available.

A total of 20 participants were interviewed. Some participants scheduled interviews on weekends because they were testing and did not have the same flexibility to do an interview during school hours. Most participants chose to do their interviews as

soon as possible because they had a few hours before students returned to the building, and the 11th graders were testing for the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment in English and math.

Interviews were conducted at work and home offices. The interviews were recorded and kept at a low volume to ensure the participants' confidentiality. The data were recorded in three ways: Google Meet, Otter.ai, and audio. Data were gathered via Google Meet and in face-to-face interviews with the participants, using audio-voice and Otter.ai to record and transcribe the interviews. I was not given any responsibilities that would have allowed them to influence study participants' attitudes toward the interview, to compel anyone to participate, or to dictate how they described their personal experiences. Participants were informed during the meeting that they could withdraw at any time. One participant chose to withdraw from the study. I deleted the interview and shredded their signed informed consent form.

Demographics

Participants met all inclusion criteria and identified themselves with pseudonyms. The participants consisted of six male and 14 female teachers who had been teaching for more than 1 year and had served SIFE/ELLs. One participant from Walden Pool increased the interview pool from 20 to 21 participants interviewed for the study. These participants were over the age of 18 years and had vast experience in the public school system. Ten participants taught ELLs, four were bilingual specialists, and the other teachers taught different subjects. Their highest level of educational attainment varied.

Most participants held a master's degree, two held a doctorate, and seven held a

bachelor's degree.

Data Collection

Before beginning the data collection process, I met with the participants face-to-

face to explain the procedure and to give them a copy of the informed consent form.

After they received their agreement, a second copy was sent via Google Forms for them

to sign before I scheduled the interview. The participants were asked again during the

meeting if they were prepared to start the interview after they consented to participate in

the study.

Based on the recruitment process, I interviewed 20 out of 25 participants who

received the flyer at the high school. Five declined a day or two later, and one declined

after the interview was conducted. The data collection lasted for 3 weeks; the interviews

were recorded with a digital audio-recording app, Otter.ai recording and transcribing, and

Google Meet. I had estimated that each interview would last 30 minutes; however, the

interviews lasted about 20 minutes or less. The reduced time was due to the participants'

being preoccupied with lesson planning, evaluation times, and proctoring the New Jersey

State testing. The first few participants on day one were nervous because they did not

know what to expect or how to explain their lived experiences or perspectives of teaching

SIFE/ELLs. After each interview, the data were recorded, backed up on the computer,

and saved to a particular folder. From Otter.ai, the transcription was emailed to the my

email, which was printed to revise and included in the Google folder that is password

protected.

Data Analysis

I collected 16 coded interviews. The interview questions were semistructured to understand how teachers described their lived experiences teaching ELLs and SIFE with no resources and how they hope to have better instructional techniques to implement in the classroom. The data were analyzed and coded using the IPA process. Because experiences varied from teacher to teacher, I explored, described, interpreted, and positioned the participants' lived experiences as they related to the experience of teachers' perspectives on teaching SIFE/ELLs. Understanding a phenomenon helps analyze and interpret how it may affect the participants' knowledge, experience, and individual education (Smith, 2015), and allow teachers to identify both how they perceive their individual teaching experiences and how their training or professional development could be improved to address more ways for assisting SIFE/ELLs.

I listened to the audio recording and read the transcript data multiple times, noting unique descriptive statements (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The process of understanding each transcription independently and then spotting patterns to see how they linked to one another allows for the identification of codes and emergent themes (Smith et al., 2009). Thematic coding was performed within the Quirkos platform. Nine interview questions were posed. Using the Quirkos platform help identify patterns and how they led to the themes. This approach revealed data that were repetitive and helped identify those that were new.

After the data analysis process concluded, the participants' responses included seven themes. Three themes related to RQ 1: SIFE/ELLs face challenges and need

additional resources and assistance, especially with language barriers; SIFE/ELLs bring

diversity, maturity, life experiences, and work ethic to the classroom; teachers have a

passion for teaching and a significant impact on the students. Two themes aligned with

RQ 2: teaching experience or possessing worldly experience is helpful in working with

SIFE/ELLs and professional development focused on SIFE/ELLs is important but

somewhat lacking. Lastly, two themes aligned with RQ 3: a multilingual co-teacher and

exposure to English are crucial needs and approach to student learning should be

balanced and fair (mainstreamed) but does come with disadvantages. There were no

discrepancies in cases that would have introduced inconsistent information that could

have misled contradictory results in this study.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I verified the research process's accuracy using the four criteria—credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability—as tools to ensure safe trustworthiness

in this study.

Credibility

It is essential to plan the research process of recruiting qualified participants,

collecting and analyzing data gathered, and discussing the findings to ensure the truth of

the phenomenon based on the data collected (Cope, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017). In this

study, trustworthiness was confirmed during and after each interview session. I assured

the participants that the nature of the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at

any time. During the interview, I noticed that some participants were nervous when the

interview began and relaxed afterward as they became engaged with the interview

session. Some other participants were more composed and confided their opinions and perspectives on SIFE/ELLs in this interview.

During the interview, participants were asked probing and follow-up questions based on specific responses for an extended time to elicit more data that could have been relevant to the phenomenon. Participants were engaged and questioned to add any additional ideas or viewpoints during the interview sessions. This approach helped to build rapport and to comprehend their experiences in the classroom with their SIFE/ELLs. To gather data to be triangulated, it may be necessary to use a variety of techniques, including individual interviews and observation, which are the primary methodologies used in many qualitative studies (Nowell et al., 2017). One technique to triangulate data sources is to employ a variety of them. Participants' viewpoints and experiences can be compared to those of others.

Transferability

Other researchers must be able to replicate the study's process and context to achieve similar results to ensure trustworthiness in the study. These researchers must reflect, understand, and interpret the study's results as their own experiences (Cope, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017). The context and presumptions of the research that produced these results in this study were described in great detail using the interviews. Additionally, the criteria for participant selection and a detailed description of the lived experiences of the participants were included to enable other researchers to replicate the study. Nevertheless, it is impossible to show that the findings and conclusions of the qualitative study apply to different contexts and populations because the findings are

particular to a small number of distinct environments and participants (Shenton, 2004).

The conclusions of a qualitative study must be interpreted in the context of the study's

unique features, and similar studies using the same methodologies but carried out in

different settings may be extremely valuable for determining how much the findings may

apply to people in other circumstances. The goal is to develop generalizable findings

from a particular study or to ignore the context as a crucial element in qualitative

research.

Dependability

Dependability ensures that data collected are not exhibiting any bias that could

alter the reliability of the findings. Dependability means the data are authentic and

consistent in understanding the research findings reflected from the interview. I ensured

that the process was logical, traceable, and documented to any researcher who may want

to replicate the process based on the same context in which the research was conducted.

Using an audio voice recorder, Google Meet, and Otter.ai, interview sessions with the

participants were transcribed, and transcription of the data was a time-consuming and

tedious task that took hours to transcribe one hour of audio.

I took notes during the interview and incorporated them with the transcription to

better interpret the responses to the interview questions. For example, a participant who

mentioned their years of experiences also shared the extra classes they took to overcome

the challenges of instructing SIFE/ELLs in their classroom, but on the transcript, some of

the points were not printed. Therefore, note taking was essential to complete the process.

This approach emphasized keeping an audit trail of the research process to ensure dependable interpretations and findings.

Confirmability

The results of a research study must be representative of the participants' experiences, and as the data is related to a person's actual lived experiences, the accuracy of the data is crucial (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Open-ended questions were used so the participants could freely express themselves. I also sought clarification of unfamiliar words from the participants and avoided using leading questions that could influence their thoughts and feelings. To the greatest extent possible, precautions are made to ensure that the research's conclusions come from the participants' thoughts and experiences rather than the researcher's personal traits and preferences (Shenton, 2004). To lessen the impact of bias in this research, it is essential to underline the function that triangulation plays in fostering such confirmability (Shenton, 2004).

Results

The purpose of this IPA study was to focus on teachers who taught SIFE/ELLs in high schools. Data were collected from 16 participants interviewed using semistructured, open-ended questions. These interview sessions were conducted via Google Meet, audio voice recording, and Otter.ai recording and transcribing devices. Thematic coding was performed within the Quirkos platform. Nine questions were posed. I also used probing questions based on their responses and rephrased questions so that the participants understood the interview question. Data were also collected via an online survey. I used the unmodified survey questionnaires that collected additional information about teachers

who teach ELLs/SIFE. This information was based on the research questions, which explored teachers' lived experiences, their professional preparation, and best practices associated with student engagement. The results helped to understand the challenges or benefits associated with teaching SIFE.

Survey Results

In this teacher survey, 1% of teachers taught in Los Angeles, California and were ESL certified, and 99% of teachers came from Irvington, New Jersey. Females comprised 66.7% of the sample, 27% were males, and 5.5% preferred not to answer. African Americans comprised 55.6% of the sample, 22.2% were Hispanics, 16.7 % were White, and 5.5% were Asian/Pacific. Many teachers completed a higher education credential: 33.3% received their bachelor's, 55.6% received their master's degree or higher, 5.6% received their doctorate, and 5.6% received college credit and will complete their degree. Most teachers were multilingual, and 22.2% spoke only English. 50% of teachers were not ESL certified, 55.6% were not bilingual certified, 5.5 % were Spanish teachers, 38.9 were bilingually certified, and 38.9% were ESL certified.

Most teachers had high expectations for all their students, including those identified as SIFE/ELLs. Of SIFE/ELLs, 44.4% had little to no previous school in the classroom, 55.6% were in a special education class, and 22.2% were gifted and talented. Teachers also served 16.7% of the SIFE/ELL population, that is, between 1–10 students in ESL classes, 27.8%, 1–15 students per class, and 55.6% in a class with teachers and approximately 16 or more students per class.

During the last 12–18 months of COVID-19, 94.4% of teachers participated in PD. Teachers preferred coaching or mentoring by other teachers by 22.2%, 11.1% preferred coaching or mentoring by a specialist, administrator, or expert in their field, 38.9% chose to attend SIFE/ELL conferences, 50% participated in a self-paced course or programs or online webinars, 44.4% participated in school-based training programs such as workshop or seminars, and lastly 27.8% participated in college or graduate-level course. Different PD opportunities involved families of SIFE/ELLs in their children's education: 77.8% of teachers were willing to attend sessions on accessing translation and interpretation services, 66.7% of teachers attended instructed families to support the work of the classroom at home, 61.1% involved families in the life of the school, 55.6% involved designing school-wide parent involvement programs, and 44.4% involved sharing college/university, SATs, financial aid information with families.

Many ESL teachers want to participate in PD related to SIFE/ELLs. Based on the survey, 72.2% of ESL teachers want to participate in identifying them, 72.2% were interested in instructional strategies, 66.7% expressed interest in the classroom, 61.1% stated that integrating content and language instruction and selecting materials was desirable, 55.6% showed interest in teaching reading and writing to SIFE/ELLs, and 38.9% wanted to promote the oral language. Many teachers have dedicated themselves to attending PDs to enhance their knowledge; 38.9% were willing to attend a course offered at an institution of higher learning (colleges/universities), 33.3% were willing to attend a summer PD course during their time away from the classroom, and 22.2% were willing to attend 6–7 hours on Saturday or every other Saturday. Teachers were found to be

effective when working with SIFE/ELLs by attending and participating in professional development related to that cohort will help smooth their learning experience.

Many teachers have one class that is their most challenging to teach. According to the survey, 50% of teachers felt like SIFE/ELLs in their class had different proficiency levels in English, but only 44.4% of teachers spoke the same language as most students. When 33.3% of teachers felt that students in their class were the most challenging group to work with, 27.8% felt comfortable working with them due to their native language and understanding. Moreover, 27.8% of SIFE/ELLs in the class have a similar proficiency level in English as their peers.

Many teachers mentioned that students' absenteeism was a problem in their classes. Some teachers agreed that academy expectations were the same for all students, regardless of their English language abilities. A few teachers must follow policies that conflict with their best professional judgment about teaching and learning the English language. Several teachers enjoyed teaching SIFE/ELLs, had many opportunities to learn new things about teaching them, and felt successful teaching them. Several teachers strongly agreed that students learn a new language best when they engage in reading and writing tasks they find meaningful, and they should be allowed to think of solutions to practical problems themselves before the teacher shows them how they are solved. Effective teachers demonstrate the correct way to solve problems and facilitate students' inquiry. Teachers agreed that students learn best by finding solutions to their problems; how much they learn depends on their background knowledge, which is why teaching facts is necessary. However, many agreed that instruction should be built around

problems with clear, correct answers and around ideas that most students can grasp quickly.

