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Investigating Effective Instructional Strategies to Increase Reading Comprehension of ELLs

Caroline Kosho
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Caroline G. Kosho

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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2024

Abstract

Investigating Effective Instructional Strategies to Increase
Reading Comprehension of ELLs

by

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MA University of Detroit Mercy

BA University of Michigan Dearborn

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2024

Abstract

High school classroom teachers with English language learners (ELLs) assigned to their classrooms might not be using effective instructional strategies to increase reading comprehension scores of ELLs. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the use of strategies that high school classroom teachers use to teach cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to ELLs who have difficulty reading for understanding. The conceptual framework guiding this study was Cummin's second language acquisition theory. The basic qualitative research design was guided by two research questions intended to determine the effectiveness of strategies used by the high school classroom teachers to help ELLs learn CALP for improving reading comprehension. A basic qualitative study using open-ended, semistructured interviews with 13 general education teachers was used in this study to determine if teachers are using strategies to help their ELLs learn CALP. The inclusion criteria for the study were general education high school teachers who were not certified to teach ELLs but were providing instruction to ELLs. Interview responses were analyzed using NVivo 12 and content analysis to determine trends and patterns in the data. Coding included inductive coding to develop categories that could be combined into themes that could be used to address the research questions. School administrators might use the results of this study to plan professional development programs for general education teachers who are working with ELLs in their classrooms. Understanding effective strategies that teachers use can help ELLs learn CALP and students achieve their academic goals. The social change that this research might accomplish is providing teachers with the tools that could help their ELL students become college or career ready and be successful citizens in an increasingly global economy.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to Jesus Christ who gave me the ability to pursue and complete a doctoral degree. Next, it is dedicated to my late parents, Ghassan and Jackline Kosho, and my brothers; Yousef, Wissam, Daniel, and Ehab. My parents taught us that a family that loves one another works together for great accomplishments. My brothers continuously provided encouragement to me throughout this process. I also have to include my dog, Marlow, who provided diversions when I worked too hard.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

English language learners (ELLs) include both children who have recently immigrated to the United States and those who were born in the U. S. but did not speak English prior to starting school (Uro & Lai, 2019). Immigration to the United States continues to increase, with many individuals, including children who will be attending school, entering the country unable to read, write, or speak English (de Araujo et al., 2018). However, many schools and teachers are unprepared to manage the influx of ELLs (Hegde et al., 2018). While new immigrants can start school at any age from preschool through high school, those born in the U.S. generally learn English prior to entering high school. This study focuses on general education teachers who are working with ELLs at the high school level.

Effective instructional strategies that can increase reading comprehension scores of ELLs are important to be successful in school. ELLs need to learn cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to complete their educational successfully (Brisk & Zhang-Wu, 2017, Gu, 2018). CALP is the formal language of academe that is used in textbooks and other resources that are needed in classrooms to support instruction. In contrast, basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), which is informal language used in interpersonal communications between people. Contractions, slang, and jargon are commonly used with BICS, but not with CALP (Brisk & Zhang-Wu, 2017; Gu, 2018), Support from school administrators is important to provide teachers who are responsible for teaching ELLs with methods to meet the needs of ELLs in their classrooms (Brisk & Zhang-Wu, 2017; Gu, 2018). Determining which strategies work best could result in positive social change by assisting ELLs in becoming proficient in English and integrated in the community (Adera, 2017). Support from school administrators is important to provide teachers how are responsible for teaching ELLs with methods that meet the

needs of ELLs in their classroom (Guler, 2018). The purpose of the study and research questions that will be addressed are presented in Chapter 1, along with the conceptual framework, an overview of the nature of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, limitations, and significance of the study. The chapter ends with a summary and introduction to Chapter 2.

Background

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968, specifically Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act, was established to meet the needs of ELLs (Escamilla, 2018). This act recognized the special educational needs of the large numbers of children with limited English-speaking ability in the United States (Bialystok, 2018). Title VII required the federal government to provide financial assistance for school districts to develop bilingual programs for students who needed help learning English, including program development, hiring bilingual staff, and providing professional development programs to train staff to work with English language learners (Escamilla, 2018). ELLs are expected to meet state-mandated standards for funding purposes. School districts are required to evaluate ELLs in reading, writing, speaking, and listening on state-mandated assessments. The goal of Title VII has been to provide access to bilingual education programs for children of families with low socioeconomic statuses (Bialystok, 2018).

ELLs are children who enter school unable to read, write and communicate using the English language (Escamilla, 2018). These students may be immigrants from other countries or those born in the United States, but English is not spoken in their homes (Evans et al., 2020; Sánchez, 2017). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021), 5.02 million ELLs were enrolled in public schools in the United States in 2018, with most students born in the United States (PreK to 5th grade [85%], 6th through 12th grade [62%]). The

percentage of ELLs in high school was 24.9%, including 7.3% in 9th grade, 6.5% in 10th grade, 6.0% in 11th grade, and 5.1% in 12th grade; NCES, 2021).

Three court cases regulated education for ELLs in the United States. The first was *Keyes v. Denver* that ruled out segregation for ethnic groups such as Blacks and Latinos in the United States (Moon, 2018). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that ELLs must assimilate with native peers (Moon, 2018). The *Lau v. Nichols* case gave equal access to educational opportunities for minority students (McCalley, 2018). *Lau v. Nichols* argued that school districts were not providing ELLs with equal education due to low comprehension in reading, writing, and speaking in the English language (Escamilla, 2018). The U.S. The Supreme Court ruled that school districts must provide instructional programs to assist ELLs in learning to read, write, and speak the English language (Moon, 2018). The third case was *Castaneda v. Pickard* that argued local school districts were discriminating against ELLs based on race and ethnicity. School districts did not implement any bilingual education programs to assist ELLs in learning to read, write, and speak English to meet their educational goals (McCalley, 2018;).

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled that school districts must implement a three prong-test to ensure that ELLs were receiving an adequate educational program that could assist them with reading, writing, and speaking in English to be successful in school (Carjuzaa & Ruff, 2016; Coady et al., 2022). The three-prong program must be research-based with schools providing needed commitment and resources and the programs need to be assessed to determine their effectiveness (Zacarian, 2012; Coady et al., 2022). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) 2001, also now known as The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA), holds schools accountable for ELLs who are performing under the level of their native counterparts (Bialystok, 2018; McCalley, 2018).

ELLs must be taught in schools that have specific programs for helping nonnative speakers of English learn English at the same time as they are learning grade-level material (Brevik, 2017; Coady et al., 2022). These programs are generally taught by teachers who have certifications in bi-lingual education or English as a second language (Johnson, 2019). However, in some schools, the number of ELLs may not be sufficient to require a teacher dedicated to teaching ELLs. In these schools, general education teachers are tasked with the responsibility of teaching ELLs to read and speak English while teaching their grade level subject matter to all students.

Learning and using effective strategies is central to meeting the educational needs of ELLs. Most ELLs struggle in school because they lack access to quality instruction to meet their academic achievements (Sánchez, 2017). According to the U. S. Department of Education (2021), a critical shortage exists for bilingual education teachers. These shortages have required schools to place ELLs in regular education classes with teachers who may not be prepared to work with these students. According to Villegas, (2018), a need exists to fill in the gap in practice regarding strategies teachers need to use and the support they need to increase the reading comprehension skills of ELLs using CALP successfully.

Researchers (Brevik, 2017; Irby et al., 2018) studied the strategies used by high school classroom teachers to help ELLs who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding. The achievement level is lower for ELLs than their native peers (Soland, 2019). Teachers can become aware of recommended strategies that can be tailored to meet the instructional needs of the ELLs, and high school classroom teachers may use the results of this study to implement best practices when teaching ELLs.

Problem Statement

The problem is that high school classroom teachers might not be using effective instructional strategies to increase reading comprehension scores of ELLs and provide their students with the skills to learn content-specific material using CALP (Adera, 2017; Irby et al., 2018). Teachers in today's inclusive classrooms need to have skills to address their students' language and literacy abilities (Diamantes & Curtis, 2015; Irby et al., 2018; Lucas et al., 2018). Nelson (2018) contended that administrators are responsible for providing professional development, instructional strategies, and curriculum support to high school classroom teachers who are working with ELLs.

At an suburban public high school (Grades 9-12) in the midwestern United States (US), students come from a wide range of language backgrounds (Bengali, Yemeni, African American, and Polish). Their ability to speak, read, and understand English varies (Personal communication, Principal of the Suburban Public High School; pseudonym, May 7, 2019). As the school is small, less than 250 students, a specific ELL program is not available. Students who are new to the United States are included in classrooms with native speakers (Braden et al., 2016; Gu, 2018). High school classroom teachers are expected to differentiate instruction to help ELLs learn academic English and become successful in school (Braden et al., 2016; Lucas et al., 2018).

According to the Michigan Department of Education (2019), ELLs continue to demonstrate reading deficits as measured by the State Assessment test scores. Statewide, only 21% scored proficient on the state competency test. While researchers (August & Shanahan, 2017; Brevik, 2017; Helman et al., 2015; Irby et al., 2018; Lucas et al., 2018; Rosa, 2015) have discussed strategies that have been found to be effective in helping ELLs learn CALP,

additional research is needed to determine if high school classroom teachers are using these strategies with their ELLs and if school administrators are providing the necessary support for the high school classroom teachers to be successful in their efforts. Research has shown that ELLs need effective instructional strategies to comprehend what they read to succeed in high school (Brevik, 2017; Lucas et al., 2018), but a gap exists in the research regarding the strategies high school classroom teachers can use to provide CALP instruction to ELLs. According to researchers (Adera, 2017, Coady et al., 2022, Irby et al., 2018), filling this gap in the research regarding strategies teachers need to use and the support they require to increase the reading comprehension scores of ELLs using CALP successfully is important.

Purpose

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to explore strategies used by high school classroom teachers to teach cognitive academic language proficiency CALP to ELLs who have difficulty reading for understanding. High school classroom content teachers who are providing instruction in English, math, social studies, and science participated in semistructured interviews to obtain information on strategies they use with ELLs and the effectiveness of these strategies to improve their use of CALP to read informational text.

Research Questions

Research questions in a basic qualitative study are used to focus the research on specific topics of interest (Braun et al., 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The research questions guide the collection of data and provide a structure for the data analysis. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. How do HS teachers build ELL's comprehension skills in oral and written language?

2. How do high school teachers perceive these strategies for teaching reading comprehension are effective in helping address the academic needs of ELLS who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding subject matter content?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework to guide this study is the second language acquisition theory by Cummins (1979, 1980). Cummins' theory (1979; 1980) is related to the distinction between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and CALP in second language acquisition. BICS develops from birth and plateaus at an early age, whereas CALP is the academic language learned through social interactions and is acquired in school (Cummins, 1979, 1980). Students need to continue to acquire CALP if they are going to be successful in school (Cummins, 1979, 1980; Gu, 2018).

High school classroom teachers are aware that ELLs taught in high school content courses (e.g., history, English, science, etc.) may have difficulty understanding academic English (Soland, 2019). Integrating strategies to teach CALP while providing instruction in social studies, science, English language arts is important to the academic success of high school students as they prepare for college. The conceptual framework is aligned with the purpose of the study, which is to explore strategies used by high school classroom teachers to help ELLs who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding. The results of the study addressed research questions regarding how high school classroom teachers use strategies to teach course content material to ELLs by building on Cummins' language acquisition theory (Ardasheva et al., 2017; Gu, 2018). High school classroom teachers who are aware of strategy instruction using CALP may help ELLs read and comprehend at grade level.

Cummins' (1979, 1980) second language acquisition theory is widely accepted.

Cummins' (1979, 1980) theory distinguishes between BICS and CALP, with teachers required to teach using CALP. The conceptual framework for this study was based on Cummins' theory (1979, 1980).

Nature of the Study

Both quantitative and qualitative research designs were considered when planning this project. Quantitative research requires the use of surveys to collect numerical data regarding perceptions of general education teachers regarding teaching ELLs in their classrooms and the types of strategies that worked best for helping these students learn CALP (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This type of study would require a large sample of high school teachers. In addition, the concepts in this study are difficult to quantify as the teachers may use different strategies with their students. I decided to use a qualitative approach, as semistructured interviews used in basic qualitative research studies (Braun et al., 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) could yield rich data, with teachers able to provide specific examples of strategies used in their classrooms, as well as determining what does and does not work with a variety of students.

This study used a basic qualitative research design. Several different qualitative research designs, including narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study were considered before selecting a basic qualitative design. Narrative studies used biographical stories about the individual who was the focus of the study (Bauer & Larkina, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose of the present study was not to focus on an individual but to provide strategies that could be used to help ELLs learn CALP and succeed in high school.

Phenomenological studies use interviews to examine the lived experiences of people who have all experienced the same situation or event (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Philipsen et al., 2019).

Phenomenological studies use semistructured interviews of people who have shared a common experience. As the teachers and nonclassroom educators have different experiences with ELLs, this type of research would not be appropriate. The grounded theory uses multiple sources of data to develop a theory that applies to the group being studied (Charmaz & Belgrade, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Grounded theory is not appropriate for this research as the purpose is not to develop a theory to explain a behavior or action of a group. Ethnographic studies are in-depth research on a particular group that share a common characteristic. Ethnographic studies are used to describe a characteristic of a group and use multiple sources of data to validate the characteristic. The purpose of the present study was not to define characteristics of ELLs or their teachers; rather it was to determine strategies that other general education teachers could use to help their ELLs learn CALP. Case studies require multiple sources of data, such as interviews, records, and other types of artifacts, to study a case (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). A case study is not appropriate for this study as the only source of data is semistructured interviews with teachers and nonclassroom educators to determine strategies for working with ELLs in general education classrooms.

Basic qualitative studies are commonly used in the social sciences for applied research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data are collected using interviews, document analysis, or observations and do not require triangulation of multiple data sources. Data analysis for basic qualitative studies uses thematic analysis to determine patterns and trends, and themes that occur across the interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). As semistructured interviews were the only data collection source for this study, a basic qualitative study was appropriate to investigate the type of reading comprehension strategies used by high school classroom. Qualitative researchers describe

phenomena and attempt to provide a better understanding of how things work in the world (Yin, 2018). Since the purpose of this doctoral study is to investigate the effectiveness of the strategies used by the high school teachers, a basic qualitative study is deemed appropriate.

Data were collected using in-depth, semistructured interviews with high school classroom teachers. Participants included 10 high school classroom teachers who are providing instruction in content areas and are providing support for high school classroom teachers. All potential participants were invited to participate in the study through an email sent through the school email system, and those interested in participating were asked to contact me through email. High school classroom teachers who agreed to participate in the study were asked to complete face-to-face semistructured interviews to discuss strategies used to provide instruction to ELLs in content areas.

The school principal has indicated that he would provide a letter of support for the study that allowed me to contact high school classroom teachers to be in the study. Purposeful sampling was used to ensure that all participants meet the criteria for inclusion in the study. The criteria for inclusion in the study include teachers must be at the high school level, teach a core subject (e.g., English, history, math, science), and have had ELLs assigned to their classrooms for at least one academic year. According to Tashakkori et al. (2021), purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to define a sample that was most likely to have information needed to address the research questions.

Data from the semistructured interviews were collected and member checking was used to validate the data. According to Busetto (2020), member checking can be accomplished by sending the participants the results to confirm that the statements are accurate. Additionally, the second language acquisition theory help focused the qualitative study to the problem that high

school classroom teachers might not have the background of education or experience to provide effective instruction to ELLs in reading comprehension in the content areas.

This design is guided by two research questions that are intended to determine the effectiveness of the strategies used by the high school classroom teachers to help ELLs learn CALP for improving reading comprehension. Data from the interview questions, developed to ascertain the high school teachers' use of effective strategies in providing the CALP instruction for reading comprehension, were analyzed for patterns and themes across high school teachers' and nonclassroom educators' responses using open coding and thematic analysis.

Definitions

Definitions of the key terms used in this study are included in this section. The context of the definitions may be specific to this study.

Academic language- Academic language is the abstract, specialized, and conceptually dense language of school (Cummins, 1979). In third grade and beyond, content-area texts increasingly include highly specialized academic vocabulary (Kirby, 2002; Wei, 2020).

Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). According to Cummins (1979, 1980), BICS is an informal language that is used in daily interactions with others.

English as a second language- English as a second language is an educational program in which ELLs are instructed in the use of the English language at a school (Rodríguez, 2018).

English language learners - English language learners (ELLs) are students who speak a language other than English and are in the process of learning the English language (MDE, 2018).

