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Grades 6-12 Teachers' Perceptions of Targeted Professional Development Needed to Support ESOL Reading Instruction

Esmeralda V. Villarreal
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Esmeralda V. Valdez

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Review Committee
Dr. Michelle McCraney, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Ashraf Esmail, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Esmeralda V. Valdez

MIT, Heritage University, 2009

BA, Heritage College, 2005

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The research problem for this study was teachers in grades 6-12 at a particular school district on the West Coast are not provided targeted professional development needed to support lower performing reading English speakers of other languages (ESOL) students in their school districts. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore these teachers' perceptions regarding this topic related to reading instruction and professional development activities, which can facilitate the learning and academic success of ESOL students. Sancar et al.'s new conceptual framework for teachers' professional development was used to provide a modern and improved view of professional development for teachers Participants were asked to provide their insights and opinions on the various forms of professional development programs that were useful in promoting reading skills among ESOL students who are in grades six through twelve. This study involved employing a basic qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with 10 participants. Data analysis included thematic analysis involving open coding and categorization to identify patterns and themes in order to analyze data. The results of the study have shown that the active participation of teachers in the planning of yearly professional development activities significantly affects both schools and districts. This study has important implications for social change, as it raises awareness among district personnel, administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders about the need to focus on professional development that specifically supports ESOL reading instruction. By emphasizing the importance of targeted professional development, this study aims to facilitate positive changes in teaching practices and ultimately improve the educational outcomes of ESOL students.

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Dedication

I dedicate this journey to my family for their support and love while I was on this doctoral journey. I also want to dedicate this work to all the educators and mentors I have been fortunate enough to have on my educational journey, which inspired me to make a difference for children in my career as an educator. I would like to dedicate this work to my children Nathaniel, and Natalia, and to my parents, Eloy and Amelia, they were my motivation to persevere to find my voice and share this topic with the educational world. To my sister Yanira "te nos adelantaste en el camino" I know you watch over us, and I miss you dearly.

Furthermore, to all the outstanding educators, I have had the privilege of working alongside and mentoring, our dedication to students' success in school and life does not go unnoticed. Above all, to God be all the honor and glory for this journey I travel. God has a bigger purpose for my life, one of serving and using this platform as a voice for social change, especially for those vulnerable groups whose voices have been silenced and need a dedicated, God-loving person in their life called a "teacher." Again, without my faith and God by my side this challenging journey and this study would not have been possible.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge and thank Dr. McCraney and Dr. Esmail for their support during this journey. This journey would have been challenging to navigate without their words of wisdom. I want to thank my parents and children for allowing me to dedicate the time needed to make it to the finish line of this doctoral journey. I have been fortunate to have many dedicated friends and educators who supported and listened to all the ideas that went into creating and culminating this study. I would not be at this point in my career if not for my high school, Ms. Eileen Keith-Wallace. Ms. Keith-Wallace was my educator hero who went above and beyond to advocate and get me into leadership positions and built my confidence that college was an option for this first-generation, U.S.-born, Mexican American daughter of two farm workers. This academic achievement would not have been possible without the challenges as they brought to where I am today on this doctoral journey.

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Section 1: The Problem

Teachers in grades 6-12 working in a school district situated on the West Coast of the United States are currently dealing with a significant challenge. Despite the increasing number of students who are English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), these educators are not provided with the proper targeted professional development opportunities they need to support their ESOL students in their school district. This lack of support has become even more pronounced as a result of the shift to online learning, which has forced these teachers to provide instruction remotely and online to their ESOL students. As a result, these teachers are struggling to provide effective and engaging instruction that meets the needs of their diverse student population.

The emergence of online learning alongside with the growing population of minorities in the United States has brought forth an array of new challenges for the teaching profession (Professional Educators Standards Board [PESB], 2021). With the advent of the pandemic, many families were forced to move to predominantly white and middle-class neighborhoods, causing a shift in student enrollment in schools across the West Coast. As a result, schools have faced the challenge of accommodating a diverse population of students, many of whom require instruction in English as a second language (Smith, 2019). It is worth noting that despite the changing demographics of students in public schools, the teaching workforce has remained predominantly Anglo-Saxon, with only 21% of teachers being minorities (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). This is a far cry from reflecting the national population of school students, which is approximately 50% people of color. Moreover, a recent national report card for 2019

indicated that English learners enrolled in pre-K-12 public education made up 10% of the student body in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Despite the federal government's efforts and funding to improve the professional development of the teacher workforce, many students are still struggling to achieve academic success in classrooms across the country. This highlights the pressing need for schools to adopt new strategies and approaches that can effectively address the unique needs of diverse student populations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a multitude of challenges for the teaching profession, but it has also provided an opportunity for teachers to learn new ways of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, as well as how to use digital platforms for creating multimedia learning. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 was revised to include increased accountability for student academic achievement, which had a significant impact on the teaching profession. However, the pandemic has widened the achievement gap between socioeconomic classes and among students of color, creating new challenges for teachers attempting to reach and provide instruction to students who are not engaging with instructional platforms or attending online courses.

Traditionally, teachers have been supported through the one-time workshop model and after-school teacher book study. However, with the ongoing pandemic, districts across the country are preparing to reopen schools, providing an opportunity to rethink teacher professional development and prioritize how students receive instruction. While the study site district spent over two weeks getting its current systems in place with how-to videos for using its current multi-learning systems platforms and content materials in digital formats to get teachers ready to teach, many teachers were still determined to seek

targeted and specific professional development to learn and navigate the new way of teaching and providing learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the important role teachers have in closing achievement gaps among students in their classrooms, especially those of grades 6 to 12, and their perceptions of professional development activities are essential to plan and provide effective teaching reading lessons that support reading instruction for lower performing reading ESOL students. The pandemic has shown the need for a new approach to what teachers need to know in order to provide effective instruction that meets the needs of their learners while being part of a process in which they grow as professionals in the field. With the ongoing pandemic, it is essential to reimagine how our schools can begin to close the academic achievement gap for students and provide teachers with the support they need to be successful in their roles.

Rationale

According to a recent study by Sancar et al. (2021), secondary school teachers on the U.S. West Coast are not provided with targeted professional development activities to support lower-performing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) reading within their school districts. This lack of support becomes increasingly concerning as the U.S. becomes more diverse in terms of population, and the demographics of students entering school districts are not reflected in their teaching force. Therefore, it is crucial to provide targeted professional development activities to current teachers if they want to gain knowledge about how to provide effective reading lessons to a population of

students who need different teaching modalities to achieve academic success within the education system.

According to the International Literacy Association (2020), teachers from 65 countries perceived professional development activities as a crucial need to support their students in the content area of literacy. One of the top five reoccurring themes shared by participants was the need for professional development that was specific to literacy content. Educators felt it was critical to the instruction they provided students in their classrooms. Additionally, 52.0% of teachers expressed professional development was a specific individual interest to gain familiarity in the subject area of literacy and improve literacy outcomes and student success in the classroom (Guberman & Mcdossi, 2019; International Literacy Association, 2020).

Since 2016, the study site has seen an increase of 14% of ESOL students, with 47 first languages spoken by this population. However, the number of targeted professional development offerings for teachers in the district was only 71, of which three were topics on literacy. Further, only one of those 71 offerings was relevant to secondary level teachers. The study site budgeted for and allocated one instructional specialist per building who works with small groups of students on the general education reading curriculum in English. Often, this person is not bilingual and has no reading endorsement specific to supporting academic literacy.

The study site and surrounding districts in the West Coast were the subject of a complaint filed by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The complaint states in which the study site and surrounding school districts have failed to provide minimum reading

instruction to ESOL enrolled in their preK-12 schools. According to the Office of the State Department of Education, they were obligated to meet minimum civil rights obligations as part of the basic education of ESOL in the region in order to provide this student population with free and appropriate education. However, this is not a unique problem in this area.

With the current challenges of dealing with learning loss for all students in the country due to COVID-19 and remote and online learning, teachers are observing academic gaps in their students as they return to classrooms. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers of grades 6 through 12 at a school system in the U.S. West Coast and their perceptions of professional development activities which support reading instruction for lower performing reading students. The study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the current situation and to offer insights into how to provide effective professional development activities that can support teachers in their efforts to provide high-quality reading instruction to their students.

Definitions of Terms

English language learners (ELL): Students who speak English as a second language (Gupta, 2019).

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): Learners whose first language is not English (Higton et al., 2019).

Minority Students: Ethnically-defined groups within larger dominant populations" refers to subgroups of people who share common cultural or ancestral traits, such as language, customs, religion, or physical features, within a larger society or nation where

they are not the majority and may face certain forms of marginalization, discrimination, or assimilation pressure (Isik et al., 2018).

Professional Collaboration: Development initiatives and policy frameworks to foster trustful relationships (Kolleck et al., 2021).

Professional Development: Ongoing natural and planned activities that involve developing professional skills (Nawab, 2020).

Significance of the Study

The research study involved addressing the gap in understanding the perspectives of teachers regarding professional development activities that could enhance reading instruction for ESOL students in grades 6 to 12 in a particular school district situated on the U.S. West Coast. The study aimed to shed light on the perceptions held by teachers, which could offer valuable insights into the practices adopted by schools and districts in the surrounding areas. The study results could help schools and districts offer specific activities to secondary teachers that provide effective reading support to ESOL student populations at the local, regional, and statewide levels. The information gathered from this study can be an asset to educators and communities and aid in supporting the teaching profession. It could also lead to effective reading instruction for ESOL students and assist them in developing and acquiring English language skills.

Research Question

The study was guided by one specific research question, which served as the focal point for all the research activities. This research question was carefully crafted to ensure

that it captured all the key elements of the study and provided a clear direction for the research process. The question stated:

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6-12?

Review of the Literature

The primary focus of the research was to examine the perceptions of teachers with respect to professional development activities that support reading instruction for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students in grades 6 through 12 at a specific school district located on the U.S. West Coast. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this topic, the researcher conducted an extensive literature review using various credible sources such as scholarly journal articles, books, dissertations, and government documents. In particular, the researcher accessed Walden's online library and utilized online databases such as EBSCO Host, ProQuest, SAGE Journals, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The researcher employed different keywords to refine the search and ensure that the obtained information was relevant and up-to-date. Overall, the research was conducted with a great deal of care and precision to ensure the findings were accurate and reliable. The following keywords were used: *professional development*, *low achieving*, *students*, *disadvantage*, *advantage*, *perceptions*, *teacher support*, *English speakers*, *reading instructions*, and *minority*.

Conceptual Framework

Sancar et al.'s (2021) new conceptual framework for professional development of teachers presents a contemporary and improved perspective on the subject. The

framework is centered on holistic teacher development and professional growth processes, where teachers play a vital role as leading participants and evolving practitioners. This approach emphasizes developing skills that teachers acquire through participation in professional development activities. The framework prioritizes holistic, teacher-centered, and reflective approaches to professional development, aiming to improve student achievement and educational outcomes. The framework also places a strong emphasis on the significance of lifelong learning processes and encourages the adoption of multidimensional approaches, including assessment and research.

This new conceptual framework is a third-generation framework that is a holistic teacher-centered approach to professional development that addresses all the process variables of teacher professional development as part of individual teacher career growth. The framework recognizes the importance of addressing individual teacher characteristics, teaching strategies, student outcomes, collaboration, supportive activities, school context, curriculum, reform, and policies, all of which are interrelated and interdependent.

The framework provides a guide for ensuring professional development activities are centered around teachers' learning. It enables those responsible for creating and organizing professional development activities to do so with teachers' needs and preferences in mind. When implemented effectively, professional development activities are highly applicable to teacher practitioners in their classrooms and positively impact student outcomes.

The researcher conducted a study to gather teachers' perceptions of professional development activities and to highlight the need for skills to support low-performing students in their classrooms. The framework assisted in raising awareness about teachers' perceptions of professional development activities to support reading instruction to ESOL students in grades 6 through 12 at a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast. The new generation of professional development processes significantly influences teachers' characteristics, skills, and student learning outcomes.

Literature Review of Related Key Factors

Federal law requires general education teachers to obtain state certifications or licenses in the grade levels and subjects they teach. However, preparing teachers for EL-specific initial and in-service training has never been a national priority (Ballantyne et al., 2012; Samson & Collins, 2012). Therefore, school staff should schedule time for school support structures which allow ESOL and non-ESOL staff to meet as a professional learning community and discuss teacher and student learning needs to improve teaching and content delivery (Kennedy, 2016; Yoon et al., 2007).

Professional development opportunities for teachers organized by educational leaders can promote positive changes in teachers and schools. These experiences enhance teachers' knowledge and skills and inspire them to translate new ideas into classroom practice, resulting in positive changes in terms of student learning outcomes (Osman, 2020; Kennedy, 2016; Yoon et al., 2007). However, it's important to recognize teachers differ in terms of personal characteristics, which influence what and how they implement later in the classroom (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Turner et al., 2009). Therefore,

professional development opportunities should be designed to cater to the specific needs of different teachers to ensure they can improve their teaching skills and enhance student learning effectively.

Teacher Effectiveness

In order to improve student achievement, it is crucial to implement high-impact instructional strategies and provide professional development programs that positively impact student learning (Babinski et al., 2018). However, becoming an inclusive professional requires more than attending professional development sessions. It involves continuous development of professional autonomy, resourcefulness, practical and ethical responsibility, and collaboration with others (Klibthong et al., 2018). Teachers can enhance their own professional growth and become more inclusive practitioners by immersing themselves in different environments which challenge them to adapt to various changes in terms of their physical and conceptual learning.

The findings by Malik et al. (2020) suggest schools that focus on providing teachers with meaningful activities and appropriate support and feedback are more successful in implementing instructional strategies in the classroom and achieving high levels of student and school achievement. These schools place a strong emphasis on creating and sustaining teacher effectiveness. Moreover, Mustafa et al. (2021) found that teachers who participated in professional development programs were satisfied with the experience. This highlights the importance of providing teachers with opportunities to continuously develop their skills and knowledge to improve their teaching practices and ultimately benefit their students.

Traditional Approaches

Research has shown students with lower English proficiency benefit the most from teachers' participation in professional development programs. Bohon et al. (2017) suggests that reflection time for teachers and opportunities to test newly learned skills in the classroom are essential components of successful professional development programs. Teachers require additional experience and knowledge to effectively meet the diverse needs of their students. Consequently, district programs often focus on offering professional development opportunities to faculty and staff, with many school initiatives emphasizing teacher practices and perspectives (Smith, 2021).

To improve their techniques, teachers must have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and frame them in an environment that fosters growth and improvement. Smith & Robinson (2020) indicate that such reflection is essential for teacher growth and development. Teachers are more likely to engage in professional development programs when they perceive the value and importance of such programs.

However, education systems generally do not provide sufficient exposure to high-level academic content and discourse to secondary education students. Weddle et al. (2020) found that designing support by school districts for teachers of English language learners is crucial. Structural support is often insufficient in mediating teacher development for students learning English as a second language. Sponsorship for professional development, seminars, coach education, and limited English language-focused professional learning opportunities are necessary. Structural constraints are closely linked to a culture of misunderstanding regarding the origins and interests of non-

English speakers, further limiting access to professionals and learning opportunities for teachers. Although there are some examples of support, they remain rare, and most educators feel unprepared to fully engage students in classes (Weddle et al., 2020).

Professional Development New Approaches

Effective and ongoing professional development is crucial for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge and ultimately positively impact the daily practice of teaching in schools. In contrast to traditional staff development activities, in-service training is done on-site and is an integral part of a teacher's everyday life. It is focused on topics relevant to classroom instruction and encourages teachers to be active participants in the development of their long-term practice. According to research conducted by Camburn et al. (2017), teachers are more likely to reflect on their teaching if their professional learning experiences are centered on work-integrated learning experiences.

To ensure that professional development for teachers remains relevant to the teaching profession and current areas of teaching interest, it is crucial to have a research-based and validated tool to assess teachers' levels of professional development, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and then provide them with appropriate activities to use in training sessions. Estaji et al. (2022) emphasize the need for targeted research in this area to develop a concise and contextualized tool to measure the structure of teacher professional development.

However, there is a need for improved methods and mindset changes in teacher professional development and new approaches. Until recently, relatively little attention has been paid to professional development at the level of teachers' professional identity

and mission in the teacher education literature. Korthagen (2017) argues that there may be an inconvenient fact that lies at the heart of educational change. This change manifests as a one-sided rational attitude toward teacher learning, as if the district or the leaders within a district can change teachers simply by influencing the way they think. Those responsible for teacher training programs or innovative projects must learn to understand what drives teacher behavior and their inherent desire to improve learning and teaching.

Richter et al. (2019) analyzed different learning opportunities and found that teachers pursue different goals and choose lessons on different topics. Most teachers choose learning opportunities that address subject content, and teacher involvement in professional development is positively correlated with the demand for teaching skills. Teachers who want to improve their skills choose professional development courses specific to teaching-related content. Additionally, teachers who choose professional development activities based on their interests are more likely to prioritize subject-specific courses and topics.

The success of students in any discipline requires literacy skills to read, write, and speak complex content. Policymakers, business leaders, and educators have determined that for students to succeed in the future, they must be able to read deeply, analyze what they read, and then form a coherent argument based on their reading. Therefore, it is essential to provide teachers with effective and relevant professional development opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge and ultimately benefit their students.

Reading Instruction

In the field of education, meeting the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) can be a challenge for teachers. According to Pegram (2019), teachers at a particular school were not provided with training and preparation time to develop lesson plans and activities that emphasize activities that differentiate ELL teaching. This lack of training and experience can be particularly challenging for new teachers who have not yet worked in multicultural learning environments. Brito (2012), quoted in Pegram (2019), highlights that language and literacy skills often require specific skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning. It can be difficult for teachers to prepare lessons for individual students and groups of different abilities, but consistent practice and curriculum modifications can lead to differentiated instruction that meets the needs of different learners, such as ELLs. Providing opportunities for teachers to implement research-based instructional strategies can help educators take responsibility for ELL (Pegram, 2019).

However, despite efforts to address this issue, teachers sometimes fail to meet the learning needs of students learning English through teaching (Hynes, 2021). This highlights the need for professional development and other resources to improve teaching outcomes and student growth for English speakers of other language populations in the classroom. Teachers require focused professional development on English learner teaching strategies and effective teaching practices that they can implement in the classroom to meet the needs of all ELL students. Furthermore, English learners' teachers should have access to all the resources they need for relevant professional development

for English learners and to be active in the classroom. Including the participation of ELL teachers in planning and implementing professional development activities at the building and district levels benefits all school and district teachers and administrators (Hynes, 2021).

Reading fluency is essential for cognitive development and reading comprehension, and it is dependent on the instructional practices utilized by teachers. Kulo et al. (2021) describe reading fluency as revealed when students feel comfortable reading aloud with appropriate expressions at about the same rate of their typical speech. Scaffolding is a reading technique that assists English learners during reading instruction (Reynolds et al., 2021). When scaffold-focused instruction was the focus of teaching EL reading and mindful preparation, EL participants demonstrated high achievement rates in reading.

Winlund (2020) contends that overlapping continuums of academic content and growth equity are dependent on the environment and medium of development and cannot be clearly separated. The literacy process may be described by movements on these two scales. To improve literacy and language abilities, training should be highly contextualized based on students' current background, previous knowledge, and language abilities. In reading classrooms, children with limited formal education may find success learning English when teachers are purposeful in preparing engaging, teacher-centered lessons and provide seamless connections among the development of content materials and instruction (Winlund, 2020).

Student Outcomes

The role of teachers in student achievement has been a topic of much discussion among researchers and educators. While there is some disagreement on the importance of teacher background variables, existing research suggests that teaching practices are a critical factor in student outcomes. Specifically, teachers' instructional practices have been shown to be more important than their professional qualifications in predicting student achievement.

In addition to instructional practices, teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and emotions about the teaching process and student learning can influence classroom teaching practice and student achievement. These factors are not only important for understanding teacher job satisfaction but also for predicting student outcomes. Teachers who have positive attitudes and beliefs about their ability to teach and influence students are more likely to foster a positive learning environment and promote student success.

Professional development is also a key factor in student achievement. Studies have shown that teacher training and engagement in the professional development process can significantly impact student outcomes. When teachers are given the opportunity to learn and grow professionally, they are better equipped to meet the needs of their students and provide high-quality instruction.

Moreover, developing a strong professional community and culture within schools has been linked to higher teacher satisfaction and improved student achievement. When teachers are encouraged to collaborate and share best practices, they are more likely to feel supported and motivated. This can lead to improved student outcomes.

Ultimately, teachers' quality and professional development activities are critical to student learning and achievement. As students' progress through their school experience, their background knowledge and understanding of content become more complex, making it even more important that teachers receive ongoing training and support to meet their evolving needs. By investing in the professional growth of teachers, schools can ensure that all students have access to high-quality instruction and the best possible chance for academic success.

Curriculum

In the United States, K-12 teacher educators who focus on English Language Learners (ELLs) face numerous challenges in enhancing pre-service and general education teachers' comprehension of language and language pedagogy concepts and practicing their emotional investment in students belonging to minority language communities. According to Guerrettaz et al. (2020) and People (2020), language educators are crucial in enriching teacher-learners' understanding of the academic world for K-12 students from minority language groups. However, in linguistically homogeneous rural America, teacher-learners may lack personal experience of linguistic diversity and have limited exposure in K-12 classrooms with language learner populations.

As a result, language educators must design and implement effective strategies to enhance teacher-learners' understanding of the world of academic life for K-12 students from minority language groups. Given the prevailing performance culture, teachers are involved in significant curriculum reforms and act as curriculum designers. Lambert and

Biddulph (2015) argue that teachers do not just "deliver" pre-packaged lessons but are the ones who bring life and meaning to lessons, which require a complex understanding of students, subject matter, and pedagogy. However, teachers are often reluctant to change the curriculum, and it is crucial to encourage and support them in this regard.

In the context of education reform, it is essential to set ambitious goals for student learning and prepare them for the complexities of modern society. Policy documents and educational reforms worldwide require 21st-century skills, which involve the ability to conduct advanced reasoning, understand the content, and apply and transfer knowledge to solve problems. Teachers are essential to carrying out educational reforms, and some researchers have pointed out that teachers need support to accomplish this task. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize the teacher's voice to bridge the gap between the vision of reform and the classroom.