Many teachers stated they were well prepared to teach classes for students with diverse abilities and learning styles, work with SIFE/ELLs with behavioral problems, and use their first language to support their second language acquisition. A few teachers needed additional support to teach students with special needs, organize and manage student behavior, and involve parents in their children's English language acquisition. Many teachers developed and administered their assessments daily and weekly to students, but the ACCESS/WIDA testing is from the state and is administered yearly or when new students register to the school. On a daily or weekly basis, some teachers let their students judge their progress and collect data daily or every other day from classroom assignments or homework.

Teachers observed students daily when working on a particular task and provided immediate feedback. Weekly, 50% of teachers, exchanged teaching materials with their colleagues, co-teach jointly as a team, participated in collaborative professional learning, and worked with other teachers in the school to ensure common standards in evaluations for assessing student progress. Meanwhile, 27.8% of teachers engaged in discussions about the learning development of specific students twice a month and joined activities across different classes and age groups, and 5% did not collaborate with other teachers. Weekly, 80% of teachers attended staff meetings to discuss the vision and mission of the school. Yearly, 60% of teachers worked together to develop a school curriculum, 25.2 % of teachers attended school and climate committee meetings and parent/community

involvement, and 84.4% of teachers attended departmental meetings and team conferences twice a year.

Teachers and students should have a positive, non-judgmental relationship that could increase student progress. Eighty-five percent of teachers believed it was very important to have a voice in deciding the curriculum for their students so as to give students positive feedback regularly and to provide attention to SIFE/ELLs and special needs students. Based on the teachers' viewpoints, the highest number of students believed that their teachers held them to high expectations around efforts, understanding, persistence, and performance in class, and they felt that they were valued members of the school community.

Many teachers found other alternatives to support SIFE/ELLs. Many teachers provided designing charts or models that supported learning of academic content and their language development. Teachers grouped students in pairs or small groups to prepare or practice for a presentation, assignment, report, or project that took longer than one week to complete and worked on a writing project in which group members engaged in peer revision and editing. Many students engaged in small group discussions and completed written assignments from the textbook or worksheets with peers. Many teachers worked with technology-based visuals and manipulatives that supported learning the academic language, providing students with additional language-learning software, and using assessment software to evaluate language learning. Few teachers engaged their students in writing (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing), creating multimedia presentations, and researching and collecting information.

Some teachers addressed social-emotional learning with these students when discussing race twice per month. Just under half (44.4%) of teachers once per week changed their lessons to address their students' needs, and 88% of teachers weekly took time to ensure their students understood their materials and resources to work in class. Moreover, 65% of teachers stated that their students were eager to participate in a class discussion based on cultural events once a week. Over three-quarters, (76.4%) of teachers felt comfortable intervening if their students from different backgrounds struggled to get along with their peers because it might have been an issue of communicating well with others in their native language or English. Similar to the lesson plan question, 44.4% of teachers felt comfortable assisting students and parents who could not communicate well with teachers due to the language barrier. However, they felt the need to assist them with bilingual teachers or use translating devices to communicate with teachers.

Fewer teachers did activities daily based on the social-emotional development of SIFE/ELLs, but 40% engaged in these activities weekly. Exactly half (50%) of teachers motivated their students to focus weekly on their SEL and self-care, self-awareness, and relationship skills. Daily, 40% of teachers still motivated their students to focus on decision-making, relationship skills, social awareness, and self-management. Also, many teachers addressed all the five interrelated sets of competencies in their classrooms, either daily or weekly, because it was very important to engage SIFE/ELLs in SEL due to their emotional state.

Emergent Themes

Resulting from the thematic coding exercises, seven themes emerged, with three aligning with RQ1, and two each aligning with RQs two and three. A total of 365 quotes were extracted and coded from the 16 interviews (Table 1).

Table 1

Theme and Research Question Alignment, and Global Coverage

Theme	RQ Alignment	Global Coverage
1) SIFE/ELLs face challenges and need additional resources and assistance, especially with language barriers		30.7%
2) SIFE/ELLs bring diversity, maturity, life experiences, and work ethic to the classroom	RQ1	14.0%
3) Teachers have a passion to teach and a significant impact on the students		6.0%
4) Teaching experience or possessing *worldly experience* is helpful in working with SIFE/ELLs	RQ2	16.4%
5) Professional development focused on SIFE/ELLs is important but somewhat lacking		11.0%
6) A multilingual co-teacher and exposure to English is a crucial need	RQ3	14.0%
7) Approach to student learning should be balanced and fair (mainstreamed) but does come with disadvantages.		7.9%

Research Question 1, Themes 1, 2, and 3

RQ1: How do teachers describe their lived experiences and challenges of teaching high school SIFE in the classroom?

Theme 1: SIFE/ELLs Face Challenges and Need Additional Resources and Assistance, Especially with Language Barriers. Participants offering content aligned with Theme 1, the theme with the largest proportion of quotes (30.7%) were focused on describing the challenges SIFE/ELLs displayed in and out of the classroom, with a more poignant focus on language barriers. Often stated were the difficulties these students have in adjusting to their environment, owing primarily to the problems in understanding teachers and peers when communicating in English. Participant 1 claimed that differentiation in the classroom becomes more difficult due to language issues, stating, "when you have bilinguals in the classroom, that differentiation is not there." Time spent teaching vocabulary was mentioned as a significant barrier, with Participant 2 noting that they would "spend some time teaching them vocabulary" since, as they put it, "vocabulary would have to be pre-taught in both languages." Participant 4 echoed that sentiment, adding that the lack of vocabulary presents a barrier; they stated, "you're reading something you see a vocabulary that you don't know, chances are, you might just look at and say, Okay, I don't know, you just might give up right there." Participant 6 supported those claims by stating that vocabulary must be understood in both languages; they stated, "you have to amplify their own vocabulary skills and help them to transfer their knowledge in their native language over into the English language." Participant 16

noted hope in applying vocabulary lessons, explaining that "we do a lot of literacy and vocabulary. I find that helps then and then reciting, talking about the work always helps".

A frustration mentioned by several interviewees focused on their inability to understand or help the student, rooted in the lack of a common vocabulary and language. For example, Participant 1 stated, "I can't speak the language to help that child," and "they don't understand me." Difficulty in speaking and understanding English was mentioned as a "major barrier" phrased as "the majority of the problem that we are experiencing right now" (Participant 5). "Because they don't know the English language" was claimed Participant 10 to be a significant problem in the classroom. A similar statement was offered by Participant 11, who noted that "it is challenging because [of] the language deficit," and that "the challenge is really the lack of being able to communicate." Overwhelming the student was suggested by Participant 14, who stated that "In case there is a language barrier, it could be a challenge to them; that kind of environment is so overwhelming for them." Even possible emotional distress was mentioned by Participant 15, they said "they feel ashamed for not speaking or understanding the language; it's not easy for them." Broadly, the concept of a challenging environment, both for the teacher and the student, was a common thread in theme 1. Aside from what seemed to be a primary concern, language, the environment was thought to present barriers, with several subcomponents creating the hard-to-navigate environment.

Participant 2 mentioned that technology was a challenge for SIFE/ELLs; they claimed that "As much as this technology is there to help them it's so challenging

because that's the first time to even see a computer." Participant 6 said "many of them [students] don't even know how to use technology," "they need access to technology," and "they don't know how to use a calculator." "The system" was mentioned by Participant 1 as a reason for SIFE/ELL student's difficulties, more specifically, "the system is not there for them to assess and navigate themselves." The environment pre-classroom may also have created issues for students. Participant 2 noted that their home countries, and perhaps a poor education there (before coming to America) affects their performance; they stated, "they were not able to continue their education in their home country," "newcomers have not had the academic background necessary," and "I think it's very difficult for students when they come to America. For most students who are coming from different backgrounds, I think they have to make the adjustment. It takes some time." Participant 3 echoed Participant 2's line of thinking, stating that "A lot of those kids who come directly here, how much English have they had in their respective countries?" Participant 5 went so far as to claim that "SIFE come with no knowledge, no education[al] background." The issues with language were mentioned at least once by every participant and provided a focus for several. Students who cannot navigate the environment, be it due to language or other barriers, require additional resources or assistance to help them overcome the obstacles standing in the way of educational achievement.

Participant 1 stated that quality students may be among the population, but a lack of resources could disallow them from being noticed; they stated, "there might be an A student if there was someone [to] translate, but there was no one." Translating books was

mentioned as a solution by Participant 1, who said "If they have that as they're reading they're saying the English part of it and it helps them." Orientation programs are not new to academia, and were mentioned by Participant 2 as a useful resource for SIFE/ELLs; they stated "Having the newcomers' program also helps." Participant 5 discussed the need for the parents to provide assistance, claiming

> Parents have to also agree because there are certain students that I work with, they have to agree to come or come to join me online or stay after school two or three or four times a week; help them with whatever academic issues that they're dealing with.

Technology was again mentioned as a resource (as opposed to a barrier) that SIFE/ELLs could use; "have them each have their own iPad or Chromebook for their own use" (Participant 6). Participant 6 also noted that transcription software might be an effective resource to provide. That notion was also espoused by Participant 7; they stated that students should have "Google Translate," "pocket translator," or "a little dictionary that they can bring around with them." Participant 10 followed this with "they don't have workbooks because they don't have the money to buy them." Translation tools were again mentioned when Participant 11 stated "they should have the tools to translate for themselves." Emotional support was also discussed as a needed resource; Participant 13 claimed that "they need a lot of emotional support, they have psychological needs, too" and that "after school enrichment programs" might provide support. Participant 14 claimed that counseling could be helpful, stating that "they should undergo some counseling because honestly being in a new environment is overwhelming." Finally,

participant 15 followed with "I will provide then with support and a qualified staff to work in meeting the emotional and psychological needs." Theme 1 presented a great deal of information covering the primary barriers faced by SIFE/ELLs and what resources may assist them in overcoming those challenges. Theme 2 highlights a more positive set of considerations; the diversity and work ethic these students bring to the classroom, which was seen by several as a very enriching experience for the teacher and the SIFE/ELL peers. Theme 1 is concerned with the challenges SIFE/ELLs faced; Theme 2 is centered on the positives they brought to the classroom.

Theme 2: SIFE/ELLs Bring Diversity, Maturity, Life Experiences, and Work Ethic to the Classroom. All participants mentioned at least once that their classrooms were diverse because SIFE/ELLs brought different backgrounds to the environment; Theme 2 provided 14.0% global coverage. And many noted the positive benefits of their presence, and what they bring in terms of differences. Participant 1 stated plainly, "they have a diverse background." Just as straightforward was Participant 10, who said "they come from different countries with different countries and different backgrounds." Participant 3 claimed that "I think students who come from those [diverse] backgrounds bring a wealth of knowledge with them. They have a very good collective personality." Summoning an iconic American phrase, Participant 5 said "We have quite a melting pot in some of my classes. We have students with ethnic backgrounds." They continued with "Culturally, they share so many different experiences some are similar and some are different. Overall, it is pleasant just to have them." A student's culture was labeled as something to "befriend" by Participant 8, and further:

Their classmates in return also may be exposed to global knowledge because of their [SIFE/ELLs] presence in class. It can be very enriching then the classroom has multiple perspective of the world and fosters a greater understanding of various cultures. Students may actually be more involved in helping their classmates learn which would also serve as a good method of self-learning.

Participant 11 continued this line of thought, stating that "they bring a different culture to the classroom. I mean, these are kids who are different than the kids who were in the district and they bring different culture, different language, and things like that." "When you teach ESL students from different locations, they bring their background and culture; it's just a different perspective and it adds onto the teaching" (Participant 12). Participant 13 claimed that "What they bring in with their cultural background with their life experiences and it actually developed empathy in us, teachers and the fellow students." Sharing was mentioned by Participant 14 who stated, "I think they should be given a chance to give some of their strengths, share the experiences; there should be some sort of cultural musical, something like that." Finally, concerning diversity, Participant 16 stated:

Well, the advantages that kids can see different learning styles of different students based on where they're from. Some kids come in with a lot of experience and some come on with none at all. But that's not just the special students, it's even kids that come from just different states.

Several participants also mentioned maturity and life experiences as positives that SIFE/ELLs brought to the classroom. For example, Participant 4 claimed that "They, they

learn things really quickly based on their age and prior experiences; I feel like sometimes they're very mature because maybe because they've been exposed to more things." Participant 6 stated, "they're very intelligent and have life experiences." Participant 8 discussed the idea of global knowledge, stating that SIFE/ELLs possess "global knowledge, not necessarily academic knowledge; there are many dimensions to what constitutes knowledge."