Assumptions

An assumption is a statement that is assumed to be true for the research being conducted (Tashakkori et al., 2021; Vogt & Johnson, 2016). The following assumptions are made for this study: Teachers who work with ELLs in their general education classrooms understand the importance of helping their students acquire CALP to meet their educational goals. Teachers who participate were open and honest about their experiences when responding to the interview questions.

Scope and Delimitations

The study included general education high school teachers at a single suburban public school located in a suburban community that is adjacent a larger urban area. These teachers were teaching in subject areas that have specific academic vocabularies (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies). The study did not include nonacademic teachers (physical education, music, art), although these courses have specific vocabularies. The study did not include special education teachers or bilingual teachers if they are on staff.

Limitations

The study is limited to general education subject area teachers at a large suburban high school. The study did not include elementary or middle school teachers or general education high school teachers in public schools. Teachers with certifications in bilingual education or English as a second language were excluded from the study.

Significance

This study may bring awareness to guide educators on instructional strategies they can use to instruct ELLs to read and develop CALP associated with subject matter content. Based on the research that has been presented, a gap exists in the research regarding how high school classroom teachers use strategies to help ELLs read and comprehend CALP which is needed to

be successful in high school (Brevik, 2017; Gu, 2018). Most research on teaching ELLs academic English has focused on elementary students and not on high school classroom teachers in high school (Braden et al., 2016; Wissnik & Starks, 2020). Based on the findings of the present study, recommendations can be made to tailor strategies to the instructional needs of the ELLs. High school classroom teachers can use the results of this study to implement best practices when teaching ELLs. Classroom teachers who have not had training for teaching immigrants who lack English language skills are finding more ELL students assigned to their classrooms (Hegde et al., 2018). The strategies that are being used by general education teachers who are working with ELLs in this study could be helpful for other teachers who are being made responsible for teaching ELLs. The potential findings may lead to positive social change by assisting the ELLs to become more integrated into the community by being able to read and comprehend English. Immigrants who are fluent in English are more likely to complete college, obtain meaningful employment, and become active citizens in their communities (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015; Gu, 2018). From there the implemented practices can be shared to benefit ELLs communities at the local, state, and national levels.

Summary

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the strategies used by high school classroom teachers to help ELLs who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding. As the number of immigrants continue to increase, general education teachers and nonclassroom educators are going to experience greater numbers of children entering school unable to read, write, or speak English. High school classroom teachers are expected to teach academic language to the students to help them reach their educational goals and become

successful citizens in their new country. In Chapter 2, the literature review presents research on second language acquisition and teacher strategies to help students become proficient in CALP.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Introduction

As the number of immigrants in the United States continues to increase, high school general education teachers can expect to work with students with limited English proficiency. These teachers need specialized skills to work with students whose language and literacy abilities range from nonexistent to proficient (Babinski et al., 2018; Diamantes & Curtis, 2015). According to researchers (Brevik, 2017; Munoz, 2021), ELLs need teachers who have knowledge of effective instructional strategies to learn CALP, succeed in high school, and transition to college or career. A gap exists in the research regarding strategies that high school classroom teachers can use to provide CALP instruction to ELLs. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore strategies used by high school classroom teachers and the support received from nonclassroom educators to help ELLs who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding.

According to the Department of Education (2019) state assessment results, ELLs are falling behind in reading, with approximately 20% scoring proficient on the state competency tests. Researchers (Brevik, 2017; Helman et al., 2015; Li et al., 2021; Rosa, 2015) conducted studies on effective teaching strategies that helped ELLs learn CALP, recommending additional research to study high school classroom teachers and the strategies they are using with ELLs in their classes. Researchers (Brevik, 2017; Li et al., 2021) also suggested research on the support that nonclassroom educators are providing for high school classroom teachers to provide effective instruction for all students, including ELLs. Researchers should focus on strategies that are used to teach reading to ELLs and the effectiveness of these strategies (Ali & Razali, 2019; Brevik, 2017). Li and Peters (2020) recommended that additional research be conducted

on the use of clue word strategy (CWS) to help ELLs become more proficient in reading. Additional research is needed on leadership practices that provide strategies for helping teachers improve achievement for ELL students (Ali & Razali, 2019; Rosa, 2015). Based on recommendations from Ali and Razali (2019), Brevik (2017), Helman et al. (2015), and Rosa (2015), there is a need for studying how noninstructional educational leaders can help general education teachers in providing instruction to ELLs.

Second language acquisition theory, the conceptual framework for this research, presents studies on second language acquisition and the role of teachers in helping ELLs learn CALP. Demographic information on the percentage of ELLs in public and private schools were included in the review to provide a sense of urgency in the problem as it exists in education. In addition, relevant literature on strategies used by general education content classroom teachers to help ELLs learn CALP were reviewed. The literature also includes studies on teacher preparation programs that are expected to provide teachers with strategies for teaching ELLs and ends with a summary.

Literature Search Strategy

The Walden University library served as the primary source of literature for this review. The literature includes refereed research articles, theoretical reviews of literature, books, and internet sites, such as the National Center for Education Statistics and United States Department of Education. The databases that were used include Google Scholar, ERIC, Proquest, Ebsco Host, Education, Sage, and ResearchGate. Key words that used to search for relevant literature, include, but are not limited to *ELLs, general education classroom teachers, high school, CALP, teacher preparation programs, administrators, and second language acquisition*. These terms are used alone or in conjunction with other terms to narrow the search. The literature searches

generally are limited to the last 5 years (2015-2020). However, some seminal articles on second language acquisition and CALP may be historical and based on seminal research by Cummins.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is second-language acquisition theory developed by Cummins (2017). In the discipline of second language acquisition, Cummins (1979) developed a theory on how language is acquired. His theory has been accepted by educators in determining how best to teach ELLs who need to learn English to achieve academic success.

The iceberg theory of language acquisition (Cummins, 1980, 2017) consists of two parts, which are basic communication skills (BICS) and CALP. The tip of the iceberg is BICS, while the bottom layer is CALP, which is at the base of the iceberg. BICS refers to language skills that are mandatory for daily communication in social situations, grammar, and pronunciation and vocabulary roles. BICS is a language skill that develops from birth, plateaus at an early age, and can take ELLs one to three years to acquire. This language is generally verbal. CALP is an academic language that is more complex for a learner to acquire and is learned through social interactions and is acquired in school. CALP typically takes 7 to 10 years to master. Students need to continue to learn CALP if they are going to be successful in school. CALP involves the learner to learn application skills, comprehension, and knowledge of academic language and the learner to analyze, synthesize and evaluate academic content.

Cummins' (2017) theory is related to the distinction between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and CALP in second language acquisition. Educators often fail to differentiate between BICS and CALP, creating difficulties for ELLs who are in the process of

learning English as a secondary language (Cummins, 2008). The constructs of BICS and CALP theories that are most relevant to the current study are:

1. Students learn BICS as part of the interpersonal relationships they build with classmates and friends.
2. Students learn CALP from listening to teachers presenting instruction and mastering CALP is essential to achieve success in school.
3. Both types of language development are essential for high school students to grow into productive citizens in a global society (Cummins, 2017).

ELLs who are being taught in high school content courses (e.g., history, English, science, etc.) may have difficulty in understanding CALP. According to Soland (2019), CALP must be taught at all levels and in all courses for ELLs to assure success in reading and comprehending course content. The association between academic English acquisition and the use of best practices to teach course content materials needs to be understood. General education teachers who are aware of the role of CALP in instruction may help ELLs read and comprehend at grade level.

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To understand BICS and CALP and their complexity, Cummins (1980) created a four-quadrant graph that explains the cognitive demand of the task and the amount of available support determines the difficulty of language learning for ELLs. The degree of cognitive challenge is the first factor in Cummins' framework that determines if a task is easy or hard (Khatib & Taie, 2016). The two quadrants across the top of the chart represent oral or written tasks that are not challenging for ELLs. The two lower quadrants represent tasks that are cognitively demanding for ELLs; these tasks require students to have a higher level of critical thinking skills and language skills (Khatib & Taie, 2016). The second factor is determined by content embedded tasks, which are clues or spoken words, and written prompts with which students are familiar and can make the task easier to understand. Students acquire facial expressions, body gestures and visual cues from their physical environment. The two quadrants on the left side of the chart are highly embedded and contextually supported (Khatib & Taie, 2016). The two quadrants on the right side are tasks that are context reduced. ELLs generally find quadrant I tasks easy because they do not require critical thinking skills but have a high contextual support (Roessingh, 2006). Quadrant I tasks are face-to-face conversation in social settings and require no cognitive demands. Quadrant II tasks include having a conversation over the phone (Roessingh, 2006). The task is social, but the listener typically loses the speakers' contextual support and relies on listening for comprehension. Quadrants III and IV are both cognitively challenging for ELLs (Roessingh, 2006). ELLs may have difficulty in understanding math story problems. To have a better understanding of language and reading comprehension, teachers should implement strategies from Quadrants III to IV for ELLs (Roessingh, 2006). Figure 1 presents the four quadrants.

Cognitively Undemanding (BICS)

Initial levels ESL T. P. R. Following directions Face-to-face conversation Getting absence excuse Buying popcorn Oral presentations Content classes (Art, Music)	Telephone conversation Note on the refrigerator Written directions, instructions (No diagrams or illustrations)
Context	Context
Embedded	Reduced
Demonstrations, experiments A-V assisted lessons Basic math computations Plane geometry Projects and activities Health instruction Social studies Science Experiments	Standardized tests (SAT, ACT) Reading/writing Math concepts and applications Explanations of new abstract concepts Lecture with few illustrations Social science texts Mainstream English texts Most content classes
Cognitively Demanding	Cognitively Demanding

Figure 1: Cummins Quadrants (Adapted from Khatib & Taie, 2016, p. 383).

Cummins (2005) developed the developmental interdependence hypothesis that provides support for a relationship between first language (L1) and second language (L2) reading skills. According to Cummins (1979), developing proficiency in L2 is dependent on an individual's proficiency in L1 when the exposure to L2 begins. Thus, an individual with highly developed L1 should be able to develop skills in L2 faster than an individual with limited development in L2. Cummins (2005) suggested that based on interdependence hypothesis, skill transfer across the two languages should occur if the student has enough motivation. Cummins (as cited Khatib & Taie, 2016) used a "dual iceberg metaphor" to elucidate the relationship between proficiency in two languages" (p. 383). Figure 2 presents the "dual iceberg metaphor."

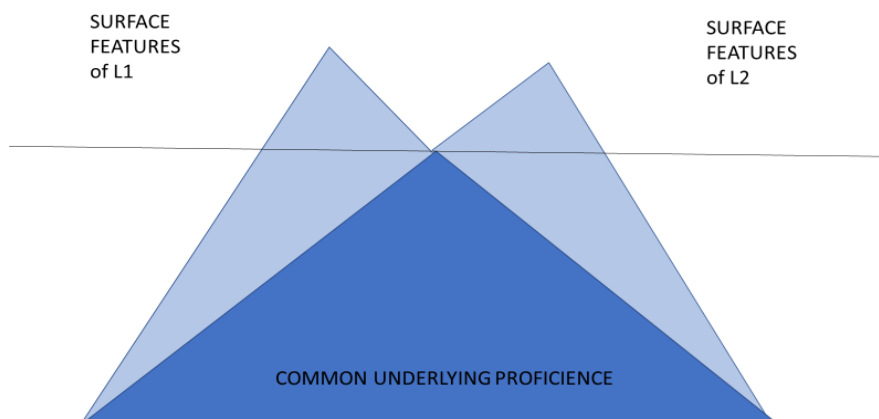


Figure 2: Dual Iceberg Metaphor (Adapted from Cummins, 1980b)

The dual iceberg metaphor indicates an interdependence of CALP between L1 and L2 for ELLs. The area above the horizontal line indicates proficiency in L1 and L2 on the surface. Cummins (1980b) asserted that while phonics, wording, and vocabulary differ, some parts of language are common to both L1 and L2. ELLs who have developed language proficiency in their first language may have less difficulty in learning the second language.

Demographics of ELLs

The number of ELLs continues to increase, especially in the western part of the United States. For example, in Fall 2000, 3.8 million students (8.1%) were enrolled in public schools, while in 2016, the number increased to 4.9 million students (9.6%) for a 28.9% increase (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018). More than 19.4% of students enrolled in California schools were ELLs, while 0.8% of students in West Virginia were considered ELLs (NCES, 2021). The primary languages of these students are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of ELLs in Public Schools 2018

Home Language	Number of ELL Students	Percentage distribution of ELL Students	Number of ELL students as a percent of total enrollment
Spanish/Castilian	3,777,926	75.2	7.7
Arabic	135,870	2.7	0.3
Chinese	102,834	2.0	0.2
Vietnamese	76,517	1.5	0.2
Somalia	40,115	0.8	0.1
Russian	38,227	0.8	0.1
Portuguese	37,535	0.7	0.1
Haitian, Haitian-Creole	32,833	0.7	0.1
Hmong	31,335	0.6	0.1

Note: National Center for Education Statistics: *English Language Learners in Public Schools, 2021*.

The greatest percent of ELLs are in elementary school, with fewer ELLs in the upper grades. For example, nationwide 16.2% of students in kindergarten were ELLs, but this percent decreased to 4.1% of 12th grade students who were categorized as ELLs (NCES, 2018).

According to NCES, most ELLs are identified when they start school and by the time they reach high school, they are fluent in English. Most high school students who are acquiring English as a second language are those who have recently immigrated to the United States (Birdsong, 2018).

History of English as a Second Language

The United States is diverse with many different ethnic groups that speak a language other than the English language. In 1839, Ohio enacted the first bilingual education law, which was a program to assist ELL students who were not fluent in the English language (Gunderson, 2021; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015). From the Civil War through World War II, concerns

were raised about insurrection and terrorism in the United States, which led to integrating English immersion programs for ELLs (Gunderson, 2021; Multilingualmania, 2010). ELLs were at a disadvantage in completing an American education because of a lack of English language proficiency. During this period from the Civil War through World War II, no programs were available to assist the ELLs with learning the English language (Multilingualmania, 2010; Russell & Von Esch, 2018).

In the late 1800s, Congress enacted the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) that guaranteed equal opportunities for speakers of all languages. However, ELLs continued to be discriminated against because of language barriers. In 1923, English-language only schools became the law in 34 states (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Gunderson, 2021). In the late 1920s, the courts struck down prohibition on foreign language instruction because it violated the Fourteenth Amendment (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Gunderson, 2021; Multilingualmania, 2010). In 1968, the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination in any federally funded program based on race, color, or national origin and was intended to create opportunities for ELLs. English language only schools violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act by denying equal learning opportunities for ELLs. In 1968, the BEA (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) funded pilot bilingual programs to help ELLs in public schools. The passage of the BEA resulted in schools having to provide bilingual education to include students with limited English proficiency in general education classrooms where possible (Schneider, 2019). However, the goals of these programs were ambiguous, with educators unsure if the programs were intended to teach ELLs in their native language or convert them into English as quickly as possible (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Gunderson, 2021; Multilingualmania, 2010). The Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) passed in 1974 mandated that federally

funded schools take *appropriate action* to meet instructional needs of ELLs in public schools (Multilingualmania, 2010). According to Gándara and Escamilla, appropriate action was defined by the 5th Circuit Court as a “three-prong” standard. The three prongs were (a) programs must be based on an accepted theory, (b) program must be established using the theory with sufficient resources provided to fund the program, and (c) evaluations have to provide support regarding the effectiveness of the program.

By the end of the 20th century, bilingual education for ELLs was under scrutiny, with Arizona, California, and Massachusetts passing laws prohibiting bilingual programs in their public schools (Sánchez et al., 2018). Bilingual programs were slowly eliminated (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Sanchez et al., 2018) until passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002. The BEA was replaced with the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017.)

Teaching ELLs

Teachers in today’s inclusive classrooms need to have skills to address the varied language and literacy abilities of their students (Diamantes & Curtis, 2015; Siefert et al., 2019). Research has shown that teachers of ELLs need to use effective instructional strategies to help their students comprehend what they read to succeed in high school (Brevik, 2017; de Oliveira, 2016; Johnson, 2019). The concern is that high school classroom teachers may not be using effective instructional strategies to increase reading comprehension scores of ELLs and need help to provide their students with the skills to learn content-specific material using CALP (Adera, 2017; Siefert et al., 2019). General education teachers are expected to use the strategies and curriculum support to help their ELLs become proficient in CALP.