Reading lessons are one of the four key language teaching skills that are pivotal in a language teaching program. The use of authentic materials in language teaching is widely supported by the literature, and these materials appear to effectively motivate learners, stimulate their interest, and expose them to the real languages they encounter in the real world. Namaziandost et al. (2022) highlight the importance of incorporating authentic materials in language teaching, as they provide learners with a deeper understanding of the language and culture of the target language community.

Enhancing teacher-learners' understanding of the world of academic life for K-12 students from minority language groups, supporting teachers in implementing educational reforms, and incorporating authentic materials in language teaching are crucial steps in

improving the quality of education and preparing students for the challenges of the modern world.

Reform and Policies

In the field of education, language policies, perceptions, and ideologies are identified as key factors that significantly impact teachers in the classroom. Bacon (2020) argues that states or schools that have adopted an explicit English-only policy are teaching in an environment dominated by English, which can potentially affect teachers and their ability to teach effectively. With a large number of bilingual public-school students in the United States, it is necessary to acknowledge the importance of embracing diversity and inclusivity in the classroom to ensure that every student receives the quality education they deserve.

To improve student outcomes, standards-based reform places a considerable emphasis on changing teacher practices. Desimone et al. (2017) highlight that federal, state, and district governments have embraced instructional coaching as a strategy to develop teacher practice due to the complexity of this work. Instructional coaching is particularly important for policymakers seeking to improve reading and literacy through on-site, individualized, and ongoing professional development. This approach has been shown to be effective in reforming and improving teacher education, improving student achievement, and establishing instructional coaching as consistent with research-based ideas for effective professional development.

According to Mager (2021), sustaining complex school reform involves building the organizational capacity of staff and leaders and allocating resources to ensure that

staff and leaders can effectively achieve the goals of joint initiatives from a top-down approach. In order to achieve collective goals and results, a shared responsibility must be established while collaborating for the success of all students. Professional development and teacher reform are central to public funding, as Martin et al. (2017) emphasize. However, providing teachers with the resources or tools to implement these skills in the classroom is equally important, as teachers need to have a clear understanding and knowledge of how mandatory reforms in instructional practices and policies are achieved.

Therefore, it is essential that teachers and school leaders work together to ensure that the required changes are achieved through the direction of reforms and policies so that staff feels empowered to change their practices while implementing the desired reforms and new changes in policy and practice for students in the classroom. Teachers must also consider their professional development in schools, as teacher learning processes must be developed to improve schools (Postholm, 2018). By doing so, teachers can keep up with the latest trends and teaching methodologies, which in turn will improve student outcomes and their overall learning experience.

Limitations

The study conducted had some limitations which need to be considered. Firstly, the participants for the study were sought from only one school district in grades 6 to 12 belonging to a particular school district located on the U.S. West Coast. However, to minimize the impact of this limitation, the study site was selected after ensuring that it had an adequate number of teachers to meet the participant threshold. Additionally, the

site was chosen based on the availability of teachers who provide instruction to ESOL students in grades 6 to 12 and have participated in professional development activities.

Another limitation of the study was that it was limited to one specific research question, which guided the entire study. However, this limitation was mitigated by conducting semi-structured interviews, which allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the research question. Additionally, the sample size of the study was limited to only 10 participants. To address this limitation, participants were selected based on meeting the study criteria of teaching at the site, participating in professional development activities, and providing instruction to ESOL students.

Furthermore, there was a potential limitation of the researcher's bias concerning the topic, as the researcher was passionate about the study. To minimize the impact of this limitation, the researcher kept a researcher's journal throughout the project study to identify and record any personal biases, thoughts, feelings, and insights. The researcher used this journal to reflect on their assumptions and ensure their interview questions were appropriately managed. Additionally, the researcher questioned their assumptions to ensure their biases did not influence the data collection process. While the study had some limitations, they were mitigated by taking appropriate measures. The study was conducted with the utmost care to ensure the results were as accurate and reliable as possible.

Assumptions

During the research study, I made an assumption that the participants who were interviewed about their perceptions of professional development activities that support

reading instruction for ESOL students in grades 6 through 12 at a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast were honest and forthcoming. I also assumed that the participants reflected on their educator experiences while answering the research question through interviews. Furthermore, I assumed that being interviewed could help evoke memories of collective experiences about the participants' perceptions regarding this topic, thereby providing more detailed and nuanced insights into the research.

Summary

In Section 1 of the study, a comprehensive introduction was presented. This section included a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and a research question that the study aimed to answer. Furthermore, a literature review was conducted, which covered both traditional and new approaches to professional development, teacher effectiveness, reading instruction, student outcomes, curriculum, reform, and policies for teachers who provide instruction to ESOL students in the sixth through twelfth grades. The conceptual framework was also addressed in this section. A detailed description of the nature of the study, which includes definitions, scope, delimitations, and significance, was provided to give a clear understanding of the study's main objectives and the extent of its scope.

Section 2: The Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research design to examine the perceptions of grade 6-12 teachers towards the targeted professional development required to support English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students' reading instruction in a specific school district on the West Coast of the United States. The research approach aimed to gain insight into how individuals perceived, approached, and experienced real-world issues and interpreted their experiences. The data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews with ten participants in grades 6 through 12, with the main objective of determining their perceptions of professional development and the necessity for instruction to support lower-performing reading ESOL students. An interview protocol was developed for this purpose (see Appendix B). The thematic analysis was applied to identify categories and emerging themes. This chapter describes the research methodology and approach, data collection and analysis, and limitations of this study.

Research Design and Approach

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to address grade 6-12 teachers' perceptions of targeted professional development required to support ESOL students' reading instruction at a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast. To explore this topic, a basic qualitative research design was employed. Ravitch and Carl (2021) considered qualitative research to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of individuals and groups and events that shaped their lives by considering the context and meanings they attributed to those experiences.

In this study, a basic qualitative design was selected to interview participants and ask follow-up questions to clarify responses during initial interviews. Babbie (2019) defined naturalism as observing a group to test a formal hypothesis and collecting data over time to watch a change in targeted groups. However, since the study did not involve observing groups to test a formal hypothesis, the naturalism method was not used. Instead, participants participated voluntarily in semi-structured interviews and self-reported during the interview process.

Creswell (2018) described narrative analysis as a method for researchers to collect stories of one or two participants. Once the researcher has collected participants' stories, collective stories are shared via a narrative. For this study, ten people were interviewed, and the narrative analysis method was not used as it does not allow for open coding to take place with the collection of data to produce a final report or manuscript of findings.

According to Billups (2021), grounded theory is a method for gathering data from diverse groups of participants to explore common everyday experiences. However, since the goal was not to develop a new theory, this approach was not chosen. Therefore, grounded theory design was not used for this study.

A case study involves investigating real-world events and focusing on one or more studies. Cases are time-bound, limited to one location per case, and require analysis of several data sources (Creswell, 2018). However, the case study design was inappropriate for this research since it only consisted of conducting interviews and evaluating resulting data to concentrate on the local issue.

According to Burkholder (2018), phenomenology involves being immersed in the day-to-day natural environment of participants while observing interactions that occur within the environment and lived experiences regarding a sometimes known or unknown phenomenon. Basic qualitative research involves understanding the perceptions and feelings of individuals and collecting data from interviews and observations. The phenomenological design did not lend itself to opportunities to explore this topic. Therefore, the design was not selected for this study.

According to Creswell (2018), mixed methods research involves combining qualitative and quantitative designs. Quantitative research involves answering why questions and providing data and analyses to explain social complexities. The quantitative approach answers what questions. Babbie (2019) stated mixed methods research should be undertaken whenever research questions cannot be answered via quantitative or qualitative data analysis alone. In this study, only qualitative research derived from interviews was collected, and there was no clear way to quantify complex phenomena. Therefore, the mixed methods approach was considered but not accepted as an option for this study.

Participants

The research study had clearly defined parameters and criteria for the study site and participants. The participants were grades 6 to 12 teachers who taught ESOL students reading instruction at a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast. They had to have been currently teaching in a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast, be a secondary teacher in grades 6 through 12, and had ESOL students in their classrooms.

The researcher reached out via email and requested permission from the principal at a particular school district on the West Coast and gained access to participants from the study site via email, Zoom, and personal phone calls.

To conduct an effective interview, building rapport with the participants was found necessary. Communication techniques like active listening, encouraging open-dialogue, and having respect were all ways to build rapport with participants. The participants were also educated about the topic's importance, confidentiality policies, and informed consent procedures. According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), interviews are a type of communication which calls for rapport, excellent listening skills, transparency, and respect.

The participants of this study were recruited from the study site of a particular school on the West Coast. However, if the research study did not reach the desired number of participants to be interviewed, the possibility of using a supplemental recruitment strategy was considered to include Walden University's participant pool. Purposeful sampling was utilized based on the following criteria. It allowed the researcher to select participants who were in grades 6 to 12 at the study site. The teachers had participated in professional development activities and could describe and share their perceptions of targeted professional development to provide instruction to lower performing in "reading" ESOL students in their secondary classrooms. The inclusion criteria stated the participants must have currently had ESOL students in their classrooms and had at least one year of teaching experience, in addition to having attended at least one professional development activity provided by their school district.

According to Benoot et al (2016), purposeful sampling was a quick and efficient way to find experts and material pertinent to a study. As the researcher, this sampling strategy allowed me to gain insight from all participants who had experience and would provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon. Through this strategy, the researcher interviewed 10 participants until saturation was obtained so that no new information was provided, proving saturation (Creswell, 2018). The data was saturated when it began to consistently reappear across participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Although saturation may have been reached before 10 participants, the researcher continued to conduct Semi-structured interviews until at least 10 participants had been interviewed. Historically, researchers who conducted similar qualitative designs in the studies included an equivalent number of participants and reached saturation (Creswell, 2018). Additionally, if there were more than 10 participants who volunteered, the researcher would select the first 10 participants who met the inclusion criteria, which stated the participants must currently have ESOL students in their classrooms and have at least one year of teaching experience, in addition to having attended at least one professional development activity provided by their school district.

Instrumentation

The collection of data is an essential aspect of any research study. For this particular study, an interview protocol was utilized to gather information from the participants. The interview protocol was developed based on the conceptual framework presented in the literature review and guiding question. The questions included in the interview protocol were both open-ended and semi-structured. They were designed by the

researcher specifically for this study, with the aim of inquiring about the teachers' perceptions regarding professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6-12.

To ensure that the interview questions were well-designed and aligned with the study's research question, two Subject Matter Experts (SME) were consulted. The first SME had eight years of extensive teaching experience and holds a Master of Arts degree in Teaching for Grades Kindergarten through eighth grade, a second master's degree in Special Education in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade, and a specialization in Technology Kindergarten through 12th grades. The second SME had a Bachelor of Arts in French and Linguistics, a DEUG in Foreign Language Education in France, a Master's in Education with a focus on Teaching Elementary Education, in addition to endorsements in Teaching English as a Second Language and Dual Language. This SME also had 23 years of teaching experience.

Both SMEs analyzed the interview questions and provided feedback that helped modify questions #4 and #9 to align with the main research question. The resulting interview protocol was designed to align with the research question and conceptual framework, ensuring the reliability of data collection. In fact, as recommended by Billups (2021), it is essential to document each interview to ensure the reliability of data collection.

Table 1 below was developed to outline the alignment between the study's guiding research question, interview questions, and the framework presented in Sancar et al.'s research. The table details the research question, the interview questions, and the

relationship between the three domains, providing a comprehensive overview of the study's research methodology. It demonstrates the alignment between the study's research question, interview questions, and the framework presented in the literature review. Additionally, the table provides a reference for the alignment between the framework, research questions, and interview questions for collecting data that would offer information regarding the study's research question. The interview protocol and Table 1 were essential tools for the efficient, transparent, and concise collection of data.

Table 1

Research Questions and Framework Alignment

Interview Questions	Research Question and Framework Alignment
1. How long have you been a teacher?	RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6 to 12?
2. How long have you taught students in grades 6 to 12 who are English speakers of other languages?	RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6 to 12?
3. How many ESOL students are currently enrolled in your class?	Student learning
4. Describe any challenges you face as a secondary teacher with English speakers of other language students in your classroom.	What and how teachers teach is not differentiated from teachers' professional or individual characteristics
5. Describe how your participation in professional development offered by your school or school district has aided you in supporting reading instruction for lower performing "reading" English speakers of other languages.	The quality of students' educational outcomes depends on the quality of their teachers' PD
6. Describe any ineffective professional development you have experienced that	Stakeholders affecting the PD Process

Interview Questions	Research Question and Framework Alignment
was intended to support reading lessons for English speakers of other languages. a. Can you provide some examples?	Student learning
7. Describe any experience you have had with professional development targeted to instruction for English speakers of other language students outside the classroom.	Teachers learning
8. Did you seek and organize those activities on your own, without your school's guidance? What motivated your decision to participate in these specific activities?	The PD process influences teachers
9. Describe what information from your coordinated professional development activities you found helpful and implemented into your classroom instruction. a. Do you see a change in English speakers of other language students reading? b. If so, can you share some examples?	PD is a process that begins with a teacher education program and continues throughout a teacher's professional life" Student learning Teachers learning
10. Describe what professional development activities you perceive would benefit secondary teachers' instruction that would support English speakers of other languages.	PD as a holistic process
11. Describe what experiences from yourself coordinated professional development you perceived would help support instruction for English speakers of other language students.	The PD process influences teachers
a. Can you share any examples from the professional development that supported instruction for English speakers of other languages?	The PD process influences teachers
12. Describe ways you coordinated participation in professional development activities that supported instruction for English speakers of other languages students in your classrooms.	The new generation of PD design is responsive to their concerns, strengths, and missions in their real school contexts
13. Describe which professional development activities you found helpful and used in	Teachers can choose and direct their PD process

Interview Questions	Research Question and Framework Alignment
your classroom to improve English Language Learners reading skills.	
14. Describe what professional development activities you perceive would benefit secondary teachers' instruction that would support English speakers of other language students.	Individual differences was always an essential factor in the PD Process

Procedures for Recruitment

The researcher explored teachers' perceptions of professional development for instruction needed to support lower performing in "reading" ESOL students. Upon approval from Walden's Internal Review Board, the researcher contacted the school's administrator by emailing a letter of permission and participation (see Appendix D) that included the study topic and interview questions. They were also presented with a copy of the letter of cooperation from the district for approval to collect data (see Appendix E).

The researcher then began recruiting 20 participants by sending a letter of participation (see Appendix F) and randomly selecting 10 based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria process to participate in the study. Participants were recruited based on the criteria, which stated that they must be secondary teachers in grades 6 through 12, receive professional development during their teaching career, and have English speakers of other languages enrolled in their classrooms at their prospective schools. The researcher emailed a letter of participation (see Appendix F) and the consent form asking permission to participate in the study (see Appendix G) to all potential participants who meet the selection criteria.

An interview was then set up with participants who chose to participate in the study. Participants had the option to be interviewed on a Zoom platform, facetime over the participant and my cell phone, or face-to-face in a safe location of participants choosing. Interviews were conducted outside of the participant's contracted working hours. Participants who selected an interview via Zoom were asked to secure a private free of distractions or interruptions. Before proceeding with the interviews on Zoom, facetime, or cellphone, participants were asked to confirm their privacy by planning the area of their interview space. Participants were also asked for permission to record the 45-to-60-minute interviews. Further, if the participant selected a face-to-face interview, a conference room at the community library was reserved, and the interview was recorded.

After the interviews, the researcher sent participants a thank you letter (see Appendix H) for their participation in the study. To gauge their interest in participating in the study, participants were asked for the names and contact details of their coworkers or friends who watched the inclusion criteria. These participants were contacted, notified that someone has suggested they participate in the study, and asked whether they are willing to do so. They chose the time and date of their interview. Each participant got a consent form (see Appendix G) through email, which they considered with attention and reply to with the words "I consent," signifying their willingness to participate in one interview. Information was gathered, examined, and signed consent forms were ensured. Participants' consent was requested before the interview was recorded and before calling them on the phone. Participants' consent was requested before the interview is recorded

and before calling them for clarification or additional questions. Nonverbal cues for answering the study questions during the interview was noted in the researcher's journal.

Participants were reassured of their confidentiality, thanked for their study participation, and given a $10 Amazon gift for their participation. Interview responses was masked using a pseudonym such as iP1 or PZ1 to keep participants' identities confidential. Participants were contacted by email to provide feedback and confirm the accuracy of the interview transcripts. In the email, the researcher offered to share her takeaways from that persons' interviews via phone or email so the participant can confirm whether the researcher's Interpretations were accurate. Copies of the 45-to-60-minute interview transcripts were saved to an electronic file with a secure password and stored on the researcher's computer for five years, as indicated by the University's policies for studies conducted and completed. After approval was received from all participants confirming the accuracy of the transcripts, information was transcribed and coded using the transcribing software NVivo or an alternate similar if NVivo is not available.

Procedures for Participation

After the participants were selected and consent was obtained, they were informed that participation would begin with an initial interview through a recorded Zoom platform or a face-to-face interview in a private location (e.g., public library with a conference room, in the participant's home in a room where the researcher asked for a 360 view check of their surroundings prior to the interview to ensure there was no one else present during the entirety of the interview) where the participant and either researcher could then engage in the interview questions. Participants were also informed the researcher

would take notes and have the interview responses recorded via a small handheld recording device. If interviews were done face-to-face in a private and neutral location such as a local library, the researcher would have made reservations for a conference room to interview as another option was to perform the interviews via Facetime, where the participant and the researcher would interact in a neutral and confidential area.

However, this procedure was unnecessary as none of the interviews were conducted in the library. At the same time, the researcher utilized a cell phone to conduct the interview. This would only occur with their written and verbal permission and consent to record the conversation to transcribe the interview responses for their review later, and this platform would need to be conducted in the same method should there need to be a follow-up interview.

The purpose for selecting Zoom as an option for conducting interviews with the participants was the researcher was also employed to work in a hybrid online platform. This made the process more accessible and flexible for the participants to be able to access Zoom, which was purchased as a subscription, therefore keeping the information confidential and also scheduling the participants to engage in the interview process. There was no conflict of interest or potential issues with employers as the interviews were conducted after the teachers worked contracted hours. Zoom was a valuable tool in qualitative research because it enabled the researcher to build a rapport with the participants that may have been limited should it only be done face-to-face or through phone interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2016). The subscription-based software utilized in the study provided comprehensive video coverage of the participants, allowing for close

observations of the participant's body language and tone throughout the interview process. The software also offered the added convenience of recording the entire interview for later analysis. This approach was particularly effective as it leveraged participants' familiarity with the Zoom platform, which they were already accustomed to using for live classes at the school site. As a result, Zoom proved to be an extremely user-friendly and flexible platform for both the qualitative researcher and the participants, making it an ideal choice for this study.

Procedure for Data Collection

In qualitative interviewing, the researcher was interested in narrowing in at a microscopic level to understand specific events, persons, or situations to uncover the knowledge that could be communicated to a targeted audience (Rubin & Rubin, 2016). Therefore, as the primary researcher for this study, I was responsible for data collection and analysis. For this study, data was collected through Semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions guided teachers' perceptions of professional development activities which supported reading instruction for "lower performing" in "reading" ESOL students in grades 6 to 12. A thematic analysis was conducted to analyze each participant's interview data.

One of the advantages of selecting Semi-structured interviews was each participant could be asked the same question about the phenomenon, which gave the researcher the opportunity to ask follow-up and probing questions based on the participant's responses (Creswell, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to acquire rich, in-depth information about the research study. In order to obtain the

perspectives, perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of participants in relation to their personal experiences, Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method of inquiry (Billups, 2021). The interview protocol was developed by the researcher and tested with two SME's. It consisted of a prepared set of questions and the potential to ask additional, probing, and follow-up questions in response to the participant's responses. Based on the responses from the SME's questions, they were modified by rewording a few of the questions. Afterward, the researcher reviewed the interview transcripts thoroughly, which was an essential component of this basic qualitative study and allowed for an in-depth analysis of the collected data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participant's names were replaced with a pseudonym code to maintain the confidentiality of their identities.

The interviews were approximately one hour in length. Data was collected and recorded in the researcher's journal. A consent recording of interviews was used to record the participant's responses. The data collected during the interviews were retrieved from the Zoom platform and recorded with the participant's permission. Further follow-up interviews were conducted if necessary to clarify information. Member checking was also conducted to confirm the accuracy of the information with participants.

According to Moser and Korstiens (2018), participants in a study should be aware of the topic of interest and willing to think about and explore the situation in depth with the researcher. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants who could articulate perspectives relevant to the research question, allowing qualitative researchers to analyze in-depth (Staller, 2021). The snowball sampling technique was also applied by qualitative researchers to identify and target specific groups of participants with competence and

experience in the research topic (Parker et al., 2019). This strategy was used to obtain additional participants for the study if enough participants were not recruited for its intended purpose. Using a combination of purposeful sampling and snowballing techniques, researchers could find the most relevant people to answer the study's research question.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's main responsibilities were to conduct interviews and analyze the data collected as a research instrument (Bansal, 2018). The qualitative researcher would learn more about a complex issue by working with individuals (Chauvette et al., 2019). As a researcher, it was their sole responsibility to shed light on the research problem and authentically reflect and evaluate the participant's views on the pertinent subject. Participants' and their data's security was the researcher's responsibility (Sutton & Austin, 2015). As the primary instrument in the study, the researcher conducted the study, created the protocol for the interviews, conducted interviews, collected interview data, and transcribed all data throughout the study.

As the sole researcher, I upheld and was able to adhere to Walden University's IRB protocols to ensure the research adhered to ethical conduct and fulfilled the procedures required by Walden IRB officials. After the Walden University Internal Review Board granted permission, the researcher contacted the school's principal to introduce themselves and the research study and asked permission to conduct it (see Appendix I). The researcher sent them a letter of cooperation (see Appendix E) to confirm that the district Superintendent had permitted them to conduct the study, after

which they scheduled a meeting via Zoom. The selection of the participants was determined by the factors listed below. First, teachers with the title of secondary teacher for grades 6 to 12 were employed in a particular school district on the West Coast. Furthermore, there were students in the classrooms of the teachers from grades 6 to 12 who had been identified as English language learners. Also, the educators actively participated in district-wide professional development activities or programs in the past or currently.

