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# Use of Integrated English Language Development to Improve Long-Term English Learner Instruction

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Rosanne Reid

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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MA, University of California, Berkeley, 2003

BA, Westmont College, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

In 2023, California schools served 1.2 million students designated English learners (EL-classified students). Most EL-classified students in grades 6-12 were considered long-term English learners. The problem addressed by this study is that LTEL-considered students have historically had the lowest academic achievement of any student group, despite federal and state mandates for instructional support through designated and integrated English language development (ELD). The purpose of this case study was to explore how content-area teachers at one California high school used components of integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students in learning language, literacy, and content knowledge and how site and district administrators supported this work. The conceptual framework was Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. Data collection included interviews and document analysis. Data analysis incorporated *a priori* and *in vivo* coding for interviews and the use of analytical memos for document analysis. Findings included the need to distinguish LTEL-considered from other EL-classified students; reconsider the efficacy of the integrated/designated ELD model; cultivate academic optimism at sites with a high population of LTEL-considered students; refocus instruction on high-level literacy tasks and productive struggle; and refine the implementation of the Constructing Meaning™ instructional framework and examine its efficacy in various contexts. This study was significant to social change because LTEL-considered students remain among the nation's most academically underserved students, due in part to decades of poor instructional practices, and this work added to the research on LTEL instruction.

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# Dedication

I dedicate this work to my husband and my children. Jeffrey, Lea, Sage, Atticus, Ariana, Deauntea, and ZJ, I love you. Thank you for supporting me on this journey.

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Thank you to my committee chair, Dr. Julie Frese. Your encouragement, prodding, and prompt responses made this experience so much more manageable. You knew exactly when to push and when to give me space to work. Thank you also to my second committee member, Dr. Deborah Focarile, for your consistently thorough and speedy feedback.

I would also like to thank everyone in the participant school district and case study site who contributed to this study. To name you here would breach my promise of confidentiality but know that I am deeply grateful for the contributions you have made to this study and to the field of LTEL education by sharing your expertise.

I am also deeply grateful to my NSTOY19 support crew (particularly Sarahi, Spencer, Laura, Danielle, Stacy, and Shelly), the YV TikTok team (Corissa, Erica, Madison, Taylor), and Sean, who supported me from afar when I was chained to my desk working instead of out having fun with my family. You all gave me the moral support I needed to keep working even when I didn't want to.

Finally, I would like to thank the many LTEL-considered students I have had the pleasure to work with over the years. Your perseverance in the face of systemic barriers remains a persistent source of inspiration for me.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

## Introduction

Students who are considered long-term English learners (LTEL-considered students) are the fastest-growing student group in the United States (Artigliere, 2019; Cashiola et al., 2021) with some of the lowest academic achievement of any student group (Shin, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). LTEL-considered students have a significant and well-documented need for additional educational support and responsive teachers who can meet their unique and diverse needs (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Luna, 2020; Shin, 2020). The ramifications of LTEL designation are vast and often detrimental to students (Cabral, 2022; Flores & Lewis, 2022; Strong & Escamilla, 2022). Students who become LTEL-considered are disproportionately referred to special education, placed in remedial courses, receive failing scores on high-stakes tests, and have lower academic performance, both in terms of grades and standardized test scores (Artigliere, 2019; Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022). LTEL-considered students are more likely to be chronically absent and drop out of school without graduating (Artigliere, 2019; Cashiola et al., 2021; Shin, 2020). They are also half as likely to attend college as students who were English learners (EL-classified students) who reclassified before becoming LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019).

LTEL-considered students are some of the most segregated students in U.S. schools today and often lack access to coursework that teaches grade-level standards (Cabral, 2022; Mendoza, 2019; Nguyen, 2021). Failure to provide adequate instructional support retains LTEL-considered students in EL programs, which correlates with grade

retention, poor academic performance, and low personal expectations for academic success (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Csorvasi & Colby, 2021; Umansky & Porter, 2020).

I have framed this research within the language of an opportunity gap to describe inequities in academic achievement between LTEL-considered students and their peers, displacing the more prevalent terminology of an achievement gap because the term opportunity gap acknowledges that LTEL-considered students' low academic achievement can be attributed to systemic barriers that have prevented them from accessing educational resources and opportunities (Strong & Escamilla, 2022). Strong and Escamilla (2022) described how this opportunity gap prevents many LTEL-considered students from making grade-appropriate progress, being deemed English-proficient, and graduating from high school ready for college and careers. By contextualizing LTEL achievement within the language of an opportunity gap, the onus of failure moves from LTEL-considered students themselves to a failure to provide EL-classified students with the learning experiences necessary to thrive academically (Cabral, 2022; Flores & Lewis, 2022; Shin, 2020). Throughout this paper, I have followed the example of Umansky and Avelar (2022), who used the terms LTEL-considered and EL-classified rather than the deficit-oriented language of LTEL or EL or the more affirming labels of emergent bilinguals or emergent multilingual learners. My rationale for this choice is that LTEL and EL remain the prevailing terms in the field and in state and federal law, and I problematize both their usage and the opportunity gaps that created the need for such terminology.

Current research on LTEL-considered students is nascent but burgeoning (Artigliere, 2019; Shin, 2020); however, additional research is needed on instructional practices that meet their distinct learning needs (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Umanksy & Avelar, 2022). At state and federal levels, EL-classified students are legally entitled to instruction on the ELD reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language standards, both through designated ELD and integrated ELD (Hopkins et al., 2022). Designated ELD teaches ELD standards in a separate setting for students identified as EL-classified students, whereas integrated ELD teaches ELD standards in content-area classes where non-EL-considered students are present using instructional strategies that teach the state-adopted academic content standards (Edelman et al., 2022; Hopkins et al., 2022). Still, state mandates do not specify how either ELD model is to be used, and a variety of contextual factors influence implementation (Hopkins et al., 2022).

Through a qualitative case study, I explored how content-area teachers at one California high school used components of integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students. I also considered how site and district administrators supported teachers in implementing components of integrated ELD in content-area classes. I contextualized this case study within a comprehensive literature review that synthesizes the myriad factors that have shaped the complex ecology of LTEL education. In this introductory chapter, I give a brief overview of the laws governing LTEL-considered students' educational access, the demographics of LTEL-considered students in California, and the use of integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students, which I further explore in the literature review. I then give an overview of the study, including the problem

statement, purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and potential significance of the research.

## Background

The landmark Supreme Court ruling of Lau v. Nichols (1974) increased attention paid to EL-classified students in U.S. public schools, arguing it is discriminatory to provide students with educational resources that they do not have the language skills to understand. Lau also determined that schools and districts must take proactive measures to ensure EL-classified students have access to the full range of educational opportunities afforded to their English-speaking peers. The ruling goes on to argue that schools must work to ensure EL-classified students achieve proficiency in English as quickly as possible and that they do not become so academically deficient while they are learning English that they cannot achieve parity with their native-speaking peers once they have mastered English (Lau v. Nichols, 1974).

The educational opportunities legally afforded to EL-classified students by the Lau decision in 1974 have not yet come to fruition in California, which has the highest population of LTEL-considered students in the nation, both in terms of percentage and overall number (Irwin et al., 2021); it is also home to one-third of the country's districts with the largest populations of EL-classified students (Luna, 2020). LTEL-considered students are a particularly marginalized student group that requires improved instructional attention (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). LTEL-considered students have been enrolled in U.S. public schools for six years

or more and have continued to score below basic or far below basic for at least two years on California's standardized English language arts achievement tests (Luna, 2020).

Currently, in California, 1.2 million (21%) of the total K-12 population are EL-classified students (State of California, n.d.), and 70.4% of these students are LTEL-considered students, with an additional 22.8% designated at-risk of LTEL status (California Department of Education, 2021-2022a). Table 1 lists the most recently reported demographic data for LTEL-considered students in California from 2021-2022 (California Department of Education, 2021-2022a). Notably, trend data over multiple years were not available at the time of this study because data were not reported at the state level in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (California Department of Education, 2021-2022a).

**Table 1**

*California Students Grades 6-12 LTEL Status 2021-2022*

| Enrollment | LTEL-Considered Students | At-Risk of LTEL Status | EL-Classified 4+ Years Not-Risk of LTEL Status | On-Track EL-Classified Students | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Students | 650,659 | 211,055 | 2,160 | 60,314 | 924,188 |
| % EL-classified Students | 70.4% | 22.8% | .2% | 6.5% | 99.99% |

*Note.* This table was created with data taken from the California Department of Education. (2021-2022a).

In California, studies of LTEL achievement are complicated by the fact that state reporting does not publicly report disaggregated data for LTEL-considered students from the general population of EL-classified students regarding academic achievement, language status, chronic absenteeism, and suspensions (State of California, n.d.). Still, with a combined 93.2% of California's EL-classified students considered LTEL-

considered students or at risk of LTEL status (California Department of Education, 2021-2022a), California's achievement and engagement data for EL-classified students broadly reflect the achievement and engagement of California's LTEL-considered students.

A review of the scholarly literature highlights how the educational experiences of EL-classified students are systemically segregated and limited at both state and national levels (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Flores & Lewis, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). California's EL-classified students have some of the lowest achievement on California's Assessment of Student Proficiency and Progress test (CAASPP) of any student group in both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics (math; State of California, n.d.). EL-classified students also show signs of disengagement from school, with 33.6% chronically absent in 2021-2022 and 68% graduating in four years, compared to an 84% 4-year-graduation rate for all California students (State of California, n.d.). A seemingly stark discrepancy, these graduation rates are comparable to national rates (Shin et al., 2022). EL-classified students are also systematically excluded from the rigorous coursework that would prepare them for college, with only 5% of students enrolled in advanced placement classes or taking the SAT being EL-classified (Nguyen, 2021). In a large quantitative study, Biernacki et al. (2023) found that LTEL-considered students were significantly more likely to receive fewer course options in secondary schools, be pushed into remedial math classes, and leave high school without the skills necessary for a 4-year college. Additionally, EL-classified students who do enroll in college are significantly more likely to take remedial college courses, attend a 2-year college, or both (Lee & Soland, 2023).

Without skillful integrated ELD instruction in all classes, language instruction can impede LTEL-considered students' access to content, and an emphasis on content can impede language instruction (Edelman et al., 2022). To promote LTEL-considered students' access to rigorous learning in content-area classes, state law (California A.B. 2193., 2012) and federal guidance (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015) require that EL-classified students take a designated ELD class each year, and that they receive integrated ELD instruction in their content-area classes. For LTEL-considered students to remain engaged in school and develop the skills necessary for college and careers, content-area teachers must use the research-based instructional practices that constitute integrated ELD by synthesizing language acquisition, literacy, and content in their curriculum and instruction (Hopkins et al., 2022; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). However, stagnant and chronically low academic performance data for LTEL-considered students point to a need for additional research on how teachers are leveraging the components of integrated ELD to meet the needs of LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022).

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in understanding and meeting the needs of LTEL-considered students (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). The quickly expanding body of scholarly literature on issues related to the instruction of LTEL-considered students includes research on the following:

- characteristics of LTEL-considered students (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021; Strong & Escamilla, 2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022), including how LTEL-considered students see themselves (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021; Mendoza, 2019;

Uysal, 2022)

- predictive factors of LTEL status (Artigliere, 2019; Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022)
- negative outcomes of being an LTEL-considered student (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022)
- federal policy issues that have shaped instruction for LTEL-considered students (Cabral, 2022; Flores & Lewis, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020)
- evolving ELD identification, progress monitoring, and reclassification policies (Hakuta, 2020; Mendoza, 2019; Nguyen, 2021)
- the co-occurrence of LTEL and special education status (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Sahakyan & Poole, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020)
- California policies that shape instructional practices for EL-classified and LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Hakuta, 2020)
- teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and preparedness for teaching EL-classified and LTEL-considered students (Byfield, 2019; Huerta et al., 2019; Kim, 2021)
- designated and integrated ELD instruction (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Hopkins et al., 2022; Luna, 2020), including instructional practices for accessing prior knowledge (David et al., 2022; Roe, 2019), teaching vocabulary explicitly (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021; Luna, 2020), scaffolding higher-order reading and writing tasks (Brubaker, 2020; Olson et al., 2020; Shin et al., 2022), and fostering cooperative learning (Lee & Stephens, 2020;

Luna, 2020).

Still, many researchers have cited a need for additional research on instruction for LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Luna, 2020), and Umansky and Avelar (2022) recommended additional research on the environmental and contextual factors that shape the experiences of LTEL-considered students.

