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Project Study Secondary Teachers' Perspectives in Supporting English Language Learners

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Yushica T. Walker

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Project Study Secondary Teachers' Perspectives in Supporting English Language

Learners

by

Yushica T. Walker

MA, University of Phoenix, 2010

BS, Prairie View A&M University, 1996

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

March 2024

Abstract

The problem for this study was that an average of 60% of eighth-grade English Language Learners (ELL) in one Virginia county were not meeting reading proficiency based on Virginia Standards of Learning. A basic qualitative design was used to explore teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and the resources they need to teach eighth-grade ELLs in reading. The resulting project was a three-day culturally responsive professional development training for English language (EL) teachers. Krashen's language acquisition theory was the conceptual framework used to explore teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and the resources necessary to teach eighth-grade ELLs. Learning should occur in a natural environment focused on realia, movement, and authentic projects. The research questions addressed teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs. Data was gathered from seven participants using seven semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. The resulting data were thematically analyzed and coded. The results and the project were based on the following five emerging themes: (a) lesson planning and delivery, (b) language proficiency with communication, (c) individualized instruction, (d) connecting background knowledge, and (e) effective professional development. The project study may benefit positive social change by offering strategies and approaches for improving classroom instructional practices for EL school districts that will increase the academic achievement of ELLs.

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Dedication

My doctoral study is dedicated to my loving husband, Johnnie. His unwavering support, encouragement, and unconditional love gave me the strength to continue this journey. Your belief in me has been my greatest push throughout this process. To my wonderful boys, Jay and Jax, thank you for reminding me of the importance of cherishing moments and bringing me joy just when I have always needed it the most. To my late grandmothers, Lucille and Claudine, thank you for taking the time to love me unconditionally at an early age and always reminding me to have God at the forefront of my life.

This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. Thank you for being my constant inspiration and motivation. I dedicate this work to each of you with all my love and gratitude.

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I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Felicia Blacher-Wilson, the chairperson of my committee, and Dr. Eilene Edejer, my second committee member, for their expertise, invaluable guidance, and support throughout the research process. Their mentorship and feedback have been instrumental in my growth as a scholar.

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Section 1: The Problem

English language learners (ELLs) were the fastest-growing student population in American public schools (Estrella et al., 2018). Since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, educators have put measures in place to help close student performance gaps on state assessments. With the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, changes made at federal and state levels provided monetary aid to school districts to implement evidence-based solutions to support struggling students. ESSA's additional recommendations were to develop a new accountability system focused on measuring results in various grade levels in reading, math, science, and social studies (Reedy et al., 2017). National studies consistently showed that culturally and linguistically diverse students score below non-Hispanic White students in reading. The U.S. Department of Education (2018) reported that between 2009 and 2017, the percentage of ELL students who achieved reading proficiency in eighth grade increased slightly at the federal level.

The Local Problem

The local problem addressed through this study was that an average of 60% of eighth-grade ELLs were not meeting proficiency on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) in reading in a county in Northern Virginia. In 2019, 39% of ELLs passed the reading state assessment (Prince William County Schools, 2022). In 2019, 79% of students passed the SOL tests in reading, and 83% passed the SOL tests in mathematics. The 2019 reading pass rates for economically disadvantaged students, English Learners,

and students with disabilities demonstrated that significant achievement gaps still exist (Prince William County Schools, 2022). The local county implemented a four-year strategic plan to address this problem. The local county continued to be recognized as one of the fastest-growing communities in Virginia and the nation regarding population size and diversity. U.S. News & World Report ranks the county as the 10th largest in the nation (Prince William County Schools, 2022). As part of the county's 2025 strategic plan, education leaders were committed to improving instruction and ensuring it is culturally appropriate and meets the needs of ELLs, as one in four local students is learning English.

In the local setting, principals played a crucial role in ensuring the success of their schools, and one of their key responsibilities was engaging in current professional development focusing on the instructional core. This involved staying up to date with the latest educational research, best practices, and strategies to improve the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes. One such issue identified in the county is the difficulty ELLs face in mastering proficiency on state assessments. The county was addressing this challenge by tasking all division leaders and educators working with ELLs to participate in professional learning opportunities. These opportunities were centered on implementing instructional best practices that promote English language development and proficiency.

Educating ELLs was a complex challenge involving the following intersecting realities: a rapidly growing population, a persistent achievement gap, low graduation rates, misidentification for learning disabilities, and increasingly rigorous assessments

that place new demands on struggling ELLs (Marsh, 2018). In U.S. history, there have never been more ELLs in the public school system than today, constituting 4.6 million young people or 9.4% of all students. This figure has more than doubled in the past three decades (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). The population of ELLs was predicted to account for 40% of the school-age population by 2030, signaling a rapidly expanding, substantial growth that demands attention and response from our educational system (Marsh, 2018). The need for secondary teachers' perspectives of the principal's role in supporting EL teachers was critical to address this local problem.

Rationale

The local school county implemented a four-year strategic plan to address ELLs' academic gap. As part of the county's 2025 Strategic Plan, educational leaders were working to improve instruction and ensure that it is culturally appropriate and tailored to the needs of ELLs.

Most ELLs were students with low proficiency in literacy who struggled to pass the reading state exam. According to an accountability report from the local county under study for the last three years, overall, ELL performance in reading has remained significantly lower than non-ELLs (see Table 1).

Table 1

ELL Performance Reading

School Year	ELL Mastery Levels in Reading
2021-2022	39%
2019-2020	No data reported
2018-2019	57%
2017-2018	62%

Table 1: ELL Reading State Test Results

The 2019-2020 testing results were unavailable due to the closure of Virginia public schools on March 13, 2020, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cancellation of state assessments. The 2020-2021 reading results reflected reduced student participation in state reading assessments due to COVID-19 (Virginia SOL Assessments, 2022). The wide variations in participation rates and learning conditions were considered when reviewing 2020-2021 data.

Little was understood about secondary EL teachers' perspectives in supporting ELLs. The problem to be addressed through this study is that an average of 40% of eighth-grade ELLs met proficiency in reading on SOL tests. This performance was significantly lower than non-ELL mastery proficiency, with a proficiency average of 70%. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives of their successes, challenges, and the resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs in reading.

Definition of Terms

An applicable list of terms and definitions was provided below to assist with understanding the educational terms integrated throughout this study:

Achievement gap: Differences in terms of performance of students, especially those defined by gender, race/ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2018).

English as a second language (ESL): ESL is a program involving techniques, methodologies, and special curricula designed to teach ELL students English language

skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural orientation. ESL instruction is usually in English with little use of native languages (USDOE, 2018).

English language learners (ELLs): Students who first learned to speak, read, or write a language other than English are among the fastest-growing student populations in North American schools (Guo et al., 2019).

English language teachers: Highly trained professionals who bring a wealth of expertise in language development with special certifications in English language development (ELD) instruction, including methods, language, linguistics, culture, and assessment that gives them an in-depth level of preparation for working with ELLs (Breiseth, 2022).

First-language acquisition: A universal process regardless of home language. Babies listen to the sounds around them, imitate them, and eventually start producing words (Ford & Robertson, 2020).

Perspectives: Teacher attitudes and understandings toward ELLs within the general education classroom (Olds et al., 2021).

Second-language acquisition: Assumes knowledge in a first language and encompasses the process an individual goes through as he or she learns the elements of a new language, such as vocabulary, phonological components, grammatical structures, and writing systems (Ford & Robertson, 2020).

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because understanding EL teachers' perspectives provided a better understanding of some of the strengths and weaknesses that EL teachers face daily in addressing ELL achievement. Preparing educators to teach and work effectively with ELLs is an educational need and challenge that U.S. public schools face (Feiman-Nemser, 2018). EL teachers' perspectives will be shared with other EL teachers or teacher leaders to consider best practices for meeting the instructional needs of ELLs, which will positively influence the instruction provided and better prepare ELLs to pass state exams.

The results of this study will provide educators and other teacher leaders with information regarding current practices and perspectives associated with EL achievement to assist in improving best instructional practices for ELLs. The results of my research will help effect positive social change by informing critical stakeholders of interventions to support teachers' efforts to help ELLs meet student learning outcomes. EL teachers provided a different lens that might change behaviors and practices and positively influence ELLs' academic performance. The social change will promote better practices and support to be implemented to close the achievement gap for EL students. This study will contribute to a positive social change in our nation's largest-growing student population. With this study, EL teachers felt more empowered after sharing their perspectives on successes, challenges, and resources to better meet their students' needs.

Teachers who instruct ELLs must partake in professional development and training to gain knowledge and skills to teach in diverse classrooms (Feiman-Nemser,

2018). Past state reading scores of ELLs showed that eighth-grade EL teachers need additional resources, strategies, and support to prepare their students better, requiring more than merely attending professional development. This research will benefit secondary educators in a northern district in Virginia by providing insights regarding effective instructional delivery of content to ELL students. Very little research was conducted to determine what successes, challenges, and resources are necessary to benefit ELLs from ELL teachers' perspectives. This study will have implications for positive social change by offering strategies and approaches for improving classroom instructional practices for EL teachers that will impact the instructional academic success of ELLs.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs. To address the practice problem, I sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are teachers' perspectives on their successes in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?

RQ 2: What are teachers' perspectives on their challenges in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?

RQ 3: What are teachers' perspectives on the resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs?

The answers to these questions will assist school district leaders in planning future professional development, allocating appropriate resources, and implementing best practices to satisfy teachers' needs and improve ELLs' achievement.

Review of Literature

Introduction

In this basic qualitative study, I explored teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs. My literature review included sources from peer-reviewed journal articles, reliable scholarly publications, published books, and databases. The databases used were Education Research Complete, Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), EBSCOHost, ProQuest, Education from SAGE, and Google Scholar. Search terms and key phrases to locate the peer-reviewed articles and other material were as follows: *English learners*, *English language teachers*, *ELL instruction*, *English as a Second Language*, *Language Acquisition*, and *Principal instructional leader*. I selected peer-reviewed articles based on their relevance to this project study. The literature searched is related to articles, books, and publications over the last five years.

In my literature review, I provided information on Krashen's Language Acquisition Theory, Characteristics of ELLs, Federal Requirement for Educating ELLs, Achievement Gaps, ELL Teacher Preparedness, Principal's Role, Principal's Role in Closing the Achievement Gap, EL Teacher's Role, Co-teaching and Content Teacher Collaboration, Instructional Practices for ELLs, and Culturally Responsive Teaching.

These topics allowed me to make connections to the relevance of this project study. In this section, I provided the implications and summary.

Krashen's Language Acquisition Theory: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Krashen's language acquisition theory. I examined the literature on EL teachers and ELL literacy instruction. Krashen (1987) emphasized the difference between learning a language and acquiring one to be understood for comprehending the hypotheses. Learning a language is a conscious process that requires knowing and talking about the grammatical structures and rules of English. These things are difficult to come across in language acquisition because the learner usually needs to learn the rules and grammatical structures of the language, even if he can speak the language accurately (Krashen, 1987). According to Krashen, ELL students need motivation to learn a second language, and EL teachers need to be able to motivate their students. Krashen stated that children do not learn their native tongue but acquire it, which is also possible for adults who want to learn a second or a foreign language. According to Krashen, second-language acquisition is the process of language learning. ELL students may improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The second-language acquisition theory is closer to acquiring a language than learning it (Gökcan & Çobanoğlu Aktan, 2018). My study built on this conceptual framework because it aligned with the exploration of teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs.

Review of the Broader Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives of their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs in reading. In this literature review, I searched for studies concentrated on EL instruction. I focused on research analyzing the EL teachers. ELLs are the fastest-growing student population in American public schools (Estrella et al., 2018). However, the academic performance of ELL students was much lower than other populations (Estrella et al., 2018). The percentage of public school students in the United States who were ELLs was higher in the fall of 2019 than in the fall of 2010. In the fall of 2019, about 3.9 million Hispanic ELL public-school students constituted over three-quarters of ELL student enrollment (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2022). The growing needs of the EL student population for EL teachers have caused educational leaders to rethink the current strategies and resources available to EL teachers.

Characteristics of English Language Learners (ELLs)

Educating ELLs has a complicated history, characterized by competing theoretical perspectives, a relatively small pool of research, numerous changing policy instantiations, and compounding issues surrounding ELLs' sizable and rapidly growing presence in the U.S. education system (Marsh, 2018). ELLs, defined as students who first learned to speak, read, and write a language other than English, are one of the fastest-growing student populations in North American schools. It is documented that ELLs often enter school with weaker English literacy skills than their native English-speaking peers and

are at risk of falling behind academically (Ludwig et al., 2019). While the number of culturally and linguistically diverse students in mainstream classrooms continued to expand rapidly, roughly 10% of the school-aged population in the United States is currently classified as EL, or emerging bilinguals, with much higher rates in urban schools. There remains a critical shortage of teachers prepared to teach emerging bilingual students (Dray et al., 2021). Therefore, my study explored the perspectives of secondary EL teachers remaining in today's classrooms.

Cassady et al. (2018) examined how K-12 principals support teachers of ELL learners. Cassady et al. (2018) reported that ELL learners are a diverse group of learners with home languages different from the language of instruction in the classroom. Because ELL learners have unique learning needs, Cassady et al. (2018) identified barriers to the delivery of ELL instruction. They indicated that K-12 principals need to support literacy development within schools and support teachers teaching ELL learners. With insight from EL teachers, school leaders will be better equipped to provide the resources in the EL classroom.

Johnson (2020) identified a growing gap in the academic attainment of ELL learners compared to first-language English students. Johnson indicated that 67% of ELL learners graduated from high school compared to the national average of 84%. Johnson said that though 81% of native English speakers attend college, only 62% of ELL learners attend college, and of that, 62% complete a two-year college program. Johnson concluded that ELL learners are affected by their status regarding student achievement. Johnson examined the reclassification of ELL learners, especially students in the eighth

grade, and how the reclassification of the ELL learners affects them. When students reach the eighth grade, ELL learners may choose their subject of study in preparation for college or vocational qualification; however, how these learners are classified at this stage determines the subjects available to them to take in preparation for college admission (Johnson, 2020).

Federal Requirements for Educating ELLs

EL students in the United States are historically lower achieving than their native English-speaking peers. There are several contributing factors to the achievement gap. In recent years, the U.S. Department of Education has undertaken various initiatives to address some of the known factors to improve education for these students and minimize educational disparities (Glatt Yochai, 2018). In December 2015, the ESSA was signed into law, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and replacing the NCLB. ESEA, the federal law that authorizes federal funding for K-12 schools, represents the nation's commitment to equal educational opportunity for all students and has influenced the education of millions of children (Young et al., 2017).

Over the years, the combined mandates of NCLB and ESSA have coalesced to raise the expectations of ELLs to meet standards and push schools and districts to meet the needs of ELLs (Marsh, 2018). These mandates left school districts searching for best practices for ELLs and resources for ELL teachers to meet the ever-changing state standards. According to Li and Peters (2020), K-12 teachers of ELLs are aware of accountability for the ELLs' progress as required by standardized tests. Although research

indicated promising teaching methods for working with ELLs, teachers' actual knowledge and skills to support effective instruction for ELLs only sometimes reach them (Li & Peters, 2020). Therefore, the findings from my study will inform interventions to prepare teachers better and provide input that can be shared with school leaders.