As an educator for many years, the researcher had experienced and observed a lack of appropriate professional development for secondary school educators to provide reading lessons that helped students "read" for English speakers of other languages in their classrooms. In addition, to their teaching experience teaching English speakers of other languages and engagement in various forms of professional development, teachers retained content and pedagogical knowledge applicable to the study, as those could have contributed to bias within the study. To alleviate the bias, the researcher kept a research journal to record their feelings and thoughts about the topic. I also allowed participants to express their opinions and perspectives about the research question freely. They utilized journaling for writing and reflecting after each interview.

The researcher ensured to eliminate any personal bias (Billups, 2021) regarding the topic of professional development possibilities provided to secondary teachers instructing English speakers of other languages with low "reading" performance, According to Billups (2021), journal writing is a technique used in qualitative interviewing to take notes, reflect on the information gathered from participants, and

synthesize newly learned material to make sense of it from the viewpoint of those who shared it with us. This was done to produce either a final report or a manuscript. As a secondary educator who had experienced this phenomenon, they had the capacity to empathize with the participants' experience and, therefore, could serve to eliminate the possibility of bias (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Data Analysis Plan

Qualitative data analysis is collecting data from various points in time within the real world to be able to fulfill curiosity and interact with the shared experiences of others in order to uncover a phenomenon while we seek to explore and understand in greater detail what is often unseen (Saldana, 2016). Engaging with qualitative data can, when done thoughtfully, provide answers to the research questions, provide deeper meaning and a higher level of credibility while also revealing or offering other points of view to topics or theories which can be applied or tested in a wide range of settings or situations. (Rubin & Rubin, 2016).

A thematic analysis was conducted after the data from individual interviews had been analyzed. I read and re-read transcriptions to become familiar with the data, noting ideas and comments about the research questions. Using a thematic data analysis approach, I identified codes that served as indicators of the meaning of each segment. I used open coding in coding the data, and according to Saldana (2016), using open coding, categorizing codes that shared similar characteristics became the beginning of a pattern. This allowed the classification and categorization of the individual pieces of data, which

created patterns among the data points to the fundamental concepts contained within the data collected (Babbie, 2017).

The researcher identified data that contained similar, common, repeated, or different characteristics within the data set provided by all the interviews. The researcher identified words, phrases, or significant statements or patterns that could serve as a guide to compile a complete list of open codes and assigned a tentative label to each based on the initial meaning. This process was repeated for each transcribed interview. After the open coding process was complete, a list of open codes was generated. After the open coding process and a list was compiled, the second level of coding, axial coding, was conducted, where significant categories were assigned names and any subcategories. This coding determined the most significant codes relevant to answering research questions.

The process also allowed the researcher to reorganize the data to make logical or chronological sense and discard redundant codes or link similar axial codes to ensure alignment with the study's research question. Significant categories and patterns derived from the data were then analyzed and developed into categories. All major categories or patterns which emerged from the data as subcategories were essential in explaining the phenomenon of teachers in grades 6 to 12 and their responses to the research question. An ongoing review of the data occurred while simultaneously searching for commonalities among the major categories. To conclude, the data set was condensed by creating groups that contained linking categories until themes emerged. Engaging in the data at multiple opportunities through the process ensured no new themes emerged to ensure saturation of the data was achieved.

Triangulation could be achieved when a second interview or follow-up interviews were conducted, as well as through the use of my research journal, which could support the multiple data sets that had been generated during data collection and could give the researcher viewpoints on the subject of the study, or validate the data provided by participants of the study, confirming that the information and descriptions provided and obtained were accurate, valid, and reliable. The triangulation approach was used to establish the validity of this study and its findings. To establish quality assurance and credibility of the codes in this study, the researcher compared one data set with the others collected during the study to guarantee the future findings' confirmability and reliability. The codes from each data set were collected to form a list, which were then applied to an Excel spreadsheet and utilized as part of a recursive method for determining major themes. Data which did not meet current patterns and significant themes were disclosed during the numerous studies and contradicting instances did not emerge. Data was published as part of the data analysis to ensure the study's accuracy and trustworthiness (Creswell,2018).

To conclude this section, transcript reviews were conducted. Transcript review allowed the participants to review and confirm the accuracy of their transcript data. The participants were emailed a copy of their interview transcript and returned for the accuracy of the information provided. If the researcher found a need for the participants to clarify any questions that were part of the interview, a follow-up interview was scheduled and conducted, and the same process of transcript review was followed.

Trustworthiness

To determine validity or reliability, qualitative researchers follow various standards or criteria. These criteria were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba,1981). These standards aligned with the research questions, objectives, and circumstances. This was possible due to the efforts of past qualitative researchers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The successful application of these principles, involving both the researcher and the participant, was intended to result in reliability. Ensuring that all criteria were met, including the reliability and validity strategies throughout the process demonstrates the commitment and competence of the researcher (Golafshani, 2015).

Credibility

Participants who were selected from the recruitment process were encouraged at the initiation of the interview to talk freely and share their honesty about their experiences. As the researcher worked in a professional setting with the participants, the researcher encouraged them to share without limiting what they wanted to share due to the nature of being employed in the same profession. Establishing credibility was based on maintaining the confidentiality of participants who had agreed to participate openly and honestly in the research process (Cope, 2014). Establishing credibility among participants in a study assured the authenticity of the phenomenon being investigated. Data triangulation was used to establish credibility.

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), data triangulation utilized several sources or techniques to support a given set of interpretations. It examined various viewpoints

from multiple angles to create themes and categories for the study. The researcher's notebook and participant interviews were used to assess data and improve the study's validity. The research techniques used numerous people and data sources to grasp a phenomenon thoroughly (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The use of transcript reviews were implemented, and participants had the option of reviewing their interview transcripts and comparing them to confirm the accuracy of the study and the validity of the data provided.

Transferability

Transferability was encouraged by asking participants from this selected study site to provide their descriptions of their experiences with professional development and how it supported their instruction for English speakers of other languages (Cope, 2014). This demonstrated the sample represented the target population by exhibiting the sample participants had the knowledge, experience, or expertise necessary to provide information for the discipline or field that the target population would find meaningful concerning the topic. Furthermore, the information was written in context to allow a broader audience of readers to understand the findings and how they could transfer the information and find transferability (Cope, 2014). This allowed us to generalize about the topic or phenomenon. In order to understand and create a clear picture of the participants in the context of their setting, the researcher used my detailed journal entries. The researcher described the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, and motivations that characterized the role of the participants during the interview sessions.

Dependability

To establish the study's dependability, the researcher evaluated multiple studies incorporating comparable settings, participants in comparable settings, and similar research questions. Throughout the research process, descriptive data analysis methods were provided containing details on the design and development of the instrumentation involved (Billups, 2021). In addition, the studies concept, the methods by which it was implemented, the obtained data, and their evaluation by which it was processed were described (Creswell, 2018). A comprehensive description was provided that permitted the replication of the study to establish the studies dependability. The studies dependability was demonstrated by providing the datasets and variables cope, 2014. Dependability was shown by providing concise, in-depth, and sequential descriptions of all steps in order for another researcher to reproduce them accurately. These components for ensuring dependability demonstrated the consistency of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Confirmability

The confirmability of the study was established by demonstrating the absence of bias during the research process and how the collected data supported the research findings. To ensure accuracy, triangulation tactics and extreme audits were implemented throughout the study to illustrate the decision-making process. As the researcher played a central role in the study, positionality and bias were critical elements that needed to be carefully scrutinized (Guba, 1981). To achieve confirmability, reflexivity was utilized by using the interview questions as a guide and asking probing questions until saturation was attained. The researcher's journal was also used to reflect on oneself and eliminate any

biases that may have arisen during the data verification process. Additionally, all interview notes were thoroughly examined to ensure accuracy. Prior to participating in the interview, participants were provided with a consent form and made aware of their position and the option to leave for any reason they felt necessary.

Ethical Procedures

The research study conducted by Walden University adhered to ethical procedures, which were followed meticulously. An application was filed with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the commencement of participant recruitment and data collection to ensure that the study complied with Walden University's ethical standards. Once the IRB approved the application, the recruitment process commenced, and informed written consent documents were emailed to the participants. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study anytime.

As part of the research procedure, participants' confidentiality was assured, and their identities were kept anonymous throughout the study. To ensure confidentiality, the data collected digitally and audio recordings of interviews, journal notes, and interview transcripts were password-protected online using iCloud storage software. Furthermore, the physical data collected through handwritten notes was scanned and stored in the cloud, and the handwritten notes were shredded. Walden University's requirements were met, and all the collected data was secured and available upon request for five years from the research publication date.

Summary

The researcher aimed to explore teachers teaching in a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast who were secondary teachers in grades 6 through 12 and had ESOL students in their classrooms. The objective was to get their perception of professional development they perceived they needed to provide reading instruction to lower-performing reading ESOL students. A basic qualitative approach was used, and the researcher acted as the conductor and observer who collected data on this topic. Participants who participated in initial interviews did so through Zoom, Facetime, cell phones, and face-to-face interviews in a private location, and follow-up interviews were conducted similarly. Data were collected and analyzed using NVivo.

The four criteria of qualitative study are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Participants had the opportunity to speak freely and honestly about their experiences, which helped further the credibility of this study. Transcript reviews were used to ensure confirmability. Ethical procedures were adhered to by following Walden University's ethical standards.

Section 3: The Project

The fundamental objective of this basic qualitative study was to conduct an in-depth exploration of grade 6-12 teachers' perceptions of targeted professional development that is needed to support ESOL students' reading instruction at a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast. Thematic analysis was employed to derive data directly via open coding procedures. Consequently, the researcher uncovered categories, subcategories, and emerging themes. Additionally, data collection and analysis procedures are presented. The research question was:

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6 through 12?

Setting

This study was conducted at a school district located on the U.S. West Coast. This particular district is home to four middle schools, two high schools, and an alternative high school that serves secondary-level students. Twenty percent of the teacher force in the district was composed of inexperienced teachers with 5 or fewer years of teaching. Additionally, 2.8% of teachers had limited certification, indicating that they had taught one or more courses, while 7.1% were out-of-field teachers who had taught one or more courses outside of their area of certification.

The district's teachers were further analyzed by grade level, with the percentage of teachers with less than 5 years of experience varying across different grades. For sixth grade, 14% of teachers had less than 5 years of experience, while for seventh grade, the percentage was 6.3%. For eighth grade, 2.5% of teachers had less than 5 years of

experience, while for ninth grade, the percentage was 27.9%. The tenth grade had the highest percentage of teachers with less than 5 years of experience at 39.6%, followed by eleventh grade at 51.1%. Finally, the twelfth grade had 22.7% of teachers with less than 5 years of experience. Regarding different types of education, 75.7% of the district's teachers were working in basic education classrooms. The career and technical education program had 15.4% of teachers. Other areas such as home economics had 15.4%, and the special education department had 10.8% of teachers.

I also analyzed programs offered by the district and enrollment rates of students in each program. For example, 6.4% of students were enrolled in the ELL program, while there were no students in the foster care program. 7.6% of students were enrolled in the Highly Capable program, while 1% of students were in the homelessness program. For the low-income program, 41.5% of students received support, while the migrant program served 1.2% of students. Additionally, the military program served 1% of students, while Section 504 provided support for 6.1% of students, and 14% of students with disabilities received services .

Demographics

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 participants who met specific inclusion criteria. These 10 participants were all teachers with experience teaching secondary-level students aged two to 25 years. To ensure ethical compliance, all participants were emailed consent forms and returned email responses consenting to interviews. Participants had to be currently teaching as sixth through twelfth-grade secondary teachers and have ESOL students in their classrooms.

Purposeful sampling was used in selecting participants based on specific criteria. This approach allowed for approval from the district designee, who wrote a letter to submit to the IRB and shared the letter with the school site principal. The building principal was then contacted via email, and the study was approved. The principal also provided names of possible participants teaching in grades 6 through 12 and participating in professional development activities. Participants were selected because they could describe and share their perceptions of targeted professional development to provide instruction to lower-performing ESOL students in their secondary classrooms.

As part of the research process, the researcher had an obligation to protect participants' privacy. Therefore, pseudonyms were employed to safeguard identities while maintaining the confidentiality of shared information within the confines of the law. It is crucial to note that participants' privacy would be jeopardized if personal information, participant names, district, or other identifiers from the report had been employed for any purposes aside from this particular study. Thus, all measures were redacted to protect the participants' privacy and confidentiality (see Table 2).

Table 2
Participant Demographic Information

Participants	Number of Years Teaching	Grade and Grade
P1	4 Years	ELA and Math
P2	14 Years	ELA and History
P3	25 Years	ELA
P4	23 Years	ELA, History and Elementary
P5	24 Years	ELA and elementary
P6	2 Years	ELA and Secondary Art

Participants	Number of Years Teaching	Grade and Grade
P7	9 Years	ELA and Elementary Science
P8	19 years	Science
P9	18 years	ELA, Financial literacy Elementary
P10	4 years	Secondary Science and AP Science

Data Collection

After receiving approval from the IRB of Walden University (04-11-23-0979998), the researcher proceeded with the recruitment process for the study. First, the researcher obtained permission and cooperation from the school's building administrator by emailing a letter of permission, which included the study topic and 13 interview questions. Afterward, the researcher contacted the building administrator and provided a copy of the letter of cooperation from the district designee, who granted approval to collect data.

Once approval was received from the building administrator and the researcher obtained names of staff who met inclusion criteria, the researcher began recruiting 20 participants by sending letters of participation and randomly selecting 10 based on the inclusion process. Each potential participant who met selection criteria received an email which contained a letter of participation along with a consent form requesting permission to participate in the study. Participants were scheduled during times and days that worked with their after-school schedules.

Upon participants' agreement to the interviews via email, the researcher scheduled them on the researcher's calendar. The first eight participants consented to be interviewed

by emailing me their agreement. However, I had to reach out via phone call and text message to the remaining two participants to obtain their permission to be interviewed for the study and then received an email from those two consenting to the interview.

The length of time it took to complete all ten interviews was two and a half weeks. To ensure the participants' comfort and willingness to participate, the researcher asked them at the end of their interviews with a statement in which the researcher asked if the researcher had their permission to follow up with them in a week's time to ask follow-up questions. Of all the follow-up interviews, only one participant requested to edit and email back their transcript to the researcher.

The instrument used to collect data was an interview protocol derived from the conceptual framework within the literature review and guiding question. The interview protocol comprised 13 open-ended and semi-structured questions developed by the researcher from the guiding research question. The 13 questions asked about teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6 -12.

Data Analysis

The researcher conducted semi structured interviews with 10 participants. Each interview was scheduled via Zoom and immediately transcribed and emailed to the participants. At the end of the interviews, participants were asked if the researcher could follow up to ask about the transcripts or their interview information. After emailing each participant, the researcher wrote in the electronic journal and cross-checked all handwritten notes taken during each interview to ensure accuracy and minimize bias.

The participants were given a week to review their transcripts for accuracy. The researcher emailed all participants and made two phone calls to check on the status of their given responses regarding their emailed transcripts to ensure Member Checking. All 10 interview transcripts were returned to the researcher, with only one correction which needed to be made to one participant's transcripts, as they were uncomfortable with all the pauses and staggering words stated before each response.

Once all the interviews were collected and approved by each participant, each transcript was printed and manually coded for each interview conducted by the researcher. After all, 10 transcripts were individually and manually coded, the research combined the responses for each question with the response from the 10 participants. The responses were then added to a separate word document to further determine themes and subthemes that arose from the data set.

Utilizing a thematic data analysis approach, codes served as indicators for the meaning of each segment identified. Data which contained similar, common, repeated, or different characteristics within the data set were identified from the 10 interviews. Researchers identified words, phrases, or significant statements or patterns that served as a guide, were compiled to complete a list of open codes, and were tentatively assigned a label to each based on the initial meaning. This process was repeated for each transcribed interview.

After the open coding process, the second level of coding, known as axial coding, was conducted, for which significant categories were assigned names and subcategories as they were identified from the emerged themes. The coding determined the most

important codes relevant to answering the research questions. Significant categories and patterns derived from the data set were analyzed and developed into categories. All major categories or patterns that emerged from the data and subcategories were essential in explaining the phenomenon of teachers in grades 6 to 12 and their responses to the research question.

The researcher conducted an ongoing review of the data simultaneously to determine the search for commonalities among the major categories. To conclude, the data set was condensed by creating groups that contained links to categories until themes emerged. Engaging in the data at multiple opportunities through the process ensured no new themes emerged to ensure saturation of the data was achieved. Table 2 below represents the study's guiding research question followed by the themes and sub-themes and the categories that derived as a result of the interviews conducted as part of the study and the categories that derived from the data collected.

Table 3

Themes and Subthemes That are Aligned with Research Question

Research Question	Themes and Sub-Themes	Categories
RQ 1: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6-12?	Theme 1: Challenges in education, language, and translation services Subtheme: Language and reading difficulties Subtheme: Teaching strategies	Education, lack of parental support, education, challenges in education, curriculum, inadequate resource or training, professional development, pedagogy, language difficulties, instructional challenges, language barriers academic language barrier, language development, teaching technique, language barrier, time constraints, language barrier, ESN learners, communications,

Research Question	Themes and Sub-Themes	Categories
	Theme 2: Language acquisition strategies	
	Theme 3: Lack of professional training opportunities	Teaching, simplification, guidance, empathy, responsibility, awareness education, professional development ESOL, study skills, testing skills, lack of training, reading difficulties, professional development
	Theme 4: Cultural sensitivity and inadequate training	Call trolley sensitive training, education, cross cultural, communication, professional development, frustration, discontentment, perceived lack of recognition culturally sensitive
	Theme 5: Lack of effective professional training	Ineffectiveness, education, middle school, training quality, ell training lack of innovation, training quality, effective training, language learning, technology in education, online learning, disappointment
	Theme 6: Support for effective professional training	Communication, learning, language acquisition, support informal setting, language learning, teaching strategies, language development, individual learning, pedagogy, language acquisition, language acquisition, support skills, training, content knowledge, Ell support, instructional design, visual aids for education
	Theme 7: Linguistic diversity	inclusive diversity inequality, learning methodologies, experience based learning,
	Subtheme: Motivation and learning methodologies	humanization technology, learning methodologies, language learning, education methods, educational strategies bilingual, technology in

Research Question	Themes and Sub-Themes	Categories
	Subtheme: Effective strategies for language learning	education, inclusive diversity humanization empathy,
	Theme 8: Child centered learning	Language barriers, education district, satisfaction, positive experience, observational
	Subtheme: Educational approach to diversity and inclusion	learning, child development, education, teaching strategies, teaching, instructional design, lack of training, teaching
	Subtheme: Instructional support	strategies for accessibility, child development inadequate support, cultural differences, linguistic diversity, language barrier.

When qualitative research is conducted, specific standards are followed to ensure validity and reliability. These standards, established by previous researchers (Guba, 1981), included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Throughout the research process, researchers implemented reliability and validity strategies, adhering to these principles to demonstrate their competence and commitment in producing reliable results. Meeting these criteria successfully required the researcher and participant to play a vital role (Ratvich & Carl, 2016).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The researcher ensured trustworthiness by completing follow-up emails or phone calls with the participants and maintaining a research journal to record viewpoints and validate data provided during the interview. The triangulation approach included interviews, member checking, and establishing the validity of the study and its findings. Member checking was completed by sending transcripts to each participant to review the

information covered during the interview. The researcher's journal was utilized to take notes during and after the interviews to record participants' responses and compare them to the interview transcript. Questions were asked in the same manner to each participant, and probes were used to elicit more information when necessary. This process was repeated for each interview.

Credibility

At the beginning of every interview, I made sure to introduce myself to the participants and establish a friendly rapport by inquiring about their day. Following this, I would ask them for their consent to record the interview, which I would make sure to get on the recording itself. Once they had given their permission by stating "yes," I would begin the actual recording and proceed to ask the questions from the pre-determined interview protocol. This ensured that the interviews were conducted in a consistent and professional manner.

Transferability

The findings of this study can be applied to other contexts as the participants, who voluntarily participated from the selected study site, provided in-depth descriptions of their experiences with professional development and how those experiences facilitated their instruction of English learners in their classrooms. The procedures employed in this study can be transferred to other secondary level teacher settings, where participants share similar experiences. Furthermore, the researcher's journal entries were used to document all steps taken in this study.

Dependability

To ensure the dependability of our study, the researcher conducted an evaluation of multiple studies that featured comparable settings, participants, and research questions. Additionally, this study provided an extensive description, facilitating the replication of the research and establishing its dependability. Furthermore, the study demonstrated its dependability by providing datasets and variables.

Confirmability

The researcher established confirmability to ensure the absence of bias during the investigation. Triangulation tactics and extreme audits were implemented to demonstrate the decision-making process due to the researcher's role as the main instrument in the study. The utilization of an interview protocol and guide questions facilitated the imposition of probing questions to attain saturation during each interview. The researcher's journal was utilized pre and post-interviews as a platform for self-reflection and the elimination of biases that may have arisen during the period. All interview notes were compared and examined for data verification. Additionally, participants were emailed a consent form to confirm their agreement to participate in the interview.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

This section presents an in-depth analysis of a study that sought to investigate the perceptions of teachers regarding professional development activities that support the teaching of reading to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students in grades 6-12. Thematic data analysis was employed to identify codes that indicated the meaning of a given data segment. Given that the interview questions focused on the

perceptions of teachers regarding professional development activities, some participants responded to interconnected questions. It was, therefore, necessary to follow the flow of their thinking to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of their responses, rather than strictly adhering to the order of the interview questions.

The study was guided by a research question, which aimed to establish how teachers perceive professional development activities that support the teaching of reading to ESOL students in grades 6-12. The data generated from the study yielded nine main themes and five sub-themes, which were then categorized into areas focused on the research question. The findings from the research question were summarized, and examples from the interviews were used to illustrate the categories.

It emerged that participants' responses often overlapped and related to one another when describing their thoughts, emotions, actions, and reactions in support of the perception of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students. The themes identified in the analysis of the data aligned with the research question's purpose, research question, and interview protocol. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into how teachers perceive professional development activities that support the teaching of reading to ESOL students in grades 6-12, which can inform the development of effective professional development programs.