The effectiveness of instructional strategies varied among general education teachers and ELLs in their classes. The study findings indicated that teachers at all educational levels were aware of effective strategies for language learning. Another study by Al-Jarrah and binti-Ismail (2018) used a qualitative research design to determine the effectiveness of reading strategies in learning a second language. The strategies used included logical knowledge, constructivism, cultural awareness, previous exposure, and basic conceptual understanding. The students felt the strategies were effective, but additional strategies were needed to improve reading outcomes (Al-Jarrah & binti-Ismail, 2018). Another study conducted by Wilson et al. (2016) used mind mapping as an instructional strategy for their students learning English. Preliminary results based on a group of 60 students suggested that Mind mapping was useful in helping students to learn long lessons, improve student motivation, and increase interactions among peers. These studies provide support for the use of instructional strategies in learning a new language.

The use of instructional strategies can benefit ELLs in learning content for understanding while learning English (Villegas, 2018). However, general education classroom teachers may lack the knowledge and pedagogical skills (instructional strategies) required to teach ELLs (Villegas, 2018). Secondary to the lack of strategies, some general education teachers may have negative attitudes regarding ELLs' ability to learn and be successful in learning content (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016; Mellom et al., 2018). By focusing on positive aspects of ELLs' learning abilities and setting high expectations for them, teachers can help them succeed in school.

One way to gain knowledge and learn effective strategies to teach ELLs in a general education classroom is through professional development. A study on effective instructional

strategies for teaching ELLs found instructional interactional scaffolding strategies, such as resources, structures, and verbal interaction to teach ELLs' second language proficiency and content knowledge were successful (Johnson, 2019). The qualitative study compared three teachers who used English language development and three teachers who used sheltered English instruction during 60 lessons of planned and interactional scaffolds used with ELLs during reading instruction. The criteria selected was (a) knowledge of ELA content and instructional strategies, (b) knowledge of English language development and instructional strategies for ELLs, (c) colleagues' respect for their teaching, (d) students' response to their teaching, (e) teaching credentials and awards, and (f) years of teaching experience. Findings by Besterman et al. (2018) indicated that most teachers found that using interactional scaffolds, such as identifying unfamiliar vocabulary, were effective. The scaffolds were effective because it provided equitable access to language input, opportunities for language production, opportunities for meaningful language interactions, and support for reading development.

Preparing Preservice General Education Teachers to Teach ELLs

As the population of ELLs continues to increase in the United States, studying the instructional strategies teachers use when teaching ELLs becomes more important. With approximately 4.6 million ELL students (1 in 20 public school students), classroom teachers are finding themselves unprepared to teach these students (Villegas, 2018). According to Villegas et al. (2018), preservice teachers need to have coursework and field experiences to help them learn effective strategies when they have ELLs in their general education classrooms. Deng and Hayden (2021). examined the need to prepare preservice teachers to teach ELLs. Strategies that were listed that could help preservice teachers learn to teach ELLs include providing field experiences that link with an ELA methods course; preparing teachers for racial, cultural, and

linguistic diversity; learning to use new technologies and new literacies in English education; understanding content area-literacy requirements; and becoming aware of K12 content standards and associated assessments (Deng & Hayden, 2021). This study provided additional support that formal coursework was needed to help pre-service teachers learn instructional strategies and bring greater awareness and understanding on language development when teaching ELLs.

Professional Development for General Education Teachers

Most general education teachers in the United States are Caucasian women who speak English only (Mellom et al., 2018). In contrast, 28% of the children attending school in the United States speak a language other than English. Immigrant children are the fastest growing student group in the country (Besterman et al., 2018; Li & Peters, 2020). According to Mellom et al. (2018), the teachers and their students typically differ in terms of their social, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds.

With the increase in ELLs in general education, research is showing that general education teachers need to participate in professional development to learn skills needed to provide education to these students (Besterman et al., 2018; Li & Peters, 2018). While the majority of teachers in the Besterman et al. (2018) study had ELLs in their classrooms, fewer than 25% had participated in any professional development programs to understand skills and strategies needed to teach these students. Bridging these differences in the classroom requires professional development for teachers to learn to provide instruction to these students and help them learn English (Besterman et al., 2018).

Traditionally, professional development uses a passive, top-down, pedagogical approach to providing information to participants (Li & Peters, 2020). This type of professional

development may not be effective in preparing general education teachers to help ELLs become proficient in CALP. To provide all of the instruction and training in the skills needed to work with ELLs, professional development for teachers need to include language acquisition theory, role of first language, and understanding cultural differences. The inclusion of these factors in professional development programs results in differences in terms of length and content (Besterman et al., 2018; Bohon et al., 2017; Li & Peters, 2020). Researchers (Li & Peters, 2020; Rutherford-Quach et al., 2018) discussed the positive effects of a research-based, content driven professional development program that lasted for 10 months.

Some difficulties were understanding the time needed to develop proficiency with English, especially when the first language is spoken at home (Besterman et al., 2018). General education teachers encountered three challenges when working with ELLs. These challenges included (a) ELLs' lack of background knowledge in content areas, (b) language barriers between the teachers and ELL students, and (c) the lack of time and resources devoted to ELLs.

Rutherford-Quach et al. (2018) discussed the use of an online professional development program to prepare general education teachers to work with ELLs. Teachers in both types of professional development programs reflected on how they were better equipped to help ELLs and were more aware of difficulties the ELLs faced when trying to learn content while trying to master English (Bohan et al., 2017; Rutherford-Quach et al., 2018). The teachers also indicated they were better prepared to teach ELLs and have become more sensitive to the needs of their students.

Strategies for Working with ELLs

Strategies for helping ELLs speak, read, and write English have been the focus of researchers and practitioners. Ferlazzo and Synpneski (2018) have taught for more than 35 years

and have written many books on working with ELLs. They discussed strategies that have been shown to be effective including incorporating differentiating instruction, increasing student intrinsic motivation for academic achievement, and using affirming forms when correcting student errors. Raza (2018) also recommended the use of differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students in the classroom.

Differentiated instruction provides support to ELLs, as well as students at different cognitive levels by (a) using readings on topics that are of interest to a majority of students; (b) utilizing online learning tools that allow students to practice and continue developing their word bank outside of the classroom; (c) preparing writing tasks that allow students to report on familiar topics; and (d) using student peers to facilitate weaker students would benefit the ELL in the classroom (Raza, 2018). The instructional process can be differentiated in a language classroom by: (a) grouping students with mixed proficiency levels and then re-grouping if needed (b) providing students with weekly lesson plans electronically; (c) informing students of upcoming formative and summative assessments either in class or online; and (d) assigning online quizzes and tests in class. Educational products can be differentiated in language arts classrooms by: (a) giving more weighting to weaker language areas (b) using course rubrics or benchmarks to assess learner performance; and (c) allowing students to be creative by creating opportunities for enhancing critical thinking skills (Raza, 2018). The learning environment can be differentiated in a language classroom by: (a) creating opportunities for learners to relate to real life issues (b) lowering the affective filter of the students by creating a collaborative and supportive learning atmosphere; (c) encouraging students to participate in given tasks by clearly delineating their roles to be performed; and (d) discussing areas of teaching and learning that should be prioritized (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2018; Russell & VonEsch, 2018). Many strategies

included in this section are based on the use of differentiated instruction to promote learning English and increase interaction between students who are learning English and the general education students (Russell & VanEsch, 2018). These strategies can help students increase their intrinsic motivation by building on their autonomy, competence, relatedness, and relevance.

In addition to the use of differentiated instruction, Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2018) suggested that providing wait time after asking a question was an effective strategy for ELLs. With this strategy, teachers should wait a few extra seconds when waiting for an ELL student to respond to a question (Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2018). They explained that ELLs are processing two languages and allowing the student to have a few extra seconds to respond could result in a positive response.

Other strategies have been found that can be used to help ELLs learn English and interact in their classes. For example, Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2018) indicated that the use of nonlinguistic cues, such as visual, are helpful when providing instruction. For example, charts, graphic organizers, and pictures of vocabulary words could help students make connections using prior knowledge to augment their current learning. Another strategy that Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2018) found helpful was preview-view-review. In applying this strategy, students' native languages are used to facilitate instruction. The teacher provides material in the students' native language, with the student previewing the material prior to the lesson. The lesson would then be conducted in English for students to understand. The fourth strategy is to have text written for different levels, which would allow teachers to use easier written text (i.e., two or three levels under grade level), provide the material prior to the lesson, then closely read the complex text to build prior knowledge before reading the actual material (Irby et al., 2018). The fifth strategy provided by Ferlazzo and Sypnieski is cooperative learning. This strategy allows

students to work together in groups and learn from each other as they go through the material. This type of strategy is encouraged for language learning and helps students take leadership roles while practicing this strategy. Ferlazzo and Sypniewski listed a sixth strategy, the jigsaw strategy. Using the jigsaw strategy allows ELL students to become experts in a mini passage and teach it to their peers. For example, if students are assigned text to read, each student would be assigned one particular section, then teach that particular section their peers. The seventh strategy is sentence starters and frames (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2018). With this strategy, ELLs are given scaffolds to help them with writing and discussions. This strategy can help students build their academic vocabulary and answer questions on a specific text.

Literacy strategies have been used to help ELLs become more comfortable in using English in both academic and social situations. Researchers (Guler, 2020; Zhang (2017) examined linguistic challenges that teacher's face when teaching ELLs social studies in general education classrooms. Commonly used content literacy strategies, such as making predictions, think aloud, or questions-answer may not be providing ELLs with sufficient scaffolds to learn academic content in general education classrooms. The researchers suggested three strategies that could assist ELLs in comprehending complex text by focusing on language-based strategies. Teachers need to pay attention to disciplinary literacy when providing ELLs with academic content and instruction. Disciplinary literacy provides a language approach that includes building academic vocabulary; using semantic maps; giving written responses; and teaching noun deconstruction, sentence matching, and text deconstruction (Guler, 2020; Zhang, 2017). The first strategy is the noun deconstruction with teachers guiding ELLs to understand the structure of the text, and the use of noun phrases to assist ELLs in comprehending the content (Guler, 2020; Zhang, 2017). The second strategy is the sentence matching strategy that

is an activity where students match sentences that are written in everyday language and in academic language. This activity can help ELLs understand academic language, unpack rich information, and comprehend academic content. The third strategy was the text reconstruction strategy that provides ELLs with a better understanding of the logical flow of the text (Guler, 2020; Zhang, 2017). This strategy is similar to the jigsaw activity that was referred to by Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018). With this strategy, students would be encouraged to reorder sentence cutouts to form a logical paragraph in groups. Students would learn transitional words, reference devices, and other words that give clues to the sentence order of the paragraph. The strategies presented by Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018), Guler (2020), Raza (2018), and Zhang, (2017) overlap and provide evidence of best practices in teaching ELLs to speak, read, and write English, as well as achieve academic success in school.

Summary

The conceptual framework for this study is second language acquisition theory as developed by Cummins (2017). Cummins (1979) developed a theory on second language acquisition. His theory has been accepted by educators in determining how best to teach ELLs who need to learn English to achieve academic success. Cummins' (2017) theory is related to the distinction between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and CALP in second language acquisition. Educators often fail to differentiate between BICS and CALP, creating difficulties for ELLs who are in the process of learning English as a secondary language (Cummins, 2008). Each of these hypotheses are integral to learning a second language.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018), the population of ELLs in the United States has increased dramatically. In 2018, 4.9 million ELLs enrolled in

public schools, with more than 20% of ELLs in the State of California. ELLs immigrated to the United States, with little to no English language proficiency (Birdsong, 2018).

From the Civil War through WWII, language proficiency programs were unavailable to meet the needs of the ELL population, although English immersion programs were important to help ELLs excel in school (Russell & Von Esch, 2018). Congress enacted the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) that guaranteed equal opportunity to all learners who spoke a different language other than English. English Language only schools were created legally in 34 States in 1923 (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Gunderson, 2021). In the 1920s, speaking and teaching in the English language was law and the court struck down prohibition on foreign language because it violated the 14th amendment (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Gunderson, 2021). ELLs were being discriminated against until the passage of the BEA (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965), resulting in public schools having to help ELLs (Schneider, 2019). The Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) mandated that federally funded schools take appropriate action to meet the instructional needs of ELLs in public schools. (Gunderson, 2021; Multilingualmania, 2010). By the end of the 20th century; states (i.e., Arizona, California, and Massachusetts) passed laws to prohibit bilingual programs in public schools (Sánchez et al., 2018) that eliminated bilingual programs (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Gunderson, 2021) until the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

Teachers of ELLs need to have effective instructional strategies to help students understand text to succeed in high school (Brevik, 2017; de Oliveira, 2016; Johnson, 2019). High school classroom teachers may not be using effective instructional strategies to increase reading comprehension scores of ELLs and need support from nonclassroom educators to help ELLs develop skills to learn content-specific material using CALP (Adera, 2017; Cramer et al.,

2018, Pereira & de Oliveira, 2015; Villegas, 2018). The use of instructional strategies can benefit ELLs in reading content for understanding while learning English (Villegas, 2018). Additionally, teachers may have negative attitudes regarding ELLs' ability to learn and be successful in learning academic content (Deng & Hayden, 2021). Teachers have to set high expectation for ELLs and focus on their positive aspects of their learning abilities in order to support ELLs to be successful in school. Teachers can gain knowledge and learn effective strategies to teach ELLs in a general education classroom through professional development (Brevik, 2017; Johnson, 2019).

According to Mellom et al. (2018), teachers and their students typically differ in terms of their social, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. Bridging these differences in the classroom requires professional development for teachers to learn to provide instruction to these students and help them learn English. Professional development is needed to provide these teachers with strategies that can be useful in helping the students to learn CALP in their content areas. Nonclassroom educators can be supportive by encouraging teachers to attend the professional development programs and provide strategies that have been shown to be effective. Chapter 3 presents the methodology that is used to conduct the research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter provides the methodology that was used to collect and analyze the data needed to address the research questions. The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to explore strategies used by high school classroom teachers to teach CALP to ELLs who have difficulty reading for understanding. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. How do HS teachers build ELL's comprehension skills in oral and written language?
2. How do high school teachers perceive these strategies for teaching reading comprehension are effective in helping address the academic needs of ELLS who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding subject matter content?

The topics that are included in this chapter are research design and rationale, role of the researcher, participant selection, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures. A summary of the methodology concludes the chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

A basic qualitative research design was used in this study. The perceptions of general education teachers who are working with ELLs in their classrooms were examined. Basic qualitative research designs are used to develop a description of a problem with defined boundaries (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Tashakkori, 2021). Yin (2018) asserted that a basic qualitative study is used to explore a problem in a real-world setting where there may be an overlap with the topic being studied and its milieu. Basic qualitative studies allow the researcher to examine variables related to the phenomenon and situation cannot be separated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ravich & Carl, 2020). Defined boundaries are necessary in a basic qualitative

study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A boundary is defined as a case, a program, a group, an institution, or some other phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon being studied is high school content area teachers' perceptions of teaching students with limited English proficiency in their general education classrooms. The 13 high school teachers were asked to provide details regarding their experiences with ELLs. The research questions can be answered using data from their combined experiences.

The Rationale for the Research Approach

When planning the present study, both quantitative and qualitative research designs were reviewed to determine which type was most appropriate. Quantitative research uses surveys with large samples of participants to obtain a data set that would then be tested using statistical analyses (Abulela & Harwell, 2020). Examining perceptions of teachers and nonclassroom educators, regarding providing instruction to ELLs needs, cannot be determined through the use of a structured survey. The semistructured interviews can allow teachers latitude to express their ideas regarding how best to work with ELLs.

Basic qualitative research were used to address problems using a naturalistic setting, with data collected from people most involved in the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maxwell, 2013; Yin, 2018). The phenomenon in this study is teaching CALP to ELLs in general education high school classrooms. The participants were teachers who provide instruction in inclusive classrooms with both native English speakers and ELLs.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the five approaches to qualitative research differ, with researchers able to choose among five different types (i.e., narrative research, grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, and case study) depending on the goals and

purpose of the study. While each of these approaches were considered for the present study, the five specific qualitative designs (case study, narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology) were not considered appropriate.

Tashakkori et al. (2021) described narrative research as using stories to provide details of the lives and personal experiences of selected individuals. The researcher uses a variety of sources, including interviews with the participants and other individuals who know the individual, as well as artifacts that describe and support relevant events in their lives. Each of these narratives follow the typical sequence of a story, including a beginning, middle, and end. Narratives are a type of qualitative research design that also are known as autobiographical, life history, oral history, and biography (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative narrative study is not appropriate as the purpose of the present study is to provide strategies regarding teaching CALP in the general education classroom and not telling a story about the teacher.

Grounded theory is another form of qualitative research that is used when the researcher is attempting to create a specific theory using data from participants involved in a phenomenon. Grounded theory research designs can be used to address questions about a phenomenon (e.g., teaching ELLs to learn CALP and achieve academic goals) that differs from previous instructional delivery methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collected for a grounded theory approach uses multiple stages of data collection to make comparisons and differences in the topic over time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the purpose of this research was to examine the lived experiences of participants and not develop a grounded theory on the teaching CALP to ELLs, the grounded theory approach was not appropriate.