## Problem Statement

The problem I address in this study is that LTEL-considered students are the fastest-growing student group in the United States with the lowest academic achievement (Shin, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). California schools have increased focus on instruction for LTEL-considered students statewide since 2012 through a requirement for integrated ELD in content-area classes to address gaps in literacy, language skills, and content knowledge (California A.B. 2193., 2012; Hopkins et al., 2022; Luna, 2020). Still, standardized test scores show that achievement for LTEL-considered students in California has not improved (State of California, n.d.). Many recommendations for effective instruction of LTEL-considered students assume that research-based practices for the broader category of EL-classified students will effectively serve LTEL-considered students (Brubaker, 2020; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Porter, 2020). However, the creation of a separate categorization for LTEL-considered students that is distinct from other EL-classified students is predicated upon the belief that LTEL-considered students have unique instructional needs that are distinct from the broader population of EL-classified students (Artigliere, 2019; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; Shin, 2020). Further research is needed on instructional strategies that meet the needs of LTEL-considered

students as a distinct student group (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Thus, the research problem that I address through this study is that little is known about how California high school teachers include components of integrated ELD in their content-area classes to increase LTEL achievement or how site and district administrators support this work. This study is centered on the educational field of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and evaluation because it focuses on classroom instruction.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how content-area teachers at one California high school use components of integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students in developing language, literacy, and content knowledge. I also explored how administrators at the site and district level support the implementation of integrated ELD. This work increases the body of research on preparing LTEL-considered students for academic success in coursework, reclassification from EL programs, graduation from high school, and success in 4-year college and the workforce. Using a qualitative case study design, I used purposeful sampling to select an information-rich case and interview participants (Schoch, 2020). I interviewed teachers about how they use components of integrated ELD in their content-area classes, and I interviewed site and district administrators about how they support teachers in using components of integrated ELD in their content-area classes (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). These data have been triangulated with document analysis to establish patterns and add context to the case description (Schoch, 2020). Data have been coded,

categorized, synthesized, and discussed in a comprehensive case description (Schoch, 2020).

## Research Questions

This study fills a gap in the current literature by providing a detailed description of how content-area teachers at one California high school use components of integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students. Two research questions (RQs) guided this study:

RQ1: How do content-area teachers at one California high school use components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

RQ2: How do site and district administrators support content-area teachers at one California high school in using components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework for the Study

### Theoretical Foundation

The conceptual framework that grounds this study is Vygotsky's (1978) theory of a zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is a theory that learning should match the child's developmental level. Educators must determine two developmental levels: 1) What learners can do independently; and 2) What learners can do in collaboration with others, which Vygotsky believed was a more indicative measure of the learner's mental development than what they can do alone. The ZPD examines functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturing and will mature in the future; it is the "buds and flowers of development, rather than its fruits" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 85). In this way,

Vygotsky (1978) argued that actual development is a retrospective look at learning, whereas the ZPD is a prospective look at learning that includes processes currently in a state of formation.

## Conceptual Framework

Vygotsky's ZPD is an appropriate conceptual framework for studying the use of integrated ELD in content-area classes to support LTEL achievement. The logical connections between the framework and the approach to the study are that Vygotsky believed students can learn independently but will not reach their full potential without the help of a more knowledgeable other. According to Vygotsky, optimal learning occurs when students engage in social interactions with peers or a mentor and access learning tools that are just beyond their current skill levels. Vygotsky also asserted that the ZPD is an integral part of the process of learning a language. As students interact with one another by doing meaningful tasks that are positioned appropriately within their ZPD, they will acquire knowledge and language skills (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD is an appropriate framework for this study because it leads to new implications about how content-area teachers scaffold instruction for LTEL-considered students to facilitate learning through a synthesis of language, literacy, and content knowledge. This conceptual framework is further explored in Chapter 2.

## Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative research approach and a case study design (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). The research approach, design, and methodology align with the problem and purpose statements because they allow for an in-depth understanding of how

teachers use integrated ELD practices in content-area classes to increase LTEL achievement (Schoch, 2020). Schoch (2020) recommended purposeful sampling for case studies to select appropriate cases and participants that will maximize information-rich data. I focused on one California high school with a high population of LTEL-considered students and a self-identified need for improved instruction to meet the needs of LTEL-considered students. Data collection methods included interviews with teachers and site and district administrators coupled with document analysis, which was conducted concurrently (Schoch, 2020). Interviews with content-area teachers explored how they use components of integrated ELD to support LTEL achievement, whereas interviews with administrators focused on how teachers are supported in doing this work (Burkholder et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Document analysis was used to validate, contextualize, and add richness to interview data (Naz et al., 2022). Both data types have been analyzed using first and second-cycle thematic coding, initially with an a priori code definition log, and then through in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016). By applying a top-down and bottom-up multistage analytic process to each data source, I have allowed themes to emerge naturally (Schoch, 2020). Finally, I synthesized themes to determine the significance of the findings, answer the research questions, and write a detailed case description (Schoch, 2020). In this way, I have come to a nuanced understanding of how components of integrated ELD are used in content-area classes at one California high school to support LTEL achievement.

## Definitions

The language surrounding EL designation and support is inherently problematic because it is deficit-based, limiting, and imposed upon EL-classified students without their or their family's consent (Cabral, 2022; Flores & Lewis, 2022; Strong & Escamilla, 2022). Much of the terminology used to describe EL-classified students implies a false heterogeneity of experience, background, and language ability (Cabral, 2022; Shin, 2020). This research follows the trend of problematizing the terminology used to describe EL-classified students because its subtractive orientation fails to create an asset-based mindset for working with EL-classified students (Shin, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). The use of the term *LTEL*, for example, impedes students' ability to develop a positive academic identity (Shin, 2020) and does not reflect "best practices for doing anti-racist work" (Strong & Escamilla, 2022, p. 4). Following the model of Strong and Escamilla (2022), this paper uses the labels identified by federal and state governments for EL-classified students and EL programs to maintain clarity and alignment with educational law and data reports, but like Umansky and Avelar (2022), I modify the term LTEL to LTEL-considered and the term EL to EL-classified, which more accurately reflect the systemic issues underlying the use of these terms.

The following terms are essential for understanding this study because they are integral to the instruction of LTEL-considered students and to the research design:

*Designated ELD*: Language instruction provided for EL-classified students during a designated time for language instruction, typically in a separate setting, to support EL-classified students in reaching English proficiency (Hopkins et al., 2022).

*English learner (EL-classified student)*: A student whose primary language is identified as a language other than English upon school entry (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). This student is classified as *limited English proficient* and placed in specialized programs for EL-classified students to receive academic and language support until they reach language proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). An EL-classified student can be reclassified as *fluent English proficient* when their academic achievement and performance on a standardized English-language assessment reflects proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Following the model of Umansky and Avelar (2022), I use the term EL-classified student rather than the more familiar language of EL or ELL to humanize the individuals who have received this formal designation based on their language status.

*English language development (ELD)*: This term can be used to identify a program, class, or curriculum designed to support EL-classified students in developing English proficiency (California Department of Education, 2012).

*Integrated ELD*: Language instruction provided within content-area classes in conjunction with grade-level content standards (Hopkins et al., 2022).

*Limited English proficiency (LEP)*: The designation used in federal and state progress monitoring and reporting to identify EL-classified students (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). It is rarely used in the field because it is widely seen as demeaning and deficit-based (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

*Long-term English learner (LTEL-considered student)*: Although federal and state laws require that LTEL-considered students be tracked and monitored, there is no

universal definition for what constitutes an LTEL, and identification of LTEL-considered students remains inconsistent across the nation and state (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Shin, 2020). In this study, I use the participant site's criteria for an LTEL-considered student, which is an EL-classified student who has been in U.S. public schools for more than 5 years, is in middle or high school, and has scored basic or below basic for two or more consecutive years on standardized tests (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Luna, 2020; Shin et al., 2022). Additionally, because there is no standardized designation for LTEL-considered students as there is for EL-classified students, I use the term LTEL-considered rather than LTEL-classified to reflect the relative arbitrariness of the term (Umansky & Avelar, 2022).

*Newcomer EL-considered student*: Student with LEP who has recently immigrated to the U.S. (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

*Reclassification*: The process of exiting EL-classified students from EL programs through their demonstration of proficiency on standardized assessments in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English, in addition to meeting state and district criteria for reclassification (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

## Assumptions

The ontological assumptions that frame this study are that knowledge is determined by perspective and contextual circumstances, and the epistemological assumptions are that knowledge is best derived from personal experience and testimony (Burkholder et al., 2020). As a relativist-constructivist, I believe that each person's experiences shape their perceptions, and there is no one objective truth (Burkholder et al.,

2020). Additionally, my worldview matches that of the critical realist in that my goal as a researcher is the emancipation of the LTEL-considered student population from the systemic barriers they face in U.S. public schools (Burkholder et al., 2020).

As such, this study lives within the qualitative research tradition, which relies upon a naturalistic or a social constructivist approach and honors a constructivist view of how people make meaning, both as individuals and collaboratively, by considering their personal and collective interpretations of stimuli (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In this study, I used multiple interviews focused on research questions about a phenomenon, and I synthesized the various perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of the phenomenon to draw conclusions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The use of a qualitative research approach and a case study design is appropriate to the research methodology because the research questions seek to understand how a phenomenon functions within a particular context. As a qualitative researcher, I assume the value of this research will not be determined by its generalizability or validity but by its depth and insight (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Regarding assumptions about the elements of the research design, I assumed that some teachers at a school with a high population of LTEL-considered students and a schoolwide focus on LTEL achievement will be using some components of integrated ELD within their instructional repertoire. I also assumed that because site and district plans identify the need to focus on LTEL instruction, administrators at the site and district levels are working to support teachers in improving LTEL instruction. Additionally, I assumed that participants would be honest in their responses to interviews. Furthermore, because state and federal law require the use of designated and integrated

ELD, I assumed there would be some documents reporting efforts to implement components of integrated ELD, such as lesson plans, curricula, meeting minutes, professional development agendas, or site plans. Finally, I assumed there would be some consistency in the data and some diversity. These assumptions were necessary and appropriate for conducting a qualitative case study.

## Scope and Delimitations

Burkholder et al. (2020) described the scope of a study as the parameters or boundaries of what will not be researched and the delimitations as the choices a researcher makes about who and what to include in a study. The scope of this case study was one purposefully selected California high school site with a high population of LTEL-considered students and a self-identified need for improved instruction to meet the needs of LTEL-considered students (Schoch, 2020). The study's participants were the content-area teachers and site administrators at the partner site. Document analysis included such items as curricula and lesson plans, institutional policies, professional development agendas, site plans, meeting agendas and minutes, and districtwide plans and reports (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

## Limitations

The primary limitations of case study research are that it can neither determine causation nor is it generalizable (Schoch, 2020). Another limitation is that I relied on teachers and administrators to self-report practices at their site, and due to prohibitive district policy, I could not conduct classroom observations to verify the accuracy of their statements. Additional limitations pertaining to dependability are the potential for

researcher bias and participants' propensity to withhold information that seems either obvious or undesirable (Burkholder et al., 2020). I further elaborate upon my biases as a researcher in Chapter 3, in addition to detailing measures that I took to address these biases. Another potential limitation of any qualitative research is the elevated risk of researcher bias, which I addressed using a reflexive journal, member checking, and peer debriefing (Burkholder et al., 2020).

## Significance

This case study is significant because LTEL-considered students continue to lack access to educational resources and opportunities, despite federal and state mandates for academic support. By conducting a qualitative case study to explore how content-area teachers at one California high school use components of integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students, I have contributed to the gap in research on current instructional practices for LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). This exploratory research also has the potential to affect positive social change by laying a foundation for future research on effective LTEL instruction and could be used by educational leaders in similar contexts to influence policy and program implementation decisions (Schoch, 2020). In this way, this study has limited transferability because readers can determine if their context is similar enough to predict a similar phenomenon in their context (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018; Nowell et al., 2017).

EL-classified students become LTEL-considered in a variety of contexts, not because of their inherent qualities but due to a systemic failure to adequately prepare

them for grade-level coursework within six years (Edelman et al., 2022; Shin, 2020; Strong & Escamilla, 2022). By studying instructional practices used to support LTEL-considered students, I am helping to rectify this inequity and giving LTEL-considered students access to a full range of educational opportunities guaranteed to them by law.

## Summary

LTEL-considered students remain some of the most academically underserved students in the U.S. and in California, as shown by academic achievement and engagement data (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; State of California, n.d.). The field of research pertaining to LTEL-considered students is relatively new (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022), and little is known about how California high school teachers include components of integrated ELD in their content-area classes to increase LTEL achievement, or how site and district administrators support this work. Although there is abundant research surrounding instructional practices that are effective in raising the achievement of the broader category of EL-classified students, this research rarely focuses on the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students, who have several common characteristics that make them unique from other EL-classified students (Artigliere, 2019; Strong & Escamilla, 2022). Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD serves as a conceptual framework for this study because it describes prospective learning through scaffolded instruction that synthesizes language, literacy, and content knowledge. My research plan used a case study methodology and qualitative research tools, including both interviews with teachers and site and district administrators, and document analysis. This work has the potential to contribute to the

growing body of knowledge on LTEL instruction by providing a thick description of the instructional decision-making of teachers and the administrative supports in place to assist integrated ELD implementation. The next chapter gives a report on recent scholarly literature surrounding LTEL instruction to provide a thorough context for this case study.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## Introduction

The problem that I address in this study is that LTEL-considered students are the fastest-growing student group in the United States with some of the lowest academic achievement (Shin, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). This chapter begins by outlining my literature search strategy and provides a more detailed discussion of the conceptual framework and its theoretical foundations. Because this study uses a case study research design to explore instructional decisions within their natural context, this literature review serves as a comprehensive examination of the complex policy issues that have shaped the current instructional landscape for LTEL-considered students across the nation and state.