Finally, a strong work ethic as displayed by SIFE/ELLs emerged as a component of theme 2. Many participants commented on how hard these students work, how much they are willing to engage, and their desire to do their best and achieve academic success through effort. For example, Participant 2 stated simply, "they work hard." Participant 2 added to that, stating that they are "students who we would consider as hard workers." Participant 4 claimed they showed the drive to take on responsibility, stating that "parents give them more responsibilities because I think somehow, they're able to carry it."

Theme 3: Teachers Have a Passion to Teach and a Significant Impact on the Students. Themes 1 and 2 were centered on the teachers' experiences as they related to students in their classrooms; however, Theme 3 (the smallest in coverage for the first three themes aligned with RQ1, provided just 6.0% global coverage) is focused on an important aspect: teacher passion and impact. Beginning with passion to teach, Participant 1 stated "even my past students who stopped by to say hello, that's how much [of an] impact that I had in their lives; we gave them all we got." Participant 4 offered that "you have to really have a passion to work with ELLs you have to SIFE. You have to

have the passion and the heart to educate them—it takes a very passionate person who loves diversity." Participant 5 continued a similar line of thinking, adding:

> You really have to be patient and you have to love what it is that you do. If you don't love to be in this field. If you don't love giving back if you don't love teaching, education is a field that you really shouldn't get into.

> Participant 10 discussed motivation as well, and how that drives their passion;

they stated, "And that [student success] was [what] motivated me because I saw there was a desire to for them to learn and become part of an American dream."

> Teachers also mentioned the impact they felt they had on students. Participant 2

claimed "are able to trust you and a lot of the students that I teach, they know that I know their parents, also involved in a community. They tend to behave in that sense; the level of trust is there." Participant 4 enjoyed watching them advance, claiming that "they just transition, and you can see them prosper." Impact can come in the form of encouragement, as mentioned by Participant 8 who stated, "we encourage them to learn," and Participant 9 who said

> I see a lot of potential in them, so I always tell them it's not too late, you can do it. I always paint a wider picture, a brighter future for them to help them to keep going on and not to give up. You're going to build their self-esteem.

> Even though this was a leanest theme in coverage overall, the passion to teach and

impact the students elicited some powerful content from the participants, and illustrates some very positive aspects of the profession. Themes 4 and 5 align with RQ2, and shift the focus to professional development, and how it affects their work with SIFE/ELLs.

Research Question 2, Themes 4 and 5

Theme 4: Teaching Experience or Possessing Worldly Experience is Helpful in Working With SIFE. Theme 4 provided the second largest proportion of global coverage of all coded participant material at 16.4%, and partially echoes content found in Theme 2 concerning the importance of worldly or global experience and knowledge. Also contained within Theme 2 is the aspect and importance of being an experienced teacher in SIFE/ELLs. Participant 1 described how understanding of and experience with technology is important:

> You are forced to learn the technology so you can be there and help so you're preparing them for college or [a] job. As a teacher, you have to know that if you learn how to use all these things, they will help you to help your students better.

> Participant 2 claimed that students should be paired with experienced teachers; they stated, "First and foremost provide them with a teacher who has had the experience." They continued explaining that time is vital: "And also just give the teachers time. Sometimes school systems think that things should be done magically, but progress takes time." Participant 5 provided a rich quote on experience:

> Teaching is in itself a learning experience. As an educator I have learned from the mistaught students that I taught when I was in elementary school in [city name redacted]. You know, I learned how to be more patient because I worked with emotionally disturbed students. To be patient has to be one of the virtues that you have to develop as a teacher because they need that more than anything else.

Participant 9 explained how gaining experience from teaching several areas has helped them; they claimed that they "became almost like an [all] around teacher; I [got] to teach them different things. Teaching the lower grades prepared me to teach them because I still have that background knowledge fresh in my mind." Understanding the learning styles of students was described by Participant 15 as an ability that emerged from experience. Participant 10 mentioned their academic preparation and experience in helping prepare them; they offered, "I have two master's degrees, one in Spanish, in language and culture, and the other one in ESL, and that prepared me more and also the experience that I've been having in different aspects of teaching." Resources also stem from experience in teaching, as put by Participant 11, "I have so many resources from teaching, so I can implement that." In teaching ESL courses, Participant 13 stated:

> While teaching elementary school, I had an opportunity to work as a long-term ESL. Having taught elementary school and preschoolers, I had a very good exposure to phonics and for high frequency words and sight words and then moving on to comprehension. I felt this is exactly what is focused [on] in ESL teaching and I thought that will be something that I can build myself more on.

Experience not only in the classroom, but in being assisted by other instructors was mentioned by Participant 14; they asserted that "interacting with other teachers has really molded me and helped me to get to know how to solve certain problems."

As many SIFE/ELLs come from countries outside the U.S., it might not be surprising that many participants discussed the value in worldly or global experience and knowledge, and in some cases, the teacher themselves having come from another country

was viewed as an asset. (Note: quotes are moderately edited to obscure the country discussed by the participant or described rather than quoted in some cases.) Participant 3 described their time in a study abroad program, and how that gave them a "different perspective." They went on to describe their time traveling, listing several countries, and explaining that:

> I've been to all these places. And so, this has been a bastion of knowledge and it's given me an opportunity, first of all to respect people who come from a different background. And me being born here [U.S.], I think it's afforded me an opportunity to have a broader perspective.

Participant 3 described how teaching abroad helped them develop the tools to pass on lesson of cultural identity; they shared:

> In the [decade], I began my teaching in a private [country redacted] school with the African philosophy, you understand or what you might call Afro-centricity. We develop[ed] in young people the idea [of] cultural identity, and once they had a cohesive cultural identity, then they could explore science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine. But we found that without having a very strong sense of who you are, where you came from, you won't know where you're going. We developed identity formation [in] our children and it worked very well.

Gaining experiences in other countries also helps break down language barriers, as put by Participant 5; they stated they can "definitely relate to these students because I know not only the culture, but I know the language." Not only traveling, but exposure to

different cultures at home was mentioned by Participant 12; they described how their parents spoke a language other than English:

> Well, because of the fact that although I was born here [U.S.], but I consider myself an ESL student because of the fact that my parents spoke [language redacted] at home. So therefore, English was not spoken at home. I learned that in school. So, I myself as an ESL student, and I wanted to make sure that the students who represent who I was as a [child] are able to have an experience with [someone] who has been there; to understand the difficulties and challenges of learning a second language and helping [to give] them the skills that they need to prosper and do well in college.

Participant 15 echoed the path of Participant 12, except that their understanding came from their homeland as opposed to exposure to SIFE living here; they described their experience as follows:

> The language barrier was my biggest obstacle. The goals I wanted to achieve paid off in the long run, because living in a different culture was like being born again. I learned that the goals you set for yourself can be achieved. That is why I decided to work with ELL students to help them in their education and encourage them to see the changes in a positive and beneficial way for them.

Participants shared a great deal of knowledge to create Theme 4. Theme 5 continues supporting RQ2, maintaining the focus on the teacher, but shifting to how professional development is needed in their schools if they are to effectively teach SIFE/ELLs.

Theme 5: Professional Development Focused on SIFE is Important but

Somewhat Lacking. Content from participants emerging to create Theme 5 provided

11.0% global coverage. Participant data mainly focused on two areas, including (a) the

idea that PD is vital their ongoing success as educators, and by extension, the success of

the students; and (b) that professional development in areas related to SIFE/ELLs is

insufficient to meet that goal. However, it is important to note that some participants

noted they had received a good deal of PD, but most of the coded data on quantity of PD

leaned towards lacking or insufficient. Participant 2, stated PD "helps a lot, helps students

transition from one proficiency level to the next." They also called PD "big," alluding to

its importance. Participant 3 claimed that "the district offered some courses that I think

could be beneficial." Helping students through PD was mentioned by Participant 4, who

stated, "I would take classes to get to know more, so I could help them [the students]

even more." They also said that "the district came on board with SIFE and ELL students;

you have to have preparation." Participant 7 explained that "it will be helpful for me to

understand cultural differences based on their background." Helping students through

ongoing learning was also mentioned by Participant 10 who stated, "I like to learn that

impulses me to do a lot of research online and get materials for them."

The second component of Theme 5 focused on the amount of PD offered by the

school or district, which many participants claimed was lacking. Several also discussed

how they engaged in PD of their own volition, to bridge the perceived gap between what

they needed and what they were being provided. Participant 1 offered a grim note, stating

that "they just throw you into the classroom without any training. You asked me what

kind of training—they don't have it." A similar sentiment was offered by Participant 4 who claimed, "Well, unfortunately, I don't feel like I've had any preparation," and "I did not receive any [PD], I really didn't receive any." Further, Participant 4 noted that the trainings available were halted; they said, "it [PD] came to an abrupt stop because I think the person that they put [in], they didn't really do any training." Coming alongside the quote from Participant 1 very closely, Participant 4 also stated, "when I came here, it was really for me, it was, you know the [phrase] they use, sinking or swimming." Participant 14 also stated something similar, in that "in terms of training, they went for a training, but I feel like they should have done more." Participant 16 provided a similar quote: "No, they didn't offer anything."

Several participants discussed how, due to a lack of PD, they took it upon themselves to seek out opportunities to learn. Participant 5 mentioned that they saw the importance in engaging in PD on their own, taking courses at a nearby college in delivering content in a foreign language and American Sign Language (ASL). Participant 7 asserted a similar notion, expressing that "any PD that I had, were sessions that I sought out knowing that whatever building I was in, at that point, predominantly my current school that we do have a lot of students who are ESL, and it will be helpful for me to understand cultural differences based on their background. Participant 9 also sought out their own PD track, explaining that:

> I had to do this on my own; I had to do some webinars on my own, I had to do a lot of research you know on my own to see what is SIFE with a lot of articles, you know, but I didn't really get much from the district.

Finally, Participant 13 also took courses at an outside institution, stating "I have taken course at [college] for teaching ESL that also covers how to address [students]." It is important to note, though, that some participants felt they had received a good amount of PD. Participant 8 claimed they received "many workshops over the years," but was not clear on where those workshops took place. Participant 10, who stated they liked to learn to continue to help their students, also said they "received many professional developments," and seemed to indicate those were provided by the school. Participant 12 stated "a lot of the professional development I have received [was] within the [located redacted] public school." Participant 15 also provided a hint that they had engaged in some professional development, but the context of the answer was muddled, and unclear as to where it took place. Overall, participants espoused the importance of PD, and, largely, the fact that the PD provided could be more extensive and accessible. The final two themes, 6 and 7, are again focused on the teacher in terms of their relationship with SIFE/ELLs, and how best to engage them in the classroom.

Research Question 3, Themes 6 and 7

Theme 6: A Multilingual Co-Teacher and Exposure to English is a Crucial Need. Theme 6 provided the third highest global coverage at 14.0% (tied with Theme 2). Many participants mentioned the need for a bilingual teacher to assist them in the classroom, and how much they have enjoyed the help. Participant 1 explained that "[Bilingual teacher 1] came in she said she is my co-teacher for this class. [She spoke] Spanish and I have Creole. And since then, I have just rocked it." They expressed her joy and satisfaction with their other assistant:

I'm fortunate to have [Bilingual Teacher 2]. She's really good with the Spanish population as far as translating the way that they understand it. She helps them better. If we can have that in the Creole population, that will really help them also, because those kids want to learn, they want to know all this stuff, but if we don't have those resources, then they can get to the highest level where they're supposed to be.

Participant 2 had similar experiences with their assistants, and the help they provided to their bilingual students; they stated:

We also had an assistant; she was bilingual, I would say she was even trilingual. So, she was able to function within the ESL classroom. She was able to communicate not just with Haitian Creole students, she was fluent in French as well, but also, she was fluent in Spanish. She was able to help the Haitian as well as the Hispanic students.

Participant 3 explained, briefly, the benefits of a bilingual assistant, stating that "[It] would be most beneficial [to put] them all in the same class [with a bilingual assistant]," and that the school should "expose children to a plethora of learning environment[s], languages they can master." Meeting the students' needs was mentioned by Participants 5 and 8, with 5 stating that "surely there should be a person who is well-equipped to help the child," and 8 claiming that "it might help them to learn English more easily." This was echoed by Participant 7, who stated "[a] co-teacher, that would be helpful; it seems to be very helpful for students." They continued, discussing the utility of having a bilingual co-teacher when the parents need to be contacted; they stated:

Because either myself or if I have a co-teacher who's there for the special

education [SIFE/ELL] students, if neither of us speak that student's name and

language, it's hard for us to call home. That's where it becomes a little more of a

tricky situation. So, it is helpful to have these colleagues

Participant 7 added that more such teachers are needed:

I think the biggest factor that would be helpful for us was would be if we had

more bilingual teachers to go around. If there's a second person in the room, it

can be helpful because I or the other teacher can go [to them for] help.