Ethnography research is used when studying a problem involving participants who share a common culture (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The culture may be related to ethnicity but could also involve students attending the same school or adults working in the same organization. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the primary focus of ethnography is society and culture. Researchers using an ethnographic approach become immersed in the environment that they are studying. They interact with the participants on a personal basis and take part in activities that are part of their culture. Data collection can include multiple face-to-face interviews, group discussions, observations, and artifacts that provide evidence of the problem being studied. After collecting and analyzing the data from the study, the researchers describe their findings in detail through presentations and refereed journal articles. Becoming involved with a general education class that includes both native language students and ELLs can be disruptive. The students may not cooperate or may try to impress the researcher. Because of this reason, the use of ethnography is not a good choice for this study.

When conducting a study that involves a group of individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon, a phenomenological research design would be appropriate. The researcher would conduct in-depth semistructured interviews with participants to obtain information regarding the lived experiences (Errasti-Ibarrondo et al., 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2018). The data from the interviews are reviewed and coded to determine patterns and themes related to the phenomenon being studied. This type of research design is not appropriate as the teachers may not have experienced the phenomenon of teaching ELLs in a similar manner.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018) and Yin (2018), case studies can be used to investigate different types of problems, including programs, events, situations, activities, or processes. Case studies can be used with single or multiple cases. Data from multiple sources are needed with case studies. These data could include interviews, artifacts to support the information provided by the participants, and school or medical records (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). A case study is not appropriate as data from multiple sources are not available, eliminating a triangulation of data. The present study uses a basic qualitative study to determine the strategies that general education teachers use in their classrooms to help ELLs learn CALP that is necessary to be successful in achieving their academic goals. This type of qualitative research does not require triangulation of data and can be completed with one-on-one interviews or focus groups.

Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher is to act as a facilitator in conducting the interviews and as an unbiased analyst in using the data to find patterns and themes to address the research question. Prior to starting the interviews, I took the time to examine my experiences as a general education teacher in classrooms with ELLs at various levels of English language acquisition. Because I am bilingual, I did not face the same problems as my monolingual peers. I decided I wanted to know how these teachers worked with ELLs trying to maintain the rigor of the classroom, while helping the ELLs to read and comprehend English. I reflected on the biases I had regarding new immigrants and the need to learn English. I decided that throughout my study, I would maintain a journal to keep track of any preconceived ideas and biases I had regarding teaching ELLs in a content specific (e.g., social studies) course.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), researchers, when interviewing participants, must be as transparent and authentic as possible. If the participants recognize the authenticity in the researcher, they will be more likely to be open and share their true feelings about the topics being discussed. A researcher should gently probe questions in a way that could promote full disclosure regarding teaching ELLs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018).

I took care to bracket my biases and preconceived ideas about teaching ELLs to allow me to listen closely to participants. I listened to determine if they lack empathy for the ELLs and feel ELLs are holding the rest of the students back. In addition, I would like to hear from participants regarding the types of strategies they have found useful in working with the ELLs. I was careful to make sure that I only reported what the teachers said and not what I thought they meant by their comments.

Because the schools may be closed, I used Zoom to schedule individual meetings with the teachers. Zoom has recording capability which I used to review the meetings. I used a professional transcription company, Happy Scribe, to transcribe the responses. In addition, I maintained a field journal where I indicated my impressions of the teachers' responses to the interview questions.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The target population for this study was high school general education content area teachers. Teachers who were certified in special education or bilingual education were excluded from this study as they came to the classroom with different skills in working with ELLs than general education teachers.

Sample selection.

A convenience sample was used to recruit a minimum of 13 general education high school teachers. I addressed a teacher meeting and explained the purpose of my study and asked for volunteers from teachers in attendance. A recruitment email was sent to each classroom teacher explaining the study (See Appendix A). My name, telephone number, and email address were provided for teachers who were interested in participating in the study. The teachers who were interested in participating in the study were asked to contact me for further discussion. Recruitment continued until a minimum of 13 general education teachers had volunteered for the study.

Instrumentation

A short demographic survey was developed to obtain information about the teachers. The purpose of this instrument was to provide a profile of the teachers and determine if they met the inclusion criteria for the study. The types of questions on this study included age, gender, length of time teaching, certification status, and curriculum area in which the participant was teaching. The items on the survey used a forced choice format to provide consistent responses among the teachers. (See Appendix B for demographic survey)

Open-ended interview questions were used to obtain the information needed to address the research questions. These questions were developed from the review of literature on CALP (the conceptual framework), strategies for teaching ELLs, and attitudes regarding teaching ELLs. The interview was expected to last from 45 to 60 minutes. The interview questions are included in Appendix C.

Before conducting the interviews, a panel of educators familiar with teaching ELLs in general education classrooms were asked to review the interview questions to determine their

appropriateness for the study. This panel included a high school principal and two general education teachers who have experienced working with ELLs in their classrooms. The panel members received the problem statement, purpose of the study, conceptual framework and the interview questions to review. They were asked to review the questions and comment on the wording, alignment, and relevance to the research question they are intended to address. I met with the panel to discuss their comments and suggestions and make changes to the interview questions that the panel felt were needed to assure the relevance of the questions to the research.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), semistructured interview questions are typically used in basic qualitative research. This type of interview question is flexible and allows the participant to provide comments that they feel are relevant when answering the question. I can respond to their responses to the interview questions, probing for additional details and integrating new concepts about teaching ELLs in general education classrooms (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Tashakkori et al., 2021).

To assure that all participants receive the same information, an interview protocol was used. This protocol included an introductory script that explained the study and both the participants and my roles in the interview. The results of these interviews provided information on strategies that general education teachers use to help their students with limited English proficiency gain master of CALP and be successful in school.

A reflexive journal was maintained throughout the data collection period to allow me to make notes regarding any biases I might have about ELLs and general education teachers. The journal was not used in the data analysis. In addition, I also maintained field notes for each interview. The field notes included any body language that I notice (sighs, fidgeting, etc.), comments made by the teachers either before or after the interview, and any other comments I

may have regarding the interview session. The field notes might be used to add anecdotal information in the data analysis or the discussion of the findings.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

After receiving approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the principal of the suburban public high school where the research was conducted, I began the data collection process. I sent a recruitment email to all content classroom teachers in the high school (See Appendix A). Classroom teachers who were interested in participating in the study were asked to contact me to obtain further information. Potential participants emailed a copy of the informed consent form and demographic survey (See Appendix D). They were asked to review the informed consent form and contact me if they had any questions or concerns. The informed consent form followed the template provided by the Walden University IRB and included the telephone number for the Walden University IRB if they had any questions. If they agreed to participate, they were asked to send an email to me indicating “I confirm” in lieu of signing and returning the consent form. The demographic survey was completed at the time of the interview. I asked them each question and recorded their answers. (See Appendix B). After I received the informed consent form, I contacted the participant and established a mutually agreeable time to conduct the interview using Zoom. I started each interview using a script to ensure that all teachers received the same information regarding their participation in the study (See Appendix E). The interviews took from 45 to 60 minutes and were recorded on Zoom. Zoom is a secure meeting site that can be recorded to allow me to transcribe the interview either using Zoom transcription service or another commercial transcription service (e.g., Happy Scribe). At the conclusion of the interview, I thanked the

participant for his/her participation. Participating teachers received a \$20 e-gift card at the completion of the interview.

Member Checking

I told the participants that they would receive a copy of the transcribed interview for their review. They were asked to read the interview and make any changes or additions they wanted to assure the accuracy of their responses. The participants were asked to return the corrected transcripts within five working days. Any transcripts not received after the five working days were considered accurate.

Data Analysis Plan

After receiving the transcripts back from the participants, I began data analysis. According to Ravitch and Carl (2020), qualitative analysis is an iterative and recursive process that is important in maintaining rigor in the research study. Data analysis is both structured, but flexible to assure that the results are valid and ethical. The analytic process is nonlinear and includes many steps that may overlap (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). I started by reading and re-reading the interview responses. I made notes in the margins and highlighted responses that might be relevant. I then began the initial coding, making broad categories. The first step in the data analysis was to do an initial coding to categorize the data into groups with similar features, commonalities, similarities, and differences (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). After grouping the interview responses into categories, the items were read and reread to consolidate or expand the grouping. Then, I began combining categories and started to look for patterns. The process of combining and creating broad categories continued until the categories formed themes that were aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is to qualitative research as reliability and validity is to quantitative research. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), four criteria are used to assess trustworthiness.

These four criteria are:

1. Credibility in qualitative research is similar to internal validity in quantitative research,
2. Transferability is comparable to external validity or generalizability,
3. Dependability as used in qualitative research is the equivalent of reliability in quantitative research, and
4. Confirmability is used in qualitative research to assure objectivity in the findings.

Determining trustworthiness is under the purview of the user of the research and not the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) The user is responsible for determining the parts of the research that apply to his/her milieu. In a basic qualitative research study, trustworthiness is used to show that study findings are relevant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In establishing the trustworthiness of the basic qualitative research, specific procedures for each of the four criteria; “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability;” were followed to assure the findings of the study were accurate (p. 219).

Credibility

An important consideration used to verify the trustworthiness of a qualitative study is determining the credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility has been defined by Creswell and Poth (2018) as the extent to which findings of the study mirror reality. Credibility is used to assure that the study was conducted using the appropriate procedures and has been associated with consistency (Creswell & Poth; 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One procedure that was

used to establish credibility is the use of member checking. Member checking allowed the participants to review their transcripts and provides assurances that interpretations made by the researcher are accurate to support internal validity. Qualitative researchers (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) described member checking as a procedure that allows participants who were interviewed to help improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of their interviews. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that having credibility, the user can be assured that the study findings reflect the teachers' perceptions of strategies that are useful for teaching ELLs CALP. By using a field journal to make notes regarding the interviews immediately upon completion, I was able to support decisions made regarding the study, along with rational to maintain the credibility of this study. I maintained field notes and made entries regularly to confirm and provide a rationale for my research-related decisions. A reflexive journal was used to record my thoughts and observations while conducting the interviews.

Transferability

According to Creswell and Poth (2018) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), transferability is defined as the ability to relate results of the present study to different situations and settings. Beck (1994) argued that transferability in qualitative research is similar to external validity in qualitative research. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that a consensus among qualitative researchers has not been attained for transferability. A concern with describing transferability as a form of generalizability is that qualitative research is not intended to be generalized beyond participants being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The themes that may be generated by this research were specific to this particular study. However, they may be useful to public school administrators regarding assigning ELLs to general education classrooms. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), determining the

transferability of this study is the responsibility of the reader and not the researcher because the researcher might not be aware of possible situations or settings to which the reader could possibly apply results of the present study.

Dependability

Conducting the study using plans made during the proposal process is dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). An affirmation of dependability occurs when the results of the study appear to coincide with the responses to the interview questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Polit & Beck, 2016). I attempted to minimize my biases in the study outcomes, and I developed an audit trail that included timelines for the steps in the research and procedures that were used to collect the data.

Confirmability

Similar to validity in a qualitative study, confirmability provides assurances that the results are repeatable. Again, the reader has to determine the confirmability of a qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). If a study is confirmable, the results should not reflect the biases espoused by the researcher. The study results should reflect the participants' comments and not the researcher's opinions on the topic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability is assured if the researcher has conducted an unbiased study and the results are objective (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The trustworthiness of this basic qualitative study could be assured because I developed an interview protocol that insured consistency across the interviews. I used an informed consent form to apprise participants of their role in my research project. The informed consent indicated that the interview was held using a meeting platform (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Meet, Google Meet) and the meeting was audio recorded to ensure accuracy when transcribing the interview

responses. The informed consent form assured participants that all information provided during the interviews was confidential and the schools or grade level of participants were not disclosed in the final interview.

Field notes were maintained in a journal I maintained during the interviews. This journal was used to write notes regarding body language, expressions, restlessness, and other behaviors during the interview. The field notes were part of the audit trail that provided a written record of the activities I used to conduct the study. I also used the journal to maintain control over my calendar where I recorded dates of all interviews and the intermittent meetings with my researchers and advisors during the research.

Ethical Considerations

Before starting the study, I submitted an application to conduct the study to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University. Teachers who meet the inclusion criteria were invited to be included in the study. The informed consent form included a statement that participants could choose to not answer any questions with which they were uncomfortable. The participants could stop the interview without prejudice at any point. When writing the interview questions, care was taken to eliminate any possible bias relating to the language used to ask the questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A number was assigned to each participant to protect their identity. The participants' names were replaced with the number when the interviews were transcribed. In presenting the findings, only numbers were used to ensure that all participants were treated ethically. The original recordings were not shared but would be stored on a password protected USB drive for five years to assure that the identity of the participants was not released. However, if asked by either my chair or the IRB committee, I would allow access to the original recordings. The

participants were not asked to sign the informed consent forms, instead they were asked to respond in an email indicating “I confirm” as an indication of their willingness to participate in the study. The emails were printed and stored in a locked file cabinet away from the original recordings. These emails were erased from the server using a shredder app. The USB drive upon which the transcripts were recorded would be saved for 5-years in a secure file cabinet located in my home. At the end of 5-years, printed copies of the interview transcripts were destroyed using a cross-cut shredder. The USB drive that held the interview data was erased using a program that digitally shreds the files, eliminating any possible retrieval of the interview data.

Summary

A basic qualitative research design was used for this study. The participants were general education high school teachers who had or were currently working with ELLs in their classrooms. The teachers participated in one-on-one semistructured interviews to determine their perceptions of working with ELLs in their general education classrooms and strategies they used to help these students learn CALP and achieve academic success. The interviews were held using an online platform (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Meet, etc.), with a virtual meeting held at a mutually agreeable time. The interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. At the end of the interview, the participant was thanked for their time and a \$25.00 e-gift card was sent to them. The interviews were transcribed with all identifying information removed to protect the confidentiality of the participant. After the interviews are transcribed, participants were asked to review them for accuracy. This member checking provides a form of reliability for the study. After receiving transcripts from participants, the data were analyzed by reading and re-reading

the interviews and coding. Themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis were discussed in Chapter 4 and 5.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, I present the data analysis of the interviews conducted with high school (HS) teachers who have worked with ESL students in their general education classrooms. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore strategies used by HS classroom teachers to teach cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to ELLs who have difficulty reading for understanding. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do HS teachers build ELLs' comprehension skills in oral and written language?
2. How do HS teachers perceive these strategies for teaching reading comprehension are effective in helping address the academic needs of ELLs who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding subject matter content?

Setting for the Study

The participants were HS classroom content teachers who are providing instruction in English, math, social studies, and science. To collect data for this study, I conducted semistructured interviews to obtain information on participants' strategies for teaching ELLs and the effectiveness of these strategies to improve students' use of CALP to read informational text. The interviews, held using the Zoom platform, were scheduled at times that were convenient for participating teachers. I used my home office to determine appointment times for each participant. They joined the Zoom meetings at the appropriate times using either their telephones, tablets, or computers. The interviews were completed in January and February 2023.

Procedures

When beginning the Zoom interview, I asked each participant if they had any questions regarding the informed consent form and their participation in the study. Most participants had

no questions and indicated their willingness to be interviewed about working with ELLs in their general education classrooms. I then gathered demographic information from each participant before asking the interview questions. The interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The participants' responses to the interview questions were audio recorded on Zoom and transcribed by Happy Scribe, a professional transcription service. Each participant received a \$25.00 gift card at the conclusion of their interview.

I reviewed the completed transcriptions and then emailed each participant a copy of their interview transcript for member checking, asking them to review the transcription and return them to me with any changes, additions, or deletions they wished to make to enhance the accuracy of the interviews. If they had not returned their transcripts within 5 business days, I considered the transcriptions acceptable as presented. One participant returned their transcript with grammatical changes, and another responded that no changes were necessary.

Description of the Sample

The 10 participants who were interviewed included 3 (30.0%) males and 7 (70.0%) females. Their ages ranged from 24 to 74 years, with most between 24 and 30 years of age. Four (40.0%) participants had completed bachelor's degrees, (50.0%) reported a master's degree as their highest level of education, and one (10.0%) participant completed a doctoral degree. The teachers had worked in education from 2 to 40 years, with five having more than 10 years of experience. All participants were either currently or had previously taught ELLs, with the number of students ranging from 5 to 25 in a typical class. The number of years teaching ELLs was from 2 to 10 years, with 9 (90%) participants having taught ELLs for between 1 and 7 years. Seven of the 10 participants had attended professional development to help them with ELLs. Most participants had attended in-school professional development, and one (12.5%)

reported they had completed online training. The languages that their students spoke included Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and Pashta. Three (30.0%) of the teachers were familiar with CALP. Table 3 presents the demographics for each of the participants.