Achievement Gaps

ELLs are the fastest-growing student population in American public schools (Estrella et al., 2018). However, the academic performance of ELL students is much lower than other populations (Estrella et al., 2018). The persistent academic achievement gap between ELLs and their English-only-speaking peers has not changed much in years (Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019). According to the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (2022), reflecting the national increase, the percentage of public school students who were ELLs was higher in the fall of 2019 than in the fall of 2010 in 42 states and the District of Columbia. In the remaining eight states, the percentage of public school students who were ELLs was lower in the fall of 2019 than in the fall of 2010. Some gains have been made in some states; however, studies were needed to seek the successes and areas of need for the ELLs through their teacher's perspective.

Recent data showed that 43% of fourth-grade ELL students scored below baseline in math compared to 15% of non-ELL students. This gap persisted through eighth grade, with 69% of ELL students and only 26% of non-ELL students performing poorly in math (the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2022). It was concerning to see such a significant gap in achievement between ELLs and non-ELLs.

There were likely many factors contributing to this achievement gap, including language barriers, cultural differences, and lack of access to resources and support. It was important for educators to be aware of these challenges and to work toward creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

The gap continued into the eighth grade, with 69% of ELLs and only 26% of non-ELLs scoring below basic in math. The difference was more dramatic in the English Language Arts assessment, which relies entirely on reading, writing, and language skills (Glatt Yochai, 2018). In the northern Virginia school district, there was a large achievement gap in the reading state assessment scores of the non-ELLs and ELLs. In 2019, merely 39% of eighth-grade ELLs passed the state assessment in reading (Education, 2022). Glatt Yochai (2018) claimed this was not surprising, as low scores translate into graduation rates below their English-speaking peers. The achievement gap was addressed to ensure equity among all students.

Fusarelli et al. (2018) stated that, with the reauthorization of ESSA (2015), teachers are the most crucial factor in student learning and growth in student achievement. The quality of teachers' effectiveness in instructional practices is determined at both the state and federal levels. With the requirements from ESSA, schools continue to be accountable for closing the academic achievement gaps of all students. For ESSA requirements, Congress allocated Title II funds to schools to support student achievement. With the reauthorization of ESSA, teacher quality directly correlates to closing achievement gaps. Villegas et al. (2018) reported information on the relationship between the academic achievement of all students and insufficient financing

for ELLs. Villegas et al. claimed that the performance gap occurred because of insufficient resources that were not supporting targeted populations using federal and state funds. According to Mavrogordato and White (2020), school leaders have a critical role in ensuring that schools make the best decisions for meeting the academic needs of their students.

ELL Teacher Preparedness

As the ELL student population in the United States has steadily increased, teacher preparation programs at U.S. colleges and universities have been tasked with ensuring that preservice teacher candidates enrolled in their programs are prepared to effectively instruct students whose native language is not English (Starks & Wissink, 2019). According to Saultz et al. (2018), high-quality teachers and student achievement are linked. Teachers who become certified to teach ELLs have various routes to teacher certification. Programs through which ELLs are served can be divided into bilingual education, English as a Second Language (ESOL) program, and mainstream. Requirements for teacher preparation within each program depend on various factors. Most bilingual education requires teachers to be prepared and competent to teach students in their native language, as well as English as the second language (Kimbrel, 2019). The ESOL program requires teaching professionals to be prepared to teach English ELL students reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. (Li & Peters, 2020). These teachers are experts in the classroom servicing ELLs; their perspectives matter. As the number of ELLs continues to grow, states across the nation are faced with the heightened

challenge of ensuring that educational professionals are well-prepared to provide quality instruction to all students who enter their classrooms, including those who are learning the English language (Feiman-Nemser, 2018).

Research supported the need for specialized instruction in preservice teacher programs and also identified states such as Arizona that mandated college coursework called Structured English Immersion (SEI). SEI entails up to 90 hours of instruction aimed at teaching strategies, such as word knowledge and building background, to preservice teachers (Starks & Wissink, 2019). Bacon (2020) stated that stakeholders hope the heightened emphasis on preparing teachers for linguistic diversity will help to align the profession with the multilingual realities of today's U.S. classrooms.

Principals' Role

Russell (2018) stated that the culture and norms principals establish in a school can affect teacher leaders' ability to impact instructional practice in classrooms. It is estimated that principals are one of the largest school-based influences on student achievement, second only to teachers (Grissom et al., 2021). The principal's role makes a critical impact on any area of a school. Research on effective schools reveals that principal leadership is a consistent and imperative factor for change and school reform (Philippakos, 2021). Doss et al. (2021) stated that principals have a multidimensional job that includes leading the hiring and firing of staff, directing the school's instructional goals and resources to support the attainment of those instructional goals, and setting the overall vision and culture of the school.

For my study, the EL teacher's perspective of the principal's role was critical. The conceptualizations of the principalship focused on ensuring that the core mission of teaching and learning in schools is occurring. Responsibilities in this dimension include observing and supervising teachers, managing the curriculum, and other interactions that support instruction (Doss et al., 2021). School administrators are key factors in student achievement. According to Cooc et al. (2019), it is natural for school administrators to exert more leadership in improving student achievement and overall school performance.

Principals' Role in Closing the Achievement Gap

LaMonica et al. (2021) stated that recent policy initiatives intensified what is expected of principals, especially in schools identified as underperforming. The expectation for principals to lead rapid improvement, often defined as dramatic gains in test scores, has only intensified pressures. The principal plays a key role in closing the achievement gap for all students. Principal leadership can promote sustainable instructional change. Principals who take responsibility as instructional leaders are aware of evidence-based practices and communicate the school's mission and instructional and reform goals to stakeholders (Philippakos, 2021). Cooc et al. (2019) explained that until recently, student achievement had been directly or indirectly related to various school-level factors, including principal leadership. With increased accountability systems, principals are held to a higher standard to raise student expectations, improve school cultures and climates, and elevate instructional practices (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019).

A teacher's perspective and instructional practice with ELLs were key factors in learners' academic success. The study conducted by Cooc et al. (2019) suggested that

teacher characteristics, such as teacher collaboration, teacher instruction, interaction, and professional culture, indirectly mediate the effect of principal leadership on student achievement. Despite evidence that principal quality is the second most important within-school factor in student achievement, demonstrating the importance of continued, in-the-field leadership development on student outcomes is difficult (LaMonica et al., 2021).

EL Teachers' Role

Russell (2018) stated that mainstream teachers do not necessarily have the knowledge and expertise that EL teachers possess. Therefore, it is possible that ELLs will be improperly assessed (or not assessed at all), and instruction will either be incomprehensible to them or too remedial. The EL teacher played an important role with ELL students in regular content classrooms and ELL classrooms. Recent U.S. education policies frame the marginalization of emergent bilinguals as an issue of inadequate teacher preparation. Through this framing, histories of economic, racial, and linguistic discrimination are overshadowed by the discourse on standardized testing gaps for which teaching can be upheld as both a problem and solution (Bacon, 2020). This study focused on the EL teacher's role in supporting ELL students in all content and EL classrooms. Bacon (2020) reviewed research on teaching emergent bilinguals in specific content areas, concluding that content area teachers are often unprepared for contexts in which there is linguistic diversity. He concluded that teachers generally have strong content knowledge but often struggle to teach the language of their content area. Due to the lack of teacher preparation for content area teachers to teach ELLs, EL teachers must ensure they can assist content teachers and ELL students in individual and whole group settings.

The role of EL teachers is to ensure they are meeting the academic needs of the ELLs.

Dray et al. (2021) state that these teachers must be able to scaffold and differentiate instruction for different levels of language proficiency and background knowledge while upholding high expectations for students learning English by creating intellectually challenging classrooms. In addition, teachers of emerging bilinguals should include opportunities for students to engage in collaboration, creativity, and innovation, which are required in 21st-century schools.

The local school district had specific expectations for EL teachers. The district was committed to learning and achievement for all students. In support of this commitment, the local school district required EL teachers in every K-12 school to provide a language instruction program in a supportive environment so that English learners gained proficiency in English and met the same rigorous academic content and student achievement standards as other students. Support for this initiative came from EL teachers. The EL teachers provided components of instruction for academic language instruction to students at English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels 1–5 for success in language arts, math, social studies, and science. In addition, EL teachers implemented delivery styles to maximize service opportunities taught in cotaught, push-in, pull-out, and inclusion settings. The ESL teacher supported the content teacher's knowledge techniques that support ELD.

Coteaching and Content Teacher Collaboration

In the local setting, the county provided support for all non-ESL supported Shelter Instruction (SI) and special education teachers from ELLs. As part of the EL Professional

Learning Program, the county ensured that all SI teachers who were not ESL-approved and all special education teachers serving ELLs completed 45 hours of mandatory professional development over three years. In addition, they completed at least five hours of practical practice each academic year. Some examples of implementation practices included expert and peer tutoring, demonstration classroom visits, collaborative student work analysis, and sharing strategies within professional learning communities to transfer training into the classroom.

Many of the classrooms in the local school division used the co-teaching model with ELLs. Bauler et al. (2019) stated that a co-teaching model can help ESOL and content teachers balance the demanding task of focusing on language, culture, and content in a diverse classroom. The relationship between content and ESOL teachers should be reciprocal. Bauler and Kang (2019) stated that coteaching between English Speakers of ESOL and content teachers is a recognized approach to addressing the needs of ELLs in schools worldwide. Varying models of coteaching or team teaching have been adopted in Australia, England, Canada, the U.S., and international universities to include ELLs in the mainstream classroom while granting these students access to grade-level content. In the local division, teachers were responsible for teaching ELLs in content classes, coteaching with an EL teacher, special education classes, and ESOL classes. Including ELLs in the mainstream classroom through team teaching or coteaching between a content teacher and a language teacher was a sensible solution to tackle the ever-increasing number of ELLs in U.S. schools. Teacher collaboration and coteaching

have been advocated as strong practices that can foster the development of teacher leaders and enhance student learning (Bauler et al., 2019).

Instructional Practices for ELLs

Oliver (2021) stated that over the past two decades, various articulations of what constitutes leadership for ELLs have existed. While some researchers have focused on the essential characteristics of successful leaders of ELLs, that is, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they display, others have identified explicit practices, that is, what leaders do for the ELLs they serve. Leaders must hire teachers and provide support for ELL teachers to meet the needs of their students. ELLs regularly experience teachers with limited knowledge about how to help ELLs make academic gains. Teacher support was important for all students, but it was a critical aspect of classroom instruction for ELLs. ELLs generally face unique academic challenges as they gain ELP and master academic content simultaneously (Banse et al., 2018). EL teachers must keep in mind that as they are instructing students, their perspectives on the ELL students are critical to these students' achievement. Theories and beliefs are important to teachers' general knowledge, including how they perceive, process, and act upon information in classrooms (Kulkarni et al., 2022).

In Virginia, ELLs comprise over 12% of the student population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Educational programs that address an ELL's native language help provide equitable opportunities through intentional language and literacy development in two languages simultaneously. The state provided professional development opportunities and support for EL teachers' instructional best practices for

ELL students; as a result, this is implemented in the local counties. The local county implemented a new standard in all educators' evaluation processes in alignment with state requirements for educators. In the 2022-2023 school year, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) released revisions to some of the performance standards for professional educators and educational leaders and added new standards related to culturally responsive teaching and equitable practices.

Additionally, several new performance standards were developed to better align with the work of the non-classroom professional educators, central office instructional administrators, and associate superintendents. According to VDOE (2023), research the importance of professionals' commitments to becoming lifelong learners. Educators who engage in lifelong learning set examples for their students by practicing what they taught. Effective educators supported students' development into lifelong learners as they shared their own experiences of working through the learning process.

The state in which the study was conducted implemented a Virginia English Learner Instruction Professional Development Framework. This framework was a guidance document designed in response to requests for support for individual professional learning related to equitable instruction and best practices for ELLs. VDOE (2023) stated that the professional development framework was to ensure a coherent system that supports educators across the entire professional continuum. Professional learning should link to educators' experiences in preparation and induction and to teaching standards and evaluation. The framework was adapted from the Teaching

English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association's Professional Teaching Standards.

TESOL was a major international source of information and resources for advancing the field in teaching excellence for ELLs through a general education classroom or during ELD instruction from an ELL specialist. For the state and local county, this framework supported educators and leaders with ideas for teaching ELLs and any student learning the academic language of a content area. The compilation of information was extracted from the Virginia Standards for Teacher Practice Key Elements, descriptions, explanations accompanying the sets of TESOL and National Board standards, and best practices listed in current research and literature. The collection of material above demonstrated educator equitable instructional practice for ELLs.

An EL teacher's instruction planning differed from a regular classroom teacher's instruction. EL teachers prepared their instruction using best practices through learned strategies gleaned from professional development. The EL teacher's preparation courses were geared toward ELLs' success. Teachers should use teaching strategies based on best teaching practices (Mazzotti et al., 2018). Teaching ELLs is challenging for teachers (Lemonidis & Kaiafa, 2018). Teachers need professional development to empower ELLs to learn English (Estrella et al., 2018). Researchers noted specific strategies and other changes that leaders made to address concerns about EL teachers' instructional practices. ELLs benefit when teachers use strategies to establish interactions with them (Balagova & Halakova, 2018). One strategy used visual aids to help ELLs gain confidence in literacy (Amos & Rehorst, 2018) by working on reasonable language exercises and

assignments (Altiner, 2018). Another strategy required knowing how to teach vocabulary (Mesta & Reber, 2019). Yet, a mere focus on teaching practices was not enough in the era of standards, high-stakes testing, and accountability. School personnel addressed the diversifying student populations and the achievement gap through culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching values the cultural and linguistic diversity that ELLs bring to school with them and allows students to use their various funds of knowledge (Oliver, 2021).

The importance of equity for EL education will continue to increase as Virginia's EL population increases. Implementing the current professional development framework provided pathways for the continuous growth of EL educators, which will help Virginia schools meet the challenge of graduating from college and career-ready students in a globally competitive environment (VDOE, 2023). This study will create a social change in the local setting for the EL teachers and other teacher leaders. Ideally, EL teachers will continue to use what works best for ELLs and also in other areas where they endeavor to meet the needs of their students.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

With globalization, many teacher education programs face the challenge of preparing prospective teachers for culturally responsive teaching with the increasing cultural diversity in schools, which is today's reality (Özüdoğru, 2018). Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2021) stated that most educators with whom we have worked agree that there is a strong relationship between culture and motivation and that it only makes sense to understand a student's perspective. It is important to note that the majority of the

nation's public school teachers do not share students' heritage or diverse linguistic backgrounds. This creates a challenge and raises questions about essential competencies that need to be addressed in preservice teacher preparation programs (Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019).

Divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia served over 117,000 ELLs, who speak over 240 languages and come from a variety of learning and cultural backgrounds. These students bring a unique set of assets that have the potential to enrich the experiences of all learners and educators (VDOE, 2023). Current EL teachers were struggling to meet the needs of these diverse learners. The present research showed that students who were culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) make up 33% of the school population in the United States. The increasing population of students who are CLD and their learning needs or challenges is of great concern to educators, as research has indicated that students from CLD backgrounds tend to receive lower grades and drop out of school at higher rates than their nondiverse peers (Lubin et al., 2021). CLD teachers must learn about the students' languages and educational backgrounds as well as home and second-language proficiencies. They must be able to identify the language demands of classroom tasks and apply principles of a second language and language development. They need to know how to interpret and use standardized test results, as well as how to develop, interpret, and use formative and summative assessments for instructional purposes (Dray et al., 2021). This study will allow EL teachers an opportunity to share their perspectives on instructing ELLs with the hopes of providing the principal with feedback on the next steps to address the current challenges and celebrate the successes.