Administrators were noted as requesting bilingual teachers help. Participant 9

explained that "many administrators asked me, especially ESL supervisors asked me,

they said, we need you, we need you to because you speak, we speak Creole, French, and

Spanish, we will need you. So, I went I did the certification." Teaching them the

language was mentioned as important by Participant 11, who said "if I'm teaching ESL

class, you want the kids to learn English, obviously, because it's going to give them

better opportunities once they leave high school." But they need help in achieving this, as

discussed by Participant 13: "They need bilingual support and they have to build those

academic skills, too, along with the language skills." A bilingual co-teacher is positioned

to do this; according to Participant 15:

I think one advantage is that their ESL teacher will focus on development

developing students' English language skills. They will help them learn English

and the content of the classroom subjects allow students to feel more confident

and secure in their environment.

In working with SIFE/ELLs daily, participants were well-positioned to provide data on the need for co-teachers to help those students. Largely, the need stems from the teachers desire to see the students understand the material and succeed. Theme 7 rounds out the theme results presentation and is focused on ensuring that SIFE/ELLs receive equal treatment in the classroom.

Theme 7: Approach to Student Learning Should Be Balanced and Fair (mainstreamed) but Does Come with Disadvantages. Theme 7 provided the second lowest proportion of data content, with global coverage calculated at 7.9%, just above the 6.0% offered by Theme 3. Participants noted that the curriculum should be balanced and fair (students should be mainstreamed) if SIFE/ELLs are to be successful and fully engage with the material possible. Participant 2 began with "The curriculum is important as well, asking SIFE to, for example, have the same scope and sequence or the curriculum that the regular ELA students are using." Participant 4 added:

A classroom where I feel like they should be able to have part of their day where they're being immersed to bring them up to their grade level because that's the problem. They're not at their grade levels. So then doing certain classes they should be mainstreamed.

Participant 5 noted that placing all immigrant students in special classes might not be needed; they claimed:

Not every foreign student needs to be placed in an ESL class. That is one of the problems that we have here as well. Because you are from a different country doesn't necessarily mean that you do not know English. Some of them have taken

classes in their native country, so they know the language so there really shouldn't be any reasons for them to be placed in an ESL class.

Participant 6 noted that this may be detrimental to the student; they stated, "They feel hindered, because they're like, why can't I be in that class with those other students?" Participant 8 supported that claim in stating, "social difficulties are a very big part of it," and mainstreaming "[leads] to a more regulated learning growth among the students." Concluding, Participant 8 said that the school should "maintain a similar higher level compared to their peers." But Participant 9 revealed that this might be challenging, especially if the SIFE/ELL student is below grade level; they stated:

They are all below grade level. That is a big problem because they don't have background information. [For] some of them, I have to go down and teach them lower grade stuff, because they don't have anything to transfer to English.

However, Participant 9 also acknowledged the problem being below grade level, and ostensibly, not mainstreaming might cause; they continued:

The advantage of it is that the classes are modified for them, but the disadvantage is that if they're in a class by themselves, they are all very low so they cannot really help each other. So that's the disadvantage.

That sentiment was related in Participant 11's comments as well, who claimed they are "often concerned about them in the regular setting; often I'm wondering if I'm doing enough to help them accommodate them."

This theme presented some challenges, as discussed by several participants. Mainstreaming has known advantages, but participants seemed divided on whether it

works as an advantage or disadvantage for SIFE/ELLs—a topic that will be explored in chapter 5.

Summary

The teachers' lived experiences of SIFE were examined by 16 participants in this qualitative study, as well as their personal teaching experiences with SIFE. Otter.ai, Google Meet™, and audio were used to collect data, which was then transcribed. An online survey was used to collect more data. From the 16 interviews, 365 quotes in all were taken and categorized. Seven themes developed as a result of the thematic coding exercises, three of which correlated with RQ1 and the other two with RQs 2 and 3. Within the Quirkos™ platform, thematic coding was carried out.

Three themes that relate to RQ1: SIFE/ELLs face challenges and need additional resources and assistance, especially with language barriers; SIFE/ELLs bring diversity, maturity, life experiences, and work ethic to the classroom; teachers have a passion for teaching and a significant impact on the students. Two themes aligned with RQ2: teaching experience or possessing worldly experience is helpful in working with SIFE/ELLs; professional development focused on SIFE/ELLs is important but somewhat lacking. Lastly, two themes aligned with RQ3: a multilingual co-teacher and exposure to English are crucial needs; the approach to student learning should be balanced and fair (mainstreamed) but does come with disadvantages. According to teachers, SIFE/ELLs were enthusiastic about learning while receiving bilingual instruction, using online resources, participating in social-emotional learning, and emphasizing interpersonal

skills, social awareness, and self-care. They must actively participate in class discussions, study English, and learn.

In chapter 5, there will be an interpretation of the findings and a discussion of the limitations of the study, the recommendations going forward, the implications for positive social change, and the research study summary.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

I used the IPA to examine teachers' lived experiences working with SIFE, understand their perspectives and perceptions of SIFE learning, and analyze how teachers make sense of their social and emotional lives (Smith & Osborn, 2009). I also sought to comprehend the difficulties teachers face daily when working with SIFE/ELLs in the classroom. According to previous studies, many schools are still struggling to identify the traits of SIFE, lack resources to support SIFE/ELLs, and lack teachers who are capable of meeting their needs (DeCapua, 2016; Robertson & Lafond, 2012). The purpose of this study was to better understand the participants' lived experiences teaching SIFE in high school, how they perceived their own teaching practices, and how their professional development or training may address additional techniques or provide resources for helping SIFE/ELLs.

A total of 20 participants were recruited and interviewed. I collected 16 coded interviews. Analyzing each transcription individually helped to identify and understand patterns and how they related to each other to identify codes and emergent themes (Smith et al., 2009). Additional data were conducted via an online survey. After the data analysis process concluded, the participants' responses included seven themes. Three themes that relate to RQ 1: (a) SIFE/ELLs face challenges and need additional resources and assistance, especially with language barriers; (b) SIFE/ELLs bring diversity, maturity, life experiences, and work ethic to the classroom; and (c) teachers have a passion for teaching and a significant impact on the students. RQ 2 yielded two themes: (a) teaching experience or possessing worldly experience is helpful in working with

SIFE/ELLs and (b) professional development focused on SIFE/ELLs is important but somewhat lacking. Lastly, two themes aligned with RQ 3: (a) a multilingual co-teacher and exposure to English are crucial needs and (b) a mainstream approach to student learning should be balanced and fair but does come with disadvantages. The elements that were unique to each participant were used to identify these themes. There were no discrepancies in cases that would have introduced inconsistent information leading to contradictory results in this study. This final chapter addresses the interpretation of the finding, the theoretical framework, the limitations of the study, the recommendations going forward, and the implications for positive social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research has been directed toward educators who participate in professional development and apply what they learn to work by planning and ensuring students' highest-quality learning (Mizell, 2010). The effective implementation of ESL teachers' professional development enhances the teachers' community of practice and strengthens classroom exchanges and interactions (Kong, 2018). The current study confirmed that teachers use professional development opportunities to improve students' learning. Specific to SIFE/ELLs, teachers sought professional development opportunities that allowed them to develop additional resources for teaching vocabulary and overcoming language barriers in the classroom. Teachers apply many strategies and develop additional resources to assist each SIFE/ELL in expanding their knowledge and improving their academic resources, especially those with language barriers. The strategies included in teachers' approach to student learning should be balanced and fair

(mainstreamed), but they come with disadvantages. In the following sections, I will discuss each theme in the context of the recent literature.

Research Question 1, Themes 1, 2, and 3

Theme 1: SIFE/ELLs Face Challenges and Need Additional Resources and Assistance, Especially with Language Barriers

Several participants discussed their lived experiences and challenges teaching SIFE/ELLs in the classroom. Educators indicate that in addition to having a high incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder, struggling with cultural adjustment (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017), or having identity issues, students are encountering problems adapting to the educational environment (DeCapua & Marshall, 2019). Students must learn a second language while completing academic requirements (DelliCarpini, 2018). Additionally, they often experience learning gaps or lack of schooling and have social and emotional needs (DeCapua & Marshall, 2019). The current research demonstrated that participants had several difficulties with SIFE/ELLs while differentiating instruction, teaching vocabulary, and teaching English as a second language. But teaching vocabulary amplifies their skills and helps them understand English and their native language.

Participants pointed out that students struggling in every aspect of the community were emotionally distressed due to the language barrier. According to previous research, have a range of difficulties when instructing SIFE/ELLs and establishing or differentiating appropriate or alternative instructional methodologies (DeCapua & Marshall, 2018). Thirty-one percent of teachers stated that language was not only the primary concern but presented an environmental barrier to SIFE/ELLs. Due to instability

or disastrous conditions in their homeland, such as war, natural disasters, and socioeconomic challenges (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Robertson & Lafond, 2012), teachers have stated that SIFE/ELLs lack of attendance of primary school in their native land prior to coming to America increased the burden of immigrating to America. Therefore, the classroom environment may also have created issues for these students. However, teachers with pedagogical expertise are aware of how classroom strategies might help students acquire knowledge, skills, and positive learning habits (Nopriyeni et al., 2019).

Participants also considered technology an essential tool for SIFE/ELLs to learn to navigate because it can assist them through academics, translating tools, and better communication. Participants noted that each student should have access to an iPad, tablet, or Chromebook to help them overcome some challenges by translating or talking to speech that can assist them. SIFE/ELLs need extra help because of their limited first language literacy, frequent academic knowledge gaps, and skills (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). As more SIFE/ELLs enter the public school system, teachers need to implement research-based best practices has become increasingly crucial (Kennedy & Lamina, 2019). Therefore, a new approach that can assist students through learning and technology would support a better classroom environment.

Participants suggested that teaching SIFE/ELLs vocabulary in both languages would help them understand their reading materials. Previous research has supported that teachers should receive training and more resources to implement learning techniques for SIFE/ELLs (Custodio & O' Loughlin, 2020). One participant mentioned that teaching

literacy and vocabulary, assisting them by reciting words and explaining each meaning, and engaging each student in the lessons seemed to help them learn through this approach.

Theme 2: SIFE/ELLs Bring Diversity, Maturity, Life Experiences, and Work Ethic to the Classroom

Participants stated that their classrooms are diverse, and SIFE/ELLs brought a rich and unique background to the classroom environment.   Many participants expressed that SIFE/ELLs might have an interrupted formal education but are rich and manually talented in different categories such as agriculture, farms, and farmers' market. t One participant shared that SIFE/ELLs brought their life experience to the classroom, and they are entrepreneurs, have many businesses, and have their own industries. Teachers can recognize the value of learning more about their students' rich backgrounds and how their prior educational experiences—or lack thereof—affect their potential to work daily (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017).

Participants also indicated that having a good relationship with SIFE/ELLs will build trust and understanding of what to expect in the classroom environment. In the classroom, teachers build a positive relationship with students (Hagenauer et al., 2015), which can significantly impact academic success (Koca, 2016). If SIFE misbehave in class, this behavior may result from trauma or ongoing stress, such as learning or thinking difficulties, frustration, or a stressful home environment (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua, 2016). Building psychological safety with some students is more challenging than with others, particularly with SIFE (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Teachers need

to interact with students by finding out about their interests, hobbies, and a little bit about the culture they experienced in their home country, and also need to find out how they can help the student feel less stressed (Mailizar et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2015). Teachers can resolve many behavioral difficulties by helping students gather in the classroom by strengthening their relationships with SIFE (Mailizar et al., 2020; Spilt et al., 2011).

In addition, many participants added that parents give SIFE/ELLs more responsibilities because they are trustworthy and will do their duties well. Thus, providing students the freedom to be themselves and reinforcing appropriate behaviors with compassion will positively influence students and families (Spilt et al., 2011). Teachers can establish trust among SIFE, and positive interactions include greeting students by their name, using eye contact when speaking to the students, giving positive praise for working hard, participating in class discussions, asking questions, raising hands, and being an advocate in the classroom climate (Mailizar et al., 2020). Participants noted that a positive interaction between teachers and students contributes to friendly experiences in the classroom environment. Relationship-based instruction also promotes pleasant experiences and shows students that the teacher cares about them (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). SIFE/ELLs have different learning styles and should be allowed to learn their strengths and weaknesses through cultural diversity.