Table 3

Participants' Demographics

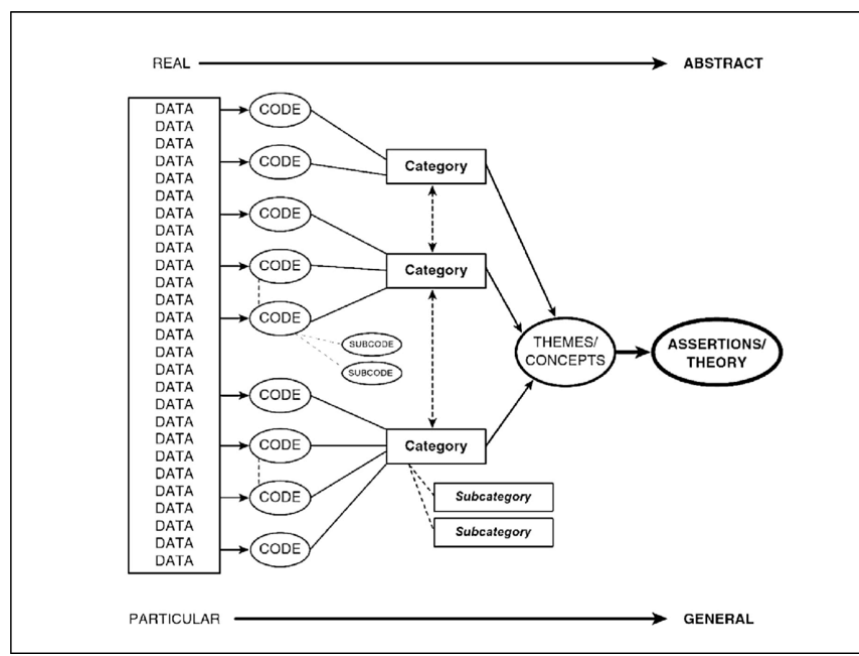
Participants	Age	Gender	Education	Time teaching	Time teaching ELLs	Number of ELLs taught
Participant 1	39	Male	Masters	10	7	25
Participant 2	74	Male	Doctorate	40	10	25
Participant 3	67	Female	Master	16	5	5
Participant 4	44	Male	Master	14	4	25
Participant 5	26	Female	Master	4	2	35
Participant 6	24	Female	Master	3	1	43
Participant 7	24	Female	Bachelor	2	2	80
Participant 8	30	Female	Bachelor	5	5	30
Participant 9	53	Female	Bachelor	10	6	30
Participant 10	24	Female	Bachelor	3	1	35

Data Analysis

The 10 teachers participated in one-on-one, semistructured interviews via Zoom. After reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, I began the coding process using the step-by-step text analysis process described by Saldana (2013). Figure 3 presents the coding plan for this study. I followed the following steps in the coding: (a) transcribed the interviews, (b) sent the transcribed interviews to participants for member checking, (c) read and re-read the transcriptions and highlighted categories within each interview, (d) grouped the categories from each interview, (e) started matching participant responses to the categories, and (f) looked at

themes that appeared to emerge from the data. Coding was iterative, with some codes and categories changing, merging, or being eliminated as the process continued. Table 4 presents the steps that were involved in the analysis.

Figure 3
Coding Diagram to Theory Model for Basic Qualitative Research



Source: Saldana (2013) p. 14

Table 4*Data Analysis Plan*

Phase	Steps
1. Using descriptive coding	<p>The steps involved in descriptive coding include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participant interviews are read and re-read several times; 2. Data are clustered into meaningful categories; 3. Labels are created and categories into macro (central) themes and micro (subcategories of central themes); and 4. Properties were developed from transcribed interview properties (Saldano, 2013).
2. Categorizing the statements from transcripts into clustered themes	<p>The codes are categorized into groups that are examined to determine meanings. Based on this analysis, decisions are made to either combine with other groupings or eliminate them from the study. According to Saldano (2013), understanding the meaning of the groupings, themes can emerge that reflect the underlying meaning of the groups.</p>
3. Creating textual descriptions of the themes	<p>Participants' experiences are presented with their responses regarding types of strategies they use with their ELLs in helping them learn CALP.</p>
4. Explaining of the context of the use of particular strategies in their general education classes when teaching ELLs who are having difficulty comprehending English	<p>Provide a written structural description of strategies used by HS teachers who are working with ELLs in their general education classrooms. The findings or themes should be evaluated to determine that they are reflective of the aims of the study and make sense in addressing the research questions.</p>
5. Writing the report	<p>The effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of strategies used to teach CALP to ELLs are described by the researcher in a narrative that highlights comments regarding participants' experiences. The composite report can enable the researcher to link details in the interview with the research findings.</p>

Adapted from Saldana (2013).

Table 5*Codes and Themes From the Analysis of the Interview Transcripts*

Research questions	Interview questions	Themes
1. How do HS teachers build ELL's comprehension skills in oral and written language?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do HS teachers build ELLs' comprehension skills in oral and written language? 2. What type of training have you had to work with ELLs in your general education classrooms? 3. To what extent was CALP and basic interpersonal communication skills included in this training? 4. How do you differentiate your instruction to meet the learning needs of your students? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching vocabulary 2. Training to teach ELLs 3. Differentiating instruction
2. How do HS teachers perceive these strategies for teaching reading comprehension are effective in helping address the academic needs of ELLS who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding subject matter content?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you use nonlinguistic cues (e.g., visual aids, charts, graphic organizers, pictures) that can be helpful in providing instruction for ELLs in your classroom? 2. Which strategies have you found useful in helping ELLs in your classroom comprehend language in their textbooks? 3. Which strategies are least helpful in teaching ELLs in your classroom? 4. Do the strategies used for ELLs also help general education students in your classroom who may have difficulty in reading CALP. 	<p>Effective strategies</p> <p>Ineffective strategies</p>

Results

The interview responses were coded and summarized to determine the types of strategies that were used in this study. Word counts were obtained to determine which words were used most often by the teachers to describe the strategies they used and their effectiveness. A description of each of the reported strategies follows, with quotes from the interviewees to reflect their practice in teaching ELLs in their core content classes.

I analyzed the words that were included in the participants' interview responses to determine which words were used most commonly. Table 6 presents the number of times the following words were used by the respondents in their interviews. A word cloud of the words used by the teachers in their interviews is shown in Figure 4.

Table 6

Word Count

Word	Number	Word	Number
1. ELLs	147	11. Level	27
2. Students	89	12. Learning	26
3. Strategy	61	13. Used	26
4. Words	49	14. Using	25
5. Can	43	15. Another	24
6. Academic	38	16. Help	24
7. Teachers	38	17. Content	23
8. Reading	37	18. English	23
9. Vocabulary	33	19. Learn	23
10. Language	31	20. Instruction	22

representing each of the words. The following day, students played a game (e.g., Kahoot, Quizlet, etc.) involving the terminology before starting to learn the concept.

The participants continued discussing the importance of teaching vocabulary prior to presenting the content of the lesson. Participant 8 agreed with Participant 5, indicating strategies like front-loading the teaching of vocabulary to help build content-based language. Participant 9 concurred with Participants 5 and 8 about the importance of teaching vocabulary in preparing ELLs to learn. Participant 9 stated that she could only comment on what she had done and what individuals with whom she had worked. She devoted a lot of attention to terminology and helped students learn vocabulary through images.

Participant 10 offered some insight into the importance of vocabulary in a specialized class, such as economics. She stated that, “I was teaching economics, which is so fun. Lots of jargon, right? Lots of vocab, lots of words that are hard for native English speakers.” Participant 10 went on to say that many students, including non-ESL students, have difficulty with vocabulary in economics, so introducing vocabulary first is important for all students.

Participant 1 summed up the importance of vocabulary for ELLs who were attempting to learn concepts as well as English. He placed a lot of emphasis on pointing out vocabulary words with which they might not be familiar at the beginning of a lesson. He started by reviewing those concepts beforehand to help them understand the meaning of those words. Participant 1 provided the example of giving out a list of words to students with definitions of the vocabulary words that were very basic and not complex, such as a single sentence, instead of lengthy definitions that would serve only to confuse the students more.

Sentence Frames

A useful strategy for helping students learn vocabulary associated with a specific concept is sentence frames. Sentence frames are a structure with fill-in-the-blank words created for students as a way to begin learning CALP for a specific topic (Lee et al., 2019). Using sentence frames, teachers start with a complete sentence and then start removing words. Students are then expected to insert the correct word to make the sentence complete. Participant 1 discussed the use of sentence frames with his ELLs, stating that “giving them the opportunity to do more written assignments, such as sentence stems and sentence starters, where they just have to fill in certain words that could tie in some of the vocabulary words that you give them.” Participant 8 uses sentence stems with her ELLs to help them master the vocabulary, saying that “there are a variety of ways [to use sentence stems]. Of course, academic language is important, and so in terms of content, teachers will do things like provide sentence starters [to help teach the content and vocabulary].” Agreeing with Participant 8, Participant 10 stated sentence stems are important to use to help ELLs grow their understanding and bridge the gap between reading and comprehending formal academic language.

Working in Small Groups

Working in small groups is a strategy that has been found to be useful in all grades and most subjects. Several teachers indicated that pairing ELLs with native English speakers can help the ELLs become more comfortable with listening and speaking English. These participants provided comments regarding the use of small groups to help the ELLs learn both the language and develop relationships with the other students. For example, Participant 1 said working in small groups offers ELLs with opportunities to express themselves verbally. The participant reported that students’ speech abilities improved by placing them in groups and

letting them talk to one another. Participant 1 also shared that when ELLs are in groups with other students, particularly non-ELLs, they have the chance to listen, which helps them feel more at ease with how they sound and speak because they notice things from listening to others. Participant 1 went on to say that when immigrants first arrive in a country, many people advise them to watch television so they may listen and see how people interact, and this advice also applies in the classroom; hence, he believed that giving ELLs the chance to listen, hear, and talk to others could be beneficial. Participant 1 continued to say that one of the most frequent problems he had observed in ELL kids was their shyness, which could prevent them from developing their speaking abilities, so he recommended that ELLs should be offered chances to express themselves verbally.

Participant 6 reported that she liked having students work in groups. Reflecting on her use of groups, she stated that she makes sure lessons are clear and simple to understand and that she works hard with the students. She posts a “do now” as her lesson starter and has the class discuss it together. A “do-now” is a problem on the board for students to complete before starting her formal lesson. She uses whiteboards to practice math problems and play games like jigsaw puzzles so the students could combine various aspects of math concepts in a cooperative way. If she is using a whiteboard, she might ask questions or have them fill in spaces before putting the concept of the lesson being taught together. Participant 6 has students read aloud from their whiteboards, so students, both ELLs and non-ELLs, are involved mostly in group work, with a great deal of collaboration.

Participant 8 explained that she did group work that mainly had ELLs work together to learn academic language, then she had them practice speaking English as well. Participant 9 indicated that she tried to help ELLs with academic language by using small groups to provide

internal support from non-ELL students who were more proficient in English and academic language. A strategy that Participant 10 used in her classes was creating partnerships between students who spoke the same language, and acting like cohorts, these ELLs would work in groups along with her as the teacher.

Communication

Communication is another useful strategy that teachers have found to be helpful with ELLs at most grade levels. Communication is a strategy that allows ELL students to feel safe to express themselves orally and allows ELLs to work in groups to discuss grade level concepts in class. ELL students were able to have conversations with their peers. Several participants provided comments regarding the use of communication to help ELLs learn both the language and develop relationships with the other students. Participant 1 suggested that ELLs should be offered chances to express themselves verbally by placing them in groups and letting them talk to one another. This strategy could help ELLs improve oral communication abilities.

Agreeing with Participant 1, Participant 2 stated that listening and speaking about content was very important to build ELLs' comprehension skills. The key component of building comprehension skills is communication. Teachers have to communicate that they are aware of potential English barriers in teaching pedagogy. Participant 2 continued that communication could be something as simple as voice inflection. For example, if a teacher wanted to emphasize a certain point, they could talk loudly or in some cases, yell at the students. In other words, students recognized when the teacher was mad or not focused on me. But if the teacher learned basic ways to lower their voice, they could communicate a teaching strategy and students should be able to comprehend the content.

Agreeing with both participants, Participant 9 suggested that communication was

another strategy that had really nothing to do with academics but was able to help ELLs develop interpersonal relationships and help them feel safe, supported, and accepted. Since ELLs may be from different cultures, pairing ELLs with native English speakers could help the ELLs become more comfortable with listening and speaking English. Several participants agreed that communication could help ELLs learn both the language and develop relationships with other students.

Journaling

Another useful strategy that was mentioned among participants was journaling. Journaling is a strategy that allows ELL students to express themselves in writing and speaking. ELLs can express themselves in written form in a journal. The journal entry could be shared with a friend, teacher, or they could share it aloud. Participant 2 felt journaling was a helpful strategy to assist ELLs in speaking, reading, and comprehension. He suggested the following:

As far as the written language is concerned, it can be as simple as you know having them journal everything and giving them a journal prompt about something to write about and it can be something very simple such as What did you do last night with your family? It doesn't really matter what it is, it's just giving them practice and the opportunity to write things. If you want to tie the oral part of it, you can have them share. If they don't want to share with the entire class they can share with the person next to them. They can share with the teacher if they are that shy.

Repetition

Participant 5 mentioned she found Repetition was a useful strategy that could assist ELLs in the classroom. Repetition allows for grade level concepts to be repeated multiple times

until learning occurs. Participant 5 stated that when working with ELLs “Repetition is key. So just having them hear the words, say the words, see the words multiple times, and interact with the words is important to building that language overall.”

Scaffolding

Another strategy mentioned by Participants 5 and 10 was Scaffolding. Scaffolding is a strategy that allows the teacher to split the material into smaller parts that allows students to learn at a gradual level. The complexity of text is increased slowly to allow mastery at lower levels before moving to more complicated concepts. For example, Participant 5 indicated that she provides pre-teaching techniques to familiarize students with the topic to prepare them to understand the topic that is being taught. Agreeing with her, Participant 10 suggested that I would have to scaffold a lot because completing economics tasks was challenging in their native language, especially when locating translated text was difficult. Scaffolding would also be helpful for my native English speakers to master economics.

Close Read

Close reading is a useful strategy to help ELLs in the classroom. Students learning English are able to practice speaking, reading, and writing by annotating text, circling unfamiliar words, and defining unfamiliar words. Students then reread the text using the correct definitions of words they have learned. Students also can make notes in the margin of the reading passage to address the what, where, when, why, and how questions. Participant 5 suggested using this strategy indicating: "Whether it's supplementing the subject, I use close reading to help students develop comprehension when reading academic text."

Guided Reading

Guided reading is another strategy that was used by some teachers when working with

ELLs. This strategy was useful to help ELLs learn concepts in a lecture. Using guided reading, ELLs listen to the lecture, read a PowerPoint™ presentation on the subject as they follow along by filling in blanks in their guided reading notes. ELLs benefit from this strategy as they become active learners by reading and writing in their notes during the lesson. The ELLs could use these notes to prepare for tests or other assignments. Participant 5 asserted that giving them guided reading notes or guided reading questions could help them develop their understanding of subject matter in their academic classes.

Visual Pictures

Several participants agreed that visual images were helpful when teaching ELLs. Teachers typically have used visuals in their lessons to teach a concept. The visual strategy used illustrations, such as charts, diagrams, maps, and graphs to explain the concepts being studied. Using this strategy, ELLs can view images of concepts during the lesson. According to Participant 6, ELLs can benefit from this strategy. ELLs are given several visuals that are related to the concepts being taught. They can refer to these visuals to enhance the meaning of the lesson. In addition, Participant 6 maintained a word wall in her classroom where she posted vocabulary words and attached images of most vocabulary words. She used the same visuals in her PowerPoint™ presentations for repetition. She felt the use of the word wall benefited ELLs to learn concepts because it was straightforward and simple to understand. Participant 9 who teaches ELLs academic vocabulary using pictures in her lessons agreed with Participant 6. In addition, Participant 10 used photos to provide ELLs with examples of cultures they were learning. This strategy helped ELLs understand concepts by relating their lessons to their culture. She conducted research to determine how the lessons could be related to students' native cultures.