Implications

This study will benefit ELLs, EL teachers, and educational leaders by allowing all stakeholders to explore the best instructional practices to better serve ELL students.

Walden University considers itself a learning organization that seeks continuous improvement and believes that quality and integrity are the cornerstones of all academic processes (Walden University, L.L.C., n.d.). The implications of this project study will be significant to ELLs, EL teachers, and educational leaders who were struggling in middle school classrooms to pass the reading state assessment. The findings of this project study will make a positive change to improve the quality of instruction for ELLs by providing insight into resources and best practices for EL teachers.

Summary

The ELL population continued to increase in Northern Virginia. These students must receive equitable instruction and resources to address their needs by ensuring EL teachers are well-prepared to teach them. Teachers of ELLs needed to be able to share what was going well in their classroom, challenging areas, and additional resources to meet this growing population's academic needs. The principal must actively support the EL teachers to ensure they have what they need to support their students better. This qualitative study explored teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs. The conceptual framework was the theory of second-language acquisition. It states that ELLs can improve their language proficiency in a natural environment focused on realia, movement, and authentic projects.

In Section 2, I presented a review of the literature on EL teachers' perspectives and the role of principals in supporting EL teachers' needs.

Section 2: Methodology

Introduction

In Section 2, I discussed the study's methodology. I described the number of EL teacher interviewees, sample size, confidentiality, and privacy of this study. The data collection process included participant interviews, and the data collected were analyzed and organized using Delve qualitative software. Then, I was able to disaggregate the data line by line. The Delve software enabled me to identify distinct codes, patterns, and themes.

Research Design and Approach

I used a basic qualitative study to explore the EL teacher's perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap. This design was selected because of the purpose and nature of the study, which explores several perspectives of participants. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), the qualitative methodology allows researchers to study a problem with unknown variables by exploring multiple perspectives. This approach is best aligned with my study's purpose.

This basic qualitative study allowed me to study the phenomenon of closing the achievement gaps for ELLs by using the EL teacher's perspectives in a real-world environment. Qualitative research involves systematic and contextualized research processes to interpret how humans view, approach, and make meaning of their experiences, contexts, and the world. Using personal topics in the current context made the study more beneficial to the researcher. Qualitative research involves fieldwork and

naturalistic engagement. The researcher is physically present with the people in a community, institution, or context to engage, observe, and record experiences and behavior in a natural setting (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). This approach allowed me to provide an authentic and realistic study related to the local district. As a result, the impact of this research will allow me to implement positive social change in the local district.

Basic Qualitative Project Study Design

The most appropriate approach for this study was the qualitative approach. Qualitative methodology allows researchers to study a problem with unknown variables by exploring multiple perspectives (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). A quantitative approach was not useful to allow the phenomenon of closing the achievement gaps for ELLs. In quantitative research, the researcher seeks to understand and describe a phenomenon, behavior, or issue using numerical data and statistical analysis. This includes measurement of variables and strategies for sampling (Burkholder et al., 2020). I was not seeking to gather numerical data for this study or use a strategy to sample. In addition, using any of the common types of randomized experimental, quasi-experimental, or nonexperimental quantitative designs was not appropriate for this study. Instead, I used the participant responses to the research questions in the study to explore how and why a phenomenon happened without controlling the events surrounding it. This was done by using a qualitative approach. I used the research questions in the study to explore how and why a phenomenon happened without controlling the events surrounding it. This was done by using a qualitative approach.

I explored how the EL teachers' perspectives of their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs using a basic qualitative design. I collected data through one-to-one interviews with EL teachers. This approach provided insight into best practices for meeting the instructional needs of ELLs better, which will positively impact their instruction and better prepare them to pass state exams at the same rate as their non-ELL peers.

Participants

Population and Sampling

The setting for the project study was in Northern Virginia. The county was the second-largest school division in the state and the 34th-largest school district in the United States. Currently, the county has nineteen middle schools, and the EL population comprises 26 % of the student population in the county. I sent invitations to EL teachers who teach at the middle school level. Schools selected to participate in this study will have at least five or more EL teachers.

Teddlie (2017) stated that purposive sampling techniques are primarily used in qualitative studies and may be defined as selecting units based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions. According to Teddlie (2017), purposive sampling leads to a greater depth of information from a smaller number of carefully selected cases. In contrast, probability sampling leads to a greater breadth of information from a larger number of units selected to be representative of the population. With this sampling, the researcher can be more meaningful and purposeful when sampling by using their own and experts' prior experience.

Purposive sampling refers to selecting a sample based on a particular purpose that meets the needs of the study (Burkholder et al., 2020). Collecting data using purposive sampling has strengths and limitations. I used purposeful sampling to select participants. One limitation was finding and selecting willing participants who communicated honestly regarding responses to their principals' support. My role as a middle school principal did not affect the participants' responses. To mitigate bias, participants were selected from two other middle schools where I did not have any supervising role and did not know the participants personally.

Criteria for Participant Selection

The participants in the study were teachers who were certified to instruct ELL students and had a current caseload of ELLs. They are responsible for ensuring their learning accommodations are implemented throughout the school year. The participants selected for a qualitative study were those who could contribute the most to addressing the research problem and research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To ensure that the perception from ELL teachers was gained for this study, I sought participants that had a criterion of: (a) a minimum of one year of teaching experience with ELL students in the local county, (b) one year of teaching experience in the county from 2014 to the current school year, and (c) ELL certified in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted that a sample size of 3-10 participants is sufficient for a basic qualitative research design in exploring a phenomenon. I sought 10 study participants from two middle schools in the local county. I planned to have ten participants in the study to gain

the most EL teachers' perspectives that will benefit in closing the achievement gap for our ELLs. I sought participant selection based on the criterion stated above, and I had no professional relationship or supervisory ties with the participants.

Participants' Rights and Protections

Researchers must follow the Nuremberg Code, dating back to the 20th Century, and the Professional Code of Ethics. In addition, researchers must follow the three ethical principles of respecting people, beneficence, and justice. This dissertation study required Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before I began collecting data for the study. I sought to partner with my local district to complete the signed Partner Organization Agreement as well as complete the web-based form for the ethical approval process. I waited for the IRB approval number and clearance to collect data due to the ethical standards of my proposal being fully approved through Taskstream.

Babbie (2017) stated that human research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteer for the study. For this basic qualitative study, all participants were safe, and an agreement upon the meeting place was the interviewing location. As the researcher, I was conscious of not having preconceived ideas. I ensured all ethical standards were implemented throughout the study with integrity. In addition, I ensured that I respected the participant's time. I conducted myself professionally, treated my participants with respect, and kept all responses confidential. After five years, I plan to destroy all notes, documents, and the USB device that will include information regarding the study.

All research involves some degree of risk; some research methods, such as observations of public behavior and some types of secondary research, are essentially low risk. Other research methods, such as surveys and experiments, might place research participants at minimal risk (Burkholder et al., 2020). For my study, the EL teachers' perspectives on the principal's role in supporting them were explored. Participants' responses were shared with them to ensure I captured the correct interpretations; however, names and school settings were excluded. As a result, this study was minimal risk for the participants. Researchers must protect the participants and ensure confidentiality is implemented and all steps of the IRB process have been followed ethically. In addition, researchers must be aware of all risks and benefits; therefore, this will minimize potential ethical issues.

Data Collection

For my study, I used a basic qualitative study to explore the EL teacher's perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap. As a mainstay of qualitative data collection, interviews are central to many qualitative studies since they provide deep, rich, individualized, and contextualized data that are centrally important to qualitative research. The primary goals of qualitative interviews are to gain focused insight into individuals' lived experiences, to understand how participants make sense of and construct reality about the phenomenon, events, engagement, or experience, and to explore how individuals' experiences and perspectives relate to those of other study participants and perhaps prior research on similar topics (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I

developed questions for individual semi-structured interviews. I set aside one hour for participant interviews, allowing enough time for clarifying and follow-up questions. Yin (2018) stated interviews are an essential data source in a basic qualitative study.

As I created interview questions, I reviewed and revised them based on feedback from my committee to ensure I avoided research bias. In addition, I formulated questions that provided the best responses to collect data to answer my research questions. Once interviews were conducted, I emailed all participants their responses for them to review and confirm responses were captured correctly. Using interviews allowed teachers to express personal feelings. Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated that researchers can explore people's perspectives to achieve fuller development of information within and across individuals and groups while keeping similar lines of questioning that help you look within and across experiences in ways that help decipher meaning, experience, similarity, and difference.

Procedure for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

To begin the study, I gained IRB approval and recruited participants who fit the criterion. IRBs are informed consent that will ensure that the participants understand the nature of the research, are aware of risks, and have given consent (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I interviewed 7 EL teachers during semi-structured one-to-one interviews using open-ended questions regarding their perspectives on the challenges, successes, and resources needed to assist ELLs effectively. According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), semistructured, probing, and follow-up questions may be suggested on the interview instrument and used

as needed during the interview. I conducted the interviews for one hour. I kept notes in a personal journal to record my thoughts regarding the interviews. The participants and I discussed the interview norms and the assurance of confidentiality for the study. I audio-recorded the interview with permission from each participant. I scheduled a day, time, and location to meet the participants to conduct the interviews. The interviews were conducted over four weeks. I made accommodations for Zoom interviewing and recording based on the participant's availability. Communication occurred with the participants to discuss the interview procedures, and a follow-up email was sent out to confirm the agreed-upon interview. In addition, I transcribed recordings to analyze them and took notes during the interview to eliminate distractions for the participants. According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), many considerations need to be taken into consideration so that transcripts are valid and reliable.

Ross et al. (2018) stated that informed consent protects the participants' rights during all aspects of the study. Informed consent was discussed with the participants, and either the agreement to participate was established, or the choice to withdraw from the study was offered. Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated that consent is a vital concept and ethic. Informing participants means researchers give potential participants information they are asking of participants. Researchers must be aware of all risks and benefits; this will minimize potential ethical issues that may arise. Babbie (2017) states that human research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteer for the study. This ensured the participants' privacy was protected, and the

researcher set the parameters and reassured all the participants before they participated in the research study.

After gathering data and conducting semi-structured interviews, I informed the participants of a seven-day window of contact time that was needed to follow up with a phone contact. This follow-up phone contact was utilized with the participants. To ensure transparency with the participants, I emailed the transcripts of the interviews to ensure I captured their responses correctly. I allowed seven days for them to review for accuracy. I made the needed revisions based on the participants' feedback.

Role of the Researcher

Burkholder et al. (2020) stated that qualitative research begins with assumptions and interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. My role as a first-year middle school principal did not affect the data collection because I did not know the possible participants, and I was interested in the participant's perspectives to answer the research questions for the study. In addition, our county was the second largest public school county in the state; therefore, the study sites were not at my current school. I was not in a supervisory role or had professional relationships with any possible participants; therefore, I did not influence the participants.

Burkholder et al. (2020) stated researchers can prevent selection bias by using random assignment to treatment and control groups when possible. When random assignment is not an option, researchers may statistically control for control other variables, such as socioeconomic status, gender, race, age, and disability status, in

statistical models to decrease the systematic differences between groups. I did not reflect on my personal beliefs so I could reduce bias and loss of confidentiality with the participants. I was objective throughout the study and kept my perspectives aside. Managing this process effectively required thoughtful consideration of the design of the study and the format of the online materials, including how participants would proceed from one question or activity to the next and how they would contact the researcher with any questions or concerns (Burkholder et al., 2020). By implementing professional ethics, the study findings were valid and reliable.

Data Analysis

Creswell and Poth (2018) stated data analysis in qualitative research will proceed together with other parts of developing the qualitative study, namely, the data collection and the write-up of findings. The data for this study was collected from semi-structured interviews. I used the data from the participants' interview transcripts that I reviewed for coding. A methods discussion in a qualitative proposal or study also needs to specify the steps in analyzing the various forms of qualitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The area of focus was on organizing and analyzing the data gathered from the interview questions. As stated earlier, transcribing took place with additional notetaking when needed during the interviews.

I conducted a thematic analysis for this study. Saldana (2021) stated a code in qualitative analysis is often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. In a qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher-generated interpretation that

symbolizes or translates data and attributes meaning to each purpose of pattern detection categorization, theme, or other analytical processes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The precoding and coding process took place to identify the codes and ideas. In addition, open coding was done in several ways. Some people do it by hand, using sticky notes or different color highlighters (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I used both open coding and other features in word-processing documents such as Excel. This word-processing form will allow tracking of changes and commenting features (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). As a result, this allowed me to identify the categories and themes. I used an Excel spreadsheet with descriptive codes. I created the coding columns by identifying each participant, the research question, common codes, and themes. I worked on this process until I could identify the ideas, themes, and categories to find the EL teacher's perspectives. As a result, this allowed me to identify reoccurring participants' responses.

Credibility

I took proper steps to ensure my research was valid and credible from the beginning of the study. Burkholder et al. (2020) stated credibility is established using strategies such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, progressive subjectivity, member checking, and triangulation. Triangulation involves looking across different kinds of data to determine what interpretation best fits the data, hopes for patterns, explanations, for alternative explanations, and a willingness to be the devil's advocate in your research (Burkholder et al., 2020). It is commonly thought of as having different sources or methods to challenge

or confirm a point or set of interpretations (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I sought all of my participants from the local county with set criteria for the participants. I sought participants not within my supervision and with no personal bias.

Discrepant Cases

Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated qualitative research involves iterative processes of interpretation, reflection, and sense-making. Because the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative research, examining researcher biases and assumptions and understanding how these impact decisions is an ethical responsibility. This is the foundation of how I analyzed discrepant cases. I considered my research purpose by eliminating a biased and contradictive perspective.

Limitations

Burkholder et al. (2020) stated researchers can prevent selection bias by using random assignment to treatment and control groups when possible. Limitations could occur if bias exists, and professional ethics will be violated. Although this study will potentially benefit EL teachers, school leaders, and ELLs, the study has potential limitations. My role as a middle school principal did not affect the participants' responses. There was one limitation in this qualitative study; the study focused only on middle school EL teachers and did not include general education teachers in public education who instruct ELLs in their classes. The potential participants for this study included seven middle school EL teachers who teach ELLs in ELL classes in public schools. As a result, the findings of this study did not represent all teachers who instruct ELLs in social studies, science, or math in general educational classes in Northern

Virginia. For this qualitative study, I conducted semi-structured interviews. To mitigate and limit biases, I plan to exclude any acquaintances from this study.

Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the EL teacher's perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap. The research problem was that an average of 40% of eighth-grade ELLs met proficiency in reading on SOL tests. This performance was significantly lower than non-ELL mastery proficiency, with a proficiency average of 70%. I sought to explore teachers' perspectives of their successes, challenges, and the resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs in reading. Research was needed in this area to inform educators and other teacher leaders of the current practices and perspectives associated with EL achievement to assist in improving best instructional practices for ELLs. I chose purposeful sampling and collected data from 7 EL teachers to explore their perspectives on the successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap.

I drew the conceptual framework that I used for this study from Krashen's language acquisition theory. Krashen's theory (1987) emphasized the difference between learning a language and acquiring one to be understood for comprehending the hypotheses. I established the research questions using the concepts from Krashen's conceptual framework:

RQ 1: What are teachers' perspectives on their successes in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?

RQ 2: What are teachers' perspectives on their challenges in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?

RQ 3: What are teachers' perspectives on the resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs?

To answer the research questions for this qualitative study, I collected data from semi-structured interviews. Chapter 4 includes an explanation of the findings of the study and the settings of the seven participants. I have described the methods of collecting, organizing, recording, and analyzing the collected data. The chapter ends with a summary of the results as they relate to Krashen's framework of language acquisition theory.