I also explain what is known about the characteristics of LTEL-considered students, including how they see themselves, predictive factors for LTEL status, and the adverse outcomes of LTEL status. A summary of national and state policy issues that have shaped LTEL instruction follows. Next, I describe evolving policies for identification, assessment, progress monitoring, and reclassification, including those pertaining to co-enrollment in EL and special education programs. I then summarize California's policies that have impacted the instruction of LTEL-considered students. An examination of research on teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and preparedness for teaching EL-classified and LTEL-considered students follows. Next, I discuss the limited body of research on integrated ELD. Finally, I examine the prevailing methodologies for research on LTEL education, including a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each, and make an argument for the appropriateness of a case study methodology for this study.

## Literature Search Strategy

This literature review began with an extensive search of the Walden Library using such search engines as EBSCOhost, ERIC, and SAGE Journals with the following keywords: *English learner, English language learner, ELL, long-term English learner, long-term English language learner, LTEL, academic achievement, learning, instructional strategies, instruction, pedagogy, teaching, designated English language development, integrated English language development, high school,* and *secondary.* Results were limited to peer-reviewed, scholarly articles from 2019-2023 and delimited to include full-text articles. When I found a relevant article, I looked for other research by the same author or mined the journal of publication for related studies. I also reviewed the reference lists of recent, salient research, which often led to more research relevant to the instruction of LTEL-considered students.

My initial findings were rich but limited in quantity because although research on LTEL-considered students is a quickly expanding field, it is still in its infancy (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). I then broadened my scope to consider articles about the broader population of EL-classified students. These results often discussed LTEL-considered students, although the phrases *long-term English learner, LTEL, long-term English language learner,* and *LTELL* were not used in the title or keywords. As I researched, I became immersed in the politics of language surrounding the education of LTEL-considered students. Many researchers have objected to using deficit-based language for EL-classified and LTEL-considered students and argue that both labels imply a deficiency on the part of the student (Cabral, 2022; Flores & Lewis,

2022; Strong & Escamilla, 2022); so, I also searched for more culturally responsive and affirming terms, such as *emergent bilingual*, *long-term emergent bilingual*, *emergent multilingual*, and *long-term emergent multilingual*. To ensure the literature search was comprehensive, I met with a Walden Librarian and conducted a review of Google Scholar search results. This multifaceted approach to searching for recent, relevant research allowed me to find and review a wide variety of research and perspectives on the current state of LTEL instruction.

## Conceptual Framework

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of a zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the conceptual framework that grounds this study. Two important theoretical propositions from the ZPD are the interrelated processes of social constructivism and internalization, which function in tandem to take learning from an individual internal process to a social external one and finally back to an individual internal one. Learning is the internal reconstruction of language to represent external operations for concepts and skills, so it requires social interaction and imitation for learners to absorb the intellectual life of those around them (Vygotsky, 1978). The process begins internally when an individual has thought in response to a stimulus but becomes external through interpersonal interaction surrounding that stimulus, a process known as social constructivism. When learners are presented with the same stimulus, they can collaborate to create a mental map of the language, skills, or concepts associated with that stimulus (Vygotsky, 1978). The internalization process completes the cycle when the individual can absorb and reproduce the map independently (Vygotsky, 1978). In essence, thought precipitates social

experience and verbalization, which becomes a blueprint for future thoughts and behavior.

Vygotsky's (1978) conception of the interrelationship between social constructivism and internalization correlates with the scholarly literature on LTEL-considered students, which confirms the need for LTEL-considered students to have opportunities for collaboration to develop language fluency, improve literacy, and increase content knowledge (Artigliere, 2019; Lee & Stephens, 2020; Luna, 2020). Vygotsky claimed that "just as mold gives shape to substance, words can shape an activity into structure" (1978, p. 28). The ZPD thus aligns with an integrated ELD instructional approach because an underlying assumption of both conceptual frameworks is that the most significant development of practical and abstract thought and speech occurs when tasks necessitate speech (Vygotsky, 1978). The more rigorous the task, the more speech will be required; so, when a problem is slightly too challenging, learners will use tools and speech to enlist assistance or collaborate on solutions (Vygotsky, 1978). Educators can stimulate language production by complicating tasks to allow learners to problem-solve collaboratively.

Learners thus develop the ability to engage in complex operations over time through thoughtfully planned interactions with one another surrounding content. Stimuli (i.e., learning tasks) must be mediated by a more knowledgeable other, such as a peer or teacher, and the learner must be actively engaged with the stimulus and the mediator (Vygotsky, 1978). The teacher is responsible for creating meaningful links between lessons and contextualizing learning objectives because when meaningless facts, skills,

figures, or concepts are presented, learners don't remember them (Vygotsky, 1978). Often, these mediating links are created through writing, which Vygotsky believed was simultaneously an organizing tool for speech production and a representation of speech and learning. Notably, some learning disabilities can make the creation of a mediating link more difficult, and the use of tools such as writing can become a slower, more challenging process (Vygotsky, 1978). This is relevant to research on LTEL-considered students because of the strong correlation between special education and LTEL status (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Rhinehart et al., 2022; Sahakyan & Poole, 2022).

Vygotsky's ZPD has been transformative for the field of language learning. Krashen (1981) built upon the ZPD with his second language acquisition theory, which holds that students will learn a language when provided with comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current capabilities, which he called the *i+1*. Like Vygotsky, Krashen believed teachers should focus on providing students with opportunities for directed social interaction for real-world purposes. In 1984, Bruner built upon the ZPD to develop his conception of learning through scaffolding, a teaching method that is still ubiquitous in education today, particularly in language development (Graneist & Habermas, 2019). According to Bruner, scaffolding is the process of sequencing instruction through activities with ingrained supports to help students access elements of learning that are currently beyond their grasp, but as students become increasingly skilled, the teacher must remove those supports to allow the student to work independently (Graneist & Habermas, 2019). Like Vygotsky, Bruner believed that instruction through social interaction in the present moment leads to independent skills

and knowledge in the future, but Bruner added the term scaffolding to the theory of the ZPD to represent the necessary supports learners need to build the mental models that will allow for independent learning (Graneist & Habermas, 2019). Vygotsky's ZPD is thus a seminal theory in the fields of language learning and language research and is an appropriate conceptual framework to ground this study. The following section describes what is currently known about LTEL-considered students from scholarly research and government statistics.

## Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

### Key Issues Surrounding LTEL Instruction

#### *Characteristics of LTEL-Considered Students*

LTEL-considered students are a diverse student group regarding race, gender, class, culture, language, and educational background (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2021; Umansky & Porter, 2020). Strong and Escamilla (2022) and Shin (2020) argued that LTEL-considered students have unique characteristics that distinguish them from other EL-classified students and should not be falsely homogenized with the larger population of EL-classified students. Because they must be enrolled in school for six years or more, no elementary student is considered an LTEL-considered (Shin, 2020), and data reporting for LTEL-considered students begins in sixth grade (California Department of Education, 2021-2022a; Cashiola et al., 2021). This section includes some common characteristics of students who fall under the umbrella of LTEL-considered students and some common trends in their academic performance, with the understanding that not all LTEL-considered students fit this profile.

Some well-documented strengths of EL-classified students and LTEL-considered students are resilience, collaboration, optimism, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and strong family and community connections (Umansky & Porter, 2020). LTEL-considered students also typically have no discernable accent and strong oral English skills (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021; Rhinehart et al., 2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). According to Artigliere (2019), LTEL-considered students tend to be confident, self-motivated, able to self-advocate, and active learners. Although their teachers often do not see them as motivated, most LTEL-considered students report high aspirations (Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Shin (2020) concurred that many LTEL-considered students report ambitious goals but do not understand how to get from their current academic status to where they want to be. LTEL-considered students tend to be emergent bilinguals on the cusp of true bilingualism (Mendoza, 2019), frequently co-switching between L1 and L2 depending on the context, which can be an asset for them in terms of flexibility and adaptability (Artigliere, 2019; Shin, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Other common assets of LTEL-considered students are metalinguistic awareness, translanguaging, bicultural savviness, and content knowledge (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021). Many LTEL-considered students claim a strong sense of bicultural and bilingual identity, strong connections to family and community, and parents who are deeply engaged in their children's education (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021).

Many LTEL-considered students report frustrations with their LTEL status. Some object to the LTEL label, seeing it as offensive, and others are confused by how they are LTEL-considered students because most were born in the U.S. and speak English fluently

(Uysal, 2022). Lee and Soland (2023) reported that EL-classified students report feeling a stigma associated with their language proficiency status, and this stigma increases the longer they are EL-classified. Mendoza (2019) reported that some LTEL-considered students feel marginalized and disempowered in secondary school because they are habitually excluded from Career Technical Education pathways and other college preparatory electives due to conflicts with designated ELD classes. Some report feeling frustrated by placement in designated ELD classes with newcomer EL-classified students (Uysal, 2022). Others describe feeling discouragement at not being able to pass high-stakes tests and not knowing the graduation and college preparatory course requirements (Mendoza, 2019). Nguyen (2021) reported that EL-classified students describe frustration at their perceived academic and linguistic barriers to college, such as not knowing how to write essays.

Cabral (2022) took an intersectional look at stigmas surrounding EL and LTEL labels and argued, “The stigmatization of being rendered an EL, LTEL, or student in special education are deeply intertwined with logics of segregation and exclusion, along with the interpellated ideological bundle of race, language, and disability in schools” (p. 12). Lee and Soland (2023) conjectured that this stigma of being an EL is a critical factor in academic performance. Umansky and Avelar (2022) argued that the LTEL label further marginalizes already marginalized students because, particularly in secondary schools, these students are generally physically removed from the presence of their English-proficient peers, are placed in designated support classes and describe feeling

castigated by a label that showcases both their lack of proficiency and their ability to achieve proficiency quickly enough.

As LTEL-considered students go through school, they often become academically disillusioned due to frustration at their chronic underperformance and can present to their teachers as unmotivated and disinterested in school (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021). Clark-Gareca et al. (2019) emphasized the detrimental effects of annual ELP assessments on the psychological state of LTEL-considered students, saying, "For LTEL-considered students, taking and 'failing' a proficiency test every year inevitably takes a toll on their academic engagement" (p. 7). Shin (2020) concurred that many LTEL-considered students gradually become more academically disengaged and disconnected and reportedly feel more negatively about school and the level of academic support they receive. Still, many LTEL-considered students continue to see themselves as motivated and optimistic learners in the face of these challenges, believing they will overcome the educational barriers they face (Artigliere, 2019). Both Artigliere (2019) and Mendoza (2019) noted that many LTEL-considered students tend to perceive themselves as successful in school, despite empirical evidence of poor academic performance.

### *Predictive Characteristics of LTEL Status*

Many key differences exist between the demographics of LTEL-considered students and the broader category of EL-classified students. Although LTEL-considered students have attended U.S. schools for more than five years – often their entire academic careers – they tend to struggle in school, perform more poorly on standardized tests, and have stalled in their English language acquisition (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Shin et al.,

2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). LTEL-considered students are also more likely to share the following traits:

- be Latinx and come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Cashiola et al., 2021; Umansky & Avelar, 2022).
- be born in the United States and enter school as kindergarteners (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Shin, 2020; Siordia & Kim, 2022).
- be male (Cashiola et al., 2021; Rhinehart et al., 2022; Shin, 2020).
- have moved several times throughout their schooling, leading to inconsistent educational programming (Cashiola et al., 2021; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2022).
- have experienced substandard ELD services and programming (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2021).
- have started school in the U.S. in kindergarten than on-track EL-classified students, who are more likely to have entered U.S. schools in grades 1-3 and whose parents are more likely to be more recent immigrants (Sahakyan & Poole, 2022).
- have a higher rate of absenteeism (Cashiola et al., 2021), with the number of days absent in the first grade being a significant predictor of LTEL status (Shin, 2020).
- underperform academically with an average grade of 69.2% (i.e., a D+ average) throughout their schooling (Artigliere, 2019).
- score at lower levels on reading assessments than their peers throughout their

years of schooling (Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020).

- Cashiola et al. (2021) added that the most decisive risk factors for becoming an LTEL-considered student were grade retention and special education status at any point in elementary school, while the most decisive protective factor was entering first grade with a higher reading level.