Theme 1: Challenges in Education Language and Translation Services

Participants felt that Teaching English as a second language (ESL) presents a significant challenge due to the language barrier. Even students who have been speaking English for a few years often struggle with academic material and are faced with

considerable vocabulary gaps. The district curriculums are typically designed for native English speakers, making it necessary to provide additional resources and adaptations to meet the needs of ESL students. Communicating with families who speak a foreign language can also prove to be a challenge, but the district does provide translators to facilitate communication. While there is not a lot of professional development specifically geared towards these situations, teachers can seek out relevant training opportunities on their own to better serve their students. Participants expressed their challenges encountered in reading due to language barriers. The first theme derived from the first interview question which asked about challenges faced as a secondary teacher with English speakers of other language students in your classroom and how have these challenges been addressed through the professional development provided by your school, or school district. P1 recommended, "Assisting individuals with technology can be challenging, especially when it involves translation and subtitle features. However, the most arduous task is guiding children through the process of utilizing these tools."P3 indicated, "One of the challenges I anticipate is that children may not always receive sufficient parental support, particularly in online environments. As a solution, it would be beneficial to provide professional development opportunities for educators to offer parent classes that help them better understand the English language or for educators to learn how to better support students at home. I am also concerned about the lack of support for students after school hours." P6 stated, "I often ask students about their challenges and provide them with a step-by-step process to tackle them. However, I understand that providing all the steps at once can be overwhelming." P5 also mentioned:

Time management is challenging, as we receive students in our ELL program who

require immersion. The issue lies in the fact that many of these students are brand

new to the country and do not speak any English whatsoever. Unfortunately, we

do not currently have a program in place that specifically caters to their needs. In

the past, we had an ELL program where students could attend classes and receive

assistance. However, now they are placed in general language arts courses, and I

often find myself using Google or my phone to interpret things for them. There

was very little training provided in this area, aside from a few ELL training

courses in second grade. In middle school, five students arrived, and I decided to

pilot a program during their Spanish class. They were already fluent in Spanish,

so I used this time to provide one-on-one tutoring and teach them English. By

reading books to them in Spanish, I was able to help them learn both languages.

This program was created out of necessity, as there was nothing else in the district

that could address the specific needs of this group of students.

Subtheme 1: Language and Reading Difficulties

Subtheme 1 derived from the first interview question as participants talked about

their Language and reading challenges. P8 stated:

When it comes to teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) students, there

are several hurdles that teachers and educators must overcome. One of the most

significant challenges is the student's ability to speak and comprehend English

effectively. Even those who have been speaking English for several years may

still struggle with certain aspects of the language, such as grammar rules or

pronunciation. Another challenge is the vast gap that exists in their vocabulary compared to native English speakers. This can make it challenging for them to communicate effectively and fully understand instructional content. Additionally, accessing relevant reading materials and academic vocabulary can be a major obstacle for ESL students, which can impede their learning progress and overall success.".

P2 mentioned, "The District Curriculum is designed with the typical or average, native English Speaking student in mind. However, it is essential to adapt the curriculum to meet the unique needs of each student." P4 indicated, "It can be challenging to distinguish between students who are struggling with the language, particularly for those who only speak English. These students may experience difficulties in reading, writing, and speaking." P9 stated, "One of the major challenges we encounter while navigating the online world is the prevalent use of English language. The need for translation often arises, which can be a cumbersome and time-consuming task." P10 said:

In my classroom, I have observed that a considerable number of students are non-native English speakers, either ESL students or ELL foreign language learners. These students often find it challenging to comprehend my instructions due to language barriers, especially when communicating at home. As a teacher, I understand the importance of effective communication between students and their families, so I appreciate the district's efforts in bridging the communication gap. The district has provided translators who are readily available to assist both

Spanish and English-speaking families, which is a great help to the students and their parents.

P9mentioned, "So I haven't had a lot of training." P5 said,

I apologize, but I must clarify that I haven't received any specific training on that matter. My educational background includes a master's degree in Reading and a Reading Endorsement for K-12 students. However, I believe that the strategies that are beneficial for students struggling with reading are actually beneficial for all students. While I did receive some training on this during my college years, I must confess that the district has not provided me with any further training on this topic." P10 said,

I must admit that I haven't received much professional development on effectively communicating with families at home, especially those who speak foreign languages. The only information I have been given so far is that translators are available for assistance. However, I understand the importance of building strong relationships with families and would be willing to seek out additional resources to improve my communication skills."

P6 said,

I cannot recall having undergone any Mandatory Professional Development that specifically addressed this type of situation. In order to enhance my knowledge and skills, I am constantly on the lookout for any relevant professional

development opportunities that may arise. My goal is always to be prepared for any challenges that may arise in my line of work.

Subtheme 2: Teaching Strategies

Participants also talked about the different teaching strategies employed to help with the challenges faced as a secondary teacher with English speakers of other language students in your classroom and how have these challenges been addressed through the professional development provided by your school, or school district. P6 stated:

Breaking down the task into smaller segments is helpful. I provide hands-on demonstrations and explain the necessary vocabulary by writing it out for them. It's important to take note of these words and understand their meanings. After completing each segment, we can move on to the next one.

P7 said, "I have discovered methods to provide detailed descriptions of things, which can aid in ensuring that every child understands the concept, even if one particular word does not resonate with them." P8 stated:

I have received extensive training that specifically targets ELL students. I have attended numerous training courses that incorporate effective strategies for all students, not just ELLs. I strongly believe that what benefits ELL students can benefit all students. The training focused on vocabulary has proven particularly helpful, as have those aimed at assisting students with reading difficulties.

Participants were asked to describe the ways in which their participation in professional development offered by their school or school district has aided them in

supporting reading instruction for lower-performing "reading" English speakers of other

languages. Two themes emerged from the responses of participants.

Theme 2: Language Acquisition Strategies

In this theme, P1 supposed, "I provide guidance for English Language Learners

(ELL) to sound out words, use phonetics, and connect their first language from home. I

assist with reading and understanding information while also guiding them through the

phonetic aspects". P2 stated, "we offer Avid training. We also offer comprehensive

training and a variety of study skills to help our students excel." P8 said,

> The school district is offering professional development on Oral Running Records
>
> to aid students who are below their grade level. Oral running records are more
>
> applicable to elementary students and are used to enhance their reading skills.
>
> Although I am not an ELL teacher, secondary teacher, or reading teacher in my
>
> subject area, I am trying to help ELL students access content in my field.
>
> Therefore, I have undergone UDL training to think outside the box on what
>
> barriers the students are experiencing. I provide multiple opportunities for them to
>
> learn and work around the obstacles instructional. For example, I create videos,
>
> read them out loud, or record them so they can listen to them. Additionally, I
>
> embed a test-to-speech option in texts or articles to make them more accessible
>
> for them.

P9 stated,

> As educators, it's essential to ensure that our students are reading and
>
> comprehending the content they're supposed to. In my case, I go through the

lesson every week and verbally explain the concepts to my English Language

Learners (ELL) students. I simplify the content by using simpler language,

showing pictures, and color-coding everything. This approach follows the Glad

Guided Language Acquisition Design and has helped my students understand the

concepts better."

Theme 3: Lack of Professional Training Opportunities

In this next theme, participants were unanimous in their responses. P3 mentioned,

I don't think our district has provided sufficient professional development

opportunities. I had to attend sessions from other districts to meet my needs. In

this district, I only attended two classes for second language learners, which is not

enough. I received more training from my previous schools. Overall, I wouldn't

say that we have had enough training in this district."

P4 also said, "I don't recall receiving any training. I remember having Glad training back

in middle school. While it may have been beneficial for some students, it was quite

burdensome for teachers. P5 said,

I haven't received any specific training on that topic. However, I do have a

Masters' in Reading and a K-12 Reading Endorsement. The strategies that are

effective for low-reading students are often beneficial for all students. Although I

did receive some training during my college years, the district hasn't provided

much training in this area.

P6 also said, "I haven't had the opportunity to attend any professional development

sessions that specifically focus on supporting reading." P10 stated,

I am not entirely certain if I have undergone any professional development programs that specifically cater to lower-achieving students. I am unfamiliar with UDL and its language-focused approach, nor have I received training on Universal Design for Learning, which advocates for providing students with multiple options for completing assignments that work best for them. However, I am aware that employing such methods can greatly benefit English language learners, and I have yet to undergo professional development that is specifically geared toward ESOL students.

Theme 4: Cultural Sensitivity and Inadequate Training

Participants were asked what professional development opportunities the school or school district has offered to support their teaching of English speakers of other languages students. During the interviews, P1, P4, and P5 brought up the topic of GLAD training, which is a professional development model for language acquisition and literacy. It focuses on strategies and techniques that aid in English language acquisition, academic achievement, and cross-cultural skills. However, the participants mentioned that their experience with this training was a while ago, and they had only vague memories of it. P1 mentioned:

> I can briefly remember the GLAD training. I believe it was to help educators understand and navigate cultural differences. I also remember the Ace training. If a child is an English Language Learner, there are ways to help them feel more connected and included in the classroom. Additionally, it's essential to recognize that what may be considered normal in one household or culture may not be the

same for another. By acknowledging these differences and making an effort to understand them, teachers can create a welcoming environment for all students. I believe it is beneficial to encourage students to share their experiences and perspectives. They could describe what their home life is like or what they enjoy doing outside of school. This can help build connections and foster a sense of community. When it comes to working with ELL students, a teacher has to be observant and pay attention to body language. This can help teachers better understand how a student is feeling and tailor their approach accordingly. By being mindful of cultural differences and making an effort to connect with students, teachers can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

P4 supposed, I only know of the GLAD training, but I don't remember anything for Ell Kids. Likewise, P5 stated, "We just haven't received much training on that at all, how to teach students how to read, no matter what language they spoke, we just really haven't gotten much training on that, except for GLAD training, like 10 years ago." P8 said:

There has been a lot of GLAD training that helps with vocabulary acquisition, it provides visuals when you are instructing. Instead of just talking and having kids listen, overarching ideas of using visuals, input charts, and intentional note-taking strategies. UDL Training, how to help them get past those barriers that they might have.

P7 said,

As an educator who specializes in teaching refugees, I have not been provided with any professional development opportunities in quite some time. Although the

district initially offered a training guide, it was not as comprehensive as I had

hoped. The guide only provided information on the refugees' living conditions,

and the training sessions themselves were quite long, lasting for seven and a half

hours each day. Furthermore, the guide did not offer much guidance on how to

handle day-to-day situations that may arise when working with refugees. Given

the unique challenges that come with teaching this population, I believe that

receiving more in-depth professional development would be incredibly

beneficial."

P2 stated:

I believe that I haven't been provided with enough professional development

opportunities that cater to this particular subject matter. This is particularly

interesting because we have a high number of students who would greatly benefit

from it. However, unless I actively seek out professional development

opportunities that aren't directly offered to me, I am left without many options. In

the past, I have attended several professional development sessions that were not

effective. I have been in school districts where they simply had us watch

PowerPoints and provided us with information that was common sense. This has

been quite frustrating, especially since, as an educator, I already knew most of

what was being discussed. I am finding it difficult to come across new and

innovative ideas that could truly benefit my students.

P3 said, "I have noticed a lack of sufficient offers in our district in terms of

training opportunities." P6 mentioned, "it is highly likely that the school provides

opportunities for Professional development. However, the district's list of available courses does not seem to be the primary focus." P7, P9, and P10 also expressed concerns about the lack of training. P7 said, "there has not been any formal or structured program or opportunity provided for individuals to enhance their professional skills or knowledge within this particular context." P9 says, I have completed one or two tasks related to that particular area, but unfortunately, I haven't received much direct instruction on it. Moreover, it is also outside of my contract time, despite it being extra pay." P10 stated,

> I have undergone various pieces of training on Universal Design, which have proven to be beneficial in accommodating all students' needs, particularly in science. However, I have not yet received any training on how to effectively teach English to students.

Theme 5: Lack of Effective Professional Training

Proper training is crucial to provide the best education. In this theme, participants described any effective or ineffective professional development they have experienced that was intended to support reading lessons for English speakers of other languages. Participants mentioned they have not been receiving much training on how to teach students to read in different languages, and if they do, the training, for the most part, would be ineffective. It's important to have proper training in this area to ensure that students receive the best education possible. Participants have tried reaching out to the school or district to see if they offer any resources or training programs. Some reverted to online courses or workshops available that could provide valuable information and support. P6 said, "I can't really answer this question. I haven't had any professional

development to support reading lessons for English speakers of other languages. When I do get other professional development, it's usually very informative information and effective." P7 stated, "We have not had any. Google Translator is all that's all we've been given." P10 said:

> I haven't really had much training. Haven't had any ineffective training on it either. Ineffective, nothing at all like it was advertised. At a conference a few months ago staff there were trainings that sounded like they'd be really helpful with titles like "how to design alternative school that helps all students, it turned into a marketing thing rather than helpful tips and tricks

> P1 mentioned, "A lot was geared toward elementary. reading simple picture

books, ineffective at Middle school. ELL training is always about the littles, super ineffective for Middle School settings." P2 said,

> There's been a lot of ineffective PD, I've been in school districts where they've set us to PD that are geared toward this and watching Power points, telling us things that are common sense. It's really frustrating, you'd already know this if you are an educator. I'm having a hard time getting things that are new or innovative.

P8 stated, "I have unfortunately experienced some training sessions that were not effective. Despite the time spent in the session, I felt as though I had not gained any meaningful knowledge or skills." P3 mentioned, "I have not received any ineffective PD in other school districts, and none were ineffective." P4 said "I don't remember a whole

lot of PD for ELL, the GLAD training that supports reading and language development is what I remember. I don't really think they are ineffective." P9 stated,

> We've had ineffective training, my training has been limited, the training I have attended has been very helpful and useful, especially in a new program, all the time, conversations translations. Online Microsoft translator connects to your computer into your microphone district, talk to the microphone, translates onto their computers, and code they've been effective when students are willing to use them, I can't think of any ineffective ones that we've had.

Theme 6: Support for Effective Professional Training

Participants were asked which professional development opportunities they perceived could be most effective for supporting English speakers of other languages. There were many suggestions to this question. P1 mentioned, "the use of technology in the classroom specifically for ELL kids is most effective." P4 posited, "I do not know. I mean, you know, there's been ELL programs that are really weak." P2 said:

Professional development programs that are designed and instructed by individuals who have personal experience in a particular field or have previously been students themselves can prove to be highly advantageous. These experienced individuals possess a unique understanding of the challenges and requirements faced by current students, which enables them to tailor their instruction and guidance in a way that is more effective and beneficial for the learners. Therefore,

it is recommended that such programs be created and taught by individuals who possess a thorough understanding and familiarity with the targeted area of study. P5 stated,

As an experienced reading instructor with a master's degree, I understand the importance of teaching teachers the fundamentals of reading education. It's crucial to have a solid understanding of the strategies used to teach children how to read and how to promote comprehension. At the secondary level, it's equally important to know how to communicate with students who may not speak English. This is a common issue in middle school, and having the right tools and technology to help us communicate effectively is essential. Instead of simply throwing these students in without any support or strategies, we need to provide them with the appropriate resources to help them succeed.

P3 mentioned,

In my experience, the most beneficial professional development courses I have attended have been those focused on poverty school districts, such as the Glad training and guided language acquisition development classes. These classes provided invaluable strategies for helping children, including the use of visual aids and real-life examples. While my current school may have offered similar courses in the past, I have found myself in a situation where they are not currently available to me.

P6 said, "it would be incredibly beneficial to create a short film that features interviews with students and their peers. This would provide an opportunity to build empathy and

create a more compassionate and understanding atmosphere in the classroom. P7 stated,

"it is crucial for the district to prioritize hiring individuals who are fluent in languages

other than English. By doing so, we can ensure that all members of our diverse

community feel valued and understood within our school district."

Theme 7: Linguistic Diversity

This theme highlighted the experiences participants have had with professional

development activities which were targeted to support reading instruction for English

speakers of other languages they perceived ineffective. P1 stated the professional

activities were just ineffective in middle school, despite having language barriers.

Professional development is geared toward elementary and middle school, where lots of

people come into the country later in middle school 6, 7, and 8 grades. P4 mentioned

"one downside is that kids tend to watch while others do things as opposed to doing it

themselves and learning themselves." P4 said, "no, I really can't say that the professional

developments are ineffective because I received information on language for learning and

Siop and GLAD, and they were not ineffective. P6 mentioned, "I have not had ineffective

professional development." However, P7 said, "The fact that there hasn't been any, I

can't remember." P2 stated, "I can't remember, the fact that I cannot remember shows

how ineffective it was." P5 stated, "most training is around testing, not really actual

reading instruction, more how do you take a test." P8 posited:

> The training program I attended was focused on phonics and syllable work and
>
> lasted for a duration of 40 hours. However, I found myself overwhelmed by the
>
> depth of the curriculum and the emphasis on understanding the intricacies of rule-

breaking. While the training aimed to equip us with the skills necessary to connect

with and better understand our students, I ultimately did not find it to be a

worthwhile investment of my time. From my perspective, the curriculum was not

approachable or effective in changing my reading instructional methods.

P9 commented:

The discussion around English speakers, particularly those who are non-native yet

proficient in the language, remains limited. While there are Glad strategies and

Microsoft translator programs available to facilitate communication, effective

implementation is crucial. One particularly successful practice has been the use of

a dedicated paragraph to assist English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

students. However, there have also been instances of ineffective support, as some

ESOL facilitators fail to engage with their students. This lack of engagement has

proven particularly detrimental to new students, such as those hailing from Bosnia

or Russia. Bridging content with their native language has been key to their

success, indicating that the issue lies with the individuals rather than with

ineffective practices.

Subtheme 3: Motivation and Learning Methodologies

Participants described the experiences they had with professional development

which was targeted to instruction for English speakers of other language students outside

the classroom. They spoke on how they sought and organized those activities on their

own, without the guidance of their school. They also spoke of their motivation and

decision to participate in those specific activities. P1 said:

In regard to American Sign Language (ASL) gatherings, I have had the opportunity to communicate with children who are learning ASL and are a part of the ASL culture. Although it is not my first encounter with a child who is hard of hearing, I am always curious and willing to learn more. As a guide and mentor, I believe in fostering a strong and supportive community. Being a member of such a community has not only allowed me to ask questions and gain knowledge, but it has also provided me with a unique perspective as an English Language Learner (ELL) child. Making connections and engaging with others is essential in any community, and it is something that I have come to appreciate more over time. I never thought that connecting with others would lead me to step outside of my comfort zone and try new things.

P7 stated, "I did my training on my own, I was a predominantly Hispanic-speaking student, and it made sense." P9 said,

Since my enrollment, two opportunities have presented themselves. These opportunities were advertised to the general population and offered a per diem compensation for several hours of work on ESL Instruction Methodology. The focus of this program is to support students, with a particular emphasis on the Hispanic, Mexican, or Latino population, as well as those who speak Spanish with an emphasis on Russian. Given the high number of Russian and Ukrainian speakers in the population, I have experience working with ESL and Native Spanish speakers. The program covers both daily English Language and academic English Language, utilizing strategies similar to those employed by Glad. These

include conversations that start at a basic level before building up to more

complex concepts. My motivation to participate in this program stems from my

lack of proficiency in Spanish or Russian and my desire to seek assistance in these

areas.

P2 mentioned, "any instruction I have in that area, I researched it on my own, not offered

by my school district, I have researched and found strategies, methods, anything I could

find for middle school and high school." P3 said:

There are many strategies that I have learned that can help kids outside the

classroom. I remember the biggest ones were language for learning, Reading first,

lots of training focused on language learners, Siop, Glad, Glad training was the

best training, curriculum, training that addressed ESOLs as a side component on

how you can meet the needs, however with the current curriculum we're using I

don't see that, there is not that component, and that's frustrating to me, there is not

that component on how we can utilize our current curriculum and meet the need

of the language learner kids, We have to figure it out on our own it is a missing

component. I only go to PD if they offer to pay us, and the title intrigued me. If

I'm interested in it, I know I can utilize it, it is beneficial and really enticing, and I

knew I could use it in the classroom."

P4 Obtained a copy of the book *The Outsiders* and located a Spanish version to provide

to the individual in question. P4 Utilized Google Translate to facilitate communication

with this individual, as specific strategies for teaching general education language arts

proved to be particularly challenging. Despite these difficulties, P4 was able to complete assignments as long as they were provided. P5 stated:

> I am seeking additional educational opportunities to enhance my ability to teach reading to multilingual students. Specifically, I am interested in pursuing extra courses or obtaining relevant literature to expand my knowledge base. Additionally, I am exploring the possibility of enrolling in a college program to deepen my understanding of how to effectively transfer reading skills from a student's native language to English. I aim to combine my existing knowledge of teaching reading with my desire to support multilingual learners in order to provide them with a complete and enriching educational experience."

P10 has not pursued training opportunities outside of the classroom. However, P8 has not undergone any ELL-specific training outside of my regular academic curriculum but has engaged in activities such as reading and professional development opportunities in other content areas. P8 has recently sought out training in science from the local school district. This training was offered on Saturdays and was motivated by the desire to gain experience and exposure in a new subject area since recently transitioned from teaching elementary school to teaching science. P8 posited:

> I have engaged in professional development opportunities outside of the school district, specifically in the areas of science and math. Additionally, I have coordinated training on the topic of adverse childhood experiences and childhood trauma, as I recognized the need for increased awareness and expertise in these areas. In particular, I sought out training related to the challenges that students

face during their secondary school years, including struggles with anxiety and mental wellness. This training has been valuable in providing me with a deeper understanding of my students and their unique needs. With this knowledge, I am better equipped to support my students in a meaningful way, whether it be by modifying or accommodating certain aspects of their learning environment or by providing additional resources to help them succeed despite their challenges. Overall, I believe that the additional training and awareness I have gained have been an important asset to my work as an educator and have enabled me to provide more effective and compassionate support to my students on a daily basis.

Subtheme 4: Effective Strategies for Language Learning

Participants in this subtheme describe some of the strategies employed to help support instruction for English speakers of other languages. P3 said:

The implementation of effective strategies for language learning is crucial for the success of both educators and learners alike. In this regard, the utilization of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and Glad strategies serve as a valuable tools to support instruction for language learners. Additionally, the incorporation of language for learning is equally vital in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for students. By utilizing these proven methodologies, educators can provide a more comprehensive and effective learning experience for their students, thereby promoting academic success and growth.

P4 conducted one on one language development sessions via Zoom with my students. During these sessions. P4 said, " I make use of targeted vocabulary to foster better understanding and provide clear definitions with the least number of words possible. P5 stated:

> Using individuals who possess proficiency in reading and writing in one language can readily transfer those skills to another language. The key is to assist them in comprehending and adapting to the new language while building upon their existing skillset. This can be achieved through a variety of methods, such as utilizing books on tape, engaging in group learning with peers or even having fellow students provide instruction. Whether the approach is auditory or written, it is important to recognize that these individuals possess the necessary tools and abilities to succeed in a new language. The focus should be on leveraging their existing skills to master a new language.