Setting

The research study took place in the northern Virginia area of the United States. I conducted the interviews via Zoom, as established in the study's approval process. I completed the mandatory steps with the school division to gain approval to conduct the study. I completed the questions and provided the Interview Protocol form (Appendix A) to gain full approval. After approval, the information was shared with the Level Superintendents to support me in selecting schools that could best provide a wider range of participants. I emailed five school principals to share with their EL teachers, and only three school principals received responses. Seven EL teachers agreed to participate in the study via email with "I agree willingly to participate in the study." Within one school day, I contacted the participants. I used an Excel document that included each participant's information. I ensured all participants met the criterion of (a) a minimum of one year of teaching experience with ELL students in the local county, (b) one year of teaching experience in the county from 2014 to the current school year, and (c) ELL certified in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. I communicated via email to accommodate

the participant's personal and work schedules. As a result, interviews were scheduled with an agreed-upon date and time.

Participant Profiles

Table 2 provides a summary of the participants' years of EL teaching experience and the languages spoken.

Table 2

Participant Profiles

Teacher Years of Experience and Languages

Participant	Years of EL Teaching	Languages Spoken
T1	4	English & Spanish
T2	6	English
T3	10	English & Spanish
T4	8	English & Farsi
T5	7	English & Spanish
T6	2	English
T7	30	English & Italian

Note: The table indicates the number of years each participant has taught EL and the Language they speak.

Participants' identities were protected by assigning each person a pseudonym; the letter *T* followed by a number replaced each EL teacher's name. T1 referred to the first teacher, T2 referred to the second teacher, and so on throughout the study. The identity of the participants was not revealed at any time to the principals or school division. Each participant was informed all interview data collected would be protected and their identities would not be included in the findings of the study.

Upon receiving the seven participants' emailed agreements to participate in the study, data collection began. I collected the data via Zoom during one-to-one semi-

structured interviews. These interviews were audio-recorded with camera access. The participants were offered the choice of turning off the camera during the interview.

Data Collection

As a mainstay of qualitative data collection, interviews are the center of many qualitative studies since they provide deep, rich, individualized, and contextualized data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Before data collection, I waited until Walden University IRB approval (No. 09-11-23-027048) was granted. I notified the seven participants who agreed to participate in the study. I provided the participants with general information regarding the study. In addition, I provided potential risks and benefits. The participants corresponded through email with approval to participate in the study and agreed-upon scheduled dates and times. I provided an email reminder to the interviewer on the previous day. The interviews consisted of semi-structured, one-to-one interviews using an open-ended interview protocol via Zoom.

Pre-Assumptions Prior to Semi-structured Interviews

The study site was in Northern Virginia. Several middle schools have well over 30% ELL populations; therefore, staffing levels allow for a greater number of EL teachers and staff to support the growing population. There was a total of nineteen middle schools. I assumed that a certain area of the school district had a smaller ELL population; however, I discovered that more ELLs are moving within the school district daily and that there were more EL teachers in the area than I originally thought prior to conducting the study. Additionally, I assumed that all EL teachers spoke at least Spanish to

communicate with the majority of the ELLs in their classes. I found that not to be true, and some speak a language other than the majority language found in their taught classes.

Semistructured Individual Interviews

This basic qualitative study explored the EL teacher's perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap. I interviewed participants to gather their perspectives using one-to-one semi-structured interviews that were audio-recorded. I felt this method was the best to allow participants to feel comfortable and free to provide the best responses in private. I did inform the participants the camera option is available to be turned on or off during the interviews.

The semistructured interviews were held from October 9, 2023, through October 20, 2023. Each interview ranged from 45 minutes to a maximum of 60 minutes. All interviews were conducted after school hours. Prior to beginning the interview, I explained the purpose of the interview again, including audio-recording, camera preference, benefits, risks, and the followed-up transcript for their verification. In addition, I explained that electronic coding information and recordings are all password protected, with their identities as pseudonyms. I reiterated their identity would not be shared with their principal or district personnel.

Each interview was conducted through Zoom. Zoom is a video conferencing program. This program provides audio-recording, video-recording, and transcribing options, and it can save the collected data. With these options, I was able to provide the participants with my undivided attention and focus on their responses to the questions.

All questions were designed to allow interviews to flow naturally and maintain consistency for the study.

At the end of each interview, I thanked all participants and ended the Zoom interview. I downloaded each audio-recorded file with the transcript. A folder for each participant labeled with their given pseudonym was saved on my laptop, which was password protected. Within a day of the interviews, I began to listen and read over the transcripts to begin the coding process. I created an Excel document for this process and used it throughout this portion of the study. I completed all the transcriptions by October 31, 2023.

Data Analysis

Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated as technology and social media increasingly mediate all facets of society, the field of qualitative research, like most fields, is recognizing the need to adapt to new ways of approaching methodology. For this basic qualitative study, I collected data through video recordings and audio-recorded interviews via Zoom. I read the transcripts and added additional information from the audio recordings to process the data. I kept a data journal throughout the interviewing process. This journal was used during interviews with participants. In the journal, I had a paper copy of the interview questions; I numbered each question to ensure I captured all participants' responses. I used the audio-recording feature on the Zoom platform; however, outside noises were captured, and I needed a second source in case technology was interrupted.

Additionally, I used Delve qualitative software to organize the data. Then I was able to disaggregate the data line by line. Delve qualitative software enabled me to copy the transcripts of participants' responses line by line.

Coding Procedure

Saldana (2021) states it is rare for anyone to code correctly the first time. Descriptive coding generates a sufficient list of subtopics. A theme can be an outcome of coding, categorization, or analytic reflection. I found the coding process to be lengthy, so I had to use several tools to capture all aspects of the data from the semi-structured interviews. An Excel spreadsheet was created that had a research question column, coding column, category column, and theme column (Appendix B). I reviewed all transcripts and my notes and clarified responses from participants. I used highlighting and grouping on an Excel spreadsheet to categorize and find common themes based on codes. I color-coded for each set and categorized the data. I repeated this process several times to derive common themes. Coding had conceptual similarities among all transcripts. I used the first cycle coding and continued the process using all raw data until I derived my current themes. I ensured I reviewed this process several times to ensure I was able to see all aspects of the data.

Data Analysis Results

The findings of this study came from exploring the EL teacher's perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap. The research problem was that an average of 60% of eighth-grade ELLs in one county in Virginia are not meeting proficiency on the Virginia SOL in

reading. During the analysis stage, I identified themes that were derived from the categories. From the categories, I attempted to locate each overarching theme that had a direct relationship to the research questions. The overarching themes that emerged under RQ1, “What are teachers' perceptions of their successes in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?” were (a) lesson planning and delivery and (b) language proficiency and communication. The overarching theme that emerged under RQ2, “What are teachers' perceptions of their challenges in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?” was individualized instruction. The overarching theme that emerged under RQ3, “What are teachers' perceptions of the resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs?” was (a) connecting background knowledge and (b) effective professional development.

Research Question 1

RQ1 was: What are teachers' perceptions of their successes in teaching eighth-grade ELLs? After careful data analysis of the transcripts and going through the coding, the below themes emerged.

Theme 1: Lesson Planning and Delivery.

In Theme 1, EL teachers emphasized the importance of the preparation and delivery of lessons. The participants consistently shared the components of an effective lesson plan for meeting the diverse needs of their students. Such concepts as personalized learning, effective instruction, supporting diverse learning styles, culturally sensitive lessons, differentiation, and even more categories supported this Theme. As a result, I categorized participant responses as they communicated and emphasized the importance of lesson planning and delivery, as both are critical to teachers' success in supporting

ELLs. All participants described the importance of the planning process and how to effectively deliver the learning standards to ELLs. All participants correlated the state standards for learning and the local assessment as key growth for academic success for their ELLs. Participants indicated that as EL teachers, it was important to gain assistance with helping ELL students learn how to be proficient in English by using their acquired skills to overcome obstacles.

T1, T3, T4, T5, and T6 all indicated it was important to create formal lesson plans to allow for purposeful delivery of instruction to implement a form of scaffolding opportunities for ELLs. All participants shared a common theme of the lesson planning process as a critical component in what they found to be an academic success. T3 stated, “Students show academic success in all domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I plan for those domains daily and use formative and summative assessments. When I see they have mastered them, my students are successful.” For instance, T5 stated, “Academic success for me is having all the students engaged in participating regardless of their language and proficiency level, and hopefully they are also succeeding with the task. Students are interacting with the planned learning tasks.”

All teachers shared current resources used to scaffold learning in the classroom, demonstrating academic success in their classrooms. The participants used technology and other visuals they believed allowed their students to be academically successful. T1 shared,

Using a variety of scaffolds that I have implemented in my lesson plan allows students to be successful. Audio support, hands-on manipulatives, graphic

organizers, and anchor charts are a few of the supports that I use in my lesson plan delivery. My students respond to them, and they are academically successful. Lesson planning and the delivery of the lesson were the common themes that occurred as I took a close look at the data for this study.

Theme 2: Language Proficiency with Communication.

In Theme 2, EL teachers emphasized that language proficiency and daily communication are critical for ELLs' success in class. The participants shared concepts such as vocabulary support, grammar support, language acquisition levels, daily speaking with peers, pair work, language expression, proficiency, and other categories, which were evident in the responses that led me to Theme 2. All participants indicated that language proficiency and effective communication play a key role in students' academic success. All participants referred to a form of vocabulary building and understanding of grammar as components of their daily routines with students. All participants' daily routines included a warm-up with a form of reading and writing daily. Participants shared reading is a variety of texts. T4 stated,

I provide my students a bell ringer when they enter my room. It could be viewing a clip from a video, an online resource, a cartoon, and even a picture book. It is whatever gets them to speak in English using the grammar rules that we are practicing.

Participants shared how the key components of listening, speaking, reading, and writing support the gradual process of ELLs' learning. In addition, speaking and communicating daily in English was a major component of academic success. T3 shared,

Students turn and talk daily using academic vocabulary with their table partners. I must model for them, and depending on their proficiency level, they tend to pick up quickly. Many of them are shy at first, but as they do it more, they get comfortable.

The participants did share during the listening component for their ELLs. They must ensure the students are actively listening. T2 stated, “Students participate in active listening activities during station time. I have them to answer questions to hold them accountable for listening. They practice listening using small excerpts from television shows in English and speaking in conversations with their peers.” T6 highlighted, “Students are engaged. They know what they're doing. They show their interest by saying it orally or by writing. When my students are communicating with other students in a group talking about the topic that we're talking about, they are academically successful.” T7 insisted using visuals and previous training for ELLs is what allows her students to be successful. T7 states, “Using this 7 Steps training and the strategies provided for my students have been the most beneficial. I use these steps daily, and I teach my students what to say and how to say it. I have sentence stems for them and model how to write using the sentence stems.” All the participants shared how their EL students improve their language proficiency when they become active participants in their learning. All participants insisted the components for academic success are focusing on the language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For this study, I found that language proficiency with communication was a common theme among the collected data.

Research Question 2

“What are teachers' perceptions of their challenges in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?” After careful data analysis of the transcripts and going through the coding, the below theme emerged.

Theme 1: Individualized Instruction.

In Theme 1, EL teachers repeatedly emphasized tailoring instruction, differentiation strategies, cultural connections, various levels of learners, and more categories that lead to Theme 1. Under this theme, all participants placed some emphasis on the challenge to develop lessons to meet the individual needs of their ELLs. The findings show that all the participants had a challenge as they struggled to develop lessons at the correct proficiency levels due to their students coming from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency. The participants also shared that this is extremely difficult with the larger class sizes. T1 reported, “It is critical to consider all of the student’s backgrounds because it does have a significant influence on their learning. As educators, we have to be sensitive to the cultural differences, and it is sometimes difficult.” T2 stated, “Accurately assessing my student’s language proficiency level and determining their instructional needs is difficult, and it takes a lot of time. When I have to continue to find time to assess them and then find resources to meet their individual needs, one student can be on an elementary level, and the other student has little to no schooling.”

Over half of the participants mentioned time constraints. They shared both the planning for the individualized instruction and being able to meet the large number of

students in class. T3 shared, “I find myself struggling to provide differentiated instruction because of time and my demanding schedule. It is hard to provide feedback to each ELL and provide individual instruction effectively. Whether I move the students from station to station, it is still difficult for them to work independently where I could assist individual students.” T4 reported, “Students struggle to work independently. They rely on their partners, who are mostly stronger in English than they are because of the way I have my students seated in class. Many of my ELLs are newcomers this school year. They have only been in the country for a couple of months. Placing them appropriately in their learning groups has been hard. I feel I am not meeting their independent needs.” T5 shared, “ELL students struggle to complete their work independently. They need more time to process when I ask them to complete their work. Additional resources to assist them are needed to allow more choices. It is difficult to assist a lower-level student when another student is on a higher level. The range of learners in my classroom makes it difficult to work one-on-one with them.”

T6 said, “The language barrier is difficult for my current classes. I have many newcomers to the country. I have to scaffold for them using videos, hands-on examples, and the buddy system.” The participant shared how she struggles to help her students activate learning and make background connections. T7 reported similar struggles. She stated, “Intellectual background is a challenge for me. Many of my students are illiterate in their home language and do not understand at a middle school level. I believe it is hard to plan for students who have the basic skills of a kindergartener in middle school. Many of my students are at this level. They are illiterate. I cannot meet their individual needs.”

T7 was an outlier compared to the other participants. She shared that she believed many of her ELLs were dually identified. T7 stated, “My students are dually identified. They struggle with a learning disability and a language barrier. How do I plan for this? It is challenging.” Based on the teacher’s responses, it is a challenge to individualize instruction for each student.

Research Question 3

“What are teachers' perceptions of the resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs?” After careful data analysis of the transcripts and going through the coding, the below themes emerged.

Theme 1: Connecting Background Knowledge.

In Theme 1, EL teachers emphasized culturally diverse classrooms and activating background knowledge for their students. Many categories were shared, such as culturally responsive teaching, building connections, ongoing scaffolding, and sharing lessons supporting languages; therefore, this led me to Theme 2. The teachers in the study all agreed they must connect their students’ background knowledge to foster success for their ELLs. Overall, the participants shared that connecting background knowledge as a resource is a valuable approach to supporting ELLs’ language development. In the study, the participants provided a number of responses they implemented to support their ELLs. I have captured at least one statement from each participant that highlighted the theme of connecting background knowledge. T1 stated, “I provide surveys to students and parents based on finding their interest and their home country. I use all answers to scaffold for my students as I plan my lesson.” T2 shared, “I select a variety of texts that reflect many

of the cultures in my classroom. This gets a lot of my students involved. I use poems, story books, sports, and short stories to connect my students.” T3 stated, “My students seem to be successful using the bilingual dictionaries. I provide them with an opportunity to use the dictionaries for translations for them. Hopefully, the lightbulb goes off and they can make a connection. This seems to provide a lot of my student’s success.” T4 shared, “I use actual objects, pictures, and visuals to stimulate my student’s connections. This allows them to become engaged in the lessons and a sense of belonging.”