Although a student's elementary reading level is a key predictive factor for LTEL status, this correlation is highly contextual and nuanced. LTEL-considered students tend to underperform recent immigrants with a high amount of previous schooling on reading assessments, even though LTEL-considered students have had more exposure to English and English instruction (Shin, 2020). Additionally, in a major longitudinal quantitative study of more than 7,000 LTEL-considered students entering sixth grade, Shin found that how LTEL-considered students performed in first grade was not always indicative of future LTEL status. Although the majority of LTEL-considered students scored lower on initial assessments than on-track EL-classified students, some scored comparably, and Shin argued that this could be due to insufficient EL programming, inappropriate reclassification criteria, or some combination of both factors. It is also noteworthy that in elementary years, initial English proficiency assessments for EL-classified students proved more challenging than general state standardized proficiency tests that were designed for all students, which could indicate that ELP assessments are unduly rigorous and EL-classified students are being held to a higher standard than non-EL-classified students (Shin, 2020). Clark-Gareca et al. (2019) reported that ELP assessments test content standards in addition to English language skills, making them doubly challenging

for EL-classified students who have often been kept from mainstream classes where they would be more likely to learn grade-level content standards. Likewise, Rhinehart et al. (2022) reported that students who reclassified from EL programs tended to fare at least as well post-reclassification, if not better, than students who were never EL-classified students, so the bar for reclassification may be unduly high.

Another salient characteristic of LTEL-considered students is that although they are considered *LEP*, English is typically their dominant language (Shin, 2020). Artigliere (2019) reported that LTEL-considered students are an average of 3.5 years below grade level in Spanish and three years below grade level in English. A critical difference between LTEL-considered students and on-track EL-classified students is that a majority of LTEL-considered students have limited skills in their heritage languages (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Csorvasi & Colby, 2021), and many are more comfortable communicating in English (Umansky & Avelar, 2022). As such, one of the most effective research-based interventions for LTEL-considered students is bilingual education, with the second highest protective factor for LTEL status being enrollment in a bilingual program for the duration of elementary school (Cashiola et al., 2021). Siordia and Kim (2022) added that despite generally strong oral bilingualism, Latinx students are underrepresented in dual language and State Seal of Biliteracy programs, are not praised for their bilingualism in the way that White students are and are generally under-supported in developing their heritage languages. The language skills of LTEL-considered students are often perceived as language deficiencies when they would be seen as budding multilingualism in non-EL-classified students (Flores & Lewis, 2022).

### *Negative Outcomes of LTEL Status*

The adverse academic outcomes surrounding LTEL status are well-documented. EL-classified students are more likely to experience inconsistent, low-quality, or limited access to academic content (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2021; Strong & Escamilla, 2022), leaving them with lower academic language and literacy skills (Artigliere, 2019; Cashiola et al., 2021) and lower academic achievement. Most LTEL-considered students have low reading and writing scores on ELP assessments beginning in elementary school, a trend that often continues throughout their schooling (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022), and many never surpass an overall intermediate English proficiency level (Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022). Because literacy achievement is more tied to instruction than is oral proficiency, Rhinehart et al. (2022) argued that consistently low reading scores are likely due to inadequate literacy instruction in the elementary years. Because LTEL-considered students do not often get the support they need to participate in the grade-level reading and writing activities that are necessary to be successful in school, they tend to have poor grades, low personal expectations, disengagement with school, elevated risk of dropping out, and low college attendance rates (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Strong & Escamilla, 2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Lee and Soland (2023) reported that in California, coursework for students designated EL-classified students tends to be less rigorous than coursework for non-EL-classified students, and upon reclassification, rigor increases. LTEL-considered students thus lack both rigorous coursework and access to the appropriate instructional strategies that would meet their needs, rendering them doubly impeded from the educational

opportunities that would allow them to progress academically (Umansky & Porter, 2020).

Ample research has confirmed that due to lower teacher expectations, EL-classified students have diminished learning opportunities before reclassification (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Strong & Escamilla, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). There is abundant evidence in the literature of a "rigor gap" between EL and non-EL instruction that is predicated upon a "watered down" curriculum that diminishes academic performance, and this inferior curriculum leads to more non-rigorous instruction in the future (Murphy & Torff, 2019, p. 91). Teachers who teach a high population of EL-classified students cover 20% less content (Nguyen, 2021). Without rigorous academic experiences, LTEL-considered students do not engage in the productive struggle, or the mental struggle necessary to progress academically and linguistically, which would allow them to reclassify from EL programs. Although the term *productive struggle* was first applied to mathematics, it is appropriate in a discussion of rigor for LTEL-considered students because the concept has been defined as the need for students to persevere in learning to figure out something that is not immediately apparent (Warshauer, 2014). Currently, there is a lack of opportunity in content-area classes with a high population of LTEL-considered students to engage in productive struggle, as these classes are often taught using instructional strategies not designed for LTEL-considered students (Hopkins et al., 2022; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022).

### *Policy Issues Surrounding LTEL Achievement*

The history of LTEL instruction is marked by a series of events that has yielded a dichotomous understanding of language learners as proficient or deficient in English

(Cabral, 2022; Flores & Lewis, 2022). Law and policy decisions that affect LTEL instruction trace to *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which prohibited separate but equal schooling experiences for racial minorities and led to the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964, the *Bilingual Education Act of 1968*, the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act* 1974, and *Lau v. Nichols* of 1974, which prohibited students from being given instructional materials they did not understand (Hakuta, 2020; Harklau & Ford, 2022).

Although well-intentioned, the shifts in the world of language learning post-*Lau* shaped the current view of EL-classified students as deficient and needing remediation (Flores & Lewis, 2022; Nguyen, 2021; Rhinehart et al., 2022). Cabral (2022) summarized the bases for contemporary language policy as "monoglossic language ideologies that hegemonically position some varieties of the English language as the primary modes of communication that students are expected to use in their daily activities" (p. 4). Indeed, the foundations of EL education have rested on the inherent belief in *verbal deprivation theory* (Flores & Lewis, 2022), which posits that EL-classified students do not hear sufficient English at home, so their verbal deficiencies must be remedied at school through mandated support classes and frequent progress monitoring (Cabral, 2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). It is noteworthy that parents' native language use in the home has been shown to have little effect on English language development by the time students enter eighth grade (Ju et al., 2023). Regardless, the goal of EL instruction has effectively been to fix EL-classified students' deficient English rather than to bolster bilingualism and teach the 21st-century skills necessary for college, careers, and life (Mendoza, 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020).

The post-*Lau* shift in thinking about EL education as a system of haves and have-nots regarding English proficiency led to schools administering home language surveys and standardized assessments to determine EL classification upon enrollment (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Shin, 2020). This classification system has remained in place in California since the 1970s and reinforces traditional language hierarchies (Flores & Lewis, 2022; Uysal, 2022). Since *Lau*, when students enter school, they are given a survey to determine if only English is spoken at home, in which case the student is assumed to be English proficient (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Hakuta, 2020; Siordia & Kim, 2022). Conversely, if a language other than English is spoken at home, the student is required to take a test to ensure their English proficiency (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Hakuta, 2020; Siordia & Kim, 2022). Students who are deemed proficient by these initial assessments are labeled as fluent English proficient (FEP); those who do not reach the proficiency benchmark receive the designation of *limited English proficient* (LEP) (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Students designated LEP are then placed in EL programs and can exit those programs only after demonstrating proficiency in English on an annual English language proficiency (ELP) assessment and a battery of reclassification criteria that vary from state to state and district to district (Hakuta, 2020; Siordia & Kim, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). Rhinehart et al. (2022) reported that an analysis of reclassification criteria in a sample of California schools found that some districts included math assessment scores and 16% included discipline records, neither of which are direct representations of English proficiency.

Many states, including California, incorporate academic achievement components to determine EL-classified students' capacity to do well in mainstream courses (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Lee & Stephens, 2020). This approach precludes the reality that many students receive poor or failing grades for reasons other than language proficiency (Flores & Lewis, 2022). Although federal law allows states to add additional criteria to ELP assessments, states must include ELP assessments in reclassification criteria (Bond, 2020). Rhinehart et al. (2022) problematized this policy by explaining that in some schools, most monolingual non-EL-classified students would not meet the reclassification criteria for EL programs. The inequities surrounding EL classification and reclassification policies have been noted by many scholars (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). EL-classified students who do not pass an English assessment upon school entry are labeled LEP without their or their family's consent, are required to take annual ELP assessments, and are enrolled in EL programs that they cannot reclassify from until they reach designated proficiency levels (Nguyen, 2021; Strong & Escamilla, 2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Conversely, students who are not proficient in English but speak only English at home have no such requirements (Artigliere, 2019; Flores & Lewis, 2022; Nguyen, 2021).

### *Identification, Progress Monitoring, and Reclassification*

Standardized testing has long been the focal point of improving the achievement of EL-Classified and LTEL-considered students. This approach dates to the *Castañeda v. Pickard* decision of 1981 that called for educators to increase EL-classified students' access to grade-level content through frequent evaluation of EL-classified students and

EL programs (Hakuta, 2020; Nguyen, 2021; Umansky & Porter, 2020). EL testing intensified with the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001, which sought to shrink achievement gaps between student groups through common content standards, frequent standardized assessments, and intensified progress monitoring, with added punitive measures for schools that failed to meet goals for improved achievement (Hakuta, 2020). The subsequent adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010 required all students to use language and reasoning to explain their learning on standardized tests, making these tests even more challenging for EL-classified students and EL achievement plummeted (Hakuta, 2020; Harklau & Ford, 2022; Uysal, 2022). The CCSS also added obligatory ELP assessments for all EL-classified students to annual state assessments for all students (Artigliere, 2019; Hakuta, 2020).

Two years later, California Assembly Bill 2193 institutionalized the use of the *LTEL* label at the state level, three years before the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) did the same at the federal level (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021; Luna, 2020). This law required frequent assessment of EL-classified students and mandated disaggregated progress monitoring for both LTEL-considered students and students at risk of LTEL status (California A.B. 2193, 2012; Csorvasi & Colby, 2021; Luna, 2020), which has led to steadily increasing numbers of LTEL-considered students statewide (Flores & Lewis, 2022). As was already the case in California, the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) added the requirement of federal monitoring and reporting on the progress of EL subgroups, including recent arrivals to the U.S. (i.e., newcomer EL-considered students), EL-classified students with special education status, and LTEL-considered students.

Thus, because of an ever-evolving series of federal and state mandates for frequent progress monitoring, the historical focus of the education of LTEL-considered students has been on frequent assessment rather than on rigorous instruction to prepare students for a place in a 21st-century future (Artigliere, 2019; Hakuta, 2020; Nguyen, 2021).

The intense focus on testing to ensure that EL-classified students have mastered English upon graduation has often precluded their enrollment in college and career preparatory pathways (Mendoza, 2019; Nguyen, 2021; Shin, 2020). Additionally, preparation for high-stakes testing has been shown to diminish the quality of instruction (Umansky & Avelar, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). David et al. (2022) found that teachers attempting to implement translanguaging practices in the classroom felt constrained by accountability measures for assessment and progress monitoring. EL-classified and LTEL-considered students need direct language instruction and access to rigorous content in all classes to score well enough on standardized assessments to reclassify (Luna, 2020; Rhinehart et al., 2022; Shin, 2020). This cycle has been deemed "linguistic confinement" and "carcerality" by Cabral (2022, p. 1), "consistent subtractive schooling" by Artigliere (2019, p. 10) and Shin (2020, p. 184), "structural othering" by Hakuta (2020), and a "coal mine" in which EL-classified students have been "canaried" by Umansky and Avelar (2022, p. 1). Indeed, LTEL status is a quagmire that LTEL-considered students often struggle to free themselves from.

Thus is the conundrum facing educators: LTEL-considered students are legally entitled to additional instructional support and progress monitoring (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015), which necessitates identifying and labeling them (Cashiola et al.,

2021; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Shin, 2020). However, the label and the remediation efforts that accompany that label often have damaging effects on the engagement and academic achievement of LTEL-considered students (Cabral, 2022; Sahakyan & Poole, 2022; Shin, 2020). Lee and Soland (2023) found that protracted EL status also had a deleterious effect on academic self-efficacy, which improved by .2 standard deviations upon reclassification, indicating that school districts have great power to impact students' attitudes toward themselves and their schoolwork through the reclassification criteria they set. Further problematizing the LTEL label, Strong and Escamilla (2022) argued it is an erroneous and fabricated construct when they found that EL classification rates were one standard deviation lower in metropolitan regions than in rural areas across 87 districts in Colorado; however, geographic region does not determine student aptitude, learning, or character (Strong & Escamilla, 2022). Lee and Stephens (2020) added that the inconsistency of EL classification and reclassification criteria from state to state and district to district suggests that EL and LTEL status are merely social constructs.

Still, the LTEL label is a social construct that carries much import. The stigmatization of EL-classified students for failing to reclassify within five years is countered by ample research that suggests it can take seven years or more to reach proficiency in English (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2021). Shin (2020) stated that the length of time to proficiency ranges from 4-10 years, which aligns with Artigliere's (2019) report that 75% of EL-classified students remain EL-classified after five years. Artigliere added that after ten years of schooling, LTEL-considered students have only a 40% chance of ever reclassifying, indicating that the academic benefits of exiting EL

programs at some point begin to surpass the potential disadvantages of protracted LTEL status (Artigliere, 2019). Additionally, significant discrepancies have been found in who gets reclassified, with one major longitudinal study reporting that non-Spanish-speaking EL-classified students are reclassified at nearly twice the rate of Spanish-speaking EL-classified students (Siordia & Kim, 2022). Uysal (2022) argued that Spanish-speaking Latinx EL-classified students suffer from triple segregation into "ESL ghettos" (para. 2) because of their ethnicity, poverty, and language. These students are disproportionately placed in low-track educational pathways via their EL classification, which violates the *Brown v. Board*, *Lau*, and *Castañeda* decisions that prohibited the segregation of EL-classified students (Uysal, 2022).