P8 said, "the instructional support provided to me has proven to be incredibly beneficial, not only for myself but for all students, including those who are learning English as a second language." P9 mentioned, "the program designed for students, especially for those who are non-native English speakers and native Spanish speakers, has proven to be highly beneficial. P3 said,

> In my experience of 19 years, I have found this to be one of the strongest and most effective programs for students. Despite a lack of recent innovations, this program remains a valuable asset in supporting non-native English speakers and native Spanish speakers in their language acquisition.

Theme 8: Child-Centered Learning

Participants described ways in which they coordinated participation in professional development activities which supported instruction for English speakers of other languages for students in their classroom. P4 posited, "students understand better when they use key vocabulary words and videos." P9 stated,

> The strategy I learned in GLAD remains an integral part of my approach, even in the current online setting. I rely on the use of visually-stimulating posters, incorporating color and coded power points. These materials are then disseminated through Canvas as an announcement, allowing for easy access and review by those in need.

P1 stated,

> During a classroom activity designed to foster connections among students, I found myself faced with a unique challenge: one of my students was hard of hearing. To accommodate this student, an interpreter was present, and classmates were enlisted to take notes during the session. Despite the informal nature of the activity, I made a point of encouraging questions from the students, which led to a productive and engaging question-and-answer session. Ultimately, this approach proved effective in facilitating a positive classroom experience for all involved.

P2 posited, I get students interested using materials they were handed, instead of being frustrated with a baby book. This is helpful because it was interesting and at the level they could read and understand." P3 stated:

I found the information gained through professional development to be particularly useful in my classroom. The hands-on nature of the training allowed me to learn and develop techniques that I can easily apply to help my students better understand the material. The goal of professional development is to acquire knowledge that can be translated into practical use in the classroom, and I feel that I have accomplished this by creating posters, using visuals, creating storyboards, and providing various examples. There are many strategies that I have learned and implemented in my classroom to help my students achieve their full potential.

P7 stated that engaging with children through reading, actively requesting their assistance in correcting any pronunciation errors, and building a trusting rapport with them can help to convey a sincere interest in their wellbeing. Such an approach not only supports the development of language and math skills but also fosters a safe and nurturing environment that promotes overall growth and success. P10 said,

As an educator, I have found that a significant aspect of my job is learning how to differentiate the curriculum to cater to the needs of diverse learners. Although I have not received any specific professional development geared toward helping English learners, I have made it a priority to make my lessons accessible for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) by implementing modifications such as providing multiple-choice options. By doing so, I have observed that it has become easier for English language learners and students with IEPs to engage with the content, as there is less interpretation required. However,

I have yet to receive any specific training to help students improve their English reading skills. In my classroom, I encourage students to take turns reading and foster an environment that centers around discussion and peer support. I believe that this approach has been a helpful tool for all students in my class."

Subtheme 5: Educational Approach to Diversity and Inclusion

Participants responded to information from coordinated professional development activities they found helpful and then implemented into their classroom instruction. They also reported on the changes in English speakers of other languages students' reading skills, if any. P5 said,

Understanding and communicating in multiple languages can be a challenging endeavor. It is often difficult to pair up disparate languages and ensure that resources are readily available to facilitate comprehension. In the case of English and Spanish, for instance, it can be a struggle to find appropriate resources for both languages. Furthermore, attempting to navigate languages such as Russian or Ukrainian can be particularly daunting. Nevertheless, with the right resources at our disposal, we can overcome these challenges and achieve effective communication across languages.

P6 said, "In certain professional development courses that were not specifically geared towards English language learners, there often existed a segment that pertained to this subject matter." Participants further discussed cultural differences and how they impact various customs and practices. Explored the use of vibrant colors in different cultures and established connections between them. This approach proved to be effective in assisting

ELL Spanish speakers in the classroom, as they learned ancient Mayan words and appreciated the meaning behind them. The ability to connect cultures, which was acquired during professional development, was especially helpful in designing history lessons. Moreover, when dealing with ELL students who were new to the school and the US, connecting their interests to history helped them to understand the relevance of the subject to their country. This approach was effective in motivating students to read, participate, and produce their best work. Consultations with students who had trouble understanding certain parts of the lessons were also encouraged to ensure their success in the class. P8 said:

> In my science class, I refrain from tracking students' reading levels. Rather, I focus on assessing whether they are able to comprehend and demonstrate their understanding of the science concept or target we are currently studying. My approach is informed by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training that I have undergone, which has encouraged me to think creatively and innovatively. This is particularly helpful when it comes to designing materials that are accessible to English Language Learners (ELL) or students who are reading below grade level in English. Since scientific texts can be challenging to access due to their use of jargon and technical language, I have opted to incorporate instructional videos and audio recordings of the materials that I assign. This has proven to be an effective strategy for enhancing student engagement and comprehension.

P9 mentioned that the use of notebooks proved to be a highly effective tool in facilitating learning among students. By writing down words, sounding them out, providing a definition in friendly language, and adding a picture, students were able to gain a better understanding of the subject matter. The notebooks allowed for easy reference and enabled students to revisit previous lessons whenever necessary. In particular, ESL students found it beneficial to refer back to their old notebooks from previous years as they sought to comprehend certain concepts fully. This approach proved more effective than other methods, as it allowed students to build on their knowledge and make progress. Additionally, students' mathematical content knowledge and proper use of terminology increased significantly as they engaged in discussions with their instructor. This heightened level of proficiency enabled them to explain concepts with ease and tackle more advanced topics. While not perfect, the use of notebooks proved to be a highly successful approach to enhancing student learning.

P2 believed that a successful approach to learning is to break complex subjects into smaller, more manageable parts. This can be achieved by using highlighters or different colors to distinguish between different parts of speech and word types. Additionally, employing different colored highlighters can help students demonstrate their ability to identify key elements. By breaking down the material into smaller, more digestible sections, students can avoid becoming overwhelmed or frustrated. P3 stated:

> In the realm of reading and language learning curricula, it is imperative to consider the needs of language learners. By observing their learning patterns and responses, one can utilize effective strategies that benefit both language learners

and their peers. These strategies not only promote diversity in the classroom but also foster good instruction for all children. It is essential to incorporate a variety of modalities and approaches to ensure that all students succeed.

P4 said that incorporating key vocabulary words into teaching material can prove to be a challenging and technical process, particularly when dealing with scientific concepts. However, by extracting target words from videos and books, educators can provide their students with a clear and concise definition in a manner that is easy to understand. The inclusion of relevant visuals, such as pictures and videos, can further aid in the comprehension of complex topics. In addition, providing additional reading material and short videos can help students to better understand and bond with the material. Ultimately, the use of visuals is a crucial aspect of teaching, as they serve to enhance the learning experience and facilitate understanding.

P10 posited:

> Through the concerted effort of all teachers and classes, I have observed a positive impact on the reading abilities of English language learners following an activity that I facilitated. Within this context, one key element that is particularly relevant is the emphasis on vocabulary. Science, for instance, requires a significant amount of terminology, and the understanding of these words is essential for grasping the underlying concepts. Despite individual differences in English language proficiency, many ELLs are on an equal playing field in this regard. Thus, teaching language in a manner that incorporates ELL-specific

strategies is crucial, as it involves starting from the basic building blocks of

vocabulary.

Subtheme 5: Instructional Support

Participants mentioned the support from coordinated professional development

activities they found helpful and then implemented into their classroom instruction. P5

suggested:

Through the implementation of a paired learning approach akin to individualized

tutoring, significant strides were made in the academic progress of the students.

The students were encouraged to interact with one another, leading to the

exchange of contact information and increased socialization. As a result of this

collaborative atmosphere, the students' reading levels demonstrated marked

improvement, and they enjoyed an enhanced level of success with their reading

assignments. Additionally, the impact of a mentorship program was notable, as a

dedicated mentor provided invaluable guidance and support to the students.

P6 believed that taking notes would be beneficial to carefully review the instructions

prior to proceeding with any given task. P6 said,

In the event that you encounter any confusion or uncertainty, do not hesitate to

ask me any questions. I am more than willing to provide demonstrations and offer

one-on-one assistance. It is imperative that we ensure a thorough understanding of

the instructions to ensure a successful outcome."

P7 mentioned, "my proficiency in the Spanish language is limited, and I have had to expend significant effort to achieve translation. Utilizing resources such as Google translate, I have been able to overcome this barrier."

Theme 9: Professional Development Support

Participants recommended the professional development activities they perceived would be beneficial to secondary teachers' instruction which would support English speakers of other language students. P1suggested,

Individuals who have completed the ELL program within a public school setting often enjoy participating in educational games and sharing insights regarding their experiences. These ELL students engage in collaborative activities such as Gimkit and Kahoot to foster connection and bonding while learning about each other's cultures. Within the classroom, such games and tools offer the opportunity for both enjoyment and educational advancement. Overall, the use of games and other resources can be instrumental in providing assistance and enjoyment for ELL students.

P2 indicated, that in order to aid fellow educators, a number of instructional activities may be recommended. Notably, ensuring access to adequate resources is paramount. This includes resources provided by the school, as well as a curriculum that is specifically designed for students who are learning English. Additionally, professional development opportunities that are geared toward ESOLs are crucial, as current offerings in this area are often insufficient. It is recommended that these activities be prioritized in order to support the success of both English language learners and their teachers. P9 said:

I'm not a professional development expert, understand our students better, they're

coming from, and where their knowledge would is based on your ELL tests, Their

ESOL tests, they take them, they send you numbers, it means they can do this, and

they can't kind of do that, it is not super detailed. Being able to sit down with the

test and dissect it, why they are scored, what they are scored, what areas you

know they struggled in, what areas they are excelling in. They struggle and see a

better connection between their struggles. Mind seeing the test and talking with

the person people, does it relate to literature language acquisition, how it relates to

their understanding of any, we don't have a real understanding of any of the tests

that are given, split tests, general education teachers do not have a great

understanding of what exactly is in there, how it is meant to give feedback,

training would be super effective for teaches to be able to understand what is in

these tests and how they how deficiencies and strengths, maybe strategies to

attack specific individual deficiencies, support individual strengths.

P10 said, "Throughout my career thus far, I have found great benefit in closely

observing skilled educators as they execute their craft. I believe that this practice would

be highly beneficial to all educators." P3 stated,

I am keenly interested in discovering new opportunities for professional

development. The training that I have attended has proven to be highly beneficial,

yet I remain curious about other potential offerings in this area. I am particularly

interested in staying up-to-date with current trends in the field

P4 indicated, "I am uncertain about the available options for establishing an instructional group. It may be possible to form a pull-out group for emergent readers and learners, with a focus on developing their English language skills. P8 stated:

> Various technological options have been made available to me, albeit with disparities in the extent of training provided. To illustrate, while I have had extensive training on how to utilize technology resources for ELL students, my district has yet to provide any training in this regard. Consequently, my colleagues and I have had to rely on our own research or collaborate within our team to discover suitable tools, such as Chrome extensions, that can read content to our students. In fact, I had to personally attend a Google Suites training to gain the requisite proficiency. Unfortunately, I am unaware of any formal resources or tools that are specifically geared toward ELL students. Hence, it would be invaluable to receive quality technical training that is targeted toward ELL resources. An online portal that provides language strategies to support students would be a welcome addition to my teaching toolkit. Additionally, it would be beneficial to receive instruction that is tailored to the cultural backgrounds of our students to help us incorporate culturally relevant content into our instruction. Ultimately, such measures would enhance the quality of education that we provide to our diverse student body.

For P5, obtaining a comprehensive understanding of how to facilitate the transfer of skills possessed by students in their native language to a new language is critical, particularly given the limited resources available. Additional training is required to

support teachers in communicating these skills to students, ensuring that they can be effectively applied in their new language. According to P5,

> As an AI-powered assistant, I can help explain these concepts and transfer information effectively, facilitating the melding of these two skill sets in a manner that is accessible to both teachers and students. My objective is to make this process as seamless and comprehensible as possible, thereby minimizing the difficulty associated with this undertaking."

Literature Review

Challenges in Education Language and Translation Services

According to Hynes (2021) and Heller (2020), about the challenges educators face when it comes to supporting reading instruction and ESOL students in the classroom at the secondary level. According to Shanahan (2020) reading education and the research of reading education really should be to understand how to support reading to make it equally accessible to all learners within the public school district and being able to provide educators with the best possible reading instruction methods found from current reading research. While the literature suggests reading research is meant to support the knowledge of those conducting studies on how reading is processed and then transferred by learners the purpose of reading research is also to be able to communicate strategies, methods, and how we go about supporting teachers and how they implemented reading instruction to the students in their classrooms.

Bartley (2020) suggested that schools should assess their needs when it comes to translation services as there is a plethora of applications and services available to meet

the needs of the diverse populations they serve. Further well translation services are unique to individual schools based on their diverse population of students it is an area that has lacked advancement, yeah while we experienced the Covid-19 epidemic educators and school districts soon realize that to be able to communicate with its diverse population of students and their families it was important to find resources in order to be able to communicate effectively. Sprott (2019) suggested teachers want to see their students succeed do so, by seeking out ways to participate in professional development opportunities to address the challenges they see in their classrooms.

While the literature and research reveal there is a need for addressing the challenges that educators are observing in the classroom as well as within their school districts. There is also evidence from the literature that suggests there is also a need for addressing the needs teachers have for attempting to build meaningful connections with students while trying to provide basic information to families regarding school and course materials (Borg, 2019). Yet, teachers face challenges in being able to effectively communicate with students and families who do not speak English as the resources of translation services are not present or found to be limited or not available in their school districts (Sprott, 2019).

Language Acquisition Strategies

Larson (2018) suggested that the concept of Language Acquisition Strategies has been around for a while. Larson (2018) proposed that language acquisition should prioritize future needs, and that the application of language acquisition strategies must be done with equity in mind. This involves providing support to those who are acquiring

language, as well as ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary skills to teach and support language acquisition. Murray et al. (2022) suggested to effectively provide instruction to students who need strategies to increase their language acquisition skills, it is also imperative to be able to train and provide teachers with text and materials need to implement the strategies of language acquisition in the classroom. The literature reveals the need for general education teachers to use and be familiar with language acquisition strategies, yet not all teachers perceive their targeted content courses are meant to help students be better readers, rather they perceive their middle and high school classes as more terminology based and students need to learn about subjects such as science, social studies, and math as skills they must have for after high school (Toth & Moranski, 2018).

Classes in middle and high schools focus on teaching materials and providing instruction that helps students become critical thinkers and apply practical skills. However, Murray et al. (2021) found that students spent an average of only 10% of their time in specific classes at the middle school level reading for comprehension. As a result, students need to develop skills that enable them to access the content effectively. Murray et al. (2021) suggested all middle school and high school content specific courses continue to require students to spend a fair amount of their learning, reading not only for meaning but also acquiring language which is critical for students with limited English when entering U.S. public schools while they are middle and high school aged.

Lack of Professional Training Opportunities

While the literature is rich in professional development opportunities for teachers there is a consensus between most of the researchers that approaches to professional development trainings have remained for the most part traditional one-time opportunities. An article published in Ed Week states that a survey conducted by the Elementary and Secondary Act data in 2020-2021 found that districts in the U.S. provided less than three days of professional development training to their staff. Moreover, they only provided training in the areas mandated by the state (Schwartz, 2023). Further, a study by Doubet & Southall (2017) found middle and high school teachers desired professional training in the areas they were being asked to teach in their classrooms. Doubet and Southall (2017) found in their qualitative study secondary level teacher would like to receive professional development trainings that connect, reading writing and instruction, because teachers feel there is a disconnect between these subject areas, testing and standards while teachers from the study stated these areas integrate into all areas of learning at the middle and high school levels.

The lack of professional training opportunities provided to teachers in the United States is also an international issue. Toropova et al., (2018) found that teachers perceptions of professional training opportunities in England and Sweden has decreased in the past decade and teachers unsupported in the classroom. Toropova et al. (2018) suggested these three countries are facing similar challenges in providing professional opportunities to teachers while facing the challenges of going without other resources needed in schools. While professional training is provided in other professions and

required in many states for renewing or maintaining credentials it is still an area that is

underfunded and not given much attention to until recently, within the in educational

district as a direct result of the Covid19 global shutdown and the disparities seen among

students, staff turnover and the continued demands of states and the U.S. Department of

Education (Toropova et al., 2018).

Cultural Sensitivity and Inadequate Training

In the recent five years there has been more debate, and strong actions taken in

various states in the United States when it comes to determine what curriculum and or

materials educators had access to in their classrooms, while ensuring all cultures are

represented through the curriculum for their students. Recent studies and reporting's from

news media outlets inform the general population that we are facing challenging times in

education (Miller, 2022). Further, educators know in order to engage students in learning,

students must see themselves represented in the materials they are asked to read, learn

about and then write about. According to Cherng and Davis (2019), teachers with the

most educational awareness to culture were Black and Latino teachers while Asian and

White teachers had less Culture awareness in Education.

Bonner et al. (2018) found in a recent study although this is not the fault of

anyone ethnic group of educators, it is the responsibility of the districts and their

administrative leaders to provide their educators with the skills and knowledge in culture

and diversity as it is represented in their communities. And its school districts and states

responsibilities to ensure educators are able to provide instruction with relevant

curriculum and materials that are representative of their student populations so educators

tasked with providing instruction can do so in ways students at the middle and high school levels find meaningful and engaging (Prenger et al., 2017).

Further inadequate training in cultural sensitivity is an issue from the late 1990's because of the Civil Right movement was the first time that major curriculum companies determine that the movement for incorporating culturally relevant texts into its design. With recent reforms and a multi-tiered look, Malin et al. (2020) found that the interest from the public to address and provide representation of diversity and culture in classrooms, teachers are facing issues with lack of resources and are seeking support, direction and balance from their building administrators as well as their local districts to provide them with training in cultural sensitivity for the purpose of building relationships with families and students whose home language is not English while also being to engage them in partners for their child's learning.

Cherng and Davis (2019), make the claim that lawmakers, educational policies should be committed to ensuring that culture is learned in preservice teacher programs as well as considered in the decisions made at the local, state, and federal level. While, also asserting that society must be committed to equipping preservice teachers with the understanding of various cultures and the important role in plays not only in the curriculum for representation purposes, but also for establishing relationships with the students we serve (Cherng & Davis, 2019).

Lack of Effective Professional Training

Professional development training has long been a one-day traditional approach (Darling-Hammond, 2020). Many districts according to recent data share that

professional development training has not exceeded three days in one school year (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). While educators are leaving the profession in strides, surveys from this research demonstrate these professionals perceived that the support or lack of support and resources was a reason for leaving the profession (Audrain et al., 2021). Further, there is a gap in understanding from the literature why many districts cannot afford to continuously train their teachers, let alone provide ongoing professional coaching, professional growth, and funding to attend personal sought out professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2019; Sancar et al., 2021).

According to Sancar et al. (2021), in a new framework for teachers' professional development the team found that although professional development training has no one definition, one thing is for sure professional development training is necessary to give teachers not only the skills they need to provide effective instruction in the classroom, but it must appear promising, current, useful, and ongoing for the teacher who desires to improve within the profession. While this is a newer framework it points out the importance teachers place on themselves personally and professionally and can improve if they are provided with the professional development needed to carry out their jobs with effectiveness and confidence. In recent studies conducted during the Covid19 pandemic, Donham et.al. (2022), Hargreaves (2021) and Hargreaves and Fullan (2020), pointed out the importance teachers place on being supported and trusted as professionals and their desired to be provided with training and new knowledge to support their work in the classroom.

Additionally, studies conducted by Niemi and Kousa (2020) and Cardullo et al. (2021) found that teachers perceptions of having inadequate set of skills did not give them the confidence to provide effective instruction to students. Additional similar studies by Johnson and Tawfik (2022) found similar results indicated teachers wanted the skills and training in curriculum and other areas to support English speakers of other languages and receive strategies to support secondary level students as they did not have the training or skills to do so with confidence. In studies conducted by Sprott (2019), Hester et al. (2020), McCray (2018) and Skura and Steinhagen (2023), they found the lack of professional development in school districts negatively affected teachers while there have been similar studies across the United States and Internationally also found teachers who felt unsupported during the Covid 19 pandemic and afterwards worked in schools that lacked professional development trainings. The Professional Educator Standards Board (2021) found that these teachers sought jobs in districts where teachers were valued while some of the teachers left to pursue other careers where they would get training and supported.

Support for Effective Professional Training

There has been much research on providing professional development to teachers for the past three decades. According to a recent study conducted by Darling-Hammond (2019), the 21st century has brought with it a myriad of challenges, including a global pandemic, concerns about culturally relevant materials, and the need for effective classroom instruction. In order to support teachers through these challenges, it is imperative to provide professional development that is not only effective, but also

applicable in the classroom. Additionally, it is important to recognize that professional development should be targeted and holistic in approach (Hargreaves, 2021). Therefore, ongoing efforts to design and provide professional development that meets the needs of teachers and is tailored to their unique circumstances must remain a top priority. Further research conducted by Stronge (2018) suggested effectiveness can be defined by the outcomes from the learners in a teacher's classroom. Stronge (2018) further asserted from his findings when teachers are confident and are equipped with the necessary skills this influence can directly observed by the students in their classrooms.

In their recent study, Fang et al. (2021) delved into the perceptions of teachers regarding classroom practices, educational policies, and reforms across different countries. Through a thorough investigation and surveying of teachers, the study has revealed some significant insights that can positively impact the way teachers are supported in schools. The findings suggest that there is a need for better teacher support systems and more effective policies that account for the unique challenges faced by teachers in different regions. This research provides a valuable path forward for policymakers and education stakeholders to better understand the needs of teachers and create more supportive learning environments for students.

According to studies by Richter et. al. (2019) and Fang et al. (2021), secondary level teachers are motivated to participate in professional development training if it is a topic they are interested in and can apply the new learning into their classroom instruction. Further, Richter et al. (2019) study revealed teachers are motivated to participate in professional development training if it is a topic of interest but also do so if

they believe it could have benefit for the students in their classrooms. A study conducted by Vera et al. (2022) suggested teachers want to see all their student's success but often lack the skills and necessary training to feel confident in delivering instruction on topics they are not familiar with English Speakers of Other Language students and require more support in which they may not have been trained to provide.