Review as a Class

Review as a class was a strategy that was discussed by a participant. This strategy is helpful for ELLs as the content is fresh in their minds and teachers can review different activities including playing games, using classroom stations, reviewing with flashcards, asking a question of the day, and using Pictionary to strengthen prior learning and reinforce the content in English. Participant 5 identified words with which ELLs were unfamiliar, especially for newcomers. She either had them translate those words into their native language, or if they were at a higher level, use the word in a sentence. She used visuals of words and reviewed the pronunciation of words with ELLs. At the following class, she used a vocabulary game to remind students of the word and then taught the associated academic concept.

Differentiate Content

One participant suggested that differentiating instruction could be a useful strategy to assist ELLs in learning to read and write English. One way to differentiate a lesson was to create reading or writing activities at multiple levels to meet all ELLs learning needs. For example, a student could be gifted at reading, while another student was a level or two behind. Developing different levels of reading materials could help fulfill needs of both ELLs and nonELLs regardless of their reading and writing levels. This strategy allowed students who were learning at different levels to meet state academic standards. Participant 6 modified and differentiated mainstream content to ensure the State standards are being met in her classes.

Kinetics

Kinetics is a strategy that allows ELLs to express their understanding of a concept through movement. Students read the instruction or scenario provided by the teacher and then use movement to express their mastery of the concept. For example, the teacher assigned a

quote from the Revolutionary War (i.e., Give me liberty or give me death by Patrick Henry), the students, working in groups, would write out a skit to illustrate the content and then act it out in front of the teacher and their peers. Using kinetics can provide ELLs with opportunities to speak, read, write and communicate with their peers in English. Using kinetics, ELLs may have the option of creating videos, working with peers in stations on activities that include recording themselves. Singing and dancing could help students read, write, speak, and listen. Movement is a useful strategy that teachers benefit from implementing in their lessons. Participant 2 used the kinetics strategy by allowing ELLs to move in his room. He did not view movement as a disruption to his class. Instead, he had a huge space in the back of his science classroom where he encouraged his students to demonstrate movement while he taught his lesson. One topic he emphasized was Newton's laws of motion. ELLs demonstrated their learning of Newton Laws through movement. Participant 5 agreed, indicating that she supplements her lessons with movement as it helped them understand the concepts being taught. Participant 6 used movement in her classroom as many of her ELLs learned using a hands-on approach. She relied on her hand gestures, so she expressed herself with her hands when she was teaching. Participant 7 used hand movements to introduce verbs or she pointed to specific objects for nouns. She also talked to students about placement of objects in the classroom using visuals in a PowerPoint as well as with her hands.

The strategies that some teachers indicated were most effective include teaching vocabulary, sentence frame, working in small groups, communication, journaling, repetition, scaffolding, close read, guided reading, visual pictures, review as a class, differentiate content, and kinetics. However, care must be taken, as teachers in different subject areas may consider some strategies as highly effective, while those in another discipline may consider them

ineffective. Strategies, such as teaching vocabulary, sentence frame, or working in small groups, were reported to be most effective. Teaching vocabulary is a whole class strategy as both ELLs and non-ELLs need help in understanding new vocabulary present in textbooks. The teachers used a variety of teaching techniques in introducing new vocabulary, including listing the words and asking students to define them, use them in sentences, add prefixes and suffixes. In combining strategies, teachers often combine visuals and vocabulary to heighten awareness of the context of the word as a way to improve comprehension. Working in small groups or reviewing as a whole class could be incorporated into teaching vocabulary, as understanding the meanings of academic words was basic to understanding concepts that were being taught.

RQ2. How do high school teachers perceive these strategies for teaching reading comprehension are effective in helping address the academic needs of ELLs who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding subject matter content?

The teachers discussed strategies they used with their ELLs in their classes. While some strategies were considered effective in helping all students learn, other strategies were perceived as especially helpful for ELLs to learn academic English, comprehend subject matter, and become functioning class members. Depending on the native language, previous educational experiences both in their native countries and in the United States, and their inherent motivation to learn, specific strategies were useful in helping ELLs adapt to school.

None of the previously discussed strategies were considered effective by all of the teachers who participated in the study. In some instances, a strategy that was found useful by some teachers were not at all effective by other teachers. The reasons for the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness for the strategy could be based on course content, number of ELLs in the class, or the cognitive ability of the ELLs.

Teaching vocabulary was a strategy that was discussed by all teachers. They all considered this strategy an effective way to begin a unit or lesson on a new concept. What differed was the way they introduced the vocabulary. Some teachers used word lists with students defining each word, while others had students draw pictures of the word meanings. Depending on the subject matter, the teacher could tell a story, relating the words to the new concept. Participant 9 indicated that she had students define academic words in the content with which they were unfamiliar, especially if the words had different meanings in BISC and CALP. For example, in economics, demand in BISC means an authoritarian order, while in CALP it means the desire to buy and ability to pay for a product. All teachers considered vocabulary to be effective in helping ELLs learn CALP.

Group work was a strategy that some teachers used to help ELLs master content in a subject. Dividing the students into small groups to work on a project or lesson was used in class to improve learning. Participant 1 indicated that she found group work effective in helping ELLs become more verbal by practicing speech with a few peers rather than the whole class. The use of groups required the teacher to combine students based on their skills and abilities. Placing students who were all ELLs into the same group could have negative effects because they all might have difficulty with language. Placing all high performing students in one group and all low performing students in another group also could have negative effects. Matching an equal number of high and low performing students could have negative effects due to the high performing students doing all of the work while low performing students failed to contribute to the lesson. According to Participant 8, with good student assignment to groups, learning can be accomplished, with ELLs provided with opportunities to learn academic language by reading and speaking English with their non-ELL peers.

Another strategy that appeared to be effective for some teachers was the inclusion of visuals in the lesson. Participant 6 indicated the use of a word wall with vocabulary words and pictures of some new words in the content being studied was helpful with teaching academic language. Participant 8 found using pictures of difficult words effective in teaching vocabulary for academics. For example, Participant 8 used pictures of words that the students did not understand in English and had the ELL describe the picture using their native language. She then has them link the work in their native language to the words in English. She perceived this strategy gave them a basis for learning the English word.

Videos are another strategy that had mixed reviews by the teachers. Participant 5 indicated that students should have a mix of both readings and videos to learn a concept. She continued that videos could be both effective and ineffective. The video could be ineffective if it was too fast for students to understand unless it can be slowed down. The vocabulary, if not pre-taught, could be difficult and at times the diction of the actors might be unclear. Videos also could be effective in learning a skill as the student might watch the same video several times or find more than one video on the topic.

Translation was another strategy that teachers found both effective and ineffective, depending on the subject matter and educational background of the student. Translation was used to define a word or a sentence into a student's native language. Participant 8 indicated that this strategy allowed ELLs to create a connection between their native culture and American culture. While Participant 6 did not feel that translating academic concepts into the student's native language was very helpful because some ELLs educational background levels were lower. ELLs often lacked the prior knowledge in their native language to understand the translated academic content.

Repetition was another strategy that was found both effective and ineffective depending on the teacher participant. Repetition is a strategy that teachers use to repeat an academic concept over and over until it is learned by ELLs. Participant 5 felt that repetition is the key because allowing ELLs to hear the word or academic concept multiple times could build their academic language overall versus Participant 7 who perceived that academic content needed to be understood in different contexts as the English language had multiple meanings for similar and different words. Repeating the word without learning the context might not help ELLs learn the academic content.

Differentiating Strategies

A strategy that was inherent in all of the other strategies was differentiating instruction to meet the needs of individual learners. This ideal way of teaching is also most difficult for teachers because it requires them to break down the lessons in various ways that can help both ELLs and non-ELLs in their classrooms. Creating lessons that meet the needs of individual learners may not be feasible for all concepts being taught. For example, math concepts and formulas cannot be differentiated because of the steps that must be followed to complete a problem. However, teachers in the study provided ways they differentiated their lessons for their students.

Audio

Audio was an effective strategy that one teacher used to assist ELLs in reading and reading comprehension. Audio is a listening tool that assists students with listening, speaking, and understanding the text. The teachers used audio strategy to make the reading material easier for students. Teachers played the audio version of the text for ELLs, students could listen, follow along with the printed text while listening to the pronunciation of the text and understand

and comprehend the information being presented. By playing the audio version of a book excerpt, ELLs could have a better chance of understanding the reading material from a book or passage. Participant 1 read with the ELLs in groups and the way the lesson was differentiated for ELLs was by using audio versions of the book so ELLs could be assigned similar books to read. Participant 1 continued that ELLs practiced reading, as well as practiced listening to the text so they could hear different words and how they were pronounced. Pictures of characters were presented and linked to the information into the lesson.

Pronouncing

Pronouncing words was another teaching strategy that appeared to be effective when teaching ELLs. Using the pronunciation strategy helped ELLs learn to speak English. When using pronunciation, the teacher could clap out words into three to four syllables and sound out the words to students. Students then repeated the process until they were able to say the word. The strategy was effective because ELLs had to read text. Teachers assisted ELLs in enunciating words to assist ELLs in reading text and during a reading aloud lesson. Participant 1 used pronunciation to assist ELLs when reading text to ensure that students were able to use the words when speaking. When students stumbled upon unfamiliar words, the teacher assisted students to pronounce the words correctly. ELLs have a better chance of speaking. Another Participant 1 agreed. He explained that he used scenarios with students. For example, he asked students to imagine going to a restaurant and looking at the menu to see the words with which ELLs were unfamiliar. ELLs described the different foods and words that ELLs had not seen prior. The teacher asked ELLs, what would you do? Participant 1 suggested his students could separate the menu into different categories, for example, beverages, main courses, soups and desserts. ELLs read the description of a different meal that was unfamiliar. He gave them an

example of a gelato dessert in which Participant 1 described gelato as creamy with vanilla in it. He defined creamy and students knew the word vanilla and related it to ice cream. He helped ELLs view the menu and divided the menu into different categories.

Pre/Post test on student's growth

Another effective strategy that teachers used was pre and post assessments. Pre and post testing is a data driven strategy that allows the teacher to see students' growth. The teacher administers an assessment prior to teaching students any academic concepts. At the end of the course, teachers administer the same assessment to their students to see if the student grew in academic knowledge. The strategy, pre and post assessments allowed the teacher to measure student growth from the beginning of the year till end of the year. Participant 2 used pre and post assessments to differentiate instruction as the key is understanding how students learn. At the beginning of the year, he puts an assessment together with 100 questions, and then connects this to how Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence is differentiated. And based upon these questions, it gave him some information if a student was musically inclined, verbal, or visual. He used this information to determine the depth of my pedagogy to meet the needs of those students. Participant 2 began pretest assessments from day one and kept records of the results. As students grew emotionally, they grew mentally, and it was amazing how their interests changed over time. He repeated the same assessment prior to the next semester, and he saw changes in terms of their emotional, mental, and academic development in the whole process.

Make Work Shorter

Making work shorter is a differentiating strategy that was found useful in all grades. Teachers prepare shorter lessons to meet both ELLs learning needs and State mandated standards. For example, choosing a lower-level text that was at the student reading level or answering five comprehension questions instead of 15 questions overall was a differentiating strategy. Another way teachers expressed using the make the work shorter was to differentiate their instruction by assigning 10 words to be defined and put into complete sentences rather than assigning 35 academic vocabulary lists for the lesson. Participant 3 used the strategy by modifying her lesson to assist ELLs learning to read and comprehend academic language. She pushed into the classroom, allowed ELLs to take notes and pulled students into small groups to review academic concepts at a much slower pace than normal. She modified assignments to make them shorter and more accessible for ELLs to learn.

Monitor Deadlines

Monitoring deadlines was another strategy to differentiate instruction that was found useful by classroom participants. Monitoring deadlines referred to setting due dates for academic assignments for ELLs and non-ELLs. The strategy was useful because teachers were able to provide feedback on assigned work and allowed students to reflect on the assignment in a timely manner. Additionally, the strategy allowed teachers to prepare for future lessons and support the ELLs. Participant 4 used differentiated instruction to monitor deadlines. He used programs, like News Ela or the Translate like programs, to assist students in reading and reading comprehension. He used Google Translate and New Ela programs to assist ELLs in translating work into their native languages. Being able to monitor their progress by setting deadlines was important for the teacher to check the work and determine if ELLs were able to

apply the instruction correctly.

Participant 7 differentiated instruction based on ELLs learning style. He differentiated the lesson by lowering the text level based on reading levels of ELLs. Texts can be modified slightly but still meet the appropriate Michigan mandated standards. For example, a story by Shakespeare had many questions for non-ELLs that would be difficult for ELLs. Differentiating the text to a lower level for ELLs and adapting associated activities could be appropriate and offer ELLs more time and resources to complete the same assignments.

Tailoring instruction to Students' Individual Needs

Another useful strategy for differentiating instruction that was found effective to increase learning was tailoring instruction to students' individual needs. ELLs and non-ELLs are at different levels in terms of reading and comprehending text. Many teachers agreed that they implemented the strategy to assist students based on their own individual learning. Participant 5 agreed with the tailoring instruction to meet varied learner needs. Participant 5 taught academic vocabulary to help ELLs with diverse reading skills in her classroom. She assigned more advanced students challenging text on which to focus, while offering ELLs adapted text that is less challenging. For example, vocabulary lessons planned for higher level non-ELLs were more complex, with ELLs defining and using vocabulary words in a sentence. Some ELLs were asked to translate academic words into their own native language and write the academic word in a sentence. During group work, she differentiates by allowing the higher-level students to work independently and allowing them to take the test alone. In contrast, ELLs benefited from working with a partner, working within a group, or using small group instruction. She provided different level worksheets to meet students' different learning outcomes. Activities used with ELLs consisted of closed reading, filling in the blanks, matching, as well as true and false. But

for the upper-level students, she provides more open-ended questions. ELLs who have achieved mastery of English benefit from using critical thinking skills, such as answering the what, where, when, why, and how question stems. Another way she differentiates is by peer teaching. Peer teaching allows for ELLs to be engaged in academic content. Peer teaching involves partnering advanced level ELLs with a group of ELLs in the early stage of learning English. The advanced level ELLs assist the lower-level ELLs by engaging in joint activities. Participant 8 agreed with Participant 5. Participant 8 differentiated text by analyzing ELLs prior educational records that were made available prior to meeting a new group of ELLs before starting the school year. Building relationships with ELLs to build community in her classroom was important for the delivery of her content. Learning more about ELLs strengths and weaknesses assists in differentiating instruction and classroom management. Participant 8 indicated that by becoming familiar with ELLs cultural backgrounds, the learning experiences of ELLs could be enhanced by differentiating her instruction to relate lesson content to ELLs personal experiences. She differentiated content for ELLs by delivering academic concepts tailored to ELLs learning needs and understanding that ELLs were coming into the classroom with many different cultural values. Agreeing with Participant 5, Participant 2 differentiated instruction by learning about the student as a whole.

Peer Teaching

Participant 5 differentiated her instruction by introducing vocabulary to ELLs. She had different levels of ELLs in her classes. She tried giving more advanced ELLs something that was challenging, while not providing ELLs with less ability something that was too difficult for them. When starting with vocabulary, I would not have the higher-level students translate into their native language because they did not need that additional step, and instead I would have

them use the word in a sentence. In comparison, the lower-level students. I would just have them translate the words into their native language. Both groups must do all of the other activities associated with vocabulary. After we move past that group work, I think it is essential to differentiate instruction. Some students can work individually and complete and effectively complete tests on their own, whereas others could benefit from working with a partner or working with a group or having small group instruction. I give different types of worksheets to both levels. For the lower-level kids, closed reading, fill-in the blanks, matching true and false would be assigned, while the upper-level students have to answer more open-ended questions where they write out the sentences themselves. I have used peer teaching, where I would pair upper-level students with a group of lower-level students and have them walk through the reading or through a worksheet. That has worked too, and it is one way to keep them engaged.

Note Taking

Taking notes is a helpful strategy that teachers found to be successful. Writing notes while listening to academic content is useful for all learners in the classroom. Some teachers differentiate their instruction by writing on the board to clarify academic concepts. As teachers lecture, students are encouraged to take notes and write down any questions to clarify the concepts. ELLs can hear academic concepts, write them down, and then review notes for class review or homework. Participant 6 differentiated instruction by using note taking strategy to allow ELLs to use notes to answer questions about the concept during an activity. During the anticipatory set of the lesson, Participant 6 used notes to review the prior day's learning. For Example, she asks ELLs to use notes to help answer the bell work. One example is teaching about binary fission or how bacteria reproduce? Participant 6 asks different questions about those concepts the following day to assess students' learning or if there is a gap that needs to be

filled with academic information. Participant 6 differentiated by asking ELLs to visualize the image of the academic concept then having students draw and label the concept. In another example, Participant 6 showed an image of bacteria and ELLs were able to reflect on the images and recall the name of the bacteria. ELLs were encouraged to draw the bacteria and label it. Agreeing with participant 6 is participant 9. Participant 9 differentiated instruction by using guided notes depending upon the level of the student's verbal language skills in English, sometimes providing ELLs with handouts to have access to useful information. ELLs were able to create their own notes by reviewing the handouts outside of the classroom. Some ELLs, who were at a higher level, were offered a variety of note taking strategies, especially higher-level speakers who were skilled verbally at note taking. Participant 9 encouraged high level speakers to discuss the content.