T5 stated, “I must use technology as a resource for my students to be able to allow them to use online resources. I allow my students to use their devices to access learning apps in their native language. This normally triggers them to make some sort of connection to the topic we are discussing.” T6 responded, “Depending on what we are discussing in class, I tend to bring in objects that allow students to make a connection. We were doing a short story that my students read discussing immigration. I allowed students to bring in an object from home. I worked with parents, and many of the students participated in the lesson.” T7 highlighted, “Allowing students to make personal connections has allowed me to help my students feel like they belong in my classroom. I create a safe place to encourage them to speak in class and highlight their interest in making a personal connection. My favorite lesson this year was the first week of school. They brought in one thing that represents their culture. Students had to write, speak, listen, and read about their classmates.”

As I read through the transcripts for this study, I found the common theme of connecting students’ backgrounds. Many teachers shared how they respect the unique

cultural backgrounds of their students and foster learning daily by stimulating the students' backgrounds to make the necessary connections to allow their students to learn.

Theme 2: Effective Professional Development.

In Theme 2, EL teachers emphasized several examples of effective professional development that have allowed their ELLs to be academically successful in class. Most participants highlighted that professional development was an effective resource that benefits ELLs. The participants shared a variety of topics they believe will allow them or have allowed them to assist their ELLs. The participants provided a range of effective professional development they have implemented in their classes to have yielded academic success for their students. T6 reported, "7 Steps to a Language-Rich Interactive Classroom professional development has been the best PD I have participated in post-COVID. I have been able to implement all seven steps daily in my classroom. The resources that come along with this training have allowed the majority of my students to appear to be successful." T4" shared, "I need additional professional development in writing to support my ELLs." T5 shared, "I feel my graduate course did a great job of providing me with best practices to support ELLs. It was a class where I learned most of how to create scaffolding with anchor charts, sentence stems, selecting text, and more. I still use these best practices and share them with my team, too." T7 shared, "More professional development is needed on how to assist me with meeting the needs of my newcomers. Some of them are illiterate, and I feel I am struggling to meet their individual needs." As I reflect on the participants' responses, the responses did vary; however, the

overall theme was effective professional development is important and must be research-based strategies in order to improve the academic achievement of ELLs.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases are important because they assist with identifying potential biases or errors. In addition, recognizing and addressing discrepant cases can help researchers ensure that their conclusions are valid and applicable to the broader population or context being studied. As a result, it will help improve the quality and validity of the study. Creswell & Creswell (2018) state that presents negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes. Since real life is made up of different perspectives that don't always fit together, discussing opposing information can increase credibility.

Evidence of Quality of Data

Member checking is a way to validate the findings. Both solo and team coders can even consult the participants during the analysis (Saldana, 2021). During my study, I used member checking for trustworthiness and credibility. I conducted this process through follow-up via email to participants based on my findings. By allowing the participants to review my transcribed notes and emerging themes, I minimized personal biases. Burkholder et al. (2020) state triangulation is the use of more than one source to verify the basis of the claim. As a result, I collaborated with a doctoral colleague regarding the data findings of the themes. This process ensures the validity and reliability of my findings. I used a variety of sources for my data, such as an Excel spreadsheet, coding

journal, interviews, member checking, and triangulation. Burkholder et al. (2020) stated qualitative researchers sometimes interpret member checking only as having study participants review and confirm their interview transcripts, but member checking is more than transcript review. I shared the data I collected with the seven participants for the validity of my findings. The participants agreed with their recorded responses and stated they were accurate. Participants did not provide any feedback or additional information to me regarding the collected data.

Project Deliverable

The project outcome is a three-day professional development for EL teachers based on themes that emerged from the study. This three-day culturally responsive professional development was developed to meet the needs of EL teachers. EL teachers who will attend the training will learn how to (a) create a supportive student-centered classroom, (b) improve instructional practices, and (c) celebrate diverse cultures. This information will be provided to all middle school principals and EL county leaders to encourage their EL teachers to attend the three professional development sessions to gain insight into assisting ELLs. Teachers can also earn ten credits toward the renewal of their teaching license. EL teachers will learn how to be more prepared to teach ELLs successfully and prepare more of their students to be more academically successful in mastering the state reading assessment with the ending result of making a positive social change in the local setting.

Summary

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore EL teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap. The problem addressed was that an average of 60% of eighth-grade ELLs in one county in Virginia were not meeting proficiency on the Virginia SOL in reading. Equipping EL teachers with effective resources to better meet the needs of ELLs is necessary to assist in increasing the academic achievement of ELLs. The data collected in the study helped me to gain a clearer understanding of the successes, challenges, and resources needed to assist ELLs. After carefully analyzing the collected data, I concluded that participants could benefit from a three-day professional development culturally responsive training.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Given that the fastest-growing population of students in U.S. schools is ELLs, professional development targeting the needs of this group is essential. The need for professional development focused on the needs of this population is clear because ELLs are growing at a faster rate than their non-EL public school peers (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). The proposed project is a three-day hybrid culturally responsive professional development, conducted virtually and in person using Canvas module components, to provide EL teachers, EL administrators, and other school leaders with information and best practices to support ELLs.

Goals of the Professional Development Training

The three-day hybrid culturally responsive professional development training will provide EL teachers with information and assist in closing the achievement gap of ELLs. The project also ensures that ELLs will benefit from this professional development by their EL teachers implementing the learned strategies with fidelity in their classroom setting. The EL administrators and school leaders who attend the professional development will be equipped to become aware of what to look for as they conduct observations to provide feedback to EL teachers. The objectives of the professional development were based on the thoughts and needs expressed by the seven EL teachers' remarks in semi-structured interviews. The professional development training will be

focused on increasing EL teachers' awareness of implementing culturally responsive teaching practices by supporting the various backgrounds in their lessons.

Components of the Professional Development Training

The objective of the professional development for EL teachers who will attend the training is to learn how to (a) create a supportive student-centered classroom, (b) improve instructional practices, and (c) celebrate diverse cultures. This three-day training will focus on the strategies that will best meet the needs of ELLs using culturally responsive teaching as the foundation of their teaching. This professional development emerged from the themes of the current study while supporting Krashen's second language acquisition theory and the affective filter. Krashen's theory focuses on the importance of comprehensible input, which refers to language input that is slightly beyond the learner's current proficiency level but still understandable. As a result, culturally responsive training will provide training materials and resources that can be relevant to the cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Additionally, Krashen's affective filter hypothesis explains how our emotions, such as fear and stress, act as filters that hinder language acquisition (Krashen, 1987). According to Krashen, the affective filter, which includes motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety, can impact language acquisition. In culturally responsive training, it's important to create a supportive and inclusive environment where students feel valued, respected, and affirmed in their cultural identities. By acknowledging student's cultural backgrounds and experiences, this training can help lower the affective filter, making it easier for students to engage with the content and effectively acquire newly learned skills.

The professional development aims to allow participants to develop individualized instruction based on the cultural backgrounds of their ELLs.

Rationale

After analyzing the data collected throughout the qualitative study, I developed a three-day professional development training as my project (see Appendix A). The training was designed to encourage EL teachers to implement culturally responsive strategies and incorporate them into their daily lessons to support ELLs' academic achievement. Cultural differences need to be understood, and the specific needs of ELLs need to be met (Irshad & Anwar, 2018). The project is based on the emerging themes from the semi-structured interviews with the 7 EL teachers and their responses to the successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs.

Kalinowski et al. (2019) stated there is a sequential relationship between effective professional development, enhanced teacher knowledge, improved classroom teaching, and higher student achievement. My professional development training is the best approach to fostering and educating EL teachers by creating cultural awareness as well as providing instructional support that can be implemented to close the ELL achievement gap effectively. The purpose of the three-day professional development for EL teachers is to provide support for them by sharing best practices used to implement culturally responsive teaching. Decades of research confirm the benefits of culturally responsive teaching, which emphasizes the need to validate young people's identities while they are learning (Shiller & DeShields, 2022). Additionally, this training will benefit EL

administrators by providing growth-based feedback as they conduct informal and formal observations to support EL teachers based on their instructional delivery.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs. The research questions for this project study were:

RQ 1: What are teachers' perspectives on their successes in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?

RQ 2: What are teachers' perspectives on their challenges in teaching eighth-grade ELLs?

RQ 3: What are teachers' perspectives on the resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs?

To address these research questions, I conducted semi-structured interviews with seven EL teachers in two local middle schools. By analyzing the data, I found that EL teachers had little awareness or mention of professional development training in culturally responsive teaching. The literature review was based on culturally responsive teaching through professional development training. The selection of culturally responsive professional development supported Krashen's (1987) theory of second-language acquisition. Krashen's theory aligns with culturally responsive teaching by recognizing the value of providing meaningful and relevant language input that reflects students' cultural backgrounds and experiences. It also acknowledges the importance of

teachers creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment to lower student's affective filter and facilitate language acquisition.

As I conducted the first literature review when selecting literature for this review, I accessed Education Research Complete, Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), EBSCOHost, ProQuest, Education from SAGE, and Google Scholar. Search terms and key phrases to locate the peer-reviewed articles and other material were as follows: *Culturally responsive awareness*, *Culturally responsive teaching*, *Culturally responsive learning*, *English language teachers' professional development*, *ELL instruction*, *English as a Second Language*, and *Professional development*. I selected peer-reviewed articles based on their relevance to this project study. The literature searched is related to articles, books, and publications over the last five years.

Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to Literature Review

The research problem was that an average of 40% of eighth-grade ELLs met proficiency in reading on SOL tests. The purpose was to explore the EL teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap. The research questions were about the teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs. The conceptual framework was the theory from Krashen's language acquisition theory. Krashen's theory (1987) emphasized the difference between learning a language and acquiring one to be understood for comprehending the hypotheses. According to Krashen (1987), second-language acquisition is the process of language learning. ELL

students may improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

This theory was the foundation for my study because it aligned with Krashen's proposition that language is both acquired and learned. The acquisition of a language is possible under two conditions: first, providing students with comprehensible input that is above their current proficiency level; and second, the affective filter should be low so that the comprehensible input can reach its intended target acquired by the language acquisition device (Krashen, 1987). The first condition was noted when the participants in the study applied this theory based on my findings. Participants indicated that as EL teachers, it was important to gain assistance with helping ELLs learn how to be proficient in English by using their acquired skills to overcome obstacles. Additionally, it was important for the participants to create formal lesson plans to allow for the delivery of instruction for ELLs. All participants shared a variety of cognitive activities and individual or partner projects that are student-centered in their daily classroom environment. Using these student-centered lessons, ELLs were able to apply hands-on learning and acquire the skills needed to read, write, listen, or speak. Krashen (1987) emphasized the difference between learning a language and acquiring one to be understood for comprehending the hypotheses. Learning a language is a conscious process and requires knowing about the grammar structure and rules of English and talking about them.

Krashen proposes that EL teachers recognize that each ELL progresses along their individual language acquisition path. The natural order hypothesis states that learners

acquire grammatical structures in a predictable order (Krashen,1987). Based on the participants' responses, this was evident. Participants shared that their ELLs learned more as they were engaged in daily conversations and communication with their peers. They were exposed to the language. In addition, once they have emerged into ongoing communications, the grammar structures are spontaneously learned without direct instruction. They demonstrated this portion of Krashen's theory through the explanations of teaching grammar rules. EL teachers shared that their students learned in a natural order regardless of their native language or diverse cultural backgrounds. EL teachers consistently shared their students are all at different levels, but they seem to have the same process of learning language.

The second condition identified in my research was Krashen's affective filter. The affective filter hypothesis explains how our emotions, such as fear and stress, act as filters that hinder language acquisition (Krashen, 1987). They develop individualized instruction based on the participant, considering and adapting to the unique emotional and cultural backgrounds of ELLs. Participants appeared to be successful in creating a supportive and inclusive teaching environment that celebrated diversity, recognized students' strengths, and promoted positive attitudes toward language learning. EL teachers who participated in the study shared how they use a variety of reading materials, such as authentic texts and online resources, to develop lessons so that students can choose texts that inspire and engage them by providing them with choices. Therefore, these teachers found it supportive to promote autonomous learning and language skill

acquisition. EL teachers can be supported by incorporating relevant texts and commonalities based on the different cultures in their classrooms.

Finally, Krashen's theory of the monitor hypothesis was evident in my study. Krashen (1987) stated the monitor hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and defines the influence of the latter on the former. Based on the participants, Krashen's proposition that ELL teachers expected professional development that allowed them to implement what ELLs already knew using their background knowledge to what they did know. Additionally, professional development was effective when it was tailored to the needs of both the teacher and the students. While the monitor hypothesis focuses mainly on the language acquisition process, it can also inform the appropriate and effective professional development for EL teachers to work with ELLs to make achievement gains.

Based on the results of this study, Krashen's second-language acquisition theory should be applied in EL classrooms to help EL teachers better meet the instructional needs of their students. I wanted to explore teachers' perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade English learners to read. Based on the results, there is a clear need for professional development to meet the needs of EL teachers. By implementing this professional development, EL teachers and teacher leaders can improve instructional practices for ELLs in the areas identified in my findings. Additionally, educators can gain insights into the impact of affective factors that influence language acquisition and learning strategies to create a supportive and motivating learning environment for ELLs. This type of professional development has the

potential to improve the language performance and overall well-being of ELLs in the classroom.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Genao (2021) stated understanding that culture is about unifying values, practices, and beliefs that guide individuals. Embedding concepts that are aligned with theoretical concepts while rendering the content into classroom pedagogy, discussions, and activities demonstrated a real sense of teaching and learning. Professional development training equips EL teachers with strategies and increases their awareness of best practices for increasing students' academic achievement. Culturally responsive pedagogy in education requires teachers to adapt their teaching practices, classroom organization, motivation management, and curriculum. Moreover, instructional leaders must develop and refine teachers' crafts to improve student outcomes, but this must be done with cultural sensitivity (Genao, 2021). This supports the need for EL administrators to attend the three-day professional training as well. As instructional leaders, they will be able to collaborate with the EL teachers to support the local county's professional standards through the current strategic plan. The strategic plan includes all stakeholders and will provide a learning environment that fosters inclusivity and connectedness and encourages social and emotional wellness for all students.

According to Comstock et al. (2023), culturally responsive teaching is not just a set of instructional practices but a teaching approach that requires a particular disposition toward students and teaching. Kieran and Anderson (2018) stated that educators must be

aware of how previous learning experiences have been meaningful and connected to their lives. This knowledge becomes especially important for students who have been historically oppressed and marginalized. The three-day professional development training will allow veteran and novice teachers to learn how to use a gradual release and a content-integrated approach for their ELLs. Based on the findings of the study, EL teachers can benefit from professional development to seek ways to integrate various backgrounds into their daily classroom instruction. When planning for instruction, educators must be aware of their students' readiness to learn, their interests, and their learning profile, which includes learner preferences, strengths, and challenges. Every individual's background and experiences in and out of the classroom shape the learner (Kieran & Anderson, 2018). Therefore, culturally responsive professional development can help address this local issue, and based on the project's data findings, this training is needed to help close the achievement gap in EL classrooms.

Parkhouse et al. (2023) stated culturally responsive teaching has been described as consisting of multiple elements within the broader domains of dispositions, knowledge, and skills. By exposing current culturally responsive practices to EL teachers, their teaching practices acknowledge many of their students' backgrounds by aiming to incorporate students' identities within the learning process to enhance their knowledge.