The racial disproportionality of EL status cannot be ignored. California's EL-classified students are overwhelmingly Spanish-speaking (82%), with the next most frequent language being Vietnamese at 2.12% (23,927) (California Department of Education, 2021-2022b). Rhinehart et al. (2022) added that with 97% of their 560 student-sample of LTEL-considered students identifying as Latinx, no other school-mandated assessments or labels were so closely aligned with race or ethnicity, calling into question legislative adherence to the *Brown v. Board*, *Lau*, and *Castañeda* decisions. It is also significant that a higher population of Latinx students are identified as EL-classified students than any other group, with a rate of 29% of Latinx students identified as EL-classified students nationally (Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups, 2019). Additionally, although the Latinx population should not be falsely equated with the EL or LTEL population, it is noteworthy that Latinx students are the

least likely of any student group in California to complete a four-year college degree (Olson et al., 2020). In fact, Biernacki et al. (2023) reported that the vast majority of LTEL-considered students are college ineligible by the time they are in Grade 12.

The question of how and when an LTEL-considered student should be reclassified is critical for discussions of LTEL instruction. When reclassification criteria are not rigorous enough, EL-classified students can end up in mainstream content-area classes without adequate instructional support, but too stringent of criteria can keep EL-classified students effectively trapped in EL programs (Chin, 2021; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019). Rhinehart et al. (2022) argued that removing the reading and writing domains from English proficiency assessments would more effectively differentiate EL-classified from monolingual English speakers, and this shift would reclassify most LTEL-considered students. Johnson (2019) found that EL-classified students who retain their EL classification after fifth grade are significantly less likely to graduate from high school on time. There is an urgent need for fair and consistent reclassification policies (Cabral, 2022; Flores & Lewis, 2022; Rhinehart et al., 2022). Among other issues, inaccessible reclassification practices perpetuate the dual identification of LTEL and special education status (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Sahakyan & Poole, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020).

### *Conflicting Special Education and LTEL Policy*

In contrast to on-track EL-classified students, LTEL-considered students are more likely to receive special education status coupled with EL status, complicating the coordination of services and accommodations (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Sahakyan & Poole, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). Although a significant proportion of LTEL-

considered students receive special education services, many of these students have been misidentified (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Strong & Escamilla, 2022). Identification of disabilities in EL-classified students is complicated by the fact that lower English proficiency levels can hide a disability, and a disability can make it challenging to ascertain English proficiency (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Sahakyan & Poole, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). In other words, misidentification as an EL can easily occur when a student's academic challenges are, in fact, due to a disability, and misidentification of disabilities can occur when academic challenges are caused by a student's emerging English proficiency (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Shin, 2020).

Additionally, many schools do not perform assessments for special education on EL-classified students in order to avoid erroneous disability identification (Sahakyan & Poole, 2022); however, this practice likely exacerbates identification delays and interferes with students' access to special education support services (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Sahakyan & Poole, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). Reclassification of dual-identified students based on standardized assessments is also doubly problematic because general standardized assessments were not designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities or EL-classified students, and standardized ELP assessments were not designed for students with disabilities (Shin, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020).

As EL-considered students with disabilities go through school, they become increasingly likely to become LTEL-considered students; in fact, secondary EL-considered students with disabilities are eight times more likely to receive LTEL status

(Shin, 2020), and only a small percentage of dually identified students ever reclassify (Sahakyan & Poole, 2022). Clark-Gareca et al. (2019) reported that more than 40% of LTEL-considered students have a disability. Similarly, Rhinehart et al. (2022) found in a quantitative study of 560 LTEL-considered students that 29% had a disability, and that of the LTEL-considered students who were still attending school in the twelfth grade, 50% had a disability. Still, LTEL-considered students are more prone than non-EL-classified students to have an unidentified learning disability, rendering the elevated rates of dually classified LTEL-considered students likely lower than reality (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019). Hakuta (2020) and Sahakyan and Poole (2022) emphasized the issue of dual enrollment in special education and EL programs as critical because students' concurrent categorical identifications each have unique services and federal mandates that may or may not be appropriate for the individual student.

EL-classified students with disabilities are thus quadruply systemically impeded because they are more likely to experience insufficient IEPs, reclassification criteria that have not been appropriately modified to meet their unique abilities, placement in remedial classes, and inadequate instructional support (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Rhinehart et al., 2022; Sahakyan & Poole, 2022). Although special education teachers are required to write IEPs with supports and goals to meet the needs of EL-classified students, case managers often stumble in the process of embedding linguistic supports that align with accommodations for disabilities due to a lack of training, conflicting programmatic needs, and structural issues within the school day, such as scheduling and resource limitations (Sahakyan & Poole, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). The already

onerous task of reclassification from EL programs becomes even more challenging for dual-identified students, leading to disproportionate numbers of EL-classified students with disabilities becoming LTEL-considered students (Sahakyan & Poole, 2022). The following section further explores how California has attempted to create policies for LTEL education that adhere to the federal mandates for EL identification, assessment, progress monitoring, reclassification, and special education, and will discuss how these policies have impacted LTEL instruction.

### *California's EL and LTEL Policies*

California and Massachusetts were initially frontrunners in bilingual education and EL programs but were met with fierce resistance from "English-only" advocates (Hakuta, 2020, p. 6). As such, California has written some of the most restrictive policies for EL education, as well as some of the most progressive and inclusive policies for EL-classified and LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019). Olsen (2010) shifted the ecology of EL and LTEL education when she convened a coalition of educators, researchers, and policymakers known as Californians Together to publish *Reparable Harm.* This policy paper sought to spotlight the educational harm done to LTEL-considered students in schools but framed the harm as reparable through improved EL policy and instructional practices (Artigliere, 2019; Olsen, 2010; Shin, 2020). Olsen (2010) used data from 175,000 secondary EL-classified students across 40 districts to advocate for the following: a standardized definition for LTEL-considered students, progress monitoring of students at risk of LTEL status, programming of LTEL-considered students into clusters in mainstream classes, and the creation of a specialized

class to develop the academic English that LTEL-considered students need to be successful in school.

Olsen's (2010) work was the first research on LTEL-considered students to be used to influence LTEL policy in any state, shaping California legislation through Assembly Bill 2193 (California A.B., 2193, 2012; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019). This legislation helped California become the second state in the nation to adopt an integrated ELA/ELD framework, mandate integrated ELD in all content-area classes, and provide guidance for improving language and literacy instruction in math, science, ELA, and social science (California Department of Education, 2014). In part due to Olsen's widely read, highly influential, and still often-cited report, the Every Student Succeeds Act also adopted several of Olsen's recommendations at the federal level in 2015, cementing the requirement for a distinct LTEL label and mandating designated ELD classes to meet the unique needs of LTEL-considered students nationwide (Artigliere, 2019). In the years since the Every Student Succeeds Act, the drive for a separate label for LTEL-considered students and the adoption of separate academic literacy classes to meet their needs have been criticized because they have further segregated LTEL-considered students from the rigorous educational opportunities they need to reclassify from EL programs (Cabral, 2022; Flores & Lewis, 2022; Mendoza, 2019). With the passage of the *California State English Learner Roadmap* in 2017, Olsen's advocacy for a separate distinction and educational opportunities for LTEL-considered students largely shifted to a statewide push for improved instruction in mainstream classes and increased bilingualism for all EL-classified students (California Department of Education, 2022). Current California

policy is written to provide access for EL-classified and LTEL-considered students to learning materials that embrace high-level standards, scaffolding to overcome language barriers, and access to classes students need to be college and career-ready (California Department of Education, 2022). In addition to improved pedagogy, it cites a need for more robust administrative support for teachers through ongoing professional learning for educators, increased resource allocation for LTEL-considered students, research-based programmatic interventions that do not track or segregate students, stronger relationships with students and families, and analysis of LTEL achievement data to inform program planning and professional development for teachers (California Department of Education, 2022).

### *Teacher Attitudes, Perceptions, and Preparedness*

Teachers often hold negative beliefs and attitudes about EL-classified students, which influences the instructional practices they use when teaching this population and can impact EL achievement (Huerta et al., 2019; Kim, 2021). Shin (2020) reported that there is a prevalent and problematic perception of LTEL-considered students as "non-nons (e.g., non-English and non-Spanish speaking)" (p. 183) and argued that the view of LTEL-considered students as deficient must be reconceptualized to emergent bilinguals who require additional support in both languages. Sah and Uysal (2022) reported that teachers tend to describe EL-classified students as "isolated," "loners," and "different or strange" (p. 2). Nguyen (2021) claimed that teachers become "blinded" (p. 6) by the EL label and that teachers with a high concentration of EL-classified students in their content-area classes progress through material more slowly. Notably, teachers do not start

their careers with negative perceptions of EL-classified students, but over time, they begin to see their EL-classified students as lazy (Kim, 2021). One qualitative study found that teachers believed Latinx students, who represent the vast majority of LTEL-considered students, presented greater disciplinary challenges than Russian and Asian students, whom they described more positively (Kim, 2021). Teachers and students alike deem students in designated ELD classes academically and linguistically inferior to mainstream students (Umansky & Avelar, 2022). The majority of teachers offer LTEL-considered students assignments that are more procedural than higher-order thinking because teachers are more likely to have low expectations for LTEL-considered students' academic skills and potential (Lee & Soland, 2023; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Umansky and Avelar (2022) reported that teachers' low expectations for LTEL-considered students often superseded the high ambitions LTEL-considered students had for themselves.

Low expectations for LTEL-considered students were inconsistent across teacher demographics, and teachers who had relatable experiences to their EL-classified students held higher expectations and more positive attitudes toward them (Kim, 2021). Latinx preservice teachers were found to act more compassionately toward their EL-classified students and hold higher expectations for their academic performance and behavior than White preservice teachers (Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Huerta et al. (2019) found that bi- and multilingual teachers had more positive attitudes than monolingual speakers. This finding is significant because while 80% of teachers are White, only 9% are Latinx (Harklau & Ford, 2022). Byfield (2019) offered another example of how race and ethnicity affect teachers' perceptions of and expectations for EL-classified students. In a

qualitative study, teachers used the words *Latino* and *Hispanic* as synonyms for EL-classified students, although there were many Amish EL-classified students at the school site, indicating the teachers assumed EL-classified students were Latinx and that Latinx students were EL-classified students (Byfield, 2019). This assumption that White students were not EL-classified students and that EL-classified students were Latinx led some teachers to accommodate more for Latinx students and to give them work with less rigor, even when they were not designated as EL-classified students (Byfield, 2019).

Additional factors that affect teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward their EL-classified and LTEL-considered students have been noted by many scholars. Elementary teachers tended to report more positive feelings toward EL students than secondary teachers (Cashiola et al., 2021), which is relevant because all LTEL-considered students are secondary students (California Department of Education, 2021-2022a). Female teachers were also found to have more positive attitudes toward EL-classified students and to teaching EL-classified students, but this difference shrank as male and female teachers received additional high-quality professional development (Huerta et al., 2019). Similarly, teachers with advanced degrees tended to have more positive attitudes, as did teachers with additional training to work with EL-classified students (Huerta et al., 2019). Huerta et al. (2022) reported that when science teachers received more professional development to support EL-classified students in science, which requires complex language structures, their attitudes toward EL-classified students and toward teaching EL-classified students improved overall.

Another aspect of teachers' attitudes and perceptions that impacts LTEL instruction is that teachers generally do not value multilingualism and believe fostering English proficiency is a burden beyond the scope of their job descriptions (Kim, 2021). Sah and Uysal (2022) reported that some teachers "buy into the monolingual ideology of English as a standard school language, which then reproduces raciolinguistic ideologies for racialized students" (p. 72). According to Luna (2020),

> Many subject matter teachers have not embraced the notion that the instruction of LTELs is one of their instructional responsibilities and not that of the English Language Development (ELD) teacher, who may or may not have the subject matter expertise to assist students with success in the… subject matter. (p. 24)

Similarly, Huerta et al. (2019) found that content-area teachers who lack the proper training and resources often do not believe EL-classified students belong in their classes and can be resentful about the additional work necessary to scaffold for them. In a synthesis of several studies, Kim (2021) found that teachers resisted teaching EL-classified students, showed a lack of interest in meeting their needs, and promoted student assimilation by asking students to shed their heritage languages and cultures in the classroom. Sah and Uysal (2022) conducted a multiple case study of teachers' perspectives on bilingualism and found that although teachers theoretically supported EL-classified students' use of heritage languages in the real world, teachers perceived languages other than English to be problematic in the classroom and encouraged students to take an English-only orientation.