Themes

Three themes emerged from this study regarding strategies that were used to help ELLs learn CALP. The three themes are:

1. Strategies that were considered effective.
2. Strategies that were considered less effective.
3. Strategies that were used to differentiate instruction.

These strategies will be discussed along with relevant findings and prior research that supports their use with ELLs. The implications of this research on K-12 educators are presented, along with the limitations of the research design, and recommendations for further research.

Summary

Ten HS classroom content teachers who were providing instruction in English, math, social studies, and science were interviewed for this study. I collected data in January and February 2023 for this study, using the Zoom platform at times and dates that were convenient for the participating teachers. Semi structured interviews were conducted to obtain information on participants' strategies for teaching CALP to ELLs and the effectiveness of these strategies to improve the students' ability to read informational text. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore strategies used by HS classroom teachers to teach cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to ELLs who had difficulty reading and comprehending textbooks for understanding.

After reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, the coding process using the step-by-step text analysis process described by Saldana (2013) was started. Coding was iterative, with codes and categories emerging, changing, merging, or being eliminated as the process continued. Three themes emerged from this study regarding strategies that were used to help ELLs learn CALP, including (a) strategies considered effective; (b) strategies considered less effective; and (c) strategies used to differentiate instruction. A discussion of these strategies along with supporting literature are included in Chapter 5, as well as implications for high school teachers regarding the use of strategies to help non-ELLs to master CALP and succeed in school.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The aim of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the strategies that high school classroom instructors use to assist English language learners (ELLs) who struggle to comprehend CALP. As immigration rates rise, general education teachers and non-classroom educators can expect an increase in the number of students who arrive at school unable to read, write, or speak English. High school teachers are required to provide instruction using academic language instruction to assist all students in becoming academically successful and becoming contributing citizens in their communities.

ELLs must receive instruction in institutions that have specialized initiatives for assisting ELLs in acquiring English while also studying grade-level material (Brevik, 2017; Coady et al., 2022). Teachers who are certified in bilingual education or English as a second language typically teach these programs (Johnson, 2019). However, the number of ELL students in some schools may not be sufficient to warrant hiring a teacher solely responsible for instructing them. In these schools, general education teachers are responsible for teaching all students in their grade-level content, as well as training ELLs to read and speak English.

To meet the educational needs of ELLs, teachers are expected to clarify and use effective strategies for learning CALP. Due to a shortage of bilingual teachers, most ELLs struggle in school (Sánchez, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Due to these shortages, schools were forced to enroll ELLs in general education classes with teachers who might not have the necessary training for working with ELLs. Villegas (2018) argued that additional research is needed to discern how teachers can use effective strategies to improve reading comprehension skills of ELLs using CALP.

Researchers (Brevik, 2017; Irby et al., 2018) investigated how high school classroom teachers support ELLs who struggle with understanding CALP. Compared to their native counterparts, ELLs perform less well academically (Soland, 2019). High school classroom teachers may use the findings of this study when planning to use effective strategies when teaching ELLs by becoming aware of approaches that can be customized to match the educational needs of the ELLs. Thematic analysis was used in data analysis for basic qualitative investigations to identify themes and patterns that recur across the interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). A basic qualitative study was ideal to evaluate the kinds of reading comprehension strategies employed in high school classrooms because semistructured interviews were the only data gathering source for this study (Yin, 2018). A basic qualitative study was appropriate as the goal of this study is to investigate the efficacy of the strategies employed by the high school teachers.

Interpretation of the Findings

Three themes emerged from the analysis of survey responses from general education teachers who were providing instruction in core content subject areas (e.g., English, math, social studies). The three themes were (a) effective strategies, (b) least effective strategies, and (c) strategies to differentiate instruction. Teachers must have effective instructional strategies to assist students in reading and comprehending information in textbooks (Brevik, 2017; de Oliveira, 2016; Johnson, 2019). While many strategies are available in the research, some are less effective than others. Teachers need to know what other teachers have found to be effective and adapt them for use in their classrooms.

Effective strategies. Second language acquisition theory by Cummins (1979; 2017) serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. This theory has been used by educators to teach English to ELLs and help them succeed academically, becoming global citizens of their communities. The theory distinguishes between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and CALP in second language acquisition and is central to Cummins' (2017) theory. Many educators fail to distinguish between BICS and CALP when teaching ELLs English as a second language (Cummins, 2008).

To help ELLs acquire CALP, high school classroom teachers need to use appropriate instructional strategies to assist ELLs in developing reading comprehension. (Adera, 2017; Cramer et al., 2018; Pereira & de Oliveira, 2015; Villegas, 2018). ELLs can benefit from using the appropriate instructional strategies when learning English and reading for comprehension (Villegas, 2018). Additionally, teachers may not be aware of the appropriate strategies to assist ELLs learn and succeed in mastering academic material (Deng & Hayden, 2021). To help ELLs succeed in school, teachers must know effective teaching strategies. Through professional development, teachers can learn the appropriate strategies to use when instructing ELLs in general education core classes (Brevik, 2017; Johnson, 2019).

The social, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of teachers and students vary, according to Mellom et al. (2018). Professional development is needed for teachers to learn how to instruct ELLs effectively and assist them in learning English to reduce cultural and academic diversity in the classroom. Professional development is required to equip these teachers with appropriate teaching strategies that can help students acquire CALP in content areas.

The second language acquisition hypothesis developed by Cummins (1979, 1980) served as the conceptual base for this investigation. The distinction between basic interpersonal

communication skills (BICS) and CALP in second language acquisition was related to Cummins' theory (1979; 1980). Contrary to CALP, which is the academic language taught through social interactions and is acquired in school, BICS develops from birth and reaches a plateau at a young age (Cummins, 1979, 1980). If students want to succeed in school, they need to keep developing their CALP (Cummins, 1979, 1980; Gu, 2018).

High school teachers who teach content (e.g., history, English, science, etc.) are aware that ELLs may have trouble understanding academic English (Soland, 2019). When teaching social studies, science, and English language arts to high school students as they prepare for college, it is necessary to incorporate CALP teaching theory. The study investigated the use of teaching strategies in high school classrooms to assist ELLs who struggle with understanding CALP. Based on Cummins' language acquisition theory, I interviewed high school classroom teachers who were teaching ELLs on strategies they found to be effective and ineffective (Ardasheva et al., 2017; Gu, 2018). Teachers, while generally unaware of CALP, understood the importance of helping ELLs learn to read and comprehend academic English as a way to achieve their educational goals.

The second language learning theory proposed by Cummins (1979, 1980) is widely recognized. According to Cummins' (1979, 1980) theory, students need to be taught using CALP rather than BICS to ensure they are able to understand technical terms. Cummins' theory (1979, 1980) served as the foundation for the conceptual framework for this investigation.

Discussion

Ten content area teachers in high school general education classes were interviewed for this study. They answered semistructured questions involving the types of strategies they used to help ELLs in their classrooms comprehend the course material. Because the teachers represented various subject matter (e.g., English, math, social studies, etc.), the strategies used in one class might not be useful in another. The following strategies were discussed in the interviews, including whether they perceived them to be effective or ineffective in helping their students.

The strategy involving vocabulary was used most often when teaching ELLs in the classroom. Each teacher employed different methods to help their ELLs become familiar with the CALP required for their courses, but they all stressed the importance of introducing vocabulary before teaching the content. Similar to the findings of Guler (2020) and Zhang (2017), academic literacy requires building vocabulary using a variety of approaches. Most teachers in the present study began each chapter with a list of vocabulary words specific to that chapter. The relevance of teaching vocabulary before delivering the lesson's material was to provide a familiarity with the words prior to establishing the context within the lesson. The discussion from teachers shed some light on the value of terminology in subject areas like economics.

Sentence frames are an effective method for assisting ELLs in learning vocabulary related to a particular idea. Students can start learning CALP for a particular topic by using sentence frames, which are structures with fill-in-the-blank words (Lee et al., 2019). Teachers begin with a complete phrase and gradually eliminate words using sentence frames. The final step is for students to complete the sentence by adding the necessary word. When discussing

sentence frames with ELLs "giving them the opportunity to do more written assignments, such as sentence stems and sentence starters, where they just have to fill in certain words that can tie in some of the vocabulary words that you give them" is a good way to help them improve their writing. Naturally, academic language is significant, so teachers will do things like offer sentence starters to help teach the content. Some teachers acknowledged the importance of using sentence stems to assist ELLs in developing their understanding and bridging the gap between reading and understanding formal academic language. Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018) found that sentence starters and frames were a good way to improve language. Using this strategy, teachers provided ELLs in the present study with scaffolds to help them complete assignments and participate in class discussions. This strategy can help students build their academic vocabulary and answer questions on specific topics.

Working in small groups was found to be effective in all grade levels and across a wide range of subjects. Some teachers partnered ELLs with native English speakers. These pairings could help them feel more at ease when speaking and listening to the language. The teachers offered feedback on using small groups to assist ELLs in learning the language and forming connections with other students. As a result, ELLs should be given opportunities to express themselves vocally. Researchers (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2018; Russell & Von Esch, 2018) suggested differentiating the instructional process in a language classroom by grouping students with mixed proficiency levels and then re-grouping as needed. Linking ELLs with native language speakers was considered to help both groups and help them become comfortable with their peers.

Communication was the most important aspect of developing comprehension abilities. The distinction between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and CALP in second

language acquisition is related to Cummins' hypothesis (1979; 1980). ELLs need to know both CALP, which is the academic language taught through social interactions and is acquired in school and BICS which develops from birth and reaches a plateau at a young age (Cummins, 1979, 1980). ELLs who worked in groups learned academic language as part of their classwork and were able to speak BICS through interactions with their peers. Using small groups to provide internal support from non-ELL students who were more fluent in English and academic language were able to assist ELLs become familiar with academic language. Making alliances between students who spoke the same language and having them work in groups with her as the teacher, serving as cohorts, also was a technique adopted by Participant 10 in her lessons.

Another helpful tactic that teachers have discovered to be beneficial with ELLs at most grade levels was communication. Using the communication technique, ELL students were able to engage in groups, discuss grade-level issues in class, and feel comfortable expressing themselves verbally. ELLs conversed informally with their peers to help develop their BICS. These informal interactions helped ELLs acquire the language and form relationships with other students. The strategy assisted ELLs in developing their oral communication skills.

Scaffolding was a teaching technique that enabled the teacher to divide the subject matter into manageable chunks so that students could study at a progressive pace. To allow for mastery at lesser levels before moving on to more difficult subjects, the text's level is gradually increased. A study on efficient teaching methods for ELLs indicated that scaffolding strategies for teaching ELLs second language competence and subject knowledge that included resources, structures, and verbal engagement that provided effective instructional interactions (Johnson, 2019). Besterman et al. (2018) indicated that most teachers found that using interactional scaffolds, such as identifying unfamiliar vocabulary, effective when working with both ELLs

and native speakers. The scaffolds were effective because equitable access to language input, opportunities for language production, opportunities for meaningful language interactions, and support for reading development were provided for all students, especially ELLs.

An effective method for assisting ELLs in the classroom was close reading. By annotating text, as well as defining, circling, and clarifying unfamiliar words and terms and making notes in the margins, ELLs practice speaking, reading, and writing. Then, having learned the correct definitions of words, students are able to comprehend the text when they reread it. Additionally, the added notes in the reading passage's margins help students answer the what, where, when, why, and how questions. Students can learn to be creative by developing appropriate skills for reading and comprehending text that can enhance critical thinking skills (Raza, 2018).

Another technique that some teachers used while working with ELLs was guided reading. Guided reading is developed by the teacher for use in taking notes during lectures or PowerPoint presentations. This method has been shown to be effective in assisting ELLs in understanding concepts presented during lectures. ELLs followed along by filling in the gaps in their guided reading notes as they listened to the lecture and/or read a PowerPoint presentation on the topic. This method helps ELLs because it encourages them to participate in the lesson by reading and taking notes, which can be used by ELLs to prepare for exams or other assignments. Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018) listed the jigsaw strategy, which was similar to guided reading. The jigsaw method enables ELL students to master a short passage and share it with their friends. For example, if students are given a text to read, each student would be assigned a specific segment. They would read their segment and would then discuss what they learned in that segment with their classmates.

Using Images. Visuals were a strategy that was found useful when instructing ELLs. To convey a lesson, teachers used visual aids in their teachings, which included pictures, graphs, maps, charts, and diagrams to illustrate the lesson being taught. ELLs viewed visuals of concepts throughout the class by using this technique helping them to learn using this tactic. Teachers provided several images linked to the ideas being taught, with students using these visual aids to comprehend the lesson's meaning.

The use of a word wall helped ELLs learn content as it was easy to comprehend the lesson content. Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018) suggested using nonlinguistic cues such as visuals, which can be useful in providing instruction. For example, charts, graphic organizers, and drawn images of vocabulary words could assist students in connecting prior knowledge and what they are being taught in the current lesson to form new knowledge.

Review as a class was another strategy when reinforcing prior lessons. This approach was beneficial for ELLs because the material was still fresh in their minds, with teachers using various review activities to reinforce the material in English, such as playing games, setting up stations in the classroom, reviewing with flashcards, asking a question of the day, and using Pictionary as a review game Brevik. (2017).

Differentiating instruction was helpful in teaching ELLs to learn to read and write English. To accommodate the needs of all ELLs in a single classroom, differentiating a lesson can be accomplished by designing reading or writing exercises at various skill levels. For example, one student might excel in reading while another is reading at two levels lower. Regardless of their reading and writing abilities, ELLs and non-ELLs can benefit from having access to various reading levels of texts. Students who comprehend academic language at varying rates were able to satisfy state mandated assessments. Similar to the findings of Irby et

al. (2018), the differentiation strategy is to have text written for different reading levels, which would allow teachers to provide the material prior to the lessons. With the prior knowledge generated from pre-reading the lesson, the teacher could present complex text in the lesson.

Kinetics. Kinetics was a strategy that allowed ELLs to express their understanding of a concept through movement. Students read the instruction or scenario provided by the teacher and then use movement to express their mastery of the concept. For example, the teacher assigns a quote from the Revolutionary War (i.e., Give me liberty or give me death by Patrick Henry), the students, working in groups, could write out a skit to illustrate the content and then act it out in front of the teacher and their peers. Using kinetics provided ELLs with opportunities to speak, read, write, and communicate with their peers in English. Using kinetics, ELLs had the option of creating videos, working with peers in stations on activities that include recording themselves. Singing and dancing helped students read, write, speak, and listen. Movement was a useful strategy that teachers benefit from implementing in their lessons.

Effective and Ineffective Strategies.

The teachers discussed strategies used with ELLs in their classes. While some strategies were considered effective in helping all students learn, other strategies were perceived as specifically helpful for ELLs to learn academic English, comprehend the subject matter, and become functioning members of the class. Depending on the native language, previous educational experiences both in their native countries and in the United States, and their inherent motivation to learn, specific strategies were useful in helping ELLs adapt to school.

None of the previously discussed strategies were considered effective by all teachers who participated in the study. In some instances, a strategy that was found useful by some teachers was not at all effective by other teachers. The reasons for the effectiveness or lack of

effectiveness for the strategy could be based on course content, number of ELLs in the class, or the cognitive ability of the ELLs.

Teaching vocabulary was a strategy that was discussed by all teachers. They all considered this strategy as an effective way to begin a unit or lesson on a new concept. What differed was the way they introduced the vocabulary. Some teachers used word lists with students defining each of the words, while others had students draw pictures of the word meanings. Depending on the subject matter, the teacher could tell a story, relating the words to the new concept. Students were asked to define academic words in the content with which they were unfamiliar, especially if the word had different meanings in BISC and CALP. For example, in economics, *demand* in BISC means an authoritarian order, while in CALP it means the desire to buy and ability to pay for a product. All teachers considered vocabulary to be effective in helping ELLs learn CALP.