Professional Development Justification

Professional development is defined as activities that improve an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise, and other characteristics of teachers. Teachers are required to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and awareness related to their professional development so that they can offer quality education and training to their students (Yeşilçınar & Cakir, 2018). According to Dogan and Kirkgoz (2022), professional development is essential for teachers to adapt to changes throughout their careers, which begins with preservice training and continues with in-service training. Professional development activities improve teachers' professionalism and skills by adopting a new environment, sharing professional experiences and ideas, and addressing students' needs for their achievement. EL teachers should have access to professional development opportunities that focus on culturally responsive teaching practices. Collaboration with colleagues can provide valuable insights and support. A workshop empowers people to learn through doing. In workshops that develop collegiality and support innovations, teachers find input provided by experts and experience practical classroom activities, so their motivation rises (Yeşilçınar & Cakir, 2018). Implementing the three-day training will help EL teachers focus on students' cultural backgrounds and learn new strategies by collaborating with their peers. Based on the semi-structured interviews conducted in this study, the EL teachers referenced past training that inspired them with new innovative approaches. Derakhshan et al. (2020) stated professional development directly affects teachers' development of their knowledge and expertise.

Cultural responsiveness refers to the extent to which educators value students' differences and align what and how they teach to students' cultures (Gay, 2018).

According to Fallon et al. (2018), an assessment of teachers' cultural responsiveness may be an appropriate place to start in the process of identifying specific areas of need for staff intervention, such as training and professional development. The three-day culturally responsive training will heighten attendees' self-awareness of their cultural awareness, and they will be able to better relate to their students. As a result, EL teachers will benefit from additional training to support the various cultural differences by developing a better understanding of the diverse backgrounds using their experiences along with the values of their students.

According to Fischer et al. (2020), the term professional development can encompass many different forms of capacity building, including traditional activities and informal learning opportunities. Theoretical concepts of professional development argue that teacher participation in training improves teachers' knowledge and skills, thereby increasing confidence in implementing curriculum elements and increasing self-efficacy. This improvement, in turn, can lead to more effective teaching and learning, leading to positive outcomes for students. There is a benefit for EL teachers to attend professional development training to aid in closing the achievement gap by collaborating with peers. The three-day culturally responsive training will be beneficial to supporting EL academic achievement. Despite research articles in the current literature regarding the benefits of teachers' participation in

professional development, few articles focus on the benefits of EL teachers' participation in professional development.

Project Description

Based on the findings of this study, I developed a three-day hybrid culturally responsive professional development training for EL teachers and other educational leaders who support ELLs. Administrators and local county employees in the EL office will be offered the training. This training will be implemented in a hybrid model. A hybrid model will be explained to participants as one day of training will be virtual using Zoom online, and two days will be held in person. Participants may register for professional development during the summer for the upcoming school year. This training was developed to provide culturally responsive professional development practices to assist EL teachers and support staff in enhancing instructional support to benefit ELLs in mastering state reading standards.

Potential Resources

Potential resources required to deliver the three-day professional development training will depend on the cost of the facilitator, materials, handouts, and food and refreshments. As a current building administrator, I have free access to a facility equipped with the necessary technology to ensure this professional development is efficient for all involved. I will work with the local county professional development department to pay for one facilitator and food for Days 2 and 3. The first training day is conducted online for free in a virtual session on Zoom. Additionally, there is a cost to

purchase materials such as markers, anchor paper, pencils, pens, and construction paper.

The facilitators will have handouts and tangible resources for all participants.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Implementing a three-day professional development training will face three potential barriers. The first potential barrier to implementing this training is time constraints and the consecutive days for EL teachers. A solution to this barrier is providing in-person training days by allowing participants to choose a June or a July session. Providing sessions will allow flexibility and more opportunities for participation. In addition, participants will have the Day 1 training to be completed virtually via Zoom, with two sessions being offered. These sessions will be held in June and July. This will support time constraints and a possible solution. The second potential barrier is allowing EL teachers to sign up first for the training before EL support staff. A possible solution to this barrier is to allow EL teachers an early registration of two weeks before other support EL staff since the target audience is mainly to support the instructional needs of EL teachers. Each in-person session will support ten participants, and virtual sessions will support twenty participants. The third barrier is follow-up with the participants after the training to seek feedback on the implementation aspect of the training. A possible solution is to create a community or team collaboration page where teachers can share resources, experiences, and successes throughout the school year.

Implementation Proposal and Timeline

The three-day hybrid culturally responsive professional development training for EL teachers would begin at the end of June, with another session offered in July before

the upcoming school year. Participants will attend Day 1 virtually online using Zoom. The online training will start at 9:00 a.m. and end at 11:00 a.m. The professional development training will focus on how to (a) create a supportive student-centered classroom, (b) improve instructional practices, and (c) celebrate diverse cultures. Day 1 will be a Culturally Responsive overview and setting the stage by the facilitator and myself as the program developer. Participants will have a ten-minute break. Breakout rooms with sessions on group discussions and scenarios. In addition, activities on building relationships in a student-centered classroom and a closure with a reflection ticket. Day 1 will have an afternoon designated for participants to complete prerequisite readings. Participants will have a set time from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. to complete the afternoon session of Day 1. Day 2 will focus on implementing Culturally Responsive Practices integrated into lesson planning. Participants will focus on their curriculum while sharing best practices with peers and using a reflection ticket. Day 3 will focus on Sustaining Culturally Responsive Practices and Next Steps with hands-on lesson delivery with peer collaboration. Participants will engage in group activities, role-playing, and a reflection ticket. For Days 2 and 3, participants will be in person beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 3:00 p.m. Light refreshments, mid-day snacks, and water will be provided for participants; however, participants may order or provide their own lunch.

Roles and Responsibilities

The participants in the professional development training will be responsible for attending with an open mindset, actively participating, collaborating professionally, and providing honest feedback. As the project manager, I will plan, arrange, and implement

professional development training for registered EL teachers. I will create a general description of the training, secure the location, develop a daily schedule, provide a slide deck, organize breakout sessions, support group activities, collect reflection tickets, gather participant's feedback, and support the facilitator as necessary to ensure the training is effective and efficient.

Project Evaluation Plan

The project evaluation plan for this cultural-based professional development training will be completed in a formative manner to determine the effectiveness of the training and the areas of improvement. EL teachers and other participants will finalize the daily reflection ticket after each training day session. The participants will provide comments, suggestions, gained knowledge, learned practices, and responses to the information they learned on each training day. Participants will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions to provide a greater understanding.

The evaluation plan for the project will also include a six-month monitoring period with all the participants that will assess the implementation of culturally appropriate practices and the impact on ELLs. This will be a follow-up survey of the best practices and methods learned during the training and the effect of the selected strategies on the academic success of their ELLs.

Project Implications

The project's potential impact on social change may have lasting effects on academic and social-emotional development. When students feel seen, heard, and

understood in the classroom, they are more motivated and confident. Positive social change can promote academic growth and reduce achievement gaps for ELLs (Olds et al., 2021). By acknowledging students' cultural backgrounds and integrating them into daily instruction, teachers can create more accessible and engaging learning experiences that support students' academic success. This creates the potential for impactful social change that can promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

In Section 4, I present the strengths and limitations of the project. Based on the results of the study, implementing professional development in culturally responsive teaching would be most beneficial. EL teachers have a tremendous job of balancing the needs of their diverse students. The study identified the EL teacher's perspectives on their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs to close the achievement gap. As a result, a three-day culturally responsive professional development training for EL teachers and support staff should be implemented to increase ELLs' academic growth and achievement.

The project's strengths are focused on the need to implement culturally responsive teaching practices in EL classrooms to bring more awareness of students' diverse backgrounds. This professional development would allow EL teachers to focus on celebrating diversity and implementing diversity into their instructional practices. As a result, ELLs will have opportunities to make personal connections during the learning process. This project will increase awareness of the importance of EL teachers in supporting the local county's professional standards through the current strategic plan. The strategic plan focuses on how all educators provide a learning environment that fosters inclusivity and connectedness and encourages social and emotional wellness for all students. Implementing the three-day professional development will benefit the academic needs overall and support closing the achievement gap for ELLs.

The limitations of the project might be not making professional development mandatory for EL teachers and EL supporting staff. Time constraints can be a potential barrier to attendance of the training, and additional mandatory training at the county level might take precedence. The local county has a professional development plan for all instructional staff, and many EL teachers plan their training in advance.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The local problem was that an average of 40% of eighth-grade ELLs met proficiency in reading on SOL tests. This performance was significantly lower than non-ELL mastery proficiency, with a proficiency average of 70%. I sought to explore teachers' perspectives of their successes, challenges, and the resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs in reading. To address this problem, I interviewed seven EL teachers and developed a professional development training. Although the local county requires mandated professional development for EL teachers, mandates need to be held on the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices with ELLs. One alternative approach could be placing more accountability on EL teachers and EL administrators to attend local training in culturally responsive teaching collaboratively. This will allow the EL administrator to know how to support the instructional aspect by learning firsthand what the EL teachers are expected to implement in their daily practices.

An alternative approach is allowing EL teachers to have a support system among other EL teachers. This support system is beyond having a mentor, as we do for a beginning EL teacher. It is a peer learning support group where all EL teachers can share experiences, collaborate on the lesson plan development, and engage in conversations in

real-time with their peers. As a result, this may foster a sense of community and allow ongoing peer support with collaboration beyond just attending professional development. The collaboration would be ongoing throughout the school year.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

I conducted a qualitative study that allowed me to expand my knowledge as a researcher and learn about basic qualitative research. I was able to gain more insight into how to conduct and investigate research. I appreciate and value the knowledge gained throughout the research process in a field that I truly value. This research process allowed me to conduct research in an area that I was curious to investigate and learned a wealth of information. This was a rigorous process, and it allowed me to overcome multiple obstacles. As a researcher, I was able to investigate a local problem, analyze my findings, and develop a project that can support my local community.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Reflecting on the importance of my work exploring the EL teacher's perspectives of the successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs in reading and culturally responsive professional development was important because current instructional practices are not allowing ELLs to be successful on the reading state assessment. Implementing this professional development to support EL teachers and ELL support staff was important because the learned practices can assist in closing the achievement gap and improve instructional practices.

My project was based on the findings of the study and the emerging themes, which allowed me to develop a three-day culturally responsive professional development

training to support EL teachers. The project study allowed me to gain a substantial amount of information on the process of developing a three-day professional development training. Overall, the doctoral process has allowed me to gain knowledge, apply that knowledge, collect data, analyze findings, and develop professional development that can benefit my local community. Finally, I gained firsthand an understanding of the EL teacher's perspectives on the challenges, successes, and resources needed to teach one of the most vulnerable groups of students.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

I conducted a basic qualitative study that consisted of a small population of EL teachers who exclusively taught ELLs. The sample was a small sample of seven EL teachers who had taught ELLs for at least one year and were state-certified in ESOL. The study may have a positive impact at the county and school levels. Implementing the three-day culturally responsive professional development training could serve as a foundation for future research on the impact of culturally responsive teaching practices with ELLs focusing on student academic outcomes, EL teacher's practices, and school culture. I recommend researchers replicate this study and use a sample of another content of teachers who teach ELLs to help them pass the state test. Two additional content areas to consider are math and science. Both contents have a state assessment that ELLs are required to pass. Another recommendation is to increase the scope of the study's focus on EL teachers to include elementary, middle, and high school EL teachers. This potential qualitative study might be utilized to see if there are similar findings of the successes, challenges, and resources needed to support ELLs.

Conclusion

This study focused on EL teachers' perceptions of their successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELL students to close achievement gaps. This foundational qualitative research resulted in a three-day professional development training that will equip new and aspiring EL teachers to successfully support students in all aspects of learning to create positive social change. These aspects of learning go beyond academic success and include social and emotional supports that promote diversity in the classroom. The feedback from the professional development training on culturally responsive training has the potential to ignite newly implemented best practices and policies that promote equity in education on a broader scale and support closing the academic gap for all students.

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Appendix A: The Project

Implementation and Timeline

The three-day hybrid culturally responsive professional development training for EL teachers would begin at the end of June, and another session would be offered in July prior to the upcoming school year. Participants will attend Day 1 virtually online using Zoom. The online training will start at 8:30 am and end at 11:10 am. Day 1 will be a Culturally Responsive overview and setting the stage by the facilitator and myself as the program developer. A ten-minute break will be provided to participants. Breakout rooms with sessions on group discussions and scenarios. In addition, activities on building relationships in a student-centered classroom and a closure with a reflection ticket. Day 1 will have an afternoon designated for participants to complete prerequisite readings. Participants will have a set time from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm to complete the afternoon session of Day 1. Day 2 will focus on implementing Culturally Responsive Practices and integrating them into lesson plans. Participants will focus on their curriculum while sharing best practices with peers and a reflection ticket. Day 3 will focus on Sustaining Culturally Responsive Practices and Next Steps with hands-on lesson delivery with peer collaboration. Participants will engage in group activities, role-playing, and a reflection ticket. For Days 2 and 3, participants will be in person beginning at 8:30 am and ending at 3:00 p.m. Light refreshments, mid-day snacks, and water will be provided for participants; however, participants may order or provide their own lunch.

Program Purpose

After analyzing the data collected throughout the qualitative study, I decided to develop a three-day professional development training as my project (see Appendix A) to encourage EL teachers to implement culturally responsive strategies to incorporate into their daily lessons to support the academic achievement of ELLs. Cultural differences need to be understood, and the specific needs of ELLs need to be met (Irshad & Anwar, 2018). The project is based on the themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with the seven EL teachers and their responses regarding the successes, challenges, and resources needed to teach eighth-grade ELLs.

Kalinowski et al. (2019) stated there is a sequential relationship among effective professional development, enhanced teacher knowledge, improved classroom teaching, and higher student achievement. The purpose of the three-day professional development for EL teachers is to provide support for them by sharing best practices used to implement culturally responsive teaching. Decades of research confirm the benefits of culturally responsive teaching, which emphasizes the need to validate young people's identities while they are learning (Shiller & DeShields, 2022).

Program Goal

Professional development training is the best approach to increasing EL teachers' cultural awareness as well as providing instructional support that can be implemented to close the ELL achievement gap most effectively. Additionally, this training will benefit EL administrators and support staff by providing growth feedback as they are conducting

informal and formal observations to support EL teachers based on their instructional delivery.

Learning Outcomes

The objective of the professional development training will be to help EL teachers and support staff reflect on how to (a) create a supportive student-centered classroom, (b) improve instructional practices, and (c) celebrate diverse cultures.

Target Audience: EL Teachers, EL Administrators, and EL Support Staff

Components

The components of the project are the following:

- Participants will be able to define and identify culturally responsive teaching best practices.
- Participants will be able to familiarize themselves with culturally responsive resources to implement in their daily instructional planning.
- Participants will develop a lesson to further develop a culturally responsive and interactive classroom.

Evaluation Plan

The project evaluation plan for this cultural-based professional development training will be completed in a formative manner to determine the effectiveness of the training and the areas of improvement. EL teachers and other participants will finalize the daily reflection ticket at the conclusion of each training day session. The participants will provide comments, suggestions, gained knowledge, learned practices, and responses to the information they learned on each training day. Participants will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions to provide a greater understanding.

The evaluation plan for the project will also include a six-month monitoring period with all the participants that will assess the implementation of culturally appropriate practices and the impact on ELLs. This will be a follow-up survey of the best practices and methods learned during the training and the effect of the selected strategies on the academic success of their ELLs.

The PowerPoint slideshow will be shared throughout the three-day culturally responsive training. The agenda presentation will include a facilitator, a county representative from the professional development office, and myself as the program developer. The facilitator's notes are incorporated as a guide to how the agenda is implemented daily. Day 1 training will have two components. Component 1 will be conducted virtually from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with a lunch break. Component 2 will have all participants working independently from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. with prerequisite readings. Day 2 and Day 3 training will be held daily from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Light

refreshments will be offered daily, and all participants will log in by scanning a QR code for attendance verification.