Theme 3: Teachers Have a Passion to Teach and a Significant Impact on the Students

Participants stated that they felt they greatly impacted their students' lives. One participant stated, "not only did we give them all we got, but they came back to thank us for a job well done." Other participants claimed that students trust them and behave well;

their parents also trust teachers with their education. Many educators improve their capacity to assist students in developing academically, physically, and emotionally as they develop in various spheres of their lives (Buehl & Beck, 2014; Hagenauer et al., 2015). Teachers have to have the passion and the heart to educate these students. Many other participants mentioned that "education is not your field if you do not love to be in this field and do not love to give back or teach." Teachers in the classroom are ready to address how academic language plays a part in their education by teaching the students the linguistic and skill requirements of the assignments (Merga et al., 2020).

Participants said that teachers' positive impacts come in a different form of encouragement and motivation because teachers encourage students to learn, participate, and be successful. Teaching through interactions promotes pleasant experiences and shows students that the teacher cares about them (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Teachers are experienced at interacting positively and respectfully with SIFE to engage them in the learning environment (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b). Instructing students in a way that they can learn and understand is the responsibility of the teacher (Tichenor & Tichenor, n.d.). Participants argued that SIFE/ELLs have much potential, but they need encouragement and a brighter future to help them be motivated. The students will engage in class discussions, complete their assignments with confidence, and get along well with their classmates, they will interact with teachers, and students can foster growth, including emotional, academic, and physically improved performance (Buehl & Beck, 2014; Hagenauer et al., 2015). Many participants shared that teachers must desire to teach, which can positively impact students' learning and achievement.

In addition, participants expressed their passion and the impact they bring to their students and parents. They also described their lived experiences and challenges of teaching high school SIFE/ELLs in a classroom with limited resources. Teachers must establish and sustain a healthy learning environment while attending to their students' social, emotional, and physical needs (Shewark et al., 2018). Therefore, participants expressed their desire to help these students and make a tremendous impact in their lives. Although participants discussed the challenges they face with limited resources; also, SIFE/ELLs also face challenges and need assistance with their language barriers. On a positive note, SIFE/ELLs bring diversity, maturity, life experiences, and rich culture to the classroom.

Research Question 2, Themes 4 and 5

Theme 4: Teaching Experience or Possessing Worldly Experience is Helpful in Working with SIFE

Participants pointed out the importance of being experienced teachers for SIFE/ELLs at the high school. However, participants stated that they were forced to learn technology to prepare for these students. Despite having access to technology, most teachers lack the necessary tech skills to educate or offer training using it effectively (Mellom et al., 2018; Mok, 2019). Participants stated that as a teacher, they should learn how to use technology so they can better assist these students. Merga et al. (2020) mentioned that teachers expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of sufficient Chromebooks for students to use in their classes because SIFE/ELLs rely on technology

to use Google to translate their work. Teachers must be able to assist students when using technology for school work, said a few participants.

Some participants who have taught lower grades mentioned that it prepared them to teach SIFE/ELLs because they already have the background knowledge and the resources to assist them. Teachers engage with students with various personalities, learning preferences, and learning styles daily (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015; Rosengren et al., 2018). They also explain that teaching is a life experience; they must be patient and motivated to teach different types of students. Each student's learning style differs from the next (An & Carr, 2017). Studying becomes a burden if their optimum learning preferences are not recognized in the classroom, and SIFE who struggle with learning become unmotivated (An & Carr, 2017; Sternberg & Zhang, 2014). Being patient has to be one of the virtues that teachers develop because they need that more than anything. Teachers continue to create ways to teach new concepts and strategies to varied students while considering their different learning preferences and styles, allowing all students to become successful learners (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015; Rosengren et al., 2018). Other participants mentioned that progress takes time with SIFE/ELLs, and sometimes the school system thinks things should be done magically.

The primary factor influencing student learning is teachers' preparation programs, degrees, and certificates (D'Agati & Infante-Green, 2019). Participants mentioned that they have to have a master's degree, some have language and culture, Spanish, and others have ESL. According to prior studies, teachers who want to have a beneficial impact on teaching students in high school should get an advanced degree (D'Agati & Infante-

Green, 2019). Participants also shared that it is crucial to prepare to teach and have many resources that can be implemented academically.

Some participants pointed out that teaching in elementary schools provides an opportunity to work long-term teaching SIFE/ELLs. They also said to expose SIFE/ELLs to phonics, high-frequency words, and sight words and then move to comprehension. Further issues develop when teachers must implement a curriculum for SIFE with various requirements (Jolliffe & Snaith, 2017). It takes time to differentiate lessons for SIFE and adapt the content to their needs. The administration advises teachers to help the students while providing and differentiating instruction for SIFE (Shewark et al., 2018). Teachers collaborate with other teachers to help solve specific issues in the classroom and help with learning.

Many participants discussed the value of worldly or global experience and knowledge, in some cases, the school systems viewed teachers as an asset because teachers had come from another country. With a co-teacher who is knowledgeable about the children and can provide them with the individualized attention they require for their unique issues, the mainstream classroom aims to include the students in the regular classroom (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016). One of the participants stated that studying abroad gave them different perspectives and received knowledge that allowed them to respect other cultures and afforded them an opportunity to have a broader perspective.

Participants who have taught abroad mentioned that it helped them develop the tools to pass on the lesson of cultural identity. Students must understand what they are

taught and respond to inquiries in their native languages when receiving instruction in both languages from teachers (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). To promote advanced thinking skills with SIFE in the classroom, teachers employ picture books, vocabulary, word walls, mathematical concepts, and scientific principles (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Participants believe that students should understand Afro-centricity or the idea of cultural identity, and once they have a cohesive cultural identity, they could explore science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine. Students will continue to learn these courses in both their native languages and English, so they will receive grammar and language training in both languages, which will be highly beneficial (Nieto, 2017). Gaining experiences in other countries also helps break down language barriers and reduce challenges among students and teachers.

Some participants were also ESL students because they were from another country and spoke a language other than English. They talked about ELL students and were able to have experience with other ELLs, understand their difficulties and challenges of learning a second language and help with the skills they needed to prosper and do well in college. According to Custodio and O'Loughlin (2017), SIFE who identified as non-English speakers had a four times higher likelihood of dropping out of high school than their classmates who learned and understood English. The language barrier was SIFE/ELLs' biggest obstacle they experienced because learning English is difficult in many areas. Teachers can create a positive learning environment in the classroom in a variety of ways, including (a) developing caring relationships with all students, (b) promoting constructive peer interactions (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b), (c)

addressing the different needs of each student, and (d) establishing respect for one another (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Shewark et al., 2018).

Many participants are educators, and they believe one of the reasons they chose this profession is to work with students to help them learn, achieve, encourage, and succeed positively and beneficially in the school. The teachers maintain a supportive emotional environment in the classroom, promoting positive behavior and meaningful interactions (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016).

In theme 4, participants shared their experience working with SIFE/ELLs at the high school in detail. Theme 5 will continue focusing on how professional development is needed in their school to teach SIFE/ELLs effectively.

Theme 5: Professional Development Focused on SIFE is Important but Somewhat Lacking

Professional development is essential for all educators to observe, collaborate, improve teaching, and serve the population (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016). The results of the participants' data are focused on two main areas, (a) the concepts that PD is essential to their continued success as educators and, consequently, to the success of the students; and (b) that PD related to SIFE/ELLs is insufficient to achieve that goal. Plans for professional development, curriculum creation, and student performance must include building teachers' professional capability (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). It is important to note that some participants felt they did not receive enough PD, which tended towards missing or insufficient, even though some other participants reported receiving a lot of PD to help them assist SIFE/ELLs. Some participants felt they were thrown them into the

classroom to teach SIFE/ELLs without any training, PD, or resources to accommodate these students.

Few participants stated that PD helps them tremendously, and they were able to help student transition from one level of proficiency to the next. PD provides educators with continuous opportunities to advance their knowledge and abilities to support student achievement (Mizell, 2010). Another participant mentioned that with the PD that the district offered, it would be helpful to receive a PD to understand cultural differences based on SIFE/ELLs' backgrounds which could help students through ongoing learning. PD might not meet the needs of these students (Mizell, 2010). However, one participant stated that taking classes to learn more to assist these students might be helpful in teaching them.

Some participants pointed out that their school district came on board with SIFE/ELLs, but they do not have the resources or curriculum to prepare for the upcoming SIFE. According to Zimmerman-Orozco (2015), many US school districts lack the resources necessary to address the academic, cultural, and social-emotional demands of SIFE/ELLs population. One of the participants mentioned that they like to research online to get materials and look for more resources to assist SIFE/ELLs. However, many other participants claimed that the district or the school needs to offer more PD that corresponds with the type of students we have. According to Forte and Blouin's research, many programs have been made available to instructors due to various PD offered in teacher education circles (Forte & Blouin, 2016). These initiatives include restorative

justice circles in the classroom, SEL, mindfulness, blended learning, and sociocultural concerns (Akinyemi, 2018; Nelson, 2020).

Several participants discussed how they engaged in PD or took classes of their own volition to bridge the learning gap between what they know and what they were provided to be part of this classroom. Teachers always find methods to learn new teaching techniques through professional development, for example, by returning to the classroom and modifying their lesson plans and curricula to better meet their students' requirements (Hughes et al., 2018). Some participants stated that the district's PD should have been related to the students, but they have to seek additional PD outside the school to meet the needs of SIFE/ELLs. However, some of these adjustments are difficult to assess because they are delivered gradually to demanding SIFE and require additional support to understand the material (Kong, 2018). Some other participants also mentioned that they have to take additional courses related to SIFE at a nearby college to deliver content in a foreign language that will assist each SIFE/ELL student.

According to Hill et al. (2020), establishing relationships with students during the pandemic provided an opportunity for additional teaching and learning techniques. Participants mentioned that they sought out PD during the pandemic to understand the cultural differences among SIFE, to discover how they learn, and to build a unique relationship with them and their parents. PD, however, has emerged as the new norm for educators looking to adapt and acquire new methods to suit these students (Hill et al., 2020). During the pandemic, teachers were looking for ways to teach on Google classroom and assist each child while learning at home. COVID-19 is still presumably

affecting individuals, and participants believe that teacher preparation programs must equip educators to rewrite the current curricula that consider the natural world a resource to be mined for information.

Teachers, administrators, and school staff benefit from attending PD, but some teachers benefit the most because they need to strengthen their knowledge (Forte & Blouin, 2016). During the pandemic, the district offered PD weekly, but participants stated that the context of that PD was muddled and unclear because it was not related to SIFE/ELLs. Teachers gain expertise to engage students' learning through PD that tackles a new subject about students in the classroom (Santos, 2019). Teachers who participate in PD put their knowledge and abilities to use by organizing and assuring students' most remarkable degree of learning (Mizell, 2010). Participants espoused the importance of PD and could be more extensive and accessible to help students succeed in their future endeavors.

In theme 5, participants shared their experience focusing on how professional development is needed in their school to teach SIFE/ELLs effectively with SIFE/ELLs at the high school in detail. Theme 6 will detail how having a multilingual co-teacher and exposure to English are crucial needs for SIFE/ELLs.

Research Question 3, Themes 6 and 7

Theme 6: A Multilingual Co-Teacher and Exposure to English are Crucial Need

Many participants mentioned that a bilingual program is significant for SIFE/ELLs in the classroom. Lopez and Santibanez (2018) stated that using bilingual programs for ELLs' teaching has been a political crisis in many states, including Arizona,

California, and Texas (to mention a few). Title 15-752 English language education law for children in public schools was passed in 2007 that all students should be taught in English and ELLs shall be educated in sheltered English immersion and be placed temporary in English language classroom not to exceed a period on one year (ARS Title 15, 2022). These governments have tried to replace these programs with English immersion. Many participants also mentioned the need for the bilingual teacher to assist them in the classroom and how they enjoy the extra assistance who understand and can work with the students. It seems that bilingual education has a more positive impact on SIFE/ELLs' academic and personal achievement. Lopez and Santibanez (2018) mentioned that the success of bilingual programs is found to enhance students' social-emotional growth, literacy, and reading skills.