Using an interdisciplinary approach to literacy offers a linguistic method that can be used to teach vocabulary, sentence deconstruction, and sentence matching in addition to building academic vocabulary and use of semantic mapping (Guler, 2020; Zhang, 2017). Group work was a strategy used to help ELLs master content in a subject. Dividing students into small groups to work on a project or lesson was used to improve learning. Group work was found to be effective in helping ELLs become more verbal by practicing speech with a few peers rather than the whole class. The use of groups requires teachers to combine students based on their skills and abilities. Placing ELLs students into a single group could have negative effects because they all may have difficulty with language. Placing all high performing students in one group and all low performing students in another group also could have negative effects. Matching an equal number of high and low performing students could have negative effects due

to the high performing students doing all of the work while the low performing students fail to contribute to the lesson. With careful student assignment to groups, learning can be accomplished, with ELLs provided opportunities to learn academic language by reading and speaking English with their non-ELL peers. Cooperative learning was a strategy suggested by Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018) who argued students could learn language and assume leadership roles in their groups. Students could be placed in groups and gain knowledge from one another as they work through the curriculum using this strategy.

Another strategy that appeared to be effective for some teachers was the inclusion of visuals in the lesson. Using a word wall with vocabulary words and pictures of new words in the content being studied can be helpful with teaching academic language. Pictures of difficult words in the lesson was effective in teaching academic vocabulary. Students who had not learned English could look at pictures of academic words and describe the picture using their native language that the students did not understand in English and had the ELL. She then has them link the word in their native language to words in English. She perceived this strategy gave them a basis for learning the English word.

Videos are another strategy that had mixed reviews by the teachers. Students should be given a mix of both readings and videos to learn a concept. Videos can be either effective or ineffective. For example, a video can be ineffective if the audio portion is too fast for the student to understand unless it can be slowed down. The vocabulary, if not pre-taught, can be difficult and at times the diction of actors may be unclear. Videos can be an effective strategy, with students learning a skill by watching the same video several times or finding multiple videos on the topic.

Translation was another strategy that teachers found either effective or ineffective, depending on the subject matter and educational background of the student. Translation was used to define a word or a sentence into a student's native language. This strategy allowed ELLs to create a connection between their native culture and American culture. However, translating academic concepts into the student's native language could be very helpful because of differences in ELLs educational background levels. ELLs often lacked prior knowledge in their native language to understand the translated academic content. Preview-view-review was a strategy recommended by Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018) who found this strategy useful. ELLs can review material written in their first language which helps facilitate instruction using this technique. Instruction would be delivered in English to help ELLs understand the lesson.

Repetition was another strategy that was found either effective and ineffective depending on the teacher or the lesson. Repetition is a strategy that teachers use to repeat an academic concept over and over until it is learned by ELLs. Repetition can be a key strategy because hearing, visualizing, or practicing the word or academic concept multiple times could build their academic language overall. Repetition is ineffective if academic content needs to be understood in different contexts, as the English language had multiple meanings for similar and different words. Repeating the word without learning the context might not be helpful for ELLs in learning the academic content.

Differentiating strategies. Similar to the findings of Raza (2018), differentiated instruction supports ELLs with different cognitive abilities by (a) using readings on subjects that are interesting to the majority of students; (b) using online learning tools that could motivate students to practice and continue building their word bank outside of the classroom; (c) creating writing tasks that encourage students to report on familiar topics; and (d) using

student peers to facilitate learning (Raza, 2018). A strategy that was inherent in the other strategies was differentiating instruction to meet the needs of individual learners. This ideal way of teaching is most difficult for teachers because it requires them to break down lessons in various ways that can help both ELLs and non-ELLs in their classrooms. Creating lessons that meet the needs of individual learners may not be feasible for all concepts being taught. For example, math concepts and formulas cannot be differentiated because of steps that must be followed to complete a problem. However, teachers in the study provided ways they used to differentiate their lessons. Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018) taught for more than 35 years and wrote many books regarding their work with ELLs. The results of this study provided similar results to Ferlazzo and Sypniewski. The use of differentiated instruction improved ELLs intrinsic drive for academic success and the use of positive feedback when correcting students' mistakes were some of the strategies that were highlighted. To encourage ELLs in the classroom, differentiated education was also recommended by Raza (2018).

Another differentiating technique that has been found to be effective in all grades is shortening assignments. Teachers prepare lessons that match state requirements and learning needs of ELLs but require less time to complete. For instance, selecting a work of a lower reading difficulty or completing five comprehension questions as opposed to all 15 of them is a way that teachers can differentiate instruction for students who are struggling with reading English. To differentiate their instruction and reduce the amount of work required by students, teachers also suggested assigning 10 terms to be defined and used in entire sentences rather than the 35 academic vocabulary lists provided in the textbook.

Audio. Audio was an effective strategy that was used to assist ELLs in learning to read and comprehend CALP. Audio is a listening tool that assists students with listening, speaking,

and understanding academic text. The teachers use audio strategy to make the reading material easier for students. Teachers played the audio version of the text for ELLs, with students listening, following along the text while listening to the pronunciation of the text, and understanding and comprehending the information. By playing the audio version of a book excerpt, ELLs would have a better chance of understanding the reading material from a book or passage. Teachers were able to assign ELLs and non-ELLs the same books by differentiating the lesson. ELLs could listen to the audible version of the book while nonELLs could read from the text. ELLs practiced reading, as well as listening to the text so they could hear different words and learn how they were pronounced. By providing pictures of characters and linking them to her lesson, all students were given opportunities to learn the lesson content. Irby et al. (2018) indicated the goal of helping ELLs learn was to create texts at various reading levels, which allowed teachers to prepare lower level reading material (two or three levels below grade level), present the information prior to the lesson, and then read the complex texts to develop prior knowledge before reading the actual content.

Pronouncing. Pronouncing words was another teaching strategy that appeared to be effective when teaching ELLs. Using the pronunciation strategy helped ELLs learn to speak English. When using pronunciation, a teacher could clap out words into three to four syllables and sound out the words to students. Students then repeated the process until they were able to say the word. The strategy is effective because ELLs have to read text. Teachers have assisted ELLs in enunciating words to assist ELLs in reading text during a reading aloud lesson. Pronunciation can be used to assist ELLs when reading text to ensure that students can use the words when speaking. When students stumbled on unfamiliar words, a teacher could assist students in pronouncing words correctly.

Scenarios. The use of scenarios was an effective strategy for ELLs. For example, students were asked to imagine going to a restaurant and looking at the menu and see words with which ELLs were unfamiliar. ELLs described the different foods and words that ELLs had not seen previously. The teacher could ask ELLs, what would they do? Students could separate the menu into different categories, such as beverages, main courses, soups, and desserts. ELLs could read the description of a different meal that was unfamiliar, such as a gelato dessert that was described as creamy with vanilla in it. Creamy was defined for the students who understood the word vanilla and related it to ice cream.

Pre- and post-tests measuring student growth. Pre- and post-assessments were another successful technique that teachers employed when working with ELLs. A data-driven technique called pre- and post-testing enabled teachers to track their students' progress. Before teaching students any academic topics, the teacher administers an evaluation to determine their knowledge on the topic. Teachers then give their students the same assessment at the end of the course to determine if students have improved in terms of academic knowledge. Teachers are able to track student improvement from the start of the year to the conclusion of the year thanks to this strategy. The key is understanding how students learn, with teachers able to differentiate instruction based on results of pretests. Creating a pretest with 100 questions at the beginning of the school year and comparing the results to Gardner's (1993) multiple intelligence hypothesis could help the teacher understand students' learning styles; music, verbal, or visual. The teaching methods could be adapted to better suit the learning needs of the students.

Limitations

The study is limited to teachers who taught content subjects in general education classes at a single suburban high school. The study did not involve elementary or middle school teachers. The small sample size, 13 teachers, could also be a limitation. High school teachers with credentials in bilingual education, English as a second language, or special education were excluded from the sample. The study did not include nonacademic teachers (physical education, music, art) although these courses have specific vocabularies, which may be common to most languages. A limitation of the study was the length of time that teachers had ELLs in their classes. Teachers were included regardless of when they had taught ELLs, with some having ELLs in their present classes and others having them two or even three years prior.

Recommendations for Practice

Teachers need to be aware of BISC and CALP when teaching students who are native speakers and ELLs. Professional development programs are needed to provide teachers with theory on language acquisition and its importance in distinguishing between BISC and CALP. Many of the teachers in this study were unaware of the two classifications of language, which may be important in determining appropriate strategies for teaching ELLs.

Classroom teachers need training to teach immigrants with limited English language abilities and feel confident in using instructional strategies in their classroom. The outcomes of this study indicated a need for professional development focused on helping content area teachers learn effective strategies to help students in their classes who were struggling with understanding English. Most of these students were new arrivals to the U. S. who were unfamiliar with CALP. General education teachers who are teaching ELLs at the high school level need to be aware of theories associated with learning both BISC and CALP.

Understanding the difference can help them decide what strategies are best suited for their students. The results of the study can be used to educate teachers on instructional strategies for teaching ELLs to satisfy grade level state mandated standards. Based on the findings presented, a professional development program for teachers can be used to educate high school classroom teachers to apply effective strategies that can assist ELLs learn to read and comprehend CALP, which is necessary for achievement at the high school and postsecondary levels.

As reading is the most important skill ELLs need to master, teachers need to learn to differentiate their lessons to ensure all students can read the required texts. Differentiation can have a secondary effect for native speakers who are having difficulty with the lessons. Teachers can use individualized materials for ELLs that present the subject matter in a simpler form. However, differentiating may be difficult and time consuming. Professional development may give teachers ideas on how to differentiate lessons more easily.

The majority of research on teaching ELLs academic English has been on elementary students rather than high school classroom teachers. Additionally, the study provides updated research that districts can use when planning and providing professional development programs throughout the school year to assist teachers to create effective strategies for ELLs. The findings of this study can be used by high school instructors to implement best practices when teaching ELLs. The tactics used by general education teachers dealing with ELLs in this study are beneficial to other teachers who are responsible for teaching ELLs.

Social Change

The outcomes of this study may contribute to positive social change by supporting ELLs in being more integrated into the community through the ability to read and comprehend English. Immigrants who speak English fluently are more likely to complete college, find

meaningful work, and become involved members of their communities (Sanchez, 2017). The established strategies can then be shared with teachers of ELLs in school communities at the local, state, and national levels.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Further study could be conducted of high school teachers in content areas who are teaching ELLs in their classroom. The survey may focus on the use of the different strategies presented to ELLs in the present study. Additional survey items could be drawn from the comprehensive review of related literature in this study. The high school teachers should represent all core subject areas (language arts, social sciences, math, and science) and should be drawn from urban, rural, and suburban areas. The survey should be used to measure the use and effectiveness of the strategies.
2. Conduct a longitudinal research study using high school ELL students to determine the effectiveness of specific strategies used by their teachers and their mastery of the English language over time. Starting at the freshman level, students should be tested on language proficiency and then be placed in classes taught by teachers who are not certified as bilingual teachers. The students should be tested again at the end of the ninth grade and then every grade until graduation. The teachers will be asked to indicate the specific strategies they use in their classes. The instrument used to collect data from the students will be developed from a review of literature. Reading ability will be measured using the World Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) to determine growth in English language mastery.

3. Another recommendation for further research is to use a qualitative research design with school administrators to determine their perceptions of having ELLs in their schools and how they work to establish educational equity for all students regardless of language differences. The study should include principals and assistant principals who are in schools with ELLs. This study could provide information on how principals and assistant principals support content area teachers who are not certified as bi-lingual and are working with ELLs. This study would provide another perspective of ELLs being taught in high school.

Conclusions

The results of this study have provided several effective strategies that can help ELLs learn CALP that can enhance their educational experiences in high school. The types of strategies depend on the training of the teacher, the level of second language development among their ELLs, and the type of class. A strategy that is effective in English language arts might not be effective in a science or math class. However, teaching vocabulary is an important first step in all subject areas. School administrators need to provide professional development training for their teachers to help them understand the theory behind the strategies. Teachers in the same subject areas (social sciences, math, etc.) should work together in developing differentiated materials to help all students learn, regardless of their English language fluency. Additional research is needed on this topic to improve educational outcomes for both immigrants and native language speakers.

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Appendix A
Recruitment Email

February 18, 2022

Re: Investigating Effective Instructional Strategies to Increase Reading Comprehension of English Language Learners

Dear Teacher:

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a voluntary research study about Investigating Effective Instructional Strategies to Increase Reading Comprehension of English Language Learners. This study is being conducted by Caroline Kosho at Walden University.

Participation includes a short survey and eight interview questions. The interview is expected to last from 45-60 minutes. Once the interview is complete, you will receive a \$10.00 gift card in appreciation for your participation.

If you would like additional information about this study, I can be reached at 586-205-1998; or by email at carolinekosho@gmail.com

Thank you for your consideration, and once again, please do not hesitate to contact me if you are interested in learning more about this Institutional Review Board approved project.

Caroline Kosho
Principal Investigator
Walden University

Appendix B
Demographic Survey

Age _____

Gender- again, why would this matter? What if they do not wish to respond?

Male

Female

Other _____

Educational Level

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Educational Specialist

Doctorate

Other _____

Length of Time Teaching _____

Teach ELLs

Yes

No

How many years have you taught ELLs? _____

Approximately how many ELL students do you have in your classes? _____

What are the native languages of your ELL students? (ex. Spanish, Arabic, etc.)

Have you attended any professional development programs for teaching ELLs?

Yes

No

Where did you attend these programs?

In home school

At Intermediate School District

At community college/university

At a professional conference

Through online programs (YouTube) Other _____

Are you familiar with Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)?

Yes

No

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
1. How do HS teachers build ELL's comprehension skills in oral and written language?	1. How do HS teachers build ELLs' comprehension skills in oral and written language? 2. What type of training have you had to work with ELLs in your general education classrooms? 3. To what extent was CALP and basic interpersonal communication skills included in this training? 4. How do you differentiate your instruction to meet the learning needs of your students?
2. How do high school teachers perceive these strategies for teaching reading comprehension are effective in helping address the academic needs of ELLS who have difficulty reading CALP for understanding subject matter content?	1. How do you use nonlinguistic cues (e.g., visual aids, charts, graphic organizers, pictures) that can be helpful in providing instruction for ELLs in your classroom? 2. Which strategies have you found useful in helping ELLs in your classroom comprehend language in their textbooks? 3. Which strategies are least helpful in teaching ELLs in your classroom? 4. Do the strategies used for ELLs also help general education students in your classroom who may have difficulty in reading CALP.

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study about effective strategies that classroom teachers use when providing instruction to English language learners in their classes. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study seeks 13 volunteers who are:

- high school general education content area teachers.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Caroline Kosho who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Study Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore strategies used by high school classroom teachers to teach CALP to ELLs who have difficulty reading for understanding.

Procedures:

This study will involve you completing the following steps:

- Reading the informed consent form
- Completing a short demographic survey
- Participating in a 45 to 60 minute Zoom meeting with the researcher to answer questions about effective strategies used to teach ELLs in your classroom
- The interview will be recorded by Zoom and transcribed by a confidential transcription service
- You will be asked to review the survey and make any changes or additions you feel are needed to reflect your responses to the interview questions.

Here are some sample questions:

1. How do high school teachers build ELLs’ comprehension skills in oral and written language?
2. What type of training have you had to work with ELLs in your general education classrooms?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not.

If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study would pose minimal risk to your wellbeing.

This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The aim of this study is to benefit society by determining effective strategies for helping ELLs learn English that can allow them to complete their education. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by completing her dissertation and making it available through the Scholarworks.

Payment:

The researcher will email a \$10.00 e-gift card to each participant at the end of their interview.

Privacy:

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential, within the limits of the law. The researcher is only allowed to share your identity or contact information if needed with Walden University supervisors, who are also required to protect your privacy or with authorities if court ordered (very rare). The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by storing the transcribed interviews on a password protected USB drive that will be stored in a locked file cabinet located in the researcher's home when not in use by the researcher. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You can ask questions of the researcher by telephone at (586) 205-1998 or email at caroline.kosho@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here. It expires on IRB will enter an expiration date.

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. Please save this email or print a copy for your records.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by replying to this email with the words "I consent."

Appendix E

Interview Script

Hello, my name is Caroline Kosho. I am a doctoral student at Walden University and am completing my dissertation research on *Investigating Effective Instructional Strategies to Increase Reading Comprehension of English Language Learners*.

I am particularly interested in general education teachers who have ELLs in their classes and how they work with these students to increase CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency). As a general education teacher with ELLs in your classrooms, you are in a position to add valuable information regarding this topic.

We are meeting on Zoom and the interview will be recorded for analysis. Your identity will be confidential and all identifying information will be removed in the final report.

I am going to ask you eight questions and hope you will provide detailed information on each question. Your participation should not last longer than 60 minutes and at the end you will receive a \$10.00 gift card to Amazon.

If you have no questions, we will proceed with the questions.

At the end of the interview, I will ask the participants if they have any additional comments or concerns about teaching ELLs in general education classrooms. If they have no questions or comments, I will thank them for their time and say goodbye.