What we know for certain about professional development training is there are more training opportunities available for early childhood and elementary level teachers this could be due to the abundance of research studies done at the early childhood and elementary age (Ramirez-Montoya et al., 2021; Scarparolo & Hammond, 2018). While research is having limited studies and less of a focus on professional development training for teachers at the middle and high school levels (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2019). The purpose of providing professional development training for teachers is to provide them with the support, knowledge and skills needed to help them implement standards while delivering effective and high-quality instruction to students, yet there needs to be effective professional development that is creatively and thoughtfully planned out to give all teachers the knowledge and skills they need to be effective in their classrooms (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; Stronge, 2018,).

Further, literature supports there is not enough knowledge and support being provided within teacher preparation programs to prepare new teachers for the challenges and number of responsibilities they faced in the classroom (Forghani-Arani et al., 2019; la Velle et al., 2020). Therefore, as the literature suggests school districts and states have the responsibility and imperative duty to provide funding and resources ensure the

teachers in their states receive effective professional development training (Espinoza et al., 2018; Nelson & Bohanon, 2019).

Linguistic Diversity

Although there is research such as a study by Wassell et al. (2019) found supporting the need for linguistic diversity in the teaching curriculum, the resources needed to be relevant, and teachers feel confident in the content of those materials in order to integrate them into class instruction. Correspondingly, Bice and Kroll (2019), define Linguistic Diversity in its most rigid form as having many languages spoken all simultaneously for the purpose of developing understanding or assessing. A study conducted by The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in 2019, as cited in Lorenz et al. (2021), shared similar views about linguistic diversity as a topic of discussion in education. This topic covers a wide range of issues, from how to incorporate linguistic and relevant materials into the curriculum to how teachers present it in the classroom.

Recent research and language learning discussions of how the Covid19 pandemic created challenges with the dominance of the English language and excluded many diverse groups of people and left education with questions about how to communicate and engage families of diverse backgrounds (Piller et al., 2020).

According to a study conducted by Sequiera and Dacey (2020), the Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the educational opportunity gap for students from diverse backgrounds, particularly those from low-income families or disadvantaged socio-economic homes. The study found that online educational engagement and access to

technological resources were major challenges for these students. The study was conducted through the Internal Review Board (IRB) as a self-study. While the Covid-19 pandemic had many educators working solo to determine how they could engage and highlight each of their students' diversity in the classroom to engage them in relevant and effective instruction (Azevedo et al., 2022). Reimers et al. (2021) and Audrain et al. (2021), they agreed that teachers need support that show up in ways such as needed materials and texts they can feel confident presenting and that represent the linguistic and diversity of students as well as carry meaning of relevance and engagement for the diversity represented in in their classrooms.

While Covid-19 had the entire globe in lockdown teachers were creating content to engage their students in learning, while also going out of their way to reach students and provide support by meeting them at coffee shops, visiting their homes and finding ways to communicate with families to support learning in the homes via Zoom, facetime, or other methods of communication (Dayagbil et al., 2021). Additionally, linguistic diversity is a necessity in today's changing student population in the United States (Audrain et al., 2023). Whereas small scale studies conducted in the United States and internationally also found similar results for the need to provide more texts and instruction was reflective and representative of the diverse populations and cultures of students entering their schools (Audrain et al., 2022; Kelchtermans, 2019).

Child-Centered Learning

Research conducted during the post-pandemic era of Covid-19 has shown that some people still relocate to different parts of the United States for work or to live in

more affordable areas with better job opportunities (Barbour et al., 2021). Meanwhile, other groups of people move their families to other countries to escape unsafe situations in war-torn areas. Therefore, educational districts in the United States and abroad must be prepared to rethink how they provide education and support to meet the diverse linguistic needs of these groups. This requires schools to welcome and engage diverse groups, helping them integrate into the formal education district (Cerna, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Child-Centered learning is not a new concept, yet in the recent six years has received much attention in education as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has become a consistent topic of discussion by educators and leaders (Zhao, 2020). What we learned about child-centered learning as a result of the Covid19 pandemic was the amount of access to technology students had or did not play a vital and impactful role on a child's ability to be able to access their instruction in order to learn online (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

While additional studies further found the socioeconomic status of many students at the local, state, national, and international levels provided insight to those who were more fortunate to have access to technology and internet during this global shutdown created challenges for students to access their learning as well as challenges for teachers to create child centered learning within the lessons provided through virtual instruction or online learning platforms (Zhao, 2020). Further, while schools were returning to in person learning across the globe after the Covid-19 pandemic shutdown teachers faced

challenges in creating lessons that were engaging and child centered as well as culturally relevant (Baize, 2023).

While literature suggests teachers should design learner centered instruction and lessons and have the desires to do so many lack the training or confidence to do so (Wanzek et al., 2018). While educators desire to move away from the teacher as lecturer and make the shift toward students being the driving force and constructors of their own learning the Covid-19 pandemic has presented challenges for students in kindergarten through 12th grade (Arnett, 2021).

Carmack and Mullen (2020) reported in an article in which students internationally also felt they needed to be supported in their learning of language by educators. Additionally, not only do teachers feel that they need to be supported to be able to provide engaging and culturally relevant instruction to students. While administrators and district decision makers should also concentrate their efforts in ensuring that teachers are provided with effective professional development opportunities needed to support child-centered learning environments for English Speaker of Other Languages populations (Ramos, 2023). Further, in order to begin to close the achievement and learning gaps students suffered from as a result if Covid-19 pandemic while also trying to help students meet the standards for where they are currently in their educational trajectory (Arnett, 2021; Leech et al., 2020).

Professional Development Support

How we define and provide professional development support to teachers at the secondary level has long been generalized and studied yet there is no one true

definition (Sancar et al., 2023) with professional development for all teachers has been and continues to be a traditional approach within the tiered educational district that mostly consists of grades kindergarten through 12th (de Groot et al., 2018). There has been a lack of targeted and focused professional development to support the needs of middle and high school general education teachers. Zhang and Wang (2022) conducted a study to determine how many articles were related to teachers in the past two decades and found a total of 848. The researchers concluded that the literature could be used to learn about teacher identity and create professional development programs that specifically support teachers. While there have been some small studies to understand the needs of teachers at the middle and high school levels, there is a lack of research that specifically looks at what targeted development could look like for these teachers. However, it is clear from the literature that teachers need professional development support that is specific and targeted for the practices they are being asked to implement in their classrooms.

Professional development in the past has comprised of more traditional approaches one day trainings, initiative specific or in building through coaching or book studies (Darling-Hammond, 2020). Nonetheless, with mandated recent shifts to online learning reimagining what schools looked like after the Covid19 pandemic remains to be written about and learned, one thing is certain, according to many educational scholars who have conducted small-scale studies (Baize, 2023; Gutierrez et al., 2023) this is the time to reimagine what the educational district can look like and how we can use creativity from our leaders, teachers and other educational stakeholders as we embark on addressing the many factors that resulted from the school closures worldwide.

Another study conducted by Rodgers et al. (2022) found that teachers beliefs of the types of professional development and supports they were receiving had an impact on their teaching and instruction in the classroom. As the literature and recent research studies indicate teachers leave the profession to pursue other jobs if they feel they are not supported and given the skills they need to be able provide effective instruction in the classroom while other studies conducted by Richter (2019) and Farrugia (2021) indicate teachers sought job in districts that are known to professional development teachers as well as support them through other training and skills they need to grow as professionals and be effective in their instruction within their classrooms.

Project Description

This policy position recommendation paper offered a comprehensive background of the existing problem faced by teachers in grades 6-12 who were tasked with supporting lower performing ESOL students in their school districts. The paper highlighted the need for targeted professional development training to ensure that these teachers were equipped with the necessary resources to provide quality education to their students. The focus of the paper was to establish an outline that would lay out the educational policies surrounding professional development for schools around the United States and present the resources and initiatives surrounding professional development for secondary-level teachers. The study acknowledged the potential barriers which may have hindered the implementation of targeted professional development for secondary level teachers, particularly local educational policies, and current programs available in the state and local districts. As such, the paper delved into potential solutions to these barriers, taking

into consideration the broader context of professional development for general education teachers at the secondary level.

To facilitate the implementation of this position paper, a proposed timeline was established. Immediately following the approval of the final dissertation, the position paper was shared with the current study site district leadership as a resource with information and current themes to consider when implementing future professional development for secondary level teachers. Additionally, the position paper was shared on an educational website currently being created as part of a future platform to share educational resources. Interested parties were able to access the resource electronically. The roles and responsibilities of those who participated in providing information for the findings that resulted as part of this study were to read the position paper and voluntarily provide commentary and feedback. This feedback helped to further strengthen the position paper and was particularly useful when presenting the paper at conferences or discussing it with future educational stakeholders interested in the findings of the study.

Project Evaluation Plan

To evaluate the project deliverable, a summative document in the form of a position paper was presented. This position paper provided an in-depth analysis of the existing policies and concepts surrounding general education teachers' professional development in the secondary level. The reason for choosing this type of evaluation was the expected audience to be interested in the topic to be educational stakeholders, individuals with an interest in the subject matter, and secondary level teachers who

provided reading instruction to low-performing grade 6-12 students who were English language learners.

The objective of this evaluation was to maintain a neutral tone while presenting the nine themes derived from the data collection set that were part of this basic qualitative study. This study took place at a particular school district on the US West Coast. The purpose of the project paper aimed to present the background of the existing policy and concepts of general education teachers' professional development, identify the problem which led to the need for this study, describe the methodology used during the qualitative study, and summarize the data analysis and findings collected as part of the semi-structured interviews.

The key stakeholders of this project and its position, as well as policy recommendations, consisted of school district board of directors, school district superintendents, school district leadership responsible for professional development implementation, and secondary level teachers seeking targeted professional development to provide effective reading instruction to English language learners in their classrooms. Other key stakeholders may include organizations and state-level leaders interested in understanding the needs of secondary level teachers and their professional development. It should also be noted local community colleges and nonprofit private organizations seeking to provide professional development opportunities for teachers at the local, state, or global level may have found this position paper useful when designing and/or offering professional development opportunities to teachers as self-sought professional development.

Project Implications

The school district has the potential to create a significant positive impact by implementing strategies that benefit students who receive reading instruction from general education teachers. This study serves as a catalyst for social change by raising awareness among stakeholders about the best practices for ESOL students. It could also lead to targeted professional development programs for teachers in school districts with high populations of ESOL students. It is important to note all the procedures outlined in section two of the methodology were followed, including research design, participant recruitment, data collection, and ethical treatment of all participants. The study did not exceed its boundaries.

Recommendations for program evaluation include ongoing monitoring and evaluation of project research and it is one of the most effective methods for monitoring and evaluating the resources allocated to secondary-level general education teachers is positioning. This evaluation method allows for close monitoring of the professional development opportunities being offered to general education teachers in grades 6 through 12. The primary goal of monitoring and evaluating is to identify the current needs of teachers and accept feedback on their needs for professional development or opportunities they perceive would be beneficial and effective in the classroom.

The evaluation goals would also assist district administrators, professional development coordinators, and educational stakeholders who plan or provide trainings, workshops, teacher continuing education courses, or cohort offerings at local colleges, universities, or other educational service districts interested in what types of targeted

professional development may be offered to support reading instruction for ESOL students or secondary-level teachers in grades 6 through 12 on the U.S. West Coast.

Further evaluation of current programs would ensure that educational ESOL programs in schools on the U.S. West Coast continue to utilize data and student achievement results to develop, align, and coordinate local professional development opportunities for secondary-level teachers. By doing so, teachers can be equipped with the necessary skills to help ESOL students succeed, which ultimately benefits the community as a whole.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

This study was focused on the perceptions of grade 6-12 teachers regarding the need for targeted professional development that supports ESOL students' reading instruction. The study was conducted in a particular school district located on the U.S. West Coast. The research identified nine themes and five subthemes were related to this topic. The first theme was challenges in education language and translation services, which focused on the difficulties teachers face when it comes to providing language support to their ESOL students. The second subtheme was teaching strategies, which explored the different approaches that teachers can use to teach reading to ESOL students. The third theme was language acquisition strategies, which highlighted the importance of using effective techniques to help students acquire the English language.

The fourth theme was cultural sensitivity and inadequate training, which dealt with the challenges faced by teachers when it comes to understanding the cultural backgrounds of their ESOL students. The fifth theme was the lack of effective

professional development, which highlighted the need for better training opportunities for teachers. The sixth theme was support for effective professional development, which focused on the types of support that teachers need to be able to implement effective professional development.

The seventh theme was linguistic diversity, which explored the different types of languages spoken by ESOL students. The subthemes for this theme were motivation and learning methodologies, which highlighted the importance of using effective strategies to motivate ESOL students to learn. The eighth theme was child-centered learning, which focused on the need to design learning activities that are tailored to the needs of each student. The final theme was child-centered learning and assessment, which highlighted the importance of using assessment tools that are designed to evaluate the progress of each student.

It is essential to note the study had some limitations due to the small sample size of only 10 secondary teachers in a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast. The researcher also recognized that there may be other studies which were not included due to limited access to journals which require subscriptions or monetary fees. The project deliverable of this study is a resource that provides possible professional development activities that participants perceived would support reading instruction for lower performing reading ESOL students. The recommendations provided in this resource can be used as a guide by school district administrators and directors responsible for designing and providing professional development for secondary-level teachers in grades 6 through 12 who teach reading and districts with ESOL students.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The topic of professional development for ESOL students is a complex one that requires a comprehensive exploration in order to yield meaningful results. One potential recommendation is to conduct a longitudinal study that tracks the progress of ESOL students over an extended period of time. This would allow researchers to identify patterns and trends in the experiences of ESOL students and to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to their success or failure.

Another approach that could be considered is a mixed methods study that combines quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. This would provide an opportunity to compare and contrast the experiences of ESOL students from different backgrounds and perspectives, and to gain a more nuanced understanding of the challenges they face.

In terms of addressing the local problem of supporting ESOL students, there are several viable solutions that could be pursued. One option is for the school district to implement special programs that cater specifically to ESOL students. These programs could provide targeted support in areas such as language acquisition, cultural integration, and academic skills development, and would help ensure that ESOL students receive the support they need to succeed academically.

Another solution would be for schools on the West Coast to seek out funding aimed at hiring staff who are certified to provide direct support to meet the reading needs of ESOL students, as well as obtain relevant curriculum materials. This would help to ensure that ESOL students have access to high-quality instructional materials and

support, and would help to close the achievement gap between ESOL students and their non-ESOL peers.

Finally, it may be beneficial for schools on the West Coast to explore funding opportunities from their state and federal government that are allocated specifically for providing targeted and specific professional development opportunities for secondary level teachers. This would equip those in leadership with the knowledge and skills necessary to plan and implement professional development opportunities that are necessary to provide secondary teachers with the tools and resources they need to effectively integrate new learning for ESOL students in their classrooms. Ultimately, this would result in improved academic outcomes for ESOL students and would help to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in school and beyond.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

During the research process for this project, there were several important lessons that were learned. One of the crucial aspects was to ensure that the information gathered was current and relevant, especially when it came to the issue being addressed and the funding requirements of school districts across the United States, as well as those within the specific district under study. This involved extensive research into current policies, programs, and initiatives that are currently in place in schools across the country. Furthermore, it was essential to have a comprehensive understanding of how to present the analysis and findings of the study in a way that was both informative and relevant to the intended audience.

Throughout the project development process, there was a strong emphasis on maintaining a neutral stance when presenting the findings and results of the study. This was crucial to ensure that the study was viewed as unbiased and that the findings were taken seriously by all stakeholders. Additionally, the project was developed as a position/recommendation paper, which required extensive reading and analysis of current literature to understand how it relates to the problem and methodology. This format also allowed for the nine themes found as a result of the study to be presented in a clear and concise manner.

Overall, this experience highlighted the importance of not only presenting the findings of a research study but also considering the existing policies and the current state of affairs within the public education district. It was essential to understand the connection between the evidence and the interested audiences who may read the paper, as this knowledge helped to identify potential supporters who could have a positive impact on social change.

Finally, the project also highlighted the need for targeted professional development for secondary level teachers and effective reading instruction for marginalized groups of English learners in public school districts across the United States. This was a critical finding that could lead to significant improvements in student outcomes and help address the achievement gap that currently exists.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The production of the position paper was an extensive and rigorous effort that involved conducting thorough research and synthesizing the findings from a series of

semi-structured interviews. The primary objective of this study was to address the current literature review and examine how the findings aligned with the evidence found in the literature, with the aim of answering the research question that guided the study.

The overarching goal of this study was to drive social change by empowering schools, district leaders, and other stakeholders to support and meet the needs of marginalized students, while simultaneously providing valuable information and resources. Specifically, the focus was on identifying effective ways of providing targeted professional development opportunities for secondary-level teachers who work with lower-performing English speakers of other languages.

By connecting the evidence and findings from the literature review and the study, the project aimed to offer actionable insights and recommendations that could be implemented to improve reading instruction for this group of students. The project presented these findings alongside relevant literature and made recommendations for targeted professional development opportunities that could benefit English speakers of other languages who are struggling with reading.

It is important to emphasize that the work involved in this study cannot be overstated. It has the potential to make a real difference in the lives of marginalized students and provide valuable guidance and resources for those responsible for their education. The study laid the groundwork for future progress and improvement in the field of English language education by highlighting the need for targeted professional development opportunities for secondary-level teachers who work with lower-performing English speakers of other languages.

Implication, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The potential impact of improving reading instruction for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students at the school district level can be significant and can lead to positive social change. It can also pave the way for targeted professional development opportunities for teachers working in school districts with high numbers of ESOL students. This, in turn, can further improve the quality of instruction in US classrooms and support the academic and social development of ESOL students.

It's worth noting that the study adhered to all the procedures outlined in section two of the methodology, including following the research design, recruiting participants, collecting data, and treating all participants ethically and fairly. The study, however, had some challenges, one of which was completing the project paper within the given time constraints. The researcher had to conduct extensive research and address the themes as they aligned with the study while remaining unbiased in making recommendations for future stakeholders. Another challenge faced during the study was the cost constraints related to accessing a larger amount of literature internationally or globally. Due to limited funding, the researcher had access to university-level research databases and could only request a limited number of articles on the themes and information presented in the project position paper.

Furthermore, it's important to note that the sample size represented within the position paper's themes and findings, as well as reported results, were limited to a small sample size of secondary level teachers and grades 6 to 12 at a particular school district on the US West Coast. While the researcher acknowledges that the study could have had

a larger sample size of participants, analyzing all the data if a larger sample size would have been the goal of the study's main research question would have been time-consuming and not feasible.

The study had some methodological implications, including the possibility that the research question may not have been answered by the participants, and there could have been no findings reported as a result of the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, if the participants did not provide ideas of perceived professional development opportunities based on their previous experiences, they would not be able to provide recommendations or provide a position paper as part of the study's project. Therefore, it was critical for the researcher to approach the semi-structured interviews with an open mind and avoid any preconceptions on the topic to avoid jeopardizing the results of the findings and themes derived from the collected data.

In terms of recommendations for practice, the resource paper can serve as a guide or supplemental material when considering topics to design or provide professional development opportunities for secondary level teachers who work with ESOL students. Future research considerations on this topic could focus on understanding the need for additional studies to be conducted at secondary schools with administrators or district-level leadership who have taught in secondary level classrooms. This can help gather their perceptions about professional development opportunities that could support general education teachers who teach reading instruction to ESOLs. Additionally, focusing on a cohort of students for a three to five year period and tracking controlled and uncontrolled interventions can help increase building and district leaders' understanding of what

targeted and specific trainings teachers would benefit from to see an increase in ESOL students' reading scores and graduation rates.

Conclusion

The report produced by team number one shed light on the challenges faced by teachers who work with ESOL students. The study findings revealed that four participants considered the lack of language and translation services as a significant issue. The participants noted that many of these students are new to the country and do not speak any English, which makes it challenging for them to integrate into the education system. Unfortunately, the current school district has not established any programs to cater to the needs of ESOL students. As a result, these students struggle to keep up with the curriculum and fall behind other students.

In addition to this, another participant pointed out that providing all the steps from a particular lesson at once could be overwhelming for ESOL students. The findings from team number three, which focused on the lack of professional development training, revealed that participants unanimously agreed that their district had not provided sufficient personal development opportunities to them as secondary level teachers who teach reading in classrooms with ESOL students. The theme of the findings indicates that the majority of professional development opportunities offered to secondary level teachers were general in nature. These opportunities were targeted specifically for elementary teachers, but secondary level teachers had to attend them as part of a district attendance expectation. Moreover, the training was not aimed at supporting ESOL

students specifically in improving their reading instruction and effective teaching strategies.

The project position paper aimed to provide recommendations that ensure secondary level teachers have ample opportunities to be trained and participate in professional development. The first recommendation was to delve deeper into current language learning policies surrounding language learning and professional development to gain a true understanding of the issues. This would help identify the instructional strengths of teachers from a holistic approach, which may lead to closing the academic achievement gap for ESOL students while raising high school graduation rates.

Finally, the second recommendation was to dedicate and invest funding at federal, state, and local levels for secondary-level educators specific to targeted professional development. This is essential as the demand for providing appropriate education to the growing diverse population of students identified by school districts as English speakers of other languages is increasing. The U.S. school district needs to step up and meet the demand and current need to provide an appropriate education to ESOL students. Highly qualified teachers who are equipped with the necessary tools and skills to meet the demands and needs of ESOL students in their classrooms are crucial. Therefore, investing in secondary level teachers who are working to not only teach the Common Core State Standards but also provide on-demand training and targeted professional development is imperative.

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Appendix A: The Project

Introduction

The position paper presented as part of the proposed project for this study addressed the findings from semi structured interviews and was guided by the study's research question. The position paper focused on teachers in grades 6-12 who had been provided with the targeted professional development training needed to support lower-performing English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in their school districts. With the global endemic of Covid-19 and the recent shifts to online learning, teachers had to provide instruction remotely and online. This shift was uncharted territory for teachers around the globe.

This format of teaching, planning, and learning was an area teachers were inadequately prepared for and had not received training to provide, be it during their teacher preparation programs or from their school districts, nonetheless having experienced a drastic shift during their teaching careers (International Literacy Association, 2020). Therefore, the purpose of this project study was to create a position paper with recommendations based on the findings of this study's semi structured interviews. While addressing the events and disparities which resulted from the United States school closures during the Covid-19 global shutdown at a particular school district on the U.S. Westcoast. And providing recommendations for school districts, school leaders, and others charged with designing, implementing, and offering professional development opportunities for Teachers in grades 6 to 12.