Some participants mentioned that they are fortunate to have a bilingual teacher in each bilingual class, a Haitian Creole and Spanish bilingual educator that can help their students. They also refer to the bilingual teacher as their resource that assists these students through the testing, tutoring, and State standardized assessments. On reading performance exams, students taught to read in their native language and English did better than their counterparts in English-only programs (DelliCarpini, 2016). Bilingual instruction in the classroom positively affects standardized test results, attendance, and academic engagement (Lindahl et al., 2020). Many participants had positive feedback on their bilingual teachers because they could function more smoothly in the classroom with the students. Students must understand what they are taught and respond to inquiries in their native tongues when receiving instruction in both languages from teachers

(Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Participants felt relieved because SIFE/ELLs communicated with their bilingual teachers and received the assistance the general teacher sought.

Most participants believe that there is an advantage to having two teachers in the classroom who speak the students' native tongues. It has been demonstrated that bilingual education is the most effective method for increasing students' learning and even changing the structure of the human brain (The New York State Education Department, 2011). Participants believe it would be most beneficial to have Haitian Creole in different classes as the Hispanic students in some classes, but the ESL can be mainstream. In order to prepare SIFE for long-term educational gains and a lifetime of learning, several school districts with an expanding population of SIFE advocate for bilingual education in their schools (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; López & Santibanez, 2018). As it comes to an understanding, some participants stated that the district took longer to integrate the bilingual and SIFE programs at the school.

In many school districts that have introduced bilingual education into their curricula, fundamental classes like science, history, and mathematics are taught by bilingual teachers in their native language (The New York State Education Department, 2011). Participants acknowledged that SIFE/ELLs receive bilingual instruction in history, science, and math, but they have tutoring after school, where they receive additional assistance in other subjects. As a result, instructors for these fundamental classes speak both languages with the students (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Zimmerman-Orozco, 2015). The New York City public school system incorporates bilingual instruction in

their schools because they have an influx of immigrant students and parents; however, some school systems in New Jersey have to look at the data from the township to integrate bilingual instruction at their school (participants, 2022). In elementary school, students receive grammar and language education in both English and their home language as they continue to be taught these subjects in both languages, which will be highly beneficial to them (Nieto, 2017). Some participants believe that one of the advantages of a bilingual program is that ESL teachers will focus more on the development, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation of English language skills.

One participant pointed out that the benefits of a bilingual assistant in the classroom help expose the student to a plethora of learning environments and languages they can master. For instance, teachers assigned work on IXL, PearDeck.com, Starfall, and most importantly SIFE/ELLs read on iReady, Read180, and epic. Math teachers use mathway, Khan Academy, IXL, GeoGebra, and Edutopia; meanwhile, the science teachers use the virtual lab, vernier science education, PLT-project learning tree, and many other resources they can use to accommodate these students. The bilingual program is the best and most efficient method for teaching SIFE/ELLs their home language and English (Subtirelu et al., 2019). With bilingual education in the classroom, students can become proficient and master both languages (DeCapua, 2016). Participants also confirmed that when SIFE/ELLs receive bilingual support, they learn the language faster and participate in the classroom even when they answer in their native tongue. Participants also said that it benefits them (as a teacher) to communicate with parents and guardians about their students' achievements or lack thereof. Some participants

mentioned that as they become fluent in both languages, we offered them a program to certify them as bilingual, and they must take the biliteracy test. Many high schools give students a chance to test for the Seal of Biliteracy, which certifies them as bilingual (Davin et al., 2018; C. Hancock et al., 2020).

A school district or state may present the Seal of Biliteracy to students who have studied and become fluent in two or more languages by the time they graduate high school (Colomer & Chang-Bacon, 2020; Hancock & Davin, 2021). The advantages of bilingualism include assisting students in appreciating the importance of their academic achievement and understanding the practical advantages of being bilingual (Davin et al., 2018). Participants stated that bilingual education empowers students to speak their native language while learning English, which will help them develop fluency in both languages. Participants were well-positioned to provide data on how the students improved with the bilingual program.

In theme 6, participants pointed out every detail of how multilingual co-teacher and exposure to English is a crucial need for SIFE/ELLs; also, the need for the bilingual teacher in the classroom that benefits outgrow the cons. Participants shared that with the resources and bilingual education program, students feel more confident learning English and secure in their community. Theme 7 will address participants' view that student learning should be balanced and fair (mainstreamed) but has disadvantages.

Theme 7: Approach to Student Learning Should Be Balanced and Fair

(Mainstreamed) But Does Come With Disadvantages

Participants believed that the curricula used to teach SIFE/ELLs should be balanced and fair if they want these students to be successful. SIFE/ELLs who have only recently begun formal schooling in the US may find it difficult to adjust to the regular classroom (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). Participants stated that it is essential for SIFE/ELLs to take ESL classes and bilingual assistance with their ELL peers because they can have the same scope and sequence of the curriculum. Some participants shared that teachers provide weekly and daily schedules, penalties, and ways for students to earn prizes for good behavior. When teachers maintain excellent classroom management, students are more engaged in learning and other classroom activities (WIDA Consortium, 2015).

The objective of the mainstream classroom is to integrate students into the typical classroom with a co-teacher who is familiar with the students and can provide them with the individualized attention they require for their unique issues (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016). Some participants mentioned that mainstreaming leads to more regulated learning growth among students with social difficulties who can blend among peers. Academic performance, self-esteem, and social skills are enhanced in mainstream classrooms (Scholten, Collett, & Petrovic, 2016). Bilingual teachers and classroom teachers can be requested or be permitted to get classroom accommodations like a desk and perhaps laptops for the student to use in the classroom (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015).

Participants believed that the mainstream classroom has advantages and disadvantages for SIFE/ELLs.

Some participants also pointed out that a classroom should be able to welcome the students where they can be immersed and bring them up to grade level because they will struggle to get to grade levels like their other peers. Through a variety of strategies, including getting to know the students and their culture, using appropriate language, calling them by their first names, talking with them about the rules and explaining why they are important, and, finally, meeting with the students one-on-one to better understand their needs in the classroom (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua, 2016; Merga et al., 2020), teachers can develop stronger relationships with their students.

Custodio and O'Loughlin (2017) shared that effective classroom management encourages constructive peer interaction, increases awareness, regulates students' progress, and engages students in ways that are beneficial to them. Participants mentioned that certain classes should be mainstreamed because SIFE/ELLs are not in their grade levels; they need special classes. Establishing expectations and norms in the classroom helps students gain social and emotional skills (Shewark et al., 2018). Helpful teachers who consider the student's academic and emotional needs characterize well-managed classroom environments (Shewark et al., 2018). Some participants argued that people think that because others are from different countries does not necessarily mean that they do not know English; some students learn English from their school. Therefore, students who can learn should be placed in a traditional classroom, providing more

opportunities for them to succeed. SIFE/ELLs should be placed in the mainstream classroom because they are exposed to diversity and are suitable for these students.

Participants stated that the advantage of mainstreaming is that the classes are modified for SIFE/ELLs. The advantage of placing SIFE in the mainstream classroom for at least a year is to begin planning their literacy level for transitioning to a typical classroom setting (Blanchard, 2016; Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). Participants said that SIFE and ELL students could benefit as well from mainstreaming. Participants believed mainstreaming facilitates interaction between SIFE/ELLs and their peers. Students develop their higher social skills and self-esteem in a mainstreamed or bilingual classroom context (Blanchard, 2016). Some participants revealed that some students learn to understand that SIFE/ELLs may require extra help if they are included in classroom activities.

Participants pointed out that the disadvantage of mainstreaming is that SIFE/ELLs are in the classroom alone with no assistance besides the teachers. The disadvantage of including SIFE in a regular classroom is that they require more teacher support, which takes time away from other students (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015). Some participants also mentioned that SIFE/ELLs are low academically; therefore, they could not help other students. In order to work with SIFE/ELLs, a regular teacher might not have the necessary training (Blanchard, 2016). Therefore, SIFE/ELLs experience social issues like rejection that come with being a part of a mainstream class and can become bullying targets (Scholten, Collett, & Petrovic, 2016). Some bilingual participants claimed that they are often concerned about SIFE/ELLs in a regular setting, such as physical education

class, Art, or Music class as if they are doing enough to accommodate them when they are in a different setting. According to Dagli & Öznacar (2015), a mainstreamed student's impact on the entire class depends on their prior understanding of the subject matter of the education they receive and the support resources available.

In theme 7, participants address the approach to student learning should be balanced and fair (mainstreamed) but does come with disadvantages SIFE/ELLs at the high school. The advantage has outgrown the disadvantage of mainstreaming. The following discussion will cover the research study's theoretical framework and findings.

Theoretical Foundation

The themes emerging from the research support Vygotsky's SCT relates to SIFE/ELLs learning a new language and adapting to a new environment. Vygotsky promoted the idea that culture and social interactions play a role in the growth of higher-order thinking abilities and cognitive development (Donato, 1994; Karpov, 2009; Ma, 2020; Margolis, 2020). Participants believed that SIFE/ELLs have difficulties learning a new language but learn slowly with their peers' interactions. Many participants mentioned that these students learn by engaging in activities, teaching vocabulary, and using visuals to learn both languages. Social learning occurs before cognitive development occurs, and children learn through social engagement, such as working with classmates or an adult (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978).

As some participants think technology is vital for these students to acquire, they need it to help them translate and explore a vast of learning, which engages them to work and share with their peers. One key to the learning process is the ZPD. The ZPD is the

primary focus area where learning occurs (Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). According to

Vygotsky (1978), children are more likely to succeed at a task when they are in the zone

of proximal development for it and receive the necessary support from their teacher (Azi,

2020). Thus, SIFE/ELLs learned to work independently and interact with their

classmates. Teachers design an environment in the classroom that is conducive to

learning and developing relationships based on commitment and trust (Shabani, 2016).

Therefore, the classroom environment should also be welcoming, provide different

strategies, and acquire knowledge and skills that provide positive learning. Even when

SIFE/ELLs learn English, the relationships promote social engagement and active

participation in the learning tasks (Karpov, 2009; Shabani, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978).

Following that, students pick up knowledge by listening, speaking, and observing their

peers and teachers; one of the participants mentioned that peer engagement does help

with memorization, repetition, and the acquisition of abilities and knowledge are all steps

in the process of learning a new language (Participants, 2022; Shabani, 2016).

Scaffolding is a significant component of effective instruction, in which teachers

continuously modify the amount of assistance they provide in response to the

performance of the students (Ajabshir & Panahifar, 2020; Azi, 2020; Donato, 1994;

Karpov, 2009). Using the scaffold methods in a class by teaching SIFE/ELLs vocabulary

in both languages, sciences, and math could help them understand the lesson

(Participants, 2022). Scaffolding encourages student-centered learning by fostering

learner autonomy (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016) and giving students

all the temporary support, they require to learn before they can do so independently (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015b).

The MALP helps to lessen the cultural dissonance that struggling students experience in their new educational environments (DeCapua, 2016). To create a transitional model and help with the cultural dissonance these learners experience, the MALP combines aspects from the learners' paradigm with elements from the formal educational paradigm (DeCapua, 2016). Participants shared that SIFE/ELLs possess global knowledge, not directly academic but broader knowledge that constitutes farmers. Therefore, by providing teachers with tools for helping challenging students transition to formal schooling; the MALP expands on Vygotsky's theory (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015).

Although Vygotsky contested the significance of teachers in evaluating students' capacity to solve issues since he placed more emphasis on students' development than teachers' behavior (Novita et al., 2020; Margolis, 2020), participants shared that students need to be exposed to phonics, high-frequency words, and sight words before moving on to comprehension are part of learning development. DelliCarpini (2008) pointed out that teachers require assistance in overcoming the difficulties associated with teaching SIFE/ELLs and meeting their requirements. Participants mentioned that teachers could help students by explaining their homework, adapting the lesson to fit each student's needs, and involving them socially in group activities with their classmates.

Participants in this study mentioned ways they excel in teaching SIFE/ELLs. They participate in Webinars and PD and take additional classes that can help them improve.

The Danielson framework for teaching is a common language for instructional practice based on a philosophical perspective and comprehension of outstanding education and the nature of learning (Danielson, 2007). With these common languages in Danielson's framework, participants participate in different webinars to help them prepare, administer, and engage students in their classroom activities. When assessing teachers' lesson planning and preparation, administrators employed the Danielson (2007) methodology to assess teachers on how well they prepare to teach. Danielson's framework is different from Vygotsky's SCT because Danielson's framework assesses teachers' ability to teach, and Vygotsky's theory processes the students' construction of knowledge which theorizes learning happens through social interaction and by observing social behaviors. The following discussion will cover the study's limitations.

Limitations of the Study

One of the first limitations of this study was that, like the participants, I am employed at the high school. Further, although I was not in a position of authority, obtaining the right to interview the school teachers was the first step to start conducting the study. Finding as many participants as possible was also a challenge, and I had to go through the Walden university participants pool to recruit additional participants who had taught SIFE/ELLs in the classroom for more than a year. During this study, the challenge I faced was meeting the criteria of 20 participants or reaching saturation.