### *Professional Development to Support LTEL Instruction*

Teacher quality and adequate instruction are critical factors determining the academic success of EL-classified students, indicating a need for increased focus on improving instructional practices to increase EL achievement (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Porter, 2020). Low teacher preparedness correlates with teachers having negative perceptions of EL-classified students, but teachers' perceptions and attitudes were reported to become more positive through high-quality professional development (Huerta et al., 2019; Kim, 2021). Still, schools tend to lack structures for ongoing professional development to support teachers in improving their instructional practices for designated and integrated ELD (Nguyen, 2021), which is problematic because EL-classified students are more likely to have less experienced, lower-skilled teachers with inferior curriculum (Harklau & Ford, 2022; Strong & Escamilla, 2022). In a quantitative study of 444 teachers, teachers reported less than adequate knowledge to meet the instructional needs of EL-classified students regarding curriculum, language assessment, and evaluation (Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019). Additionally, many teachers reject the professional identity of an ELD teacher. According to Harklau and Ford (2022),

> Underprepared educators may misinterpret [EL] instruction as requiring nothing more than 'just good teaching,' a generalized set of teaching skills that any good teacher would possess. Teachers may therefore not take on a professional identity as an [EL] educator or feel that they need to develop the specialized knowledge and skills […] that are needed to work effectively with ELs. (p. 145)

Most secondary teachers believe that they are subject-area experts and do not believe they are adequately prepared to support the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students (Luna, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). In fact, research confirms that teachers' perceptions of their own abilities to teach LTEL-considered students are correct; most high school teachers are content-area experts and lack the instructional practices LTEL-considered students need to succeed academically (Artigliere, 2019; Vera et al., 2022). However, when teachers developed the capacity and resources to teach EL-classified students effectively, the rigor gap remained because teachers did not think EL-classified students could handle rigorous coursework that incorporated higher-order critical thinking skills (Murphy & Torff, 2019). Thus, professional development on instructional practices to support LTEL-considered students must address teachers' negative perceptions of LTEL-considered students to be effective.

Still, teacher preparation remains critical for the effective instruction of LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019) because the classroom teacher's instructional and pedagogical knowledge have proven to be strong predictors of students' success in language and content mastery (Harklau & Ford, 2022; Vera et al., 2022). Additionally, more exposure to EL-classified students during preservice training leads to better teacher self-competency (Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019). As such, teachers need a firm preservice program that exposes them to EL-classified students coupled with regular and ongoing high-quality professional learning opportunities in-service that reflect research-based practices for meeting the complex needs of LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; Vera et al., 2022). Vaughn et al. (2022) added that EL achievement

increased when teachers received professional development that they saw as feasible and not “unduly taxing” (p. 271). High school teachers reported that to support EL-classified students effectively, they need professional development designed to help them transfer new curricular approaches and instructional strategies that synthesize literacy and content (Vera et al., 2022).

### *Designated and Integrated ELD Instruction*

To mitigate the harm of over-testing EL-classified students through a redirected focus on effective instructional practices, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which remains in place today, moved away from many of the punitive measures of No Child Left Behind and attempted to compel states to practice testing, progress monitoring, and instruction in equal measure (The Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). The Every Student Succeeds Act requires states to improve EL instruction by mandating that all EL-classified students receive a designated ELD class and integrated ELD support in content-area classes (Artigliere, 2019; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015), a move based on research that finds the two models should be used in tandem (Hopkins et al., 2022). For this reason, all secondary EL-classified students are now required to have a period of designated ELD support in their course schedules, with LTEL-considered students enrolled in language support classes designed to meet their unique needs (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). This approach aligns with research suggesting that high-quality designated ELD classes can help LTEL-considered students advance their language proficiency when expressly designed to bolster academic language and literacy skills (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019). In high school, designated ELD classes have been found to help LTEL-considered students

develop academic vocabulary, learn comprehension strategies for complex texts and content, and internalize scaffolds for academic writing (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Porter, 2020).

Still, although designated ELD has been shown to have positive outcomes, particularly for newcomer EL-classified students, outcomes are generally adverse for other EL-classified students, especially LTEL-considered students (Hopkins et al., 2022). Although some time in ELD can help optimize progression through the language proficiency levels, time spent in ELD displaces time accessing grade-level standards (Hopkins et al., 2022; Shin, 2020; Umansky & Porter, 2020). Some scholars have problematized the practice of using designated ELD to support LTEL-considered students because designated ELD classes displace access to college preparatory content (Flores & Lewis, 2022; Mendoza, 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Furthermore, LTEL-considered students may retain their EL classification for reasons that vary widely and are beyond their control, such as inconsistent schooling, ineffectual EL programs, and faulty reclassification procedures, which would make an academic support class an inappropriate placement (Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022).

Indeed, for these reasons and a variety of conflicting pressures such as on-time graduation and completion of college preparatory coursework, many secondary LTEL-considered students are not placed in designated ELD classes, nor are they receiving integrated language support in content-area classes, leaving them with few, if any, linguistic supports (Hopkins et al., 2022). Hopkins et al. (2022) recommended that teachers address this phenomenon by teaching language, literacy, and content in content-

area classes. Research confirms that LTEL-considered students need a balance of explicit language and grade-level content in all content courses (Artigliere, 2019; Nguyen, 2021; Umansky & Porter, 2020), which is the hallmark of the integrated ELD model (Edelman et al., 2022; Hopkins et al., 2022). According to Nguyen (2021), EL-classified students must "engage in contextualized learning opportunities often, using different methods and practices, with different students, and while discussing relevant content. In other words, students labeled ELL should not be separated from their peers in the pursuit of English-language development" (p. 11). Although not explicitly using the term *designated ELD,* Shin et al. (2022) recommended LTEL-considered students receive "opportunities to build both disciplinary and world knowledge, exposure to a breadth and depth of texts, explicit teaching of comprehension, [and] integration of both Reading and Writing" (p. 28). Similarly, Luna (2020) and Hakuta (2020) argued that language and content are inseparable because learning the language of each academic discipline is essential to learning disciplinary content, so English proficiency and disciplinary knowledge can be developed simultaneously in the context of content instruction.

Research on effective integrated ELD practices for secondary educators is relatively new, and additional studies are needed (Edelman et al., 2022). In her summary of current research on instruction to promote LTEL achievement, Luna (2020) called for more classroom experimentation and stated, "Through intentional pedagogical practice and the inclusion of ELLs and LTEL-considered students in the Common Core ELA/ELD standards, it is believed success can be attained in meeting the CCSS and NGSS for all students" (p. 28). Notably, rather than cite research on effective

instructional practices for integrating the ELA/ELD standards for secondary LTEL-considered students, Luna recommended research-based strategies for elementary EL-classified students and conjectured that they can be modified to support secondary LTEL-considered students. Hopkins et al. (2022) focused their research on secondary students but explored the use of designated ELD at the secondary level and did not consider integrated ELD practices. The body of research on using integrated ELD in high school is thus limited. The following section describes the most common strategies for using integrated ELD in the classroom that may be appropriate for use in high school classrooms: accessing prior knowledge, explicit teaching of vocabulary, grade-level reading and writing tasks, and collaborative learning.

**Accessing Prior Knowledge**. In terms of high leverage instructional approaches for integrated ELD, strategies for accessing prior knowledge can be easy to implement and yield positive responses from students (Luna, 2020). Teachers can draw upon LTEL-considered students' funds of knowledge – which can be personal, linguistic, academic, or cultural – to promote productive struggle and help students persevere through challenging grade-level coursework (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021). David et al. (2022) argued that teachers could counter monoglossic language ideologies by creating classroom spaces that embrace translanguaging. Csorvasi and Colby (2021) added that LTEL-considered students must be immersed in an "expansive culture of belonging" (p. 83) that incorporates their home cultures while giving them access to core content. Similarly, Roe (2019) encouraged teachers to learn about their students' interests, backgrounds, families,

and cultures as entry points for personal, linguistic, and cultural connection and labeled these student resources *assets*.

Language can be one of the most high leverage student assets because research has found that students are less likely to become LTEL-considered students when their core instruction connects to their heritage languages, either through bilingual instruction or translanguaging practices (Cashiola et al., 2021). *Translanguaging* is a particularly effective integrated ELD practice because it strengthens EL-classified students' diverse linguistic repertoire, bridges the language of school and home, helps to raise metalinguistic awareness, and improves reading comprehension (David et al., 2022). One quick and easy way to incorporate translanguaging in the classroom is by asking students to "turn and talk in any language" (David et al., 2022, p. 14). Two other strategies for scaffolding translanguaging for students are multilingual word walls and heritage language groups for literature discussions, which were reported to increase student engagement, promote collaboration between students, and increase teachers' knowledge about their students (David et al., 2022).

Indeed, translanguaging is a high leverage integrated ELD strategy for use in secondary content-area classes (David et al., 2022). The three core elements of translanguaging are *stance*, which is defined as beliefs about language use; *design*, or the planned use of heritage languages in lesson plans; and *shifts*, which are the moment-to-moment responses to students surrounding language use (David et al., 2022). Helping LTEL-considered students develop their heritage languages and developing students' bilingualism are practices linked to increased achievement in language proficiency that

help students learn content while developing their English skills (Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Csorvasi & Colby, 2021). In a qualitative study of 15 LTEL-considered students, Roe (2019) found that students in a remedial college English class performed better in classrooms where teachers promoted cultural relevance and personal connections.

**Explicit Teaching of Vocabulary.** Although Flores and Lewis (2022) argued that measures of conversational English and academic language and literacy are remnants of verbal deprivation theory, most scholars of EL instruction agree that EL-classified students need support in developing academic language that spans across disciplines, as well as explicit instruction on subject-specific terms (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Porter, 2020). Mokhtari et al. (2021) and Olson et al. (2020) advocated for more direct content instruction in conjunction with academic vocabulary development. Lee and Stephens (2020) summarized contemporary instructional approaches to the explicit teaching of vocabulary as follows: Content-area teachers should start with content standards and then determine language scaffolds necessary to engage their students in meaning-making tasks, deemphasizing the importance of English grammar and correctness. The Every Student Succeeds Act's (2015) guidance similarly recommended that “language proficiency standards align to content standards and not the other way around” (p. 429). Artigliere (2019) recommended the following integrated ELD strategies to support content instruction: Translanguaging, building from students’ current linguistic practices, activating prior knowledge, explicit teaching of vocabulary and language, teaching language within content, the use of shared readings to deconstruct texts and discuss core vocabulary. Similarly, Luna (2020) warned against the rote

memorization of vocabulary, arguing instead that teachers can best accelerate content instruction by scaffolding student discussions, helping students build interconnected networks of concept relations through concept maps, and teaching academic and domain-specific vocabulary in context.

**Grade-Level Reading and Writing Tasks.** The CCSS (California Department of Education, 2013) requires that all secondary students learn to "read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it" (p. 52) and to "write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence" (p. 61). Reading and writing have consistently proven to be the most challenging domains on ELP assessments for LTEL-considered students (Luna, 2020; Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022). Many ELP assessment tasks require higher-level processing, and LTEL-considered students lack preparation for work at this level (Shin et al., 2022). Nguyen (2021) reported that this phenomenon is a cycle; EL-classified students receive instruction that demands lower-order processing, particularly with reading and writing, and then struggle with assessments that require higher-order processing, so they are placed in remedial classes where they receive lower-order literacy tasks. With only 1% of EL-classified students in both Grades 8 and 12 scoring proficient or above in writing and only 4% of EL-classified students scoring proficient or above in reading (Olson et al., 2020), instructional practices that promote grade-level reading and writing tasks (Mokhtari et al., 2021). Olson et al. (2020) argued that "reading and writing are essentially similar processes of meaning construction" (p.

705), which aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) conception of meaning-making through integrated language tasks.

Some research-based instructional strategies for bolstering the reading and writing skills of EL-classified students may improve LTEL achievement. Cognitive strategies, such as planning and goal setting, accessing prior knowledge, making connections, forming interpretations, relating, and evaluating, can help readers and writers make meaning (Olson et al., 2020). Olson et al. (2020) delineated 11 essential elements of writing instruction for assisting struggling writers and reported that helping writers develop a "writer's toolkit" (p. 705) was the most useful instructional strategy to assist struggling writers. Artigliere (2019) also argued that EL-classified students must be taught to deconstruct text and produce genre-based writing. In a qualitative study, Brubaker (2020) coded work samples, surveys, and video and audio recordings of three LTEL-considered students and three native speakers of English and found that a critical difference in the writing process of LTEL-considered students and native speakers is the use of code-switching, which is an asset that teachers should foster. Brubaker (2020) also found that LTEL-considered students showed little planning, limited self-regulatory activities, frequent surface editing, and a lack of metalanguage, which reinforces Olson et al.'s (2020) recommendation for writing strategy instruction. Olson et al. (2020) argued that writing is a gatekeeper for EL-classified students to access higher education and salaried jobs. With text-based analytical writing proving daunting for EL-classified students, explicitly scaffolding these skills for LTEL-considered students is essential (Olson et al., 2020).