The goal of the proposed position paper was to address the findings from the semi structured interviews conducted as part of the data collection and presentation of the findings while offering recommendations based on the nine themes, which derived from the data collection set. Creating a position paper was appropriate as it would allow a resource to be shared with School districts, school district leaders, and other educational stakeholders to provide a recent need for targeted professional development for secondary level teachers. The reason a position paper was selected as the genre for this project's genre was to provide a resource guide with information which may be used to provide a resource for which districts, district leaders, and those with the capacity to provide, design, and implement programs with targeted professional development to teachers in districts within the U.S. and Globally.

In addition to the selection of the genre for this project study, the problem which was addressed throughout the content of this project was to conduct a qualitative study which aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of professional development activities which support reading instruction for lower-performing ESOL students in grades 6 to 12 at a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast. Additionally, the data analysis from this study would then be presented in a position paper to be shared with those interested in supporting secondary level general education teachers who provide reading instruction for English speakers of other language students in their classrooms.

The way the problem was addressed through the content of this project was to address the background of the existing policies within education and the concept of general education for teachers' professional development, as well as state the problem

which currently exists at the secondary level where many general education teachers do not or are limited in their access to targeted professional development needed to provide effective reading instruction for English speakers of other languages. Further, the problem was addressed during this position project paper was being able to describe the methodology used as part of this qualitative study and its findings from semi-structured interviews. And lastly, summarizing the analysis and findings from the basic qualitative study in which 10 participants who were interviewed, and their responses were utilized to analyze themes, sub-themes, categories which led to the nine major themes found as part of the study's findings and conclusions as well as recommendations would be provided at the end of the position paper and shared with school districts, school district leaders, and other educational stakeholders.

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the teaching profession, forcing educators to adapt quickly to remote learning and become proficient in utilizing digital platforms for creating multimedia learning. However, due to the sudden nature of the shift, many teachers were not adequately trained or given professional development to effectively conduct remote learning. Meanwhile, language education policies have long been a point of contention among lawmakers and stakeholders, with conflicting opinions on what programs should receive funding sources. While some believe schools should prioritize English-only education, others believe that students should be provided with an education supporting their abilities to be bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural.

The study discussed in this text was initiated during the 2019-2020 academic year, just as the world was facing an uncertain future due to the pandemic. While educators and researchers share varying perspectives on learning policy reforms in K-12 education, each state can shape education policies to create a strong teacher workforce. Many states have begun prioritizing competitive salary allocations and highly desirable teaching conditions for educators, which has resulted in effective teacher instruction and higher outcomes of student academic achievement.

While professional development for teachers and instruction for English speakers of other languages are often seen as separate areas within education, there is an observable interconnectedness and dependence between the two that is necessary to support students and teachers' professional development. The study focuses on two broad areas of education: teachers' professional development and existing policies regarding effective reading instruction and closing the achievement gap among "lower performing" reading among English speakers of other languages.

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), when teachers teach the application of language and provide general skills in language development, students can learn and comprehend complex levels in a second language, such as English. Teachers should possess the knowledge and skills to transfer newly gained knowledge through strategies or methods to their students so that learning and mastery can occur independently and intrinsically (Guskey, 2022).

The paper's structure addresses the problem that initiated the study, including a detailed discussion of the deficits and excess of professional development, secondary-level teachers, and English speakers of other languages. It also presents Sancar et al.'s (2020) new framework for teachers' professional development, which serves as the conceptual framework for the study.

The text below discusses the strategies and literature review related to professional development, reading instruction, and English speakers of other languages for secondary-level general education teachers. Furthermore, it presents the methodology and themes that emerged during the data collection process for

answering the study's research question. In addition, the text provides recommendations on professional development for secondary-level teachers to support reading instruction for English speakers of other languages (ESOLs) based on the study's data collection set.

The study aimed to address the issue of teachers in grades 6-12 lacking targeted professional development training to support lower performing English speakers of other languages (ESOLs) in their school districts. However, with the recent shift to online learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers had to provide instruction remotely and online, which was an uncharted territory for most teachers around the world. This shift posed a significant challenge for teachers, who were not adequately prepared for it, be it during their teacher preparation programs or from their school districts, given the drastic shift during their teaching careers (International Literacy Association, 2020).

Unfortunately, the United States Department of Education provided limited grant opportunities targeting secondary-level teachers after the Covid-19 global shutdown. Funding was mainly directed towards early learning in Pre-Kindergarten through fourth grade and charter schools, making it difficult for public schools to receive more funds to train their teaching force. Although charter schools are essential in certain states where the teaching force is not highly qualified or scarce, most funding opportunities were available only to charter schools. While there were grants for public schools, they were specific to early interventions for elementary-level professional development focused on core subject areas such as reading, with only two

grants targeted towards teachers at the secondary level and specific to special

education teachers for targeted funding for professional development. Despite the

study's focus on targeted professional development for secondary-level teachers and

reading instruction for English speakers of other languages, there continues to be a

deficit in targeted funding for secondary-level teachers and English speakers of other

language students (ESOLs) being allocated to schools. This lack of funding for

targeted professional development opportunities for secondary-level teachers and

ESOLs is a significant concern, especially as the teacher shortage grows due to the

Covid-19 epidemic, which is forecasted to present continued challenges for the public

educational school district of the United States in the future. The department

acknowledges little is being done to entice people to enter the field of Education,

which presents new and additional challenges for teachers trying to close the country's

academic achievement gap for students (Richter et al., 2019).

The researcher in question conducted a thorough investigation into the matter

and found that the OCR had not mentioned anything in its reports about how it

collaborated with the Department of Education to tackle the issue of allocating future

funding to support secondary level teachers who teach reading instruction and provide

professional development to tackle supports for ESOL students' reading. This study

employed a basic qualitative design and aimed to answer the research question, "What

are teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading

instruction of ESOL students in grades 6-12?" To achieve this, the researcher

conducted semi-structured interviews with ten participants from a secondary school in

a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast. The data analysis involved a thematic analysis that included open coding and categorization to identify patterns and themes utilized in the data analysis. Upon completing all the semi-structured interviews, the results yielded nine themes and five sub-themes that were derived from the data analysis.

The participants for this study were teachers from grades 6 to 12 who taught ESOL.

The impact of Covid-19 on the education system in the United States has been significant, according to a report issued in 2022 by a representative for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The report gathered data from all around the country during the National school closures and found recurring educational observations that existed or were further exacerbated as a result of the pandemic. The OCR presented eleven observational areas where inequities within education were found and issued guidance with recommendations that schools should consider as they reopen during the pandemic.

This paper focuses on three relevant observations from the OCR findings that are directly related to this study. The first observation is that K-12 students had pre-existing disparities within core subject areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics, and these disparities were further evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. The disparities were found among students enrolled in U.S public schools during the 2019-2020 academic school year.

The second observation area is the lack of equal access and participation in classroom instruction among students learning English as a second language (ESOL) to learn and meet grade-level standards. The support and access to the internet and computers to continue their learning and educational trajectory were negatively affected during the U.S. School closures of 2019-2020 due to Covid-19.

Thirdly, secondary level students who experienced disparities and disruptions in their education had received one-on-one support or had learning difficulties with language or disability. From the observational findings, this researcher conducted, there was no mention by the OCR in any of its reporting on how it worked in collaboration with the Department of Education to address how future funding can be allocated to support secondary level teachers in teaching reading instruction and provide professional development to tackle supports for ESOL students' reading. This is an important question that needs to be addressed to ensure that all students have access to quality education, regardless of their background.

Methodology

This study employed a basic qualitative design in order to answer a guiding research question about teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6-12. To achieve this, Semi-structured interviews of 10 participants from a secondary school within a particular school district on the U.S. West Coast were conducted. The inclusion criteria by which participants were chosen included being currently employed as a secondary teacher in grades 6 through 12 and having English speakers of other language students

in their classrooms at the selected school. The study utilized purposeful sampling based on criteria such as teachers having participated in professional development activities and being able to describe and share their perceptions of targeted professional development to provide instruction to lower-performing "reading" ESOL students in their secondary-level classrooms.

The instrument used to collect data is an interview protocol derived from the conceptual framework within the literature review and guiding question. This interview protocol comprises open-ended and Semi-structured questions developed by the researcher from the guiding research question. The questions asked about teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction of ESOL students in grades 6 -12. The data collected from the interviews underwent thematic analysis that involved open coding and categorization to identify patterns and themes utilized in the data analysis. After all the Semi-Structured interviews were completed, the results found nine themes and five sub-themes that were derived from the Semi-Structured interviews.

The research literature provided important data collection methods to understand and provide information that correlated the existing literature with the study's findings, which helped add information and a new angle to the phenomenon. The strategy employed as part of this literature review included the use of scholarly journal articles, dissertations, and government documents to understand how to write a policy recommendation paper addressing the study's topic on teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction for English

speakers of other language students in grades 6 to 12. These sources included accessing Walden's online library and gathering sources from peer-reviewed, scholarly journals, books, and government documents. I also searched the online database from EBSCO host, ProQuest, Sage, ERIC, and Google Scholar, and the United States Department of education database on teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that support reading instruction for English speakers of other language students in grades 6 to 12. Keywords such as *professional development, low achieving, students, perceptions, teacher support, English speakers, and reading instruction* were used during the search process.

While the effects of this study may not be revealed to the researcher, it is clear that professional development is an important aspect of education that is not going away. The U.S Department of Education and other European countries continue to provide professional development opportunities for general education teachers at the secondary level. However, it is important to note that it can be limited and take time to see improved educational districts for educators in the field globally.

Literature Review and Research

The need for professional development for teachers has been a pressing issue in the field of education for over two decades, and it remains a significant challenge to this day. Recent reports from the study site and the International Literacy Association (2020) and Smith (2020) have confirmed that teachers in grades 6 to 12 are seeking professional development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge in working with students online or in the classroom. These teachers are aware of the

importance of closing the literacy gap and preparing English speakers of other languages for post-high school opportunities, and they understand that professional development is the key to achieving these goals.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the need for effective professional development for teachers. With the shift to online learning, teachers have had to adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of their students. However, the pandemic has also highlighted the lack of innovative and effective approaches or strategies in the field of education, which is essential to support and enhance effective instruction and strategies to meet the needs of an ever-growing diverse population of students entering our educational districts and coming speaking or understanding languages other than English.

Professional development for teachers is critical to the success of students in our educational system. It is imperative that educators continue to seek out new and innovative approaches to meet the needs of students and to close the literacy gap. The COVID-19 pandemic has only highlighted the urgency of this issue, and it is up to all stakeholders in the education system to work together to find effective solutions.

Summary of Analysis and Findings

The process of analyzing the collected data involved carrying out a thematic analysis, which included open coding and categorization to identify patterns and themes that could be used to analyze the data. While the effects of this study may not be immediately evident to the researcher, it is certain that professional development is a crucial aspect of education that cannot be ignored. The US Department of Education

and other European countries continue to provide funding, albeit limited, to support the development of educators in the field globally.

Through the Semi-Structured interviews conducted as part of this study, nine themes and five sub-themes were identified. The themes derived from the data analysis are as follows:

1. Challenges in Education Language and Translation Services

2. Language Acquisition Strategies

3. Lack of Professional Training Opportunities

4. Cultural Sensitivity and Inadequate Training

5. Lack of Effective Professional Development

6. Support for Effective Professional Training

7. Linguistic Diversity

8. Child-Centered Learning

9. Professional Development Support

In addition to these themes, there were also five sub-themes that fell under the first theme, which is Challenges in Education Language and Transition Services. These sub-themes include Language and Reading Difficulties and Teaching Strategies. Furthermore, two additional sub-themes were identified under theme seven, which were Motivational Learning Methodologies and Effective strategies for language learning. Lastly, theme eight had one sub-theme, which was Educational approach to Diversity and Inclusion.

Therefore, the first theme that was addressed in this study was the challenges that educators face on a daily basis in their secondary level classrooms as they work with and support English speakers of other languages. These challenges include language and reading difficulties, as well as the need for effective teaching strategies that can help students overcome these difficulties and achieve their academic goals.

Challenges in Education Language and Translation Services

The notion of a challenge in the context of education refers to a barrier or hardship that educators face, find mentally difficult, or feel uncertain about their ability to approach or complete. As part of a study, participants were interviewed, and it was found that many educators are often called upon to provide support and instruction in subject areas in which they have had little to no training. Additionally, ESOL students at the secondary level are often placed in general education courses with limited English language skills, which presents significant obstacles in providing instruction to students with limited understanding or communication of the English language. Moreover, the current resources available within districts for translation services and technology are also limited and do not support educators' ability to communicate with students and their families.

Educators face challenges in trying to communicate and build relationships with students when there is limited access to the curriculum and language resources for the variety of languages in their classrooms. Research in the field of education has for decades written about the challenges educators face in their classrooms. However, professional development in language has been limited to early education and has not

shifted its focus to secondary schools. Although the research conducted as part of this study indicated that Teaching as a Second Language (ESL) presented a significant challenge due to language barriers. As Covid-19 continues to demonstrate disparities among students, it is also demonstrating disparities among educators, which is apparent in their tenure as well as skill sets. Participants from this study also shared from their observations even students who have been speaking English for a few years often struggled with academic materials and were faced with considerable vocabulary gaps.

Although educators are given curriculum and standards to guide their planning and instruction, there are limited translation services available to provide resources and materials to English speakers of other language students to access their education. In the field of education, research-based evidence drives the majority of decisions, and in order to determine best practices, it suggests that providing teachers with professional development at all levels of schooling Kindergarten through grade 12 is necessary. Additionally, providing targeted professional development for teachers to improve their skill set while applying their direct and indirect learnings from professional development opportunities to design and implement effective instructional methods is crucial.

As far as translation services are concerned, eight out of ten participants of this study suggested that there are only two options in their district to translate materials and one resource to communicate with parents that do not speak English. A recent study by Bartley (2020) suggests that translation services do not need to be limited, as there are many efficient applications and services available to school districts. Bartley further suggests that school districts should understand their needs for translation services and

create a plan to ensure success. If done properly and thoughtfully and organized to

include support and professional development for the teachers who had access to these

resources, applications, and programs for translation services can be effective in building

relationships and expectations among families, students, and school staff. As part of this

data set, two subthemes emerged as a result of conducting semi-structured interviews and

were derived as subthemes from the theme challenges in Education language and

translation services through open coding, which are language and reading difficulties and

teaching strategies.

Subtheme 1: Language and Reading Difficulties

The issue of language difficulties in education refers to a learner's challenge and

ability to comprehend the language of the text. The learner faces various obstacles,

ranging from learning a language initially to hesitating with the meaning of vocabulary,

using proper grammar rules, and approaching a language with confidence. Research

indicates that language difficulties in learning exist for several reasons, including a lack

of exposure to English words at a young age, inadequate vocabulary building during

schooling, and a wide range of words not in the language of instruction for learning new

subject-specific content.

Reading difficulties are defined as a learner's challenges when interacting with

passages, written words, or printed text. A learner who faces unknown words due to a

lack of hearing sounds or an inability to process the chronological order of a text's main

ideas or major events in the text or book for comprehension purposes may have difficulty

retrieving information at a later time. Additionally, a learner's inability to read with fluency hinders and impedes their reading success.

Although research primarily focuses on early interventions for young children to support reading comprehension and academic success in the U.S. educational trajectory, there is limited research on the importance of applying fundamental reading skills at the secondary level. Over recent years, much attention has been given to high school graduation rates and high-stakes assessments as part of high school graduation requirements. However, there has not been a focus on how to support the reading instruction of ESOL students entering as non-English speakers at the secondary level.

According to Uribe (2018), reading difficulties may exist for ESOL's in fluency and reading comprehension and require an alternative approach if teachers are using traditional reading curricula or materials. Teachers should learn to be innovative with the provided materials. While states are required to report English language proficiency of ESOL's while they are in school through various state and federally mandated assessments, the district's general education curriculum also provides interventions. However, the use of the same authors and companies who wrote the general education curriculum makes it unavailable for ESOL's. Participants in the study find these resources continue to cause reading difficulties for students, as they are not at their readability levels, and students cannot comprehend the texts, which are not of high engagement or interest.

The participants in the study shared they had not received much professional development on effectively communicating with families at home, especially those who

speak foreign languages. They were only given information that translators were available for assistance. However, building strong relationships with families is crucial, and seeking out additional resources to improve communication skills is necessary. According to Statistics (2022), the impact of literacy in classrooms across the United States in 2022 includes 40 percent of students who cannot read at a basic level, which is third grade. Fourth-grade students who come from low-socioeconomic groups cannot read at the basic level of grade 3, and 49 percent of those students who qualify for free or reduced lunch programs scored on the NAEP reading test below the "Basic" reading level, indicating that students only partially acquired fundamental skills and knowledge and are not proficient at their current grade level (NAEP, 2023).

Subtheme 2: Teaching Strategies

While Educators have known and understood students face reading challenges when they are not fluent in English, and all school materials, including instruction, are conducted in English. However, there is little research to support teachers' understanding and accurately identifying a student's reading levels and then be able to meet the needs of the students. Currently, teachers are given resources by their districts, and most districts across the United States that have some sort of balanced literacy approach to reading give educators the professional discretion to plan and design lessons aligned with state and national standards.

However, participants from this study indicated the challenge is in finding relevant and meaningful materials to use as part of instruction in order to meet the needs of all students, including ESOLs that are relevant and engaging. According to a study

conducted by Prenger et al. (2017) when teachers are afforded the time and discretion to plan accordingly to meet the needs of their learner's educators also grow in their skills and understanding as professionals in the field. Therefore, although there is a plethora of teaching strategies available to support students in becoming fluent readers it also requires that educators receive the training or professional development necessary to implement teaching strategies.

According to Wanzek et al. (2018) some middle and high school teachers may not know how to teach reading and do effectively in their classes because they don't have the specific knowledge to do so in their content area. Further, two participants from this study shared that as secondary level teachers with English speakers of other language students were asked to describe ways in which their participation in processional development offered by their school district has aided them in supporting reading instruction for lower performing in reading English because of other languages and two themes emerge from the responses of the participants. They were "Language Acquisition Strategies" and "Lack of Professional Development Training Opportunities."

While teaching strategies have been researched and implemented in classrooms across the United States for many decades one participant from this study pointed out that in the past ten years "there has been no new or innovative strategies added to the field of teaching" when it comes to reading and providing reading instruction to English speakers of other language students. Of these two themes Language Acquisition Strategies, from the perspective of a participant shared "I provide guidance for English language learners (ELL) to sound out words, use phonetics, and connect their first language from home. I

assist with reading and understanding information while also giving or guiding them through the phonetic aspects."

A recent statistic from the Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS), middle school teachers in the United States teach students for roughly eight hours more weekly on average compared to teachers in nations other than the United States, ranking first globally for the total amount of hours spent providing face-to-face instruction. Still, they are also given considerably fewer hours for planning and collaboration in comparison to teachers in other countries (OCED, 2020).

Therefore, although there are many teaching strategies guided by research-based such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (Siop Model), Guided language acquisition Development (Glad) which are used in elementary classrooms across the United States with general population of students these strategies require intensive and initial or ongoing professional development for teachers.   While, the teachers from this study did reference these two specific models and their strategies, seven out of ten participants from this study shared they had heard of Siop and Glad but had not had the training due lack of professional development training opportunities as it is only offered for elementary level teachers within the district or in order for them to be able to implement these strategies into their classroom instruction require a lot of preparation and planning time which is not afforded to them by their school district.

One participant shared "I haven't had the opportunity to attend any professional development sessions that specifically focus on supporting reading." While another participant shared" I am not entirely certain if I have undergone any professional

development programs that specifically cater to lower-achieving students." while the same participant stated, "I am aware of such methods can greatly benefit English language learners, and I have ye t to undergo professional development that is specifically geared toward ESOL students." Thus further, making the claim that teachers need professional development in order to implement teaching strategies from various models such a Siop, Glad or any other research-based models that supported instruction and support ESOL students. Kotting (2021) shared a value-based section in her book which further supports the need to strengthen teaching and implementation of teaching strategies in the classroom by collecting responses from her followers who shared: When new teachers stay in their teaching jobs, they are able to build trust and relationships with students and this is a critical component to any students' success.

Language Acquisition Strategies

Language acquisition has been a topic of interest for many theorists and found in many seminal The works of Piaget (1936) and Skinner (1951) provide valid claims that children possess the mental capacity to process, learn, and use language naturally. These skills can be transferred to various settings, whether social or educational, and demonstrate the cognitive understanding of language acquisition by displaying comprehension. Piaget and Skinner further emphasize that language acquisition skills occur without the need for formal training or education, as learners acquire language through their most frequently used setting or environment. This process continues until the learner fully develops the language and acquires the ability to use it as a mode of communication.

Although researchers within the field of education have found some contradicting evidence to either support or deny some of the original theorists' claims and observations, these theories remain the guiding principles used as the backbone to new research and understanding when it comes to language learning and understanding among students in classrooms around the world.

Several researchers have identified and developed models that can help students encounter success in educational settings, such as the Siop and Glad models. Participants from a recent study noted these two models, as they have expertise in or about them. The Siop model is a science-based and field-tested resource used to make content more accessible and understandable for English learners. Developed as a necessity to prepare educators who would be providing instruction to English learners in the classroom, Siop is a valuable resource for teachers to plan and implement lessons that support the literacy of English learners and align with kindergarten through college-level standards.

Although participants in the study referred to the language acquisition model of Siop, most were unable to name any specific strategies offered by the model that they implemented into their classroom instruction to support English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. However, one participant stated that, as educators, it is essential to ensure that students are reading and comprehending the content they are supposed to. In their case, they went through the lesson plan every week and verbally explained the concepts to ELL students. They simplified the content by using simpler language, showing pictures, and color-coding everything. This approach follows the Glad

Guided Language Acquisition Design and has helped their students understand the course concepts better.

One participant in the study pointed out that, although they had familiarity with the Siop model and Glad strategies over the past decade, there has not been anything new or innovative to support ESOL students. This emphasizes the challenges that twenty-first-century educators face in the education of language.