Another limitation was finding high school teachers to participate in a virtual interview about their lived experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of SIFE/ELLs. Due to the limited number of ESL teachers and the COVID-19 shutdown, I had to include

core-subject teachers who teach Math, science, world language, and social studies. I interviewed 20 participants, and 18 of them responded to the survey. In order to examine the study's conclusions, I conducted interviews with teachers and looked at survey responses, overcoming the limitations of that restriction.

The final limitation was addressing any aversion participants surveyed in the interviews may have felt to sharing candid ideas and opinions about implementing a successful classroom for SIFE/ELLs. However, I overcame this limitation by assuring the study participants that there were no right or improper answers in this study and that she was only looking for the facts from their perspective. My potential bias came to light throughout the interviews, but I recognized it and ensured it did not affect how the findings were presented. The following discussion will cover the recommendations of the study.

Recommendations

The current study can be interpreted as the educational issues of SIFE from the perspective of classroom teachers. The following recommendations reflect ideas presented in the survey and interviews.

The study's participants highlighted the challenges they faced working with SIFE/ELLs in the classroom. Given these challenges and the fact that SIFE/ELLs have higher dropout rates, according to Custodio and O'Loughlin (2020), incorporating scaffolding and the MALP in their lesson activities would offer students a better way to learn. Additionally, teachers could work with bilingual teachers to translate materials for SIFE/ELLs to improve their learning ability. These may influence SIFE/ELLs' goals to

complete high school, enroll in vocational school, earn a degree, and start working. A step-by-step approach could assist students in achieving their goals after obtaining additional support for their social and emotional needs.

This study indicates that supporting more experienced teachers benefits students and schools. This study suggests that school districts explore how to boost teacher retention rates as well as identify and address any teacher diversity gaps. Increasing teachers' salaries might be one way to recruit new teachers who can implement curriculum requirements concerning SIFE/ELLs and retain teachers who desire professional advancement and new challenges.

One intervention that was recommended was a method called TRI, which may improve the literacy abilities of struggling readers in the classroom (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2018). TRI supports challenging readers with speedy reading growth. Custodio and O' Loughlin (2020) mentioned that teachers should receive training and more resources to implement learning techniques for SIFE/ELLs. According to Vernon-Feagans e al. (2018), teachers need at least 2 years of TRI training to produce gains for their students compared to their first year of training. Teachers could benefit from TRI training, which will help amplify the learner's skills in learning a new language.

Future research could further examine the data of SIFE in each state, how they populate in the school systems and the need for a written curriculum for SIFE. Future studies could also contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological issues among SIFE. A comprehensive program was outside the scope of this study, but in the real world, this research study would be a multiyear long-term strategy encompassing a whole

building or district overseen by someone from within the district to assure constant and ongoing support. However, follow-up initiatives based on this study might meet that requirement. The following discussion will address the significance of this study for social change.

Implications

In this study, 20 participants, including retired teachers with international expertise from various nationalities who had taught in various school districts, core subject teachers, and certified bilingual specialists, described their lived experiences and challenges teaching SIFE/ELLs, and they empathized with the challenges these students face in the school system. Participants helped these students in their educational journeys by speaking their native tongues with them to translate their work and to assist them with their homework, class projects, and other school activities. According to recent teaching literature (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020; DeCapua, 2016), educators are working to differentiate instruction for students who need additional academic and emotional support in the classroom. However, schools must provide a language survey to the parents upon entering the school to know which language the child learns, speaks, comprehends, and reads to place them in a bilingual program with assistance. Schools must assess each upcoming student to gather information about prior literacy to provide optimal instructional programs and content instruction (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2020).

Participants agree that it is crucial to encourage a classroom environment where students learn to accept failure rather than fear the prospect of making a mistake. In other words, the learning environment and especially the language barriers of SIFE/ELLs make

it imperative that students learn that it is ok to make mistakes because they will learn by making mistakes. In teaching them this, they will learn that their opinions matter. This can be used to strengthen their learning abilities and to support them in learning how to accept opposing points of view on a topic. Students could spend time in classrooms learning more than just how to study vocabulary, science, and math.

SIFE/ELLs bring diversity, life experiences, and work ethic to the classroom, enriching learning activities with teachers and bilingual teachers. Although they may face challenges and struggles with the language barrier, they are mature and willing to learn. Social change in education provides the knowledge, training, and skills they need to succeed. Teachers describe SIFE/ELLs in high school as adventurous, challenging, bravo, and inspiring.

Participants mentioned that it is important to participate in PD, webinars and classes to strengthen the knowledge and skills they need to prepare for high school students. Participants want to attend PD focusing on SIFE/ELLs but lack these PDs/Webinars. Social change in education creates transparency in ideas, opinions, and values of education in a broad subject between teachers and students. Teachers can inculcate in their students a sense of achievement, drive, sensitivity, high standards of learning and performance, and a desire to study and succeed. Therefore, participants emphasized the significance of professional development and suggested that it may be made more thorough and available to promote learning in their future pursuits.

Several participants felt connected with ELL students because they were ELLs when they first migrated to the US. They understand the difficulties and challenges of

learning English. By developing empathy for these students, classroom teachers can also learn the best teaching techniques and resources to bridge the achievement gap between what SIFE already know and are capable of and what they will be expected to be able to do to succeed academically. With attention to how the teacher's work affects each student, these participants perceive their work in the classroom using different strategies to engage SIFE/ELLs in classroom lessons and activities. High school teachers found PD and extra classes to be helpful in their educational and professional careers teaching SIFE/ELLs.

Participants shared the need for bilingual teachers in their classrooms; bilingual teachers can translate the curriculum and the work for the students and prep with the teachers with a solid lesson plan. Having two teachers in the classroom -one who can communicate with the student's native language is advantageous to these students because the bilingual education program increases students learning and help them comprehend faster. The implication of social change on teachers has changed substantially. Although teachers now have a more comprehensive range of duties and responsibilities, they still have a considerably lower social status, which makes them feel stressed and frustrated. Teachers must receive an increased salary, more resources, additional stipends, and better evaluation components because they need to lower the class size with a single teacher so they can handle the increased obligations and duties as they come.

The approach to student learning should be balanced and fair if they want SIFE/ELLs to succeed in high school. Participants believe that certain classes could be

mainstreamed because SIFE/ELLs are not in grade levels but need special classes. The advantage of mainstreaming is that classes are modified for the students. Having SIFE in the typical classroom for at least a year allows for planning their literacy level for moving into a mainstream classroom environment. The disadvantage of mainstreaming is that students are in the classroom with no assistance besides the teachers. SIFE should not be included in regular classes since they need extra teacher support, which takes time away from other students. Therefore, teachers believe there are approaches to balance student learning, such as bilingual programs, differentiated instructions, and the use of Kagan strategies in groups, small groups, and movements to help them participate and reward students for their efforts. Those are the best practices teachers believe are associated with SIFE/ELLs' engagement in the classroom.

The need to incorporate social-emotional learning in the classroom, which would mark a change in existing educational trends, is also implied in this research on teaching SIFE/ELLs. The growing tendency of people seeking to prepare for a more just society through career progression runs opposite to the existing learning paradigm in education. The objective is to encourage social change or a change in a school culture that will improve academic learning and accomplishment for pupils. Social change and improving the climate in schools will improve social and emotional learning, lower absenteeism, boost graduation rates, and lessen behavioral problems among SIFE that might call for disciplinary action. The results of this study demonstrate the challenges that instructors have while developing and executing instructional learning for SIFE/ELLs and the value

of including teachers in professional development. The following will summarize the research study.

In this research, teaching SIFE/ELLs can be challenging. However, those who work with SIFE/ELLs know that social change begins with them. They know that instead of telling students what to think, it is important to teach them how to think. This study reveals how educators working with SIFE/ELLs seek professional development to make learning hands-on so that the students are actively involved. For example, teachers described using interactive SMART Boards to promote activities and having students write words in flashcards in both English and their native language, which allowed them to avoid confusing students who are trying to learn vocabulary. This study includes strategies that high school teachers working with SIFE/ELLs have developed to simplify, redefine in context, and reword lessons for SIFE/ELLs to support learning.

Within the study, teachers also shared their use of instructional techniques like the SIOP model, which integrates language and content teaching. They also employed Vygotsky's concepts of scaffolding and the ZPD to create a concrete way of building students' prior knowledge and experience by creating activities through visuals or using technology. They also discussed using the MALP to outline lessons for students that reinforced previously learned material with new knowledge.

Social change begins in the classroom, and teachers can create it by focusing on growth, not a deficiency. This study revealed how teachers working SIFE/ELLs perceived their work and needs. The greatest need was for more professional development and resources. Teachers should be encouraged to conduct independent

research from their SIFE/ELLs and share what they learn with colleagues to improve the school's culture and climate. Teachers who frequently participate in summer workshops or classes might share the highlights of their studies or the importance of implementing new ideas in a classroom in slide shows during faculty or departmental meetings. As teachers grow, they can create a collaborative culture in which planning, problem-solving, and informal brainstorming are done cooperatively to assist students.

Conclusion

This qualitative, phenomenological research study was conducted to examine high school teachers' lived experiences of SIFE/ELLs in the classroom and their challenges while implementing differentiated instruction strategies for SIFE/ELLs. Chapter 1 introduces the study, supplies background information, highlights the gap in the literature, and presents the problem statement and the purpose of the study. The theoretical framework identified and supported the study's theories, which the framework relates to the study approach and significant research. The nature of the study provided a concise rationale for collecting data and answering the research questions. The definitions of key terms used in the study have multiple meanings; explanations of the underlying assumptions clarify the aspects; scope and delimitations describe specific aspects of the research problem. Limitations described any biases that could influence the study, and the significance of the study identified potential contributions to advance knowledge in the discipline.

Chapter 2 introduces how PD is essential for teachers to extend their learning and improve their ability to work with SIFE/ELLs. Shabani (2016) argued that Vygotsky's

SCT-based professional development concepts emphasize how social interaction drives learning and human developmental changes. The most critical factor that affects teachers when implementing high-quality education in SIFE/ELLs is the lack of resources. Research indicates that teachers were unprepared and unsure about SIFE/ELLs and how to support their social-emotional learning, academic learning, and well-being.

This exploratory research examined how teachers experience working with SIFE/ELLs in the classroom to a) build teachers' and students' relationships; b) support students in building relationships with other students; c) create a positive classroom environment, and d) allow all students to feel complete, respectful, and trustworthy. The study built on current research on SIFE that focused on observing the students themselves. This study filled the literature gap in understanding SIFE/ELLs by interviewing teachers working with these students. The research explored teachers' experiences working with SIFE/ELLs to understand how best to implement programs and techniques that supported SIFE/ELLs in high school.

In this study, I used interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore teachers' perceptions of SIFE/ELLs' learning experiences by conducting individual virtual interviews with teachers to share their daily challenges with SIFE/ELLs. This study provided an in-depth understanding of teachers' lived experiences and challenges in high school while implementing differentiated instruction strategies for SIFE/ELLs. Teachers with experience teaching SIFE/ELLs participated in numerous professional development training to implement new learning techniques in their classrooms.

In chapter 3, I described the research method, the design, the rationale, and the role of the researcher. I discuss the methodology, the participant selection logic, the instrumentation, and the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; the data analysis demonstrates alignment and consistency among each study element. I addressed the issues of the research's trustworthiness and the purpose of the ethical procedures that I will follow step-by-step during the study. The study aimed to recognize how teachers struggle with their limited understanding of providing additional support to SIFE/ELLs and using PD to enrich their knowledge to assist these students.

In chapter 4, I explained the process of recruiting participants and lived the experiences of interviewing each participant. The teachers' lived experiences of SIFE/ELLs were examined by 16 participants in this qualitative study, as well as their personal teaching experiences with SIFE. Otter.ai, Google Meet™, and audio were used to collect data, which was then transcribed. An online survey was used to collect more data. From the 16 interviews, 365 quotes in all were taken and categorized. Seven themes developed as a result of the thematic coding exercises, three of which correlated with RQ1 and the other two with RQs 2 and 3. Within the Quirkos™ platform, thematic coding was carried out.