**Cooperative Learning**. For LTEL-considered students to overcome the educational challenges they face, they must be encouraged to leverage their strong oral and social skills by participating in structured oral discourse through thoughtfully prepared classroom activities (Luna, 2020; Mokhtari et al., 2021; Olson et al., 2020). Roe (2019) also emphasized the importance of student-to-student talk, arguing it leads to a more culturally responsive classroom, and Lee and Stephens (2020) argued for a range of discussion structures, such as one-to-one, one-to-small group, one-to-many, and small group-to-large group. Lee and Stephens (2020) prioritized what they called "language in use" (p. 429) because students learn how to communicate about content by engaging in the standard practices of that discipline within a classroom community. Lee and Stephens (2020) also emphasized the importance of students practicing each of the four domains of English proficiency regularly – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – and using a variety of registers, including colloquial language and technical jargon.

## Analysis of Methodologies Used in LTEL Research

The two most prevalent methodologies in LTEL research are quantitative research and critical literature reviews. Fifteen of the articles that were cited repeatedly in this paper were quantitative studies. This was appropriate because LTEL research is a new field, and large study samples have allowed researchers to determine basic generalizable information about LTEL education and LTEL-considered students, their instructional needs, and policies that mediate their access to effective instruction using numerical data and statistical analysis (Burkholder et al., 2020). Other quantitative studies used randomized experimental trials comparing two groups or conditions (Olson et al., 2020;

Vaughn et al., 2022) to make conclusions about factors that improve or hinder LTEL education (Burkholder et al., 2020). Longitudinal quantitative data were used in several studies (Cashiola et al., 2021; Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022) because students become LTEL-considered due to a confluence of factors over many years, so examining how data changed over time was appropriate. This paper also cited ten critical literature reviews, which were useful for summarizing what is and is not yet known about LTEL-considered students and LTEL education and for comparing research on LTEL-considered students to research on the broader categories of EL-classified students and non-EL students.

To understand teacher and student perspectives and experiences (Burkholder et al., 2020), some researchers have also branched out into basic qualitative design (Brubaker, 2020; Csorvasi & Colby, 2021; David et al., 2022; Hopkins et al., 2022; Siordia & Kim, 2022; Uysal, 2022). Still, few studies on LTEL-considered students have employed case study methodology (Roe, 2019; Byfield, 2019; Sah & Uysal, 2022). Because researchers have cited a need for further study of LTEL instruction (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; Strong & Escamilla, 2022; Umansky & Avelar, 2022), case study research is an appropriate research design to frame this study because it examines the phenomenon in context and can have practical implications for policy and program implementation (Schoch, 2020).

## Summary and Conclusions

The defining characteristic of LTEL-considered students is that they have not been reclassified as FEP, so they retain the EL and LTEL labels, remain in designated ELD classes, and are often excluded from the full breadth of secondary educational

programming (Mendoza, 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). The current systems of assessment and reclassification coupled with insufficient instructional practices have led to rapidly increasing numbers of LTEL-considered students in the decade since state and federal law required that their progress be tracked and monitored (Artigliere, 2019; California A.B. 2193., 2012; Luna, 2020). California's practices for the instruction of LTEL-considered students, assessment, and reclassification reflect national trends, with Latinx students disproportionately retained as EL-classified students, making them the vast majority of LTEL-considered students and rendering this a racial equity issue (Umansky & Avelar, 2022).

Still, current educational policy recommends increasing and improving teachers' use of integrated ELD to advance LTEL achievement (California Department of Education, 2022). These mandates for integrated ELD are supported by *Brown v. Board*, the Civil Rights Act, the Bilingual Education Act, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, *Lau v. Nichols,* and the Castañeda framework, which sought to ensure equal access to educational opportunities for EL-classified students by providing access to rigorous grade-level instruction (Umansky & Porter, 2020). Nevertheless, it remains unknown how teachers leverage integrated ELD instructional practices in the classroom. Through a case study on how teachers at one California high school are working to address the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students by using components of integrated ELD in content-area classes, I have contributed to the growing body of research on LTEL-considered students, thereby working to rectify this pressing raciolinguistic equity issue.

The following section details the qualitative research methodology that was used to complete this study.

# Chapter 3: Research Method

## Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore how teachers at one California high school address the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students through integrated ELD in content-area classes and how site and district administrators support teachers in doing this work. This chapter begins by describing the qualitative case study approach, design, and rationale. A detailed description of the research methodology follows, including:

- Participant selection logic, criteria for selection, and saturation considerations;
- My role as a researcher, including personal and professional relationships with participants and how I will manage researcher biases;
- The development of the study's data collection instruments;
- Data collection processes;
- Data analysis processes;
- Research-based strategies for improving trustworthiness;
- The study's ethical procedures, such as the Internal Review Board application, participant site agreements, and issues related to participant recruitment, consent, confidentiality, and data storage.

This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the data presented in the following chapter.

## Research Design and Rationale

The research problem addressed through this study is that little is known about how California high school teachers address the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students through integrated ELD in content-area classes to increase LTEL achievement. Although California schools have been required to use integrated ELD practices to support LTEL-considered students since 2012 (Hopkins et al., 2022; Luna, 2020), standardized test scores show that LTEL achievement in California has not improved (State of California, n.d.). Artigliere (2019), Clark-Gareca et al. (2019), and Umansky and Avelar (2022) cited a need for additional studies on the instruction of LTEL-considered students. In this study, I addressed the gap in the scholarly literature regarding how high school teachers use integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students in content-area classes. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: How do content-area teachers at one California high school use components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

RQ2: How do site and district administrators support content-area teachers at one California high school in using components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

The research design was a qualitative case study using interviews as the primary data source and document analysis as the secondary source. A qualitative research approach was appropriate because the research purpose is to understand “how and why the world works as it does” (Burkholder et al., 2020, p. xii). Additionally, the case study research design is increasingly being used to investigate instruction because it is an

effective methodology for exploring decision-making in context (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). The use of interviews as a data collection method was justified by Seidman (2012), who advocated for additional research using interviews to understand the individual and collective experiences that make up the experience of schooling. The triangulation of data derived from document analysis is useful for adding perspective and context to interview data and for coming to trustworthy findings in response to the research questions (Naz et al., 2022).

## Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the conduit of data collection and is the primary analytic instrument (Burkholder et al., 2020). Unlike quantitative research, which may be done away from the phenomenon of study, qualitative research requires the researcher to immerse themselves in the data collection and analysis processes (Burkholder et al., 2020). Qualitative research is thus inherently subjective because of its reliance upon the high level of researcher involvement (Burkholder et al., 2020). As the sole creator of the interview guide, interviewer, creator of the a priori code definition log, analyst, and writer of this case description, I was the primary observer of the phenomenon and conducted each stage of the research process and connected those stages logically in alignment with the study's purpose (Patton, 2015). Therefore, I must acknowledge any known biases, personal experiences, and positionality that may influence how I reacted to and interpreted the experiences of others or influence how they responded to me (Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Patton describes researcher bias as a preference for one side of an issue and noted that it is discernible in research when there is a demonstrated pattern of error in the presentation of data or analysis because the researcher is not acting as a fair witness. Some potential biases that I recognized and addressed were derived from my 22 years as a classroom teacher of LTEL-considered students. In my own classroom practice, I implemented various instructional routines, including beginning class with a reading or writing warm-up, moving into structured student talk, reading a complex text, and writing high-level academic responses using sentence frames to improve academic language. Student desks were placed in pods of four to increase collaboration. I had students engage in icebreakers with their table groups to develop a strong sense of community and foster oral participation. To process these instructional preferences and to ensure that they did not skew data collection or interpretation, I used a reflexive journal to process my reactions to interviews and documents (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Other possible biases could have come from my relationships with human participants. I have never worked at the site of the case study, and to the best of my knowledge, I did not know any teachers or administrators there. Still, the site is within my district, so I may have met some participants in district-wide professional learning or union activities. In terms of power differentials between participants and me, there was little opportunity for my positionality as a teacher to impact either teacher or administrator responses to questions because I was not in a supervisory role (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I have met and worked briefly with some district administrators who may be

participants in this study, but these meetings have been perfunctory, and I do not believe they impacted my findings or caused bias.

Additionally, because qualitative research is inherently subjective, I used various strategies to document and mitigate bias and increase the study's trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017). In addition to a reflexive journal, I used member checking and debriefing to ensure an accurate presentation of participants' experiences and perspectives (Burkholder et al., 2020). I also used a chain of evidence to document decision-making surrounding the evolution of the study (Patton, 2015). To reduce bias and increase content validity, I also had my interview protocol reviewed by experts, conducted pilot interviews, and gathered feedback from participants of pilot interviews regarding the content, style, and sequencing of the interview guide. Pilot interviews were conducted with individuals who are similar to the study's participants; however, data from pilot interviews were not included in the study because their purpose was to practice interview protocols and refine the research instrument (Patton, 2015). These pilot interviews led to no revisions of the interview guide for administrators because pilot participants in an administrative role responded easily and gave thorough and relevant answers germane to my research questions. Pilot interviews with teachers led to the modification of the interview guide for teachers in the following ways:

- I shifted from inquiring more generally about how teachers use a particular element of integrated ELD in their classes to asking for an example of how they use that element of integrated ELD. For example, instead of asking, "How do you incorporate student talk in your classes?" I reframed the

question to be, “Provide an example of how you encourage student talk in your classes.” The specification of asking for one example of an instructional strategy the teacher used was reported to induce less anxiety and led to answers more aligned with the research questions.

- My original interview guide asked teachers to explain why they approached the instructional strategy in that way; however, asking teachers, “How did you come to this approach?” as a follow-up question was reported to be less daunting by pilot interview participants, because teachers were being asked to describe the evolution of their pedagogy, rather than what they felt was a request for the rationale for their pedagogy.
- I adjusted the sequence of my questions to begin with those deemed easier to answer and place those that were deemed more challenging later in the interview based on feedback from participants.
- Additionally, the pilot interviews also helped me hone my interview skills regarding establishing rapport with participants, adhering to the interview guide, and asking appropriate follow-up questions without inadvertently influencing their responses.

This process of piloting the interview guides allowed me to revise questions for clarity and neutrality and improve the content validity (Patton, 2015). Preliminary data collected through pilot interviews was also used to ensure that the interview instrument yielded data that was relevant to the research questions. I also reduced potential researcher bias and increased trustworthiness through rigorous and systematic data

collection, analysis, and interpretation, including triangulation of multiple sources and data types (Patton, 2015).

## Methodology

Case study research was appropriate for this study because it is a highly adaptable research approach that can be used to achieve an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in context (Harling, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Case study research is most used to conduct an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context and is particularly effective when the relationship between the phenomenon and context is unclear (Yin, 2018). Yin identified the exploration of a phenomenon as a key function of case study research, which aligns with my research purpose of exploring the use of integrated ELD at one school. Additionally, most case study research focuses on how or why questions, as does this study (Schoch, 2020).

A defining characteristic of case study research is that it uses multiple types of qualitative data to answer the research questions (Schoch, 2020). Some other standard features of case study research are that it requires the researcher to define the boundaries of the case, use purposeful sampling, establish criteria for case and participant selection, develop systematic and rigorous analytic processes, and triangulate data to develop breadth and depth of understanding (Yin, 2018). Interviews are the most common mode of qualitative research because they allow researchers to understand another's experience and to make meaning from that experience (Seidman, 2012). Case study research most commonly utilizes semi-structured, synchronous, open-ended interviews coupled with observation or document analysis to understand the phenomenon in context (Naz et al.,

2022). Because the partner site for this study prohibits classroom observations by student researchers, I triangulated data from interviews with teachers and administrators with document analysis to provide a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Some benefits of using interviews for data collection are as follows. Interviews are appropriate to meet the research purpose because they can be used to illuminate what the researcher cannot observe and to understand the thinking behind behaviors (Patton, 2015). Seidman (2012) added that interviews allow a researcher to understand the context of experiences and explore why people do what they do. Seidman argued that interviews are effective for understanding how people do their jobs because "[social] abstractions like 'education' are best understood through the experiences of the individuals whose work and lives are the stuff upon which the abstractions are built" (2012, p. 10). When coupled with document analysis, interviews are an effective means of gaining a more nuanced understanding of the case, because document analysis provides a record of what has occurred in an organization, giving context and history for other data sources (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In particular, document analysis is useful for corroborating first-person accounts (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). By triangulating interview data from two distinctly qualified participant groups with document analysis, I collected thick data with increased trustworthiness (Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Saldaña, 2016). All reporting, analysis, and discussion of findings was written using thick description, which seeks to describe a behavior and its context in detail (Geertz, 1973). Patton (2015) also used the term thick description to describe the process of telling a story with layers of data in context. As I

explored instructional strategies in context, this study was written using thick data and thick descriptions.

## Case Selection

Case study research uses purposeful sampling to select a case that will yield thick data to answer the research questions (Patton, 2015). For this case study, theoretical sampling was less likely to yield thick data on how the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students are being addressed in a California high school, because a randomly-selected California high school may not have a high population of LTEL-considered students (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018; Schoch, 2020). As such, I used purposeful sampling to identify a comprehensive high school within California where more than 30% of the students were identified as EL-classified, more than 50% of the EL-classified students were considered LTELs, and the site plan identified LTEL instruction as a schoolwide need.