Detail of Day 1 Timeline Training: (hour-by-hour) **Training Day 1: Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching**
Time

Time	Day 1 Activities
8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	<p>Greetings & Welcoming in Zoom Participants -SLIDE #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator will send a Zoom link after registration. Participants will be allowed to enter the Zoom beginning at 8:30 a.m. Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 a.m. due to time constraints.
8:45 a.m.- 9:15 a.m.	<p>Introductions & Ice Breaker Activity -SLIDE #4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program developer will lead the Introductions and Ice Breaker. Participants will work on a sharing out with "Getting to Know Who is in the Room?" Participants will unmute. They will share one personal and one professional fact.
9:15 a.m.- 10:00 a.m.	<p>Component I-Setting the Stage: <i>Why Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters for ELLs?</i> SLIDE #5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facilitator will lead and display the opening question. Participants will respond independently, pairing with a partner, and then share with the whole group.
10:00 a.m.- 10:10 a.m.	<p>BREAK- SLIDE #6</p>
10:10 a.m.- 10:40 a.m.	<p><i>Exploring Cultural Competences & Awareness Activity-</i> SLIDE #7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facilitator will lead and share the PowerPoint Slide. Participants will select a component and complete a shared handout. Open discussion with the whole group. Participants will share takeaways from the activity.
10:40 a.m. -11:00 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facilitator will lead and share -SLIDE #8 Breakout Rooms: <i>Strategies for Building Positive Relationships with ELLs & the Importance of Positive Relationships.</i>
11:00 a.m.- 11:10 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Ticket & Closing Activity -SLIDE #9. The Program Developer will close out the session for Component 1. Participants will complete the Reflection Ticket.

11:10 a.m.- 12:10 p.m.	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN- SLIDE #10
12:10 p.m.- 1:00 p.m.	<i>Zoom link Assistance Hour</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facilitator and Program Developer will have an optional Zoom link opened for Questions for participants. SLIDE #11
1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.	<i>Component II: Asynchronous Learning Independently</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants work independently and at their own pace. Participants will read the mandatory prerequisites, complete reading, and collect materials needed to bring to Day 2 and 3 sessions.

Detail of Day 2 Timeline Training: (hour-by-hour)

Training Day 2: Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices in the Classroom
Time

Time	Day 2 Activities
8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	Greetings & Welcoming Participants -SLIDE #13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facilitator will have participants scan the QR code to sign in on the form's link. Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 a.m. due to time constraints.
8:45 a.m.- 9:15 a.m.	Introductions & Ice Breaker Activity -SLIDE #16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program developer will take time to set norms and in-person expectations with the group and provide housekeeping for participants to become familiar with the facility. The Program Developer will lead the Ice Breaker- <i>Four Corners</i>. Participants will actively participate and become engaged with all participants to get to know their peers.
9:15 a.m.- 10:30 a.m.	<i>Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices in the Classroom-SLIDE #17</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facilitator will review the previous day's session on <i>Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching</i>. The participants will "Turn and talk" with their shoulder partner. Participants will share out using a Collaboration board. The Facilitator will have participants transition to today's session topics. Participants were instructed to have access to their current curriculum online or have a tangible copy for today's session.

10:30 a.m.- 10:40 a.m.	BREAK- SLIDE #18
10:40 a.m.- 11:40 a.m.	<p><i>Adapting Instruction & Curriculum for Diverse Learners-</i> SLIDE#19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator will lead and share the PowerPoint Slide. • The Facilitator leads and displays the BIG question. • Participants will break into grade levels to review the current curriculum. Each participant will choose a shoulder partner to collaborate on current practices and strategies. • Each pair of participants will share out with the whole group.
11:40 a.m. 12:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator will lead and share the closing of the morning session - SLIDE #19. • Participants will share takeaways from the activity by completing a closing Learning Stem.
12:00 p.m.1:00 p.m.	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN- SLIDE #20
1:00 p.m. 2:00 p.m.	<p><i>Creating Inclusive Classroom Environments-</i>SLIDE#21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator leads and displays the BIG question. • Participants will use chart paper to create a chart to brainstorm with their table partners. • The Facilitator will share the components of an exemplary classroom environment. • Transition time- SLIDE #22. <p><i>Differentiation Instruction for ELLs-</i> SLIDE#23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EL representative will lead this component as a question-and-answer session. A review of types of learners and scaffolding using “7 Steps to a Language-Rich Interactive Classroom.” • Participants will break into four groups to act as Experts. Each Expert group will choose a spokesperson to share information with the whole group. All information will be displayed on big Chart paper. • The Facilitator will lead, and participants will share takeaways from this component by completing a closing Learning Stem.
2:00 p.m.- 2:40 p.m.	<p><i>Individual Planning Time- Lesson Plan Development Independent Activity-</i> SLIDE#23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator leads and displays the expectation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will use their current teacher-created station activity from a previously taught lesson and now implement learned “Culturally responsive strategies” based on the knowledge gained. The planning will occur independently with assistance from the Facilitator or EL representative.
2:40 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.	<p><i>Closure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gallery Walk- View all Participant-created Charts- SLIDE #25. Reflection Ticket & Closing Activity -SLIDE #26. The Program Developer will close out the session. Participants will complete the Reflection Ticket.

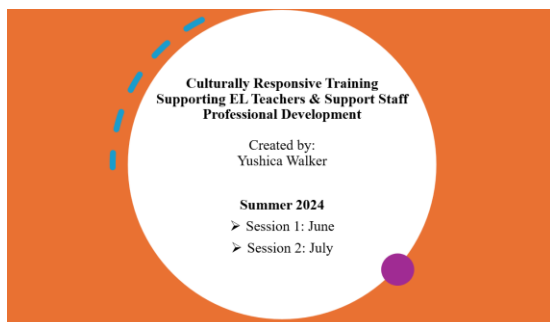
Detail of Day 3 Timeline Training: (hour-by-hour)

Training Day 3: Sustaining Culturally Responsive Teaching & Next Steps

Time

Time	Day 3 Activities
8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	<p>Greetings & Welcome Back Participants -SLIDE #27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facilitator will have participants scan the QR code to sign in on the form’s link. Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 a.m. due to time constraints.
8:45 a.m.- 9:15 a.m.	<p>Icebreaker Activity-SLIDE #30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program developer will review norms and in-person expectations with the group and remind housekeeping for participants to become familiar with the facility. The Program Developer will lead the participants in “Find a Friend.” Participants will complete the Sentence stem independently and share it with a chosen partner.
9:15 a.m.- 10:30 a.m.	<p><i>Culturally Responsive Classroom Video</i>-SLIDE #31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facilitator will share the expectations and Look-Fors for participants as they view the video. The Facilitator will have participants capture the best practices from a personal perspective. After viewing the video clips, participants will “Turn & Talk” with their shoulder partner to share takeaways. The Facilitator will call on random volunteers for a group share to close out the component.
10:30 a.m.- 10:40 a.m.	<p>BREAK- SLIDE #32</p>

10:40 a.m.- 11:40 a.m.	<p><i>Collaborative Planning Time: Lesson Plans & Curriculum Enhancements - SLIDE#</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator will lead and share PowerPoint Slide #33. • The Facilitator leads the expectation for this task. • Participants will break into grade levels to review the current curriculum. Each participant will choose a different shoulder partner from Day 2 to develop an entire lesson for ELLs. • The Facilitator will provide a lesson plan template and materials for each pair.
11:40 a.m.- -12:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator will conduct check-ins with each pair and pause for lunch.
12:00 p.m.- 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN- SLIDE #34
1:00 p.m.- 2:00 p.m.	<p><i>Collaborative Planning Time: Lesson Plans & Curriculum Enhancements Continued- SLIDE#35</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator will recap the morning session. The participants will have time to finalize their lesson plans with their chosen partners. • Participants will display their completed lesson plans. • The Facilitator will provide materials to set up for the next component. • Transition time- SLIDE #36. <p><i>Collaboration Planning- Wondering & Noticing Group Activity -SLIDE#37</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator leads and displays the activity. • Participants will use a graphic organizer to complete their feedback to a minimum of three participants. • The Facilitator will lead, and participants will participate in the Feedback session. • Closure Activity- Participants will read feedback silently with their partners and revise to prepare for presentations. • Transition time- SLIDE #38.
2:00 p.m.- 2:40 p.m.	<p><i>Model Lesson Presentations with Partners-SLIDE#40</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facilitator leads and displays the expectation. • Participants will present their “Culturally responsive lesson plan” to the class.
2:40 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.	<p><i>Next Steps- Community of Supportive Networks for Upcoming Semester- SLIDE#41</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program Developer will close out the training with the next steps. • Participants will complete the Reflection Closing Activity. • Closing Remarks.



Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching

WELCOME TO DAY 1!

2

Facilitator Notes:

Greetings & Welcoming in Zoom Participants

- Facilitator has shared zoom link and allowing all participants to enter training with low music.
- Participants begins entering at 8:30 am.
- Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 am due to time constraints.

Setting Group Zoom Expectations

- Please use the chat to place at least one expectation needed to make you successful for today's zoom.
- When the music stops, we will agree upon 4 expectations as a group.

3

Facilitator Notes:

- Participants will use waiting time to place responses in the chat.
- The greeting and discussion will begin after the zoom entrance closes.
- The Program Developer will assist to group responses.

Icebreaker: GETTING TO KNOW WHO IS IN THE ROOM?

- Please be prepared to share 1 professional fact about yourself.
- Please be prepared to share 1 personal fact about yourself.

Program Developer Notes:

- The Program developer will lead the Introductions for Ice Breaker.
- Participants will work on a sharing out with "Getting to Know Who is in the Room?" Participants will unmute.

READ & THINK

Big Question: Why Culturally responsive teaching matters for your ELLs?

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator will lead an open discussion and call on random participants.
- Participants will have 5 minutes to read and think independently
- Participants will be placed in a breakout room to share with partner.
- The Facilitator will lead whole group discussion. Participants will unmute to speak and share, use the chat, and the reaction buttons.

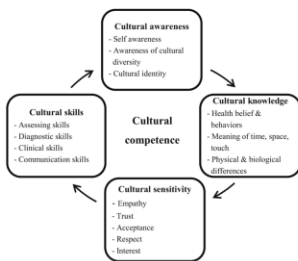
Please mute & turn off your camera.

BREAK

Facilitator Notes:

- Participants have a 10-minute break.

Exploring Cultural Competences & Awareness Activity



Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator will lead an open discussion and share their screen with the visual.
- Participants will select a component to complete the Note Catcher handout.
- Participants will select only one component to dive into conversations, research, and resources.
- The EL county representative will be a resource.
- The Facilitator will call on random participants to share why they made their selection and what was the BIG ideas discovered.

Breakout Discussion Rooms

Room 1

- Importance of Positive Relationships

Room 2

- Strategies for Building Positive Relationships

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator will lead the breakout rooms by breaking the participants in 2 groups.
- The rooms will be on a 10-minute rotation.
- The Project developer will lead room 1. The Facilitator will lead room 2.
- Participants will share past experiences and share best practices.

Exit Activity

REFLECTION TICKET



Program Developer Notes:

- The Program Developer will close out the session for Component 1.
- Participants will scan and complete the Reflection Ticket on the learned practices.

LUNCH

Facilitator Notes:

Participants have 1 hour. They will turn off their camera and mute their microphone.

COMPONENT II

Asynchronous Prerequisite's Reading

Program Developer Notes:

- Participants work independently and at their own pace.
- Participants will read the mandatory prerequisites, completed reading, and collect materials needed to bring to Day 2 and 3 sessions. It on the learned practices.
- A zoom link is open for 1 hour for question & answer opportunities.

Zoom Reminders & Closure

The Zoom link will close at
1:00 pm.
Have a great afternoon.

12

Program Developer Notes:

- The reminder slide will be visible for participants..

**Implementing Culturally Responsive
Practices**

WELCOME TO
DAY 2!

13

Facilitator Notes:

Greetings & Welcoming Participants

- The facilitator will have participants scan the QR code to sign in on the form's link.
- Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 am due to time constraints.
- Participants begins entering at 8:30 am.
- Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 am due to time constraints.
- Facilitator has shared zoom link and allowing all participants to enter training with low music.

Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices



14

Facilitator Notes:

Greetings & Welcoming Participants

- The facilitator will have participants scan the QR code to sign in on the form's link.
- Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 am due to time constraints.
- Participants begins entering at 8:30 am.
- Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 am due to time constraints.
- Facilitator has shared zoom link and allowing all participants to enter training with low music.

Setting In-person Expectations

- Please use the sticky notes to write at least one expectation needed to make you successful for today's learning.
- When the music stops, we will agree upon 4 expectations as a group.

15

Facilitator Notes:

- Participants will use sticky notes to write responses.
- The greeting and discussion will begin after the door closes.
- The Program Developer will assist with collecting responses.
- The Program developer will take time to provide housekeeping for participants to become familiar with the facility.

Icebreaker: Four Corners

Directions: You will receive a zip lock bag with Skittles. You must give one fact about yourself for each Skittle. The colors listed below tell what categories the facts should come from during your conversation with your peers.

*Rotate and chat now with peers in each colored corner of the room.

- RED: Any Hobbies/Interest/ Favorite Sport's Team
- ORANGE: Something you did this summer
- YELLOW: Share about your Family/ Pets
- GREEN: Subject you teach or area you work with/ # of Years Teaching
- PURPLE: FREEBIE

16

Program Developer Notes:

- The Program developer will lead the Introductions for Ice Breaker.
- Participants will work on a sharing out with "Four Corners."
- The Program Developer will lead the Ice Breaker- *Four Corners*.
- Participants will actively participate and become engaged with all participants to get to know peers.

Let's Chat: Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices in the Classroom

Reflect and write the learned practices from your reading on culturally responsive teaching practices. List at least 2 practices and briefly explain why.

17

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator will lead an open discussion and call on random participants.
- The Facilitator will lead whole group discussion. Participants will write responses on their sticky notes and place on the collaboration board.
- The Facilitator will review the previous day's session of *Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching*.
- The participants will "Turn & Talk" with their shoulder partner.
- Participants will share out using a Collaboration board.
- Participants were instructed to have access to their current curriculum online or have a tangible copy for today's session.

Please enjoy the refreshments.

BREAK

18

Facilitator Notes:

- Participants have a 10-minute break.

Let's Chat: Adapting Instruction & Curriculum for Diverse Learners

Big Question: How can we modify our current curriculum to implement culturally responsive strategies?

19

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator will lead the task and provide directions.
- Participants will break into grade levels to review the current curriculum.
- The Project developer will monitor 6th grade.
- The Facilitator will monitor 7th grade.. The EL representative will monitor 8th grade.
- Participants will share chosen practices with their groups.
- A spokesperson will be chosen to report to the whole group.
- The Facilitator will summarize and close out morning session.
- The Program developer and EL representee will be the note taker using chart paper for the takeaways.

LUNCH

20

Facilitator Notes:

Participants have 1 hour. They are on their own.

Reflect & Respond: Creating Inclusive Classroom Environments

Big Question: Based on the morning session, how do you create an inclusive classroom for your ELLs to be successful?

21

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator will lead the task and provide directions for this whole group open discussion.
- Participants will use chart paper to create a chart to brainstorm with their table partners.
- The Facilitator will share the components of an exemplary classroom environment.

TRANSITION

22

Facilitator Notes:

Participants will be moved into 4 groups using a randomizer by the Program Developer.