Three themes that relate to RQ1: SIFE/ELLs face challenges and need additional resources and assistance, especially with language barriers; SIFE/ELLs bring diversity, maturity, life experiences, and work ethic to the classroom; teachers have a passion for teaching and a significant impact on the students. From two themes aligning on RQ2: teaching experience or possessing worldly experience is helpful in working with

SIFE/ELLs; professional development focused on SIFE/ELLs is important but somewhat lacking. Lastly, two themes align with RQ3: a multilingual co-teacher and exposure to English are crucial needs; the approach to student learning should be balanced and fair (mainstreamed) but does come with disadvantages. According to teachers, SIFE/ELLs were enthusiastic about learning while receiving bilingual instruction, using online resources, participating in social-emotional learning, and emphasizing interpersonal skills, social awareness, and self-care. They must actively participate in class discussions, study English, and learn.

In chapter 5, I addressed in detail the interpretation of the findings, the theoretical framework, the limitations of the study, the recommendations going forward, and the implications for positive social change. The outcomes of the current study validated and expanded our understanding of how teachers use professional development opportunities to enhance students' learning. The new data demonstrated that teachers use a variety of approaches and provide extra resources to help every SIFE/ELL, particularly those with language difficulties, enhance their academic knowledge. The strategies included in teachers' approaches to student learning should be fair and well-balanced (mainstreamed), yet they have disadvantages.

Teachers describe their experiences educating SIFE/ELLs in high school as adventurous, challenging, brave and inspiring. As a result, those participants who participated in the research suggest that they are passionate about teaching and significantly impact students who have graduated and those still in school. In order to gain the information and abilities necessary to prepare for high school SIFE/ELLs,

participants noted how important it is to participate in ongoing professional development, webinars, and additional classes. High school teachers found that teaching SIFE/ELLs and taking extra classes was advantageous in their academic and professional careers. The impact of social change on teachers has significantly changed. Teachers believe there are techniques to balance student learning, including multilingual programs, differentiated instruction, applying Kagan strategies in groups, small groups, and movements to encourage them to participate, and rewarding students for their achievements. Participants shared that these are the best practices for engaging SIFE/ELLs in the classroom.

Lastly, due to their learning and social-emotional health intertwining, SIFE/ELLs spend most of their time at school, which is the best place to address the anxiety, stress, isolation, and trauma SIFE present. Schools should not be intimidated to address SIFE's emotional needs. For SIFE/ELLs to be successful, educational and mental health needs must be met. Throughout a teacher's career, teaching experience is significantly associated with improvements in SIFE/ELLs students' achievement. Teachers ought to interact with SIFE/ELLs population. Regardless of the subject, teachers should receive the training required to bridge the achievement gap between SIFE/ELLs. As the number of SIFE/ELLs in schools rises, school districts must collaborate to provide educational and professional development curricula that will give teachers the resources they need to deliver a high-quality education to SIFE/ELLs.

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Appendix A: Semistructured Interview Questions

Research Questions 1: How do teachers describe their lived experiences and challenges of teaching high school SIFE in the classroom?

1. Please tell me about your teaching experience. When did you start, grade levels, and experiences with diverse students?

2. When and what brought you to start working with ELLs and SIFE?

3. What are some strengths SIFE bring to the classroom?

4. What are some challenges SIFE bring to the classroom?

Research Question 2: What educational or professional preparation have high school teachers found to be effective when working with SIFE?

1. As you reflect on your teaching experiences, how do you believe your previous teaching experiences prepared you in addressing the linguistic and overall academic needs of SIFE? Why or why not?

2. What professional development did you receive before serving SIFE?

Research Question 3: What best practices do teachers believe are associated with SIFE's engagement?

1. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of SIFE being part of an ESL or a Special Education Inclusion class or being placed in a stand-alone classroom?

2. If provided unlimited resources and funding, what would you provide for each SIFE to enrich their educational experiences?

3. What are some strategies/best practices that have helped SIFE become literate in English?

Appendix B: Teacher Questionnaires

The teacher survey questionnaire is to collect additional information after the initial interview. It is related to teachers who taught ELLs/SIFE during their career as a teacher. This survey is being administered to collect data on teachers and help the researcher understand teachers' perspectives on SIFE. I am committed to providing you with the best experience possible so that I welcome your comments. Please fill out this questionnaire/survey via Google Forms and submit it anonymously. Thank you.

1. **Please indicate from which school district you are providing feedback:**

_____

2. **Which of the following options best describes how you identify your gender?**

   □ **Male**   □ **Female**   □ **Prefer not to disclose**   □ **Other** _____

3. **Which of the following options best describes how you identify your race and/or ethnicity?**

   □ American Indian/Native   □ Asian/Pacific Islander   □ African American/Black   □ Hispanic/Latino

   □ White   □ Alaskan Native   □ Prefer not disclose   □ Other_____

4.

4. **What is the highest level of education you have completed:**

   □ High School/Some college courses   □ Associate's Degree (AA, AS   □ Bachelor's Degree (BA, BS   □ Master's Degree in /PostGraduate (MA, MS

   □ Doctoral (Ph.D., EdD)   □ Other_____

5.

5. **What are the primary languages you speak? If any, please indicate**

_____

6. **How long have you been employed in education?**

_____

7. **Are you ESL certified?**

    □ Yes   □ No   □ Other_____

8. **Are you Bilingual certified?**

    □ Yes   □ No   □ Other_____

9. **Does your school have an ESL teacher?**

    □ Yes   □ No

10. **How many ELLs and SIFE do you serve in your class(es)?**

    □ 1-10   □ 10-15   □ 16 or more   □ None   □ Other_____

11.

11. **Do any of the ELLs/SIFE in your class have:**

    □ Little or no previous schooling

    □ Special education needs

    □ Qualify for gifted and talented services

    □ Other_____

12. **What is the language most often spoken by the student? (Select only one.)**

    □ English   □ Arabic   □ French   □ Haitian-Creole

□ Italian □ Portuguese □ Spanish □ Other_____

13.

13. During the last 12 - 18 months of COVID-19, did you participate in any

professional development (PD)?

□ Yes □ No □ Other _____

14. What is your preferred mode of receiving PD?

□ Coaching or mentoring by another teacher

□ Coaching or mentoring by a specialist, administrator, or expert in your field

□ Participation in a school-based training program (seminars, workshops)

□ Participation in a college or graduate-level course

□ Participation in a self-paced course or programs or online Webinars

□ ELLs/SIFE conferences

□ Other _____

15. How much time are you willing to devote to PD beyond the school day?

□ 6-7 hours on a Saturday

□ 6-7 hours on every other Saturday

□ Summer PD course

□ Course offered at an institution of higher learning (Colleges/University) (3 hours a

week for 15 weeks)

□ Other _____

16. Could you benefit from the following PD opportunities for involving families of

ELLs in their children's education: (Check all that apply)

□ Sharing college/university, SATs, Financial Aid information with families

□ Involving families in the life of the school

□ Designing school-wide parent involvement programs

□ Instructing families to support the work of the classroom at home

□ Accessing translation and interpretation services

□ Other _____

17. Could you benefit from the following additional PD opportunities for teaching

ELLs/SIFE: (Check all that apply)

□ Identifying ELLs/SIFE

□ Classroom practices for ELLs/SIFE

□ Instructional strategies for ELLs/SIFE

□ Selecting materials for ELLs/SIFE

□ Integrating content and language instruction

□ Promoting oral language

□ Teaching reading and writing to ELLs/SIFE

□ Other _____

18. For the following items, please indicate your opinion about each of the

statements below:

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Strongly Disagree   Disagree
19.

a) Students' absenteeism is a problem in my class_____

b) I feel successful teaching ELLs/SIFE. _____

c) My academic expectations are the same for all students, regardless of their English language abilities. _____

d) I am required to follow policies that conflict with my best professional judgment about teaching and learning the English language. _____

e) I have many opportunities to learn new things about teaching ELLs/SIFE in my present job. _____

f) I enjoy teaching ELLs/SIFE _____

g) Students learn a new language best when they engage in reading and writing tasks they find meaningful. _____

19. I would like to ask about your personal beliefs on teaching and learning. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Strongly Disagree   Disagree
20.

a) Effective teachers demonstrate the correct way to solve a problem. _____

b) My role as a teacher is to facilitate students' own inquiry. _____

c) Students learn best by finding solutions to problems on their own. _____

d) Instruction should be built around problems with clear, correct answers and around ideas that most students can grasp quickly. _____

e) How much students learn depends on their background knowledge, which is why teaching facts is so necessary. _____

f) Students should be allowed to think of solutions to practical problems themselves before the teacher shows them how they are solved. _____

20. For the following items, please indicate how well prepared you are:

 Well Prepared   Not Well Prepared   Prepared   Need Support

21.

    a) Group students in specific ways in order to support their language development. __

    b) Teach classes for students with diverse abilities and learning styles. _____

    c) Teach students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. _____

    d) Work with ELLs/SIFE with behavioral problems. _____

    e) Teach ELLs/SIFE with special needs _____

    f) Organize and manage student behavior. _____

    g) Involve parents in the English language acquisition of their children. _____

    h) Use the first language to support second language acquisition. _____

21. How often do you use the following methods of assessing student learning?

 Daily   Every other day   Weekly   Never

22.

    a) I develop and administer my own assessment._____

    b) I administer Access testing to ELLs/SIFE (WIDA testing)._____

    c) I let students judge their own progress._____

    d) I observe students when working on particular tasks and provide immediate

        feedback. ____

    e) I collect data from classroom assignments or homework. _____

22. Please consider a specific group of students (target class) for the following

    questions. If you only teach one class of ELLs/SIFE, this will be your target

class. Check all of the characteristics to the right that describe the target class you have selected.

a) It is the most challenging group for me. _____

b) It is the class where I feel more comfortable. _____

c) Most ELLs/SIFE speak a native language I know. _____

d) ELLs/SIFE in this class have similar proficiency levels in English. _

e) ELLs/SIFE in this class have different proficiency levels in English. _____

f) Other characteristics: _____

23. **When ELLs/SIFE in the target class work in pairs or small groups, how much of that time do they engage in the following tasks?**

A lot   Moderate   Little   Some   None

24.

a) Preparing or practicing for a presentation in pairs or small groups _____

b) Working on a writing project in which group members engage in peer revision and editing._____

c) Working as a group on an assignment, report, or project takes longer than one week to complete. _____

d) Completing written assignments from the textbook or worksheets with a partner _

e) Engaging in small group discussions. _____

f) Designing charts or models that support learning of academic content _____

g) Designing charts or models that support their language development _____

24. When ELLs/SIFE in the target class are engaged in activities involving computers or other educational technology, how much of that time do they use to engage in the following tasks?

  A lot   **Moderate**   **Little**   **Some**   **None**

25.

  a) Working with technology-based visuals and manipulatives that support learning of academic language. _____

  b) Using language-learning software. _____

  c) Using assessment software to evaluate language learning _____

  d) Create multi-media presentations. _____

  e) Researching and collecting information (e.g., internet, learning software). _____

  f) Engaging in a writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). _____

25. On average, how often do you do the following in this school? Please indicate how much you agree or disagree in each of the following statements:

  Once a week   **Twice a month**   **4-8 times a year**   **Once a year**   **Never**

26.

  a) Exchange teaching materials with colleagues _____

  b) Engage in discussions about the learning development of specific students _____

  c) Teach jointly as a team in the same class _____

  d) Take part in collaborative professional learning _____

  e) Engage in joint activities across different classes and age groups (projects) _____

f) Work with other teachers in the school to ensure common standards in evaluations for assessing students' progress _____

26. How often do you do the following in this school? Please indicate how much you agree or disagree in each of the following statements:

Once a week   Twice a month   4-8 times a year   Once a year   Never

27.

a) Attend staff meetings to discuss the vision and mission of the school _____

b) Develop a school curriculum _____

c) Attend Departmental meeting/conferences _____

d) Attend team conferences _____

e) Attend school and climate committee meeting _____

f) Attend parent/community involvement _____

27. How important do you think the following are, in your opinion? Please indicate how much you agree or disagree in each of the following statements:

Very Important   Important   Undecided/Neutral   Somewhat important   Not Important

28.

a) Teachers and students should have a positive relationship with each other _____

b) Students' progress is of utmost importance _____

c) Teachers should give positive feedback to students regularly _____

d) Teachers must provide individual attention to students with special needs _____

e) Teachers must provide individual attention to ELL/SIFE _____

f) Teachers should have a voice in deciding the curriculum for students _____

I am incredibly grateful for your contribution, valuable time, honest information, and thoughtful suggestions. The fact that you are reading this message indicates that you have completed the survey/questionnaire and that I owe you a debt of thanks. I appreciate the time you have taken to assist in this research and commit to filling out this survey. Your participation, sincerity, and feedback are invaluable tools for this research. I want to thank you for taking the time to respond.

Thank you!