Lack of Professional Training Opportunities

The dearth of professional development opportunities for teachers in some districts across the United States is a matter of concern. According to Bouchrika (2023), there are 16,800 public schools in school districts across the country. However, a recent federal evaluation report by Wellington et al. (2023), which tracked 24 grantees who received funding for attracting, training, and retaining educators, found that these funds were not directed towards training staff with professional development. Instead, some of the awarded districts used the funds to pay current educators to take on facilitator or mentor roles, while others focused on recruiting teachers to fill less desirable positions within their districts.

These findings underscore the lack of priority given to teacher professional development to improve skills and be more effective in instruction and approaches. The grantees were from high-needs districts in southern states within the United States, making it even more important to provide targeted and ongoing professional development to the already depleting U.S. teacher force and ever-growing diverse needs of students in classrooms across America.

This study was conducted at a site on the U.S. West Coast provides further evidence that professional development is minimal within the public schools of the United States. Participants unanimously noted in their responses that their district did not provide sufficient professional development opportunities, and they had to attend sessions from other districts to meet their needs. They also pointed out that they had only attended two classes for second language learners, which is inadequate. One participant stated that they were not entirely certain if they had undergone any professional development programs that specifically catered to lower achieving students. They were unfamiliar with universal design for learning and its language-focused approach, nor had they received training on universal design for learning, which advocates for providing students with multiple options for completing assignments that work best for them. However, they were aware that employing such methods can greatly benefit English language learners, and they had yet to undergo a professional development that is specifically geared toward ESOL students.

Moreover, more professional development is made available in American schools at the beginning of each school year than at any other point in the school year. During this time, districts re-energize and motivate teachers, review current regulations, reintroduce initiatives often mandated by the state or other federal programs or grants the districts receive, and provide professional development opportunities. However, a recent study by Gutierrez et al. (2023) conducted a survey and concluded that if schools want to see strong performance and high student achievement outcomes, they must invest in their teaching staff to improve teacher performance and instructional effectiveness in the

classroom. Therefore, the current professional development that is offered focuses on policies or mandates rather than being targeted and provided due to identified needs and to strengthen teachers' skills and knowledge for the content areas in which they provide instruction.

This study's findings further back up the assertion that when educators lack professional development opportunities, some are motivated to seek out those trainings, while others continue to teach and wait for their districts to provide the training they need. The lack of professional development opportunities lies on the school district and identifying the needs of their teachers when it comes to providing professional development to retain and improve instruction. According to Redding et al. (2018) at the Indistar organization, schools with strategic plans at the district level and building school improvement plans that focus on indicators to support teacher professional development as one of its indicators can improve the overall educational district of a district and school and includes all stakeholders in the process toward focused improvement.

Cultural Sensitivity and Inadequate Training

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the educational disparities among students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The chronic absenteeism among students with fewer resources has been a concern, while those with more resources have been attending virtual classes. In this context, it is imperative to be culturally sensitive in the selection of instructional resources and topics for discussions in classrooms. This challenge has been especially daunting for middle and high school teachers who have little experience in this area.

Middle and high school students have the ability to comprehend the happenings in their homes, societies, and on their social media accounts. Now more than ever, students look up to their teachers and schools as safe havens to seek answers related to the world and their emotional and social wellbeing. In light of school closures and the subsequent shift to virtual learning, teachers have had to face the challenge of approaching the topic of culture and incorporating culturally relevant texts and passages into their instructional methods without sufficient training.

As demographics change and people migrate to the United States seeking asylum or escaping war-stricken countries, schools and educators are faced with the task of providing instruction and support to students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Evidence from studies indicates that educators strive to build relationships with their students as a means of motivating them to attend classes, whether in-person or virtually. During interviews, educators shared their experiences with professional development programs offered by their schools or districts to support their teaching of English language learners (ELLs).

One participant recalled the GLAD training period, which helped educators understand and navigate cultural differences. Another participant mentioned the ACE training period, which was designed to help English language learners feel more connected and included in the classroom. However, some participants revealed that they had not received sufficient training on teaching students to read in any language, despite the GLAD training they received many years ago. Similarly, a participant who specializes in teaching refugees expressed dissatisfaction with the training provided by the district as

it only provided information on the refugees' living conditions and did not offer guidance on handling day-to-day situations that may have arisen while working with refugees.

According to Bouchrika's (2023) statistics report on American schools in 2019-2020, the expected student population included 23.7 million White students, 13.9 million Hispanic students, 7.7 million Black students, 2.7 million Asian students, 0.5 million American Indian/Alaskan Native students, and 0.2 million Pacific Islander students who attended public schools. However, the national teaching force remained mostly White, with only 21 percent of teachers in the profession being minorities, while more than 50 percent of the student population was made up of minorities.

To provide effective instruction and support to students from diverse backgrounds, it is essential to provide educators with adequate training and professional development programs. By acknowledging cultural differences and making an effort to understand them, teachers can create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students.

Lack of Effective Professional Development

A recurring theme discovered in the data set generated from interviews conducted for this study pertained to the inadequacy of professional development. While the definition of "effective" professional development remains ambiguous, existing research highlights the importance of schools being cognizant of the needs of their teaching staff and of the varying learning levels of their students, especially at the middle and high school level. Proper training is, therefore, imperative to provide quality education.

Within this theme, participants described both effective and ineffective professional development experiences intended to support reading lessons for English speakers of other languages. Additionally, the reviewed literature uncovers a persistent achievement gap among students performing poorly in reading and English-speaking students attending schools in high-poverty areas, where less-qualified teachers are teaching. Furthermore, the percentage of minority teachers working in schools with underachieving student populations continues to drive the achievement gap.

Professional development, as the literature suggests, is frequently targeted towards early interventions and elementary school levels, with little accounting for general education teachers who have English speakers of other language students in their classrooms. These students often perform poorly in reading due to language barriers, newcomers to the United States, and refugees attending middle and high school as their initial formal educational settings.

Research by Darling-Hammond (2020) and Gutierrez and Lopez (2023) supports the notion that investing in teachers and their professional development can enhance their teaching craft, resulting in high levels of student achievement, particularly in high-needs schools. The literature also posits that professional development opportunities that support teachers' growth and are backed by building administrators help retain teachers in the profession. Finally, districts that invest in their teachers and provide high-quality professional development opportunities have happier teachers who are confident in their instructional approach (Kotting, 2021).

Support for Effective Professional Training

According to Greenleaf's research on professional development areas of challenge for researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders interested in increasing student achievement, the lack of reading support is prevalent at the secondary level. While it is known that general education teachers at the secondary level support reading through content-specific instruction, such as in English language arts, social studies, science, or other Advanced Placement courses, the higher number of students per classroom makes it imperative to support teachers with effective professional development, whether targeted in their content area or in reading, which specifically supports ESOL students or newcomers at the secondary level.

As part of this research study, participants were asked which professional development opportunities they perceived could be most effective for supporting English speakers of other languages. Many suggestions were made, such as the use of technology in the classroom specifically for ELL kids, adding subtitles to Zoom and making it available in multiple languages, and using tools for English classrooms.

One participant mentioned that the most beneficial professional development courses they have attended were provided by poverty school districts, such as the Glad training and guided language acquisition development classes. These classes provided invaluable strategies for helping children, including the use of visual aids and real-life examples.

Another participant emphasized the importance of teaching teachers the fundamentals of reading education, which is crucial to promoting comprehension and

providing students with the appropriate resources to help them succeed. Effective communication with students who may not speak English is equally important, especially in middle school, and having the right tools and technology to help us communicate effectively is essential. Although this study was conducted on a small scale with ten participants, it adds to the need for language learning policies to focus on targeted professional development for educators at the middle school and high school level.

Linguistic Diversity

The definition of linguistic diversity is dependent on individual schools and their respective districts, as it pertains to the representation of students within each school's population and/or the district's overall population. Teachers face daily linguistic diversity challenges, particularly in schools where multiple dominant non-English languages are spoken by the majority of attending students. Current data reveals that more than 50% of students attending public schools in the US are culturally and linguistically diverse, while over 46% of schoolteachers are White middle-class females. Since language learning policies are controlled by individual states, funding for professional development varies, and educators face their own unique challenges in public school classrooms every day.

To justify the need for linguistic diversity training, materials, or resources that are culturally and linguistically relevant for students in their classrooms, participants in this study were interviewed and asked whether they had undergone professional development activities that were targeted to support reading instruction for English speakers of other language students, and whether they perceived them to be ineffective. One participant stated, "the fact that there hasn't been any, I can't remember," while another participant

stated, "I can't remember, the fact I cannot remember shows how ineffective it was." The third participant responded by stating that most training revolved around testing, rather than actual reading instruction, and that educators did not receive sufficient training in college, saying "reading to learn needs to be taught instead of teaching how to read." The findings of this study validate that secondary-level teachers face challenges when providing reading instruction to lower-performing English speakers of other language students.

The issue of culture and the texts that students are exposed to in public schools across the United States is a point of contention, not only in the media but also among parent groups, making it even more difficult for middle school and high school teachers to find culturally relevant materials and resources to support reading instruction for English speakers of other language students in the classrooms. This is especially challenging because secondary-level teachers provide content-based instruction in specific subject areas required for high school graduation.

Another participant shared that there have been instances of ineffective support, as some ESOL facilitators failed to engage with their students. This lack of engagement has proven particularly detrimental to new students, such as those hailing from Bosnia or Russia. Bridging content with their native language has been key to their success, indicating that the issue lies with the individuals rather than with ineffective practices. Yet another participant mentioned that they had not received any specific training on how to teach reading and English strategies to students, as a science teacher. They had not received any professional development specific to that area, and the general training was

not very diverse, which made it difficult to broaden the material to make it more accessible to a wider group of people.

Since discussions around English speakers, particularly those who are non-native yet proficient in the language, remain limited, it is imperative that individual states, along with their local educational agencies, work with superintendents across their states to determine appropriate, culturally relevant materials and trainings for educators. This will not only improve their professional development but also support the need for culturally relevant material at all grade levels, particularly middle and high school.

Subtheme 3: Motivational Learning Methodologies

Motivational learning methodologies refer to the willingness of teachers to engage in professional development and reflect on their practices to improve instruction. While not all educators have a growth mindset, they tend to resort to what they are accustomed to and have always done. Fullan (2016) posited that change in behavior precedes a change in feelings about the said behavior. Therefore, for behavior to have sustained transformation, emotions must be linked to them.

Participating in professional development has numerous advantages. When teachers are motivated to seek professional development specific to their subject area or area of expertise, it can lead to increased investment in the training they receive. According to the findings of this study, those who attended training independently outside of what their districts offered implemented their new knowledge into their classroom practices. Therefore, if motivational learning methodologies are key to

improving teaching practices, it is essential that professional development aligns with what teachers are teaching.

Engagement in professional development has been linked to longer tenure in the teaching profession (Professional Educator Standards & Board, 2021). Moreover, Sancar et al. (2020) found that when teachers dedicate time to engage personally in their career growth, they derive more professional satisfaction. As a result, students benefit from their teachers' new learning. For example, a participant shared, "Any instruction I have in that area, I researched on my own, not offered by my school district, I have researched and found strategies, methods, anything I could find for middle school and high school. My motivation is to reach every student; I taught where I had a high population of students that were ESOL, and to serve those students best, finding resources, I am doing differentiation, the activities I use differentiation so I can meet different student groups at the levels they need, pulling a lot of these techniques and resources, I am creating those differentiated lessons."

Several studies have found that teachers' attitudes have a direct impact on student performance (Ryan & Beamish, 2018). In other words, teachers' attitudes are projected onto their students in the classroom (Cardullo et al., 2021). Improving the effectiveness of instruction may have the potential to help close the achievement gap for ESOL students in their classrooms. When teachers are motivated to enhance their instruction, they not only build strong relationships with students but also with their colleagues (Dufour, 2004).

Considering that motivational learning is multi-faceted and comprises various factors, this study's participants found that self-seeking professional development opportunities were critical to their ability to be effective in their classroom instruction and support ESOL students in their classrooms. Furthermore, the findings and statements from the participants of this study revealed that educators who self-sought professional development opportunities were not only motivated but also able to build trusting relationships with colleagues and students (Farrugia, 2021). These trusting relationships are key to sustaining the newly acquired practices in the classroom.

Subtheme 4: Effective Strategies for Language Learning

In the last four decades, there has been a surge of interest in language learning and teaching among scholars. As per Porter's (2019) findings, language learning and teaching methods ought to engage students through sensory input. The study participants, comprising Hispanic, Russian, and Bosnian students in a specific site on the U.S. West Coast, identified feedback provision, interactive communication activities, and maintaining a pleasant classroom atmosphere as effective strategies. The teachers' informal setting and ample opportunities to ask questions also helped students improve their English skills while understanding the presented content.

Porter (2019) further argues that translation-based techniques that do not appeal to the senses are ineffective. In contrast, the study participants highlighted the usefulness of tools such as flashcards and verbalizing signed phrases, which are part of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and Glad strategies, in supporting language

instruction. One of the participants endorsed the significance of such strategies, asserting that they enhance language learning.

Child-Centered Learning

The study on Child-Centered Learning revealed some interesting insights into the role of professional development activities in supporting English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in the classroom. Participants in the study shared their experiences of coordinated participation in these activities, which they found to be beneficial for their students' learning outcomes. Child-Centered Learning is a theory that is similar to Student-Centered Learning in that it seeks to place the teacher and their lesson design as facilitators while the students are at the center of their own learning. This means that the teacher's role is to scaffold the learning process and support students as they learn and apply new concepts.

According to Cullen et al. (2012), this type of learning environment is characterized by active student engagement, with students taking responsibility for their learning and teachers providing guidance and support. This approach has been found to be effective in promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, and other key skills that are essential for success in today's rapidly changing world.

Subtheme 5: Educational Approach to Diversity and Inclusion

It is of utmost importance to acknowledge the fact that more than fifty percent of students attending public schools in the United States are from diverse populations, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education in 2019. As educators, it is not only crucial

to recognize this fact but also implement practices that support diverse educational approaches.

One effective way to support diverse learning is through the implementation of brain-based practices, culturally responsive practices, and decolonizing the curriculum. By doing so, educators can ensure that their teaching methods cater to the unique needs of each student, regardless of their cultural background.

It has been found through various studies that educators are looking for resources that can help them meet the diversity of their student populations. Furthermore, inclusion within educational approaches is key to engaging students in learning when they see themselves represented in the classroom environment and materials. It is, therefore, essential for teachers to equip themselves with the necessary skills and resources to provide this inclusive learning environment, especially at the middle and high school levels, which serve as steppingstones for students entering the real world after high school graduation.

In conclusion, the recognition and implementation of diverse educational approaches are crucial for the success of our students. By providing an inclusive learning environment, we can ensure that each student feels valued and motivated to learn, regardless of their cultural background.

Professional Development Support

The findings of a recent study have shed light on an issue that has been plaguing the education sector for a while now - the need for more professional support for teachers in the classroom. The study shows that teachers require updated practices and training

that support a more diverse range of learners. While it is true that teachers can take it upon themselves to get all the professional development they need, the lack of trust and support from their administration can lead to burnout and ultimately, an exodus from the profession. This, in turn, leads to classrooms being filled with underqualified or inexperienced teachers, which only serves to widen the already growing achievement gap left behind due to the Covid19 pandemic.

It is important to note that teachers are willing and eager to improve their practices and teaching strategies. However, to do so, they need to feel equipped with the right tools and resources to implement these approaches in the classroom while also meeting the needs of a diverse range of learners. This is especially crucial given that students from diverse backgrounds now make up 56 percent of today's student population in public schools in the United States.

At the heart of this issue lies the need for teachers to feel trusted and supported as the professionals that they are. They require the necessary support and decision-making from their administration to be able to do their jobs effectively and provide access to quality education to all students in the classroom. By working together, teachers and administrators can bridge this gap and provide students with the education they deserve.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The present inquiry into professional development for teachers of grades six through twelve and the policies governing language acquisition has identified nine primary themes and five sub-themes that have emerged through the study's data collection. The results of this research are significant and highlight the

interconnectedness between language learning policies and educators at all levels of the

public school system, including elementary, middle, and high schools. As the student

population continues to grow and diversify, it poses a challenge for teachers to provide

effective reading instruction that meets the standards and accountability requirements

necessary for students to succeed in higher education or their careers.

Despite the availability of grants from the United States Department of Education,

which states can apply to and use at their discretion based on individual state initiatives

and reforms, there is still a need to identify gaps in the educational K-12 district and find

ways to improve both the teaching profession and language learning policies. The

teaching profession has been experiencing a shortage, which has been exacerbated by the

COVID-19 pandemic and other factors related to the profession itself. Therefore, it is

imperative that language learning policies continue to be revisited, revised, and

advocated for if we are to close the achievement gap and attract and maintain a strong

teacher workforce for the public school students of the United States.

In light of these findings, this position paper offers two recommendations. Firstly,

it is crucial to continue to examine language learning policies and provide professional

development opportunities that enable teachers to identify and develop their instructional

strengths from a holistic perspective. This approach, as suggested by the literature, may

lead to closing the academic achievement gap for ESOL students and raising high school

graduation rates. Secondly, it is vital to dedicate and invest resources at the federal, state,

and local levels to targeted professional development for educators, especially in light of

the increasing numbers of diverse populations entering the United States seeking refuge

or work. As we continue to be an increasingly globally connected society, it is important

to have a strong teacher workforce that can meet the needs of all learners entering the

school district equitably.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interviewee Name: Interviewee Id: Interview #:	Conducted by:
Date: Location: Interview Modality:	Start time: End Time:

Greetings:

Hello, my name is Esmeralda Valdez. I would like to start off by thanking you for agreeing to participate in my research study. I will be asking you a services of questions regarding your experiences and perceptions with professional development intended to support instruction to English speakers of other languages at the secondary level. This interview will include some predetermined as well as follow-up questions. And the following questions will help me gain a deeper understanding of your experiences and perspectives. Please be open and honest throughout your answers.

The interview will be less than one hour in length. I will be recording you during this interview to help me with the data analysis process and ensure I have accurately captured the responses you provided. I will also be taking notes throughout the interview. The data collected during this interview will be kept fully confidential. Your name and/or identity will not be included in the study, and only will be classified to me. During the interview you do not have to discuss anything you are not comfortable sharing with me and at any point during this interview, you may choose to end the interview. At any point during this

interview, you may ask for clarification regarding a question that may not be clear to you.

Do you have any questions to ask before we start this interview? May we begin this interview?

Opening Questions:
1. How long have you been a teacher? How long have you taught students in grades 6 to 12 who are English speakers of other language?
2. How many ESOL students are currently enrolled in your class?
3. Describe any challenges you face as a secondary teacher with English speakers of other language students in your classroom? Have these challenges been addressed through the professional development provided to you by your school, or school district? 4. Describe the ways in which your participation in professional development offered by your school or school district have aided you to support reading instruction for lower performing in "reading" English speakers of other languages? 5. What professional development opportunities has your school or school district offered to support your teaching of English speakers of other language students?
6. Describe any ineffective professional development you have experienced that was intended to support reading lessons for English speakers of other languages. Can you provide some examples?

7. Which professional development opportunities do you perceive could be

most effective for supporting English speakers of other languages?

Can you provide examples?

8. Describe any experiences you have had with professional development

activities that were targeted to support reading instruction for English

speakers of other languages that you perceive seemed ineffective.

Can you give some examples?

9. Describe any experience you have had with professional development that

is targeted to instruction for English speakers of other language students

outside the classroom? Did you seek and organize those activities on your

own, without the guidance of your school? What motivated your decision to

participate in these specific activities?

10. Describe what experiences from yourself coordinated professional

development did you perceive would help support instruction for English

speakers of other language students? Can you share any examples from the

professional development that supported instruction for English speakers of

other languages?

11. Describe ways in which yourself coordinated participation in professional

development activities supported instruction for English speakers of other

language students in your classroom?

12. Describe what information from your coordinated professional development activities you found helpful and then implemented into your classroom instruction? Did you see a change in English speakers of other language students' reading?

   If so, can you share some examples?

13. Describe what professional development activities you perceive would be beneficial to secondary teachers' instruction that would support English speakers of other language students?

Closing:

Thank you for participating in my research study and by providing feedback regarding the areas of professional development and support for English speakers of other languages. Remember that I will keep all your responses confidential. I would like to schedule a follow up call for next week so that I may review the transcript of this interview as well as the notes I took during today's interview with you after you have had an opportunity to review it on your own. This time during the follow up interview will ensure that I have accurately recorded all your responses. Do I have permission to contact you for a follow up interview next week?

At this time, do you have any questions before we end the interview?

Thank you for our time.

Follow up Interview Questions

Have you had an opportunity to read the summary of the findings for which you

provided responses?

Do you believe any changes should be made prior to interpreting to the findings?

If so, please share the areas that you recommend changes be made?

Opening Questions:

1. How long have you been a teacher?

How long have you taught students in grades 6 to 12 who are English speakers of other

language?

Interview Questions

1. How many ESOL students are currently enrolled in your class?

    a. Describe any challenges you face as a secondary teacher with English speakers of
    b. other language students in your classroom?

  3. Have these challenges been addressed through the professional development provided

    to you by your school, or school district?

  4. Describe the ways in which your participation in professional development offered by

    your school or school district have aided you to support reading instruction for lower

    performing in "reading" English speakers of other languages?

  5.What professional development opportunities has your school or school district offered to

    support your teaching of English speakers of other language students?

  6.Describe any ineffective professional development you have experienced that was

    intended to support reading lessons for English speakers of other languages.

    Can you provide some examples?

7. Which professional development opportunities do you perceive could be most effective for supporting English speakers of other languages?

Can you provide examples?

8. Describe any experiences you have had with professional development activities that were targeted to support reading instruction for English speakers of other languages that you perceive seemed ineffective?

Can you give some examples?

9. Describe any experience you have had with professional development that is targeted to instruction for English speakers of other language students outside the classroom?

   a. Did you seek and organize those activities on your own, without the guidance of your school? What motivated your decision to participate in these specific activities?

10. Describe what experiences from yourself coordinated professional development did you perceive would help support instruction for English speakers of other language students?
    a. Can you share any examples from the professional development that supported instruction for English speakers of other languages?

11. Describe ways in which yourself coordinated participation in professional development activities supported instruction for English speakers of other language students in your classroom?

12. Describe what information from your coordinated professional development activities you found helpful and then implemented into your classroom instruction?

    a. Did you see a change in English speakers of other language students' reading?

    If so, can you share some examples?

13. Describe what information from your coordinated professional development activities you

found helpful and implemented into your classroom instruction.

Did you see a change in English speakers of other language's students' reading?

If so, can you share some examples?