Become an Expert: Differentiation Instruction for ELLs

Use the list below to select a differentiation category in which you can contribute that is academically successful and will benefit an ELL.

Selections:

- ❖ 1. Individualized level learning
- ❖ 2. Scaffolding techniques
- ❖ 3. Pair/ Partner learning
- ❖ 4. Group tasks/activities

23

Program Developer Notes:

- The EL representative will lead this component as a question-and-answer session.
- A review of types of learners and scaffolding using "7 Steps to a Language -Rich Interactive Classroom."
- Participants will break into 4 groups to act as Experts.
- Each Expert group will choose a spokesperson to share out information to the whole group.
- All information will be displayed on big Chart paper.
- The Facilitator will lead, and participants will share takeaways from this component by completing a closing Learning Stem.

Planning Time: Lesson Plan Development Independent Activity

At this time, please take out your chosen lesson that you have brought for today's independent planning session.

24

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator leads and displays the expectation.
- Participants will use their current teacher created station activity from a previous taught lesson and now implement learned "Culturally responsive strategies" based on the knowledge gained.
- The planning will occur independently with assistance from the Facilitator or EL representative. .

GALLERY WALK

25

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator will lead this activity.
- Participants will walk and view all participant's created charts.

Exit Activity

REFLECTION TICKET



26

Program Developer Notes:

- The Program Developer will close out the session.
- Participants will scan and complete the Reflection Ticket on the learned practices.

Sustaining Culturally Responsive Practices & Next Steps

WELCOME TO DAY 3!

27

Facilitator Notes:

Greetings & Welcoming in Zoom Participants

- Facilitator has shared zoom link and allowing all participants to enter training with low music.
- Participants begins entering at 8:30 am.
- Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 am due to time constraints.

Sustaining Culturally Responsive Practices & Next Steps



28

Facilitator Notes:

Greetings & Welcoming Participants

- The facilitator will have participants scan the QR code to sign in on the form's link.
- Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 am due to time constraints.
- Participants begins entering at 8:30 am.
- Participants will not be allowed to enter the training after 8:45 am due to time constraints.
- Facilitator has shared zoom link and allowing all participants to enter training with low music.

Reviewing In-person Expectations

Let's review our 4 norms for today's day of learning.

29

Facilitator Notes:

Participants will revisit yesterday's group created expectations.

Icebreaker: Find a Friend

Directions: You will complete the below sentence stem for the next 2 minutes. Then when the music stops, please walk around and find someone that you have not worked with virtually or in person.

“Today, I feel _____ about culturally responsive teaching because of _____.”

30

Program Developer Notes:

- The Program Developer will lead the participants in “Find a Friend.”
- Participants will complete the Sentence stem independently and share with a chosen partner.
- Participants will actively participate and become engaged with all participants to get to know peers.

View & Reflect: Culturally Responsive Classroom
Video Clips

You will have 15 minutes to view both
clips. Earbuds are in your basket.

✓ [Supporting Schoolwide Culturally Responsive Classroom](#)

✓ [Learning Walks](#)

31

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator will share the expectations and Look Fors for participants as they view the video.
- The Facilitator will have participants capture seen best practices from personal perspective.
- After viewing the video, clips, participants will "Turn & Talk" with their shoulder partner to share take aways.
- The Facilitator will call on random volunteers for a group share out to close out the component.

Please enjoy the refreshments.

BREAK

32

Facilitator Notes:

- Participants have a 10-minute break.

Planning Time: Collaborative Lesson Plan & Curriculum Enhancement Activity

At this time, please take out your curriculum. You and your partner will now begin creating your lesson for week 3 of the school year.

33

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator leads the expectation for this task.
- Participants will break into grade levels to review the current curriculum.
- Each participant will choose a different partner from Day 2 to develop an entire lesson for ELLs.
- The Facilitator will provide a lesson plan template and materials for each pair.
- A pause will occur due to time for lunch.

LUNCH

34

Facilitator Notes:

Participants have 1 hour. They are on their own.

Planning Time: Continue your Collaborative Lesson Plan & Curriculum Enhancement Activity

You and your partner will have 25 minutes to wrap of your created lesson.

35

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator leads the expectation for this task and provides a displayed timer.
- The Facilitator will recap the morning session. The participants will have time to finalize their lesson plan with their chosen partner.
- The participants will display their completed lesson plan.

TRANSITION

36

Facilitator Notes:

Participants will transition to next component.

Feedback: Wondering & Noticing Activity

Please choose 3 lesson plans to view independently to provide feedback using the graphic organizer.

37

Facilitator Notes:

- Participants will use a Wonder & Notice graphic organizer to complete their feedback to a minimum of 3 participants.
- The Facilitator will lead, and participants will participate in the Feedback session.

TRANSITION

38

Facilitator Notes:

- Transition back with partners.

Feedback: Wondering & Noticing Closing Activity

Please collect you and your partner's lesson plan.

- Read the feedback.
- Make revisions if needed.
- Prepare for presentation.

39

Facilitator Notes:

- Closure Activity- Participants will read feedback silently with their partners and revise to prepare for presentations.
- Participants will have 15 minutes. A timer will be displayed.

Pairs will present at this time.

Model Lesson Presentations

40

Facilitator Notes:

- The Facilitator leads and displays the expectation.
- Participants will present their "Culturally responsive lesson plan to the class.

Next Steps: Community Supportive Networks for First Semester

- ✓ A Microsoft office group will be created for questions and opportunities to share out ideas with peers.
- ✓ Semester one Check-in on the implementation of culturally appropriate practices and the impact on your ELLs using a 5-question survey.
- ✓ Please look for the survey. We value your input.

41

Program developer Notes:

- The Program Developer will close out the training with next steps.
- Participants will complete the Reflection Closing Activity.
- Certificates of Completion
- Closing Remarks .

Exit Activity

REFLECTION TICKET



42

Program Developer Notes:

- The Program Developer will close out the session.
- Participants will scan and complete the Reflection Ticket on the learned practices.

Thank you for attending. We look forward to hearing from you throughout the school year!

43

Program developer Notes:

- The Program Developer will close out the training with next steps.
- Participants will complete the Reflection Closing Activity.
- Closing Remarks .

**Culturally Responsive Training Supporting EL Teachers & Support S
Professional Development**

Welcome to Culturally Responsive Training Supporting EL Teacher & Support Staff PD!

* This form will record your name, please fill your name.

1. First Name

2. Last Name

Day 1: Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching

Think... Reflect.. Respond

* This form will record your name, please fill your name.

1

Why Culturally responsive teaching matters for your ELLs?

2

How do you build positive relationships with your students. Provide 2 examples.

3

Rate the importance of positive relationships between students and teachers. Be ready to speak with a shoulder partner.



4

List any additional questions for clarification. The Facilitator and the Program Developer will have a zoom link open during asynchronous time.

DAY 2: Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices



Welcome Back for Day 2!

5

Reflect and write the learned practices from your reading on culturally responsive teaching practices. List at least 2 practices and briefly explain why.

6

How can we modify our current curriculum to implement culturally responsive strategies?

7

Based on the morning session, how do you create an inclusive classroom for your ELLs to be successful?

Day 3: Sustaining Culturally
Responsive Practices & Next Steps



Welcome to Day 3, the Final Day!

8

After viewing Video #1: **Supporting School wide Culturally Responsive Classroom**, please list 3 examples seem of culturally responsive teaching.

9

After viewing Video #2: **Learning Walks**, please list 3 examples seem of culturally responsive teaching.



Lesson Plan Template

Teacher: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	Date: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	Grade/Class/Subject: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Unit/Theme: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>		Standards: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Content Objective(s): <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>		Language Objective(s): <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Key Vocabulary: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>		Supplementary Materials: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
SIOP FEATURES		
<p>PREPARATION</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptation of content <input type="checkbox"/> Links to background <input type="checkbox"/> Links to past learning <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies incorporated	<p>SCAFFOLDING</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling <input type="checkbox"/> Guided practice <input type="checkbox"/> Independent practice <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensible input	<p>GROUP OPTIONS</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole class <input type="checkbox"/> Small groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partners <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
<p>INTEGRATION OF PROCESSES</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking <input type="checkbox"/> Listening	<p>APPLICATION</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on <input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful <input type="checkbox"/> Linked to objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes engagement	<p>ASSESSMENT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group <input type="checkbox"/> Written <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oral
LESSON SEQUENCE: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> STUDENTS WILL ALSO ENGAGE IN THE FOLLOWING		
REFLECTIONS: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>		

Participant's Names: _____

Lesson Plan Gallery Walk

Directions: Spend 8-10 minutes at each of your peer's lesson plan. Write down observations ("I Notice") and questions ("I Wonder") for each.

I Notice (Fact/Statement) 	I Wonder (Question?) 
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.

Reflection: Culturally Responsive Training Exit Ticket

Please share three key learned practices for today's session.

1. Learned practice #1

2. Learned practice #2

3. Learned practice #3

Culturally Responsive Teaching ELLs Semester Check-in Survey

13 Jan 2024

Please take time to complete the check in survey. Thank you in advance for your feedback.

1. Reflecting on this first semester, have you implemented any of the learned best practices of the culturally responsive training?
 - Yes
 - No

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of 3-day professional development in enhancing your understanding of culturally responsive teaching for ELLs?

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Neutral
- Very ineffective
- Somewhat ineffective

3. Which aspect of the training did you find most valuable in supporting your ELLs academically? Please provide examples.

4. How would you rate the components of the training in relations to how useful it was this first semester with your ELLs?

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Building Positive Relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing a Lesson Plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer Collobortion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness & Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. What additional support, resources, or follow up training do you feel would further enhance your ability to implement culturally responsive teaching practices for your ELLs?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interviewee Pseudonym: _____ Male ____ Female ____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my study. I am interested in seeking your perspective on addressing the successes, challenges, and resources needed to support ELLs. Please speak honestly and openly to the questions. This interview will be audio-recorded via Zoom, as I stated in the consent form. You will be provided with a pseudonym to ensure that your identity remains confidential. Do you have any questions before we proceed?

1. What does academic success look like in your classroom? Please provide a couple of examples.
2. How do you know when you meet the instructional needs of your ELLs? Please provide evidence or past experiences.
3. What were some strategies that were successful with the EL Professional Development aiding in preparing ELLs?
4. Describe the planning process that you follow in detail to create lessons that address the various needs of your ELLs.
5. What obstacles do your ELL students encounter most frequently while working on their independent work?
6. As an ELL teacher, describe how you guide your students in making connections between the content and background knowledge.

7. Provide an area of EL Professional Development that would benefit you if you could attend.

Clarifying Statements

Please tell me more...

Thank you. Can you provide an example ...

Closure

Thank you for taking the time for the interview and responding to the questions. With your input, this will assist in improving instructional practices for ELLs. I will share your responses with you to ensure your information is conveyed accurately. Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix C: Descriptive Codes and Themes

Descriptive Codes and Themes			
Interview Transcript #	Codes	Categories	Themes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student motivation • Engagement strategies • Student interests • Remote learning obstacles • Technical challenges • Maintaining student focus • Assessment methods • Real-world application • Adjusting assessments • Technology in education • Digital resources • Interactive platforms • School community • Collaboration among educators • Positive school environment 	<p>Motivation and Engagement</p> <p>Challenges in Remote Learning</p> <p>Effective Assessment</p> <p>Digital Learning Tools</p> <p>Supportive School Culture</p>	<p>Language Proficiency and Communication</p> <p>Individualized Instruction</p> <p>Effective Professional Development</p> <p>Lesson Planning and Delivery</p> <p>Overcoming Obstacles</p> <p>Connecting with Background Knowledge</p> <p>Desired Professional Development Focus</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive assessment • Assessing multiple skills • Identifying strengths and weaknesses • Providing constructive feedback • Encouraging growth • Addressing student needs • Utilizing educational technology 	<p>Holistic Assessment</p> <p>Effective Feedback</p> <p>Digital Learning Tools</p> <p>Personalized Learning</p>	

- Interactive online resources
 - Engaging students digitally
 - Tailoring instruction
 - Addressing individual needs
 - Student-centered approach
- 3
- Enhancing language skills
 - Vocabulary acquisition
 - Multilingualism
 - Instructional strategies
 - Differentiated teaching
 - Culturally relevant instruction
 - Inclusive teaching practices
 - Addressing diverse needs
 - Creating a welcoming environment
 - Formative assessment
 - Providing constructive feedback
 - Student progress monitoring
- Language Learning Environment
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Instructional Strategies

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering language development • Immersive language environment • Language acquisition strategies • Embracing diverse cultures • Cultural awareness • Inclusive curriculum • Multimodal teaching • Hands-on learning • Real-world application 	<p>Language Learning Environment</p> <p>Cultural Sensitivity</p> <p>Instructional Strategies</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active learning • Motivating students • Cultivating curiosity • Adapting instruction • Addressing individual needs • Personalized learning • Formative and summative assessment • Tailoring assessments • Feedback for growth 	<p>Student Engagement</p> <p>Differentiation</p> <p>Effective Assessment</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language proficiency • Expressive language skills • Effective communication • Cultural relevance • Tailoring instruction to individual student needs • Addressing varying competency levels • Providing diverse teaching tools • Practical classroom management • Efficient use of time (e.g., timers) • Building rapport with students • Hands-on learning activities 	<p>Academic Success Criteria</p> <p>Meeting Instructional Needs</p> <p>Successful Professional Development Strategies</p> <p>Lesson Planning</p> <p>Obstacles While Working Alone</p>

- | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaffolding techniques • Differentiation strategies • Warm-up and background activation • Input presentation (videos, texts) • General and detailed comprehension • Vocabulary and grammar introduction • Application of new knowledge • Pair work and application • Intellectual poverty and lack of background knowledge • Illiteracy in both English and Spanish • Limited intellectual stimuli • Difficulty relating new concepts to background knowledge • Encouraging students to relate content to their cultural backgrounds • Emphasizing common human challenges and needs • Integrating linguistic and cultural connections • Addressing illiteracy and foundational cognitive skills • Supporting students with severe learning gaps • Screen for learning disabilities | <p>Building Connections with Background Knowledge Desired Professional Development</p> | |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language proficiency and expression • Communication of needs • Importance of expressive language | <p>Meeting Instructional Needs</p> |

- Success through language use
 - Tailoring instruction to various competency levels
 - Addressing diverse levels of language proficiency
- Academic Success Indicators
- Successful Professional
- Development Strategies
- Meeting students at their individual needs
 - Providing tools for different competencies
 - Practical classroom management techniques
 - Efficient use of time (e.g., timer use)
 - Building rapport with students
 - Hands-on learning activities
 - Scaffolding techniques
 - Differentiation strategies
 - Warm-up and background knowledge activation
 - Presentation of material (videos, texts)
 - General and detailed comprehension
 - Vocabulary and grammar introduction
 - Application of new knowledge
 - Pair work and application
 - Encouraging students to make linguistic and cultural connections
 - Varying levels of intellectual background
 - Intellectual poverty and lack of background knowledge
- Lesson Planning
- Obstacles While Working Alone
- Building Connections with Background Knowledge
- Desired Professional Development

- Illiteracy in both English and Spanish
- Inability to relate new concepts to background knowledge
- Building Connections with Background Knowledge
- Encouraging students to relate content to their cultural backgrounds

- Emphasizing common human challenges and needs
- Integration of linguistic and cultural connections
- Addressing illiteracy and foundational cognitive skills
- Supporting students with severe learning gaps
- The challenge of teaching illiterate students with no foundational knowledge