## Participant Selection, Recruitment, Participation, and Data Selection

A researcher's rationale for participant selection, recruitment, and saturation, must be transparent so the study could be replicated (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Interview participants in this study were content-area teachers and administrators at the school site, as well as district ELD administrators supporting LTEL achievement at the site. The primary sampling strategies were criterion sampling and snowball sampling to identify and recruit participants. Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018) advised that criterion and snowball sampling techniques may lead to a more homogenous sample with elevated correlations and commonality. Still, criterion and snowball sampling remain preferable

for case study research over theoretical sampling because they are more likely to yield information-rich data (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018; Schoch, 2020). Thus, to be eligible for participation in this study, teachers met the following nested criteria to establish that they had the knowledge base necessary to give data that answered the research questions (Guest et al., 2006):

1) They held a valid California teaching credential.
2) They taught math, science, ELA, or social science.
3) They taught LTEL-considered students math, science, ELA, or social science.
4) They were identified by another teacher or administrator or self-identified as using integrated ELD instructional strategies within their content-area classes.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with site and district administrators to explore how teachers were supported in implementing integrated ELD in content-area classes. The selection criteria for administrators were that they needed to hold a site or district administrative position and have knowledge of how teachers were supported in using integrated ELD in content-area classes at this site.

I recruited participants for this study using criterion and snowball sampling (Naz et al., 2022; Schoch, 2020). Schoch (2020) recommended using a screening process to select qualified participants for case study research. Teachers in this study were asked to participate in interviews based on self or peer identification as a teacher who uses the components of integrated ELD (i.e., language, literacy, content knowledge) through an email soliciting the participation of qualified teachers and administrators who met the selection criteria. I concluded early interviews by asking for additional potential

interviewees, effectively using snowball and criterion sampling to identify additional teacher and administrator participants (Burkholder et al., 2020). If they expressed interest in participating, I established whether participants met the selection criteria via email prior to the interview using the following questions. For teachers, I asked:

- What certifications or licenses do you hold?
- What is your current teaching assignment?
- Which classes, if any, include LTEL-considered students?
- Do you scaffold your instruction in your content-area classes to meet the needs of LTEL-considered students?
- For administrators, I asked, “Do you have knowledge of how teachers are supported in using integrated ELD in content-area classes at the site?”

If participants met the selection criteria, I emailed them to arrange a date, time, and location for the interview and sent them information about informed consent and recording permissions. When we met for the interview, I began by again sharing information about informed consent and recording permissions that was previously emailed, reminding participants that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw consent for participation at any point (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

The interview location was determined by the participant’s convenience and took place in person or on Zoom. During the interview, I spoke informally in reference to a script (see Appendix A) for the preliminary and closing comments to ensure consistency, set a professional and welcoming tone, and established rapport with participants (Patton, 2015). I also reassured participants that data would be stored confidentially and that they

would not be identifiable by name or otherwise on audio files, written transcripts, analyses, or discussions of findings (Patton, 2015). I began the interview after ensuring participants did not have any questions about my research purpose or processes (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). At the conclusion of the interview, I asked for copies of documents that participants referred to in their answers, as well as any other documents they felt may help answer the research questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I also asked participants to recommend additional teacher or administrator participants for interviews. Finally, I concluded by informing participants that I would be engaging in member checking, first by sending them a transcript of their interview and later by sharing a summary of the findings, so if they felt their words had been misunderstood or misconstrued, they would be able to correct them or add context (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The use of member checking helped establish trust with participants and elevated the rigor of the study by increasing the content validity of the data collection process (Nowell et al., 2017).

Data selection for this case study was triangulated from three sources: Teacher interviews, administrator interviews, and document analysis (Schoch, 2020). Document analysis included personal documents that were created by individuals, such as curricula and lesson plans; published curricular and instructional materials, such as professional development materials and student handout templates; and organizational documents, such as the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), the district's ELD master plan, the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), the site's master schedule, staff meeting agendas, data from administrative classroom walkthroughs, district demographic and achievement data, and the site's most recent accreditation self-study (see Appendix

F). I was solely responsible for data collection, conducting all interviews, and collecting relevant documents from teachers, administrators, and online spaces.

**Sample Size and Issues of Saturation**

The sample size of any research study must be determined by the research goals and chosen methodology (Baker et al., 2012). Baxter and Jack (2008) reported that when conducting interviews, many researchers plan for a range of participants rather than planning for a specific number, and researchers will then cease to conduct additional interviews at the point of saturation. Mason (2010) explained that saturation occurs when additional research does not add depth of understanding about the research questions. Saturation determines sample size, so qualitative researchers must engage in concurrent sampling, data collection, and analysis rather than conducting these stages sequentially in isolation (Baker et al., 2012). The methodology for establishing saturation for this study is the use of a code definition log, which is a comprehensive list of codes used for thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2006). Codes are words or phrases given to an idea that is seen in multiple units of data (Saldaña, 2016). When additional interviews yielded few new codes, I determined that saturation has been reached, and no further interviews were conducted (Guest et al., 2006).

Because I was working with a homogenous population with similar expertise, I planned for a smaller range of participants (Guest et al., 2006; Kuzel, 1992; Mason, 2010). The use of a smaller sample in this study is justified by Romeny et al. (1986) and Baker et al. (2012), who used the concept of *consensus theory* in discussions of saturation, arguing that experts within a field tend to agree with each other with respect to

their area of expertise, and saturation may be reached earlier. Additionally, the use of constant comparative analysis and triangulation of interview data with document analysis reduced the number of interviews necessary for saturation (Mason, 2010). *Constant comparative analysis* is the comparison of each unit of study to previous units of data to establish patterns and themes, which determined findings (Schoch, 2020). Triangulation is the use of multiple data sources to confirm and add context to one another (Schoch, 2020). Given these considerations of consensus theory, constant comparative analysis, and triangulation, I planned to interview 4-6 teacher participants, or until saturation was reached, and 2-4 administrator participants, or until saturation was reached.

**Instrumentation**

A case study requires in-depth data collection from multiple sources to achieve a holistic understanding of a larger phenomenon and how the various aspects of that phenomenon relate to each other in context (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). Yin (2018) delineated three aspects of rigorous data collection for case study research: the creation of a case study database, a description of the chain of evidence, and the use of multiple types of data. A *case study database* is a comprehensive collection of all data, findings, and field notes, including audio recordings, transcripts, documents, and field notes (Schoch, 2020). The *chain of evidence* must be presented when reporting conclusions by explaining the alignment between the research problem, purpose, questions, methodology, data collected, interpretations of findings, and conclusions (Schoch, 2020). The three data sources for this study were interviews with content-area high school teachers from the designated site, interviews with site and district

administrators, and document analysis. The instrumentation of each data source is delineated in Table 2. Each data source was used to answer both research questions. Data collection and analysis were not conducted as distinct steps but were completed concurrently (Nowell et al., 2017). The findings of each unit of data were added to the case study database and used to triangulate the findings of the other units of data, as well as to determine saturation (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This could make the line between data and process unclear, so detailed field notes were essential to establish the dependability of the study (Nowell et al., 2017).

**Table 2**

*Instrumentation for Data Collection*

| Data Source | Location | Frequency | Duration | Recorded | Stored |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher and Administrator Interviews | Participants will choose to meet in person at a location convenient to them or on Zoom | One interview, with the opportunity for member-checking | Less than 30 minutes | Two recording devices, including phone, digital voice recorder, or Zoom | Audio recordings and transcripts stored in password protected external hard drive |
| Document Analysis | Collected from participants following interviews and from school and district websites | One request for documents per participant with possible follow-ups via email | N/A | Digitized | Digitized documents stored in password protected external hard drive and printed documents will be locked in a file cabinet at home |

To prepare for interviews, I created two interview guides, one for teachers (see Appendix B) and one for administrators (see Appendix C), to ensure consistency of questions across interviews (Schoch, 2020). Interview questions were determined by the purpose of the study, guided by the conceptual framework, shaped by feedback from the pilot interviews, and derived from scholarly literature (Naz et al., 2022). The interview guide for teachers consisted of 11 open ended primary questions about participants' implementation of components of integrated ELD in content-area classes. The interview guide for administrators consisted of 9 open ended questions about district support for integrated ELD implementation. Because purposeful sampling was used to identify teachers who use integrated ELD and administrators who support its implementation, teacher questions were written to assume some use of the various components of integrated ELD in the classroom, and administrator questions assumed some understanding of classroom, site, and district practices for integrated ELD (Schoch, 2020).

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, so the wording and order of questions may have changed, but the content of questions did not (Naz et al., 2022). Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to speak freely about their experiences and perspectives (Naz et al., 2022). Follow-up questions and probes depended on participants' responses (Naz et al., 2022). Probes were used to manage the interview when responses did not sufficiently address the research purpose, and follow-ups were used when participants' answers did not yield sufficient depth or detail (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I presented questions as neutrally as possible, attempting to have an

open and welcoming facial expression with minimal body language while not cueing participants by overly reacting to their responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Interviews were conducted in person or using the Zoom platform and recorded and transcribed for analysis. These data sources were sufficient to meet the research purpose because they provided a comprehensive description of the case through multiple data collection instruments that were triangulated to yield rich descriptions.

**Data Analysis Plan**

The goal of data analysis in qualitative research is to integrate and synthesize data to create a coherent narrative of findings (Patton, 2015; Saldaña, 2016). Just as I engaged in pilot interviews to refine my data collection tools, I refined my analytic approach and data analysis skills by engaging in both manual coding and the use of Quirkos software for data analysis using the data from the pilot interviews. Although these analyses were not included in the final study, this exercise helped me learn to create codes and group them to make categories that would become themes. This initial experimentation with coding also confirmed that the data analysis process would include both manual and digital coding using Quirkos and contributed to the development of the *a priori* code definition log.

In my final study, I then used descriptive analysis to categorize codes to develop themes that led to logical conclusions about the phenomenon (Saldaña, 2016). For each unit of analysis (i.e., one interview or document), I used a purposeful approach to rigorous thematic analysis to increase the traceability of the emergence of themes in the chain of evidence (Yin, 2018). Nowell et al. described *themes* as patterns within the data

that would not be identifiable when looking at just one fragment of data. Schoch (2020) explained that when conducting qualitative case studies, data analysis typically has four phases, which often occur concurrently rather than sequentially as data collection progresses. These phases are describing, interpreting, drawing conclusions, and determining significance (Schoch, 2020). My analytic process synthesized Schoch's four phases of data analysis for case study research with Saldaña's descriptive coding process and Nowell et al.'s (2017) framework for rigorous qualitative data analysis.

The analytic process began in the describing phase, when I immersed myself in the data by transcribing interviews, describing documents, taking detailed field notes, and using a reflexive journal to process initial reactions (Nowell et al., 2017). Schoch (2020) recommended reading the data multiple times before attempting to engage in interpretation. Then, the initial analysis of each unit of data began with the use of predefined codes, or *a priori* codes, derived from the research questions, conceptual framework, and literature (Naz et al., 2022; Schoch, 2020). I then used a deductive coding process to allow themes to emerge naturally and logically from patterns in the data, using what are known as *open codes* (Saldaña, 2016) or *in vivo* codes (Schoch, 2020). Codes were assigned to ideas that were repeated or surprising, descriptions, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, or emotions, and were reduced to thematic categories based on similarities, differences, complexities, and discrepancies (Saldaña, 2016). These codes became themes, which became the basis for the discussion of findings (Saldaña, 2016).

Throughout this multistep process, I used Quirkos for analysis. All codes were recorded in a code definition log and explored through peer debriefing, triangulation, a reflexive journal, and an audit trail (Naz et al., 2022; Patton, 2015). As codes were added, they were compiled in a code definition. This stage often includes triangulation, diagramming connections, and detailed field notes about the development of themes, concepts, and hierarchies of ideas (Nowell et al., 2017). I then reviewed themes by continuing to triangulate data and determine the strongest patterns in the data (Nowell et al., 2017). In this stage, I finalized themes pertinent to the study for a discussion of the findings. During this stage, I again engaged in member checking by sending participants a summary of the findings (Patton, 2015). I synthesized themes from the stages of data collection to determine the significance of my findings in relation to my research questions and wrote a detailed case description (Saldaña, 2016; Schoch, 2020). Finally, I produced a case study report that thoroughly described the phenomenon, separated reporting from interpreting, and limited technical jargon (Schoch, 2020). The sum of all findings were described using thick description, explanations for methodological choices, and logic models to present conclusions and their potential significance (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018).

This systematic approach to thematic coding allowed for *progressive focusing* on emergent themes to draw logical conclusions about findings through an iterative, logical, data driven process (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). I used both a top down (i.e., *a priori*) and bottom up (i.e., *in vivo*) analytic process as I delved more deeply into the data (Nowell et al., 2017). Any changes to the analytic approach were documented in the code

definition log, field notes, and chain of evidence (Nowell et al., 2017). In my discussion of findings, I described all findings, including outliers and unexpected results, to paint a comprehensive picture of the case (Nowell et al., 2017; Saldaña, 2016). Additionally, I discussed any limitations of the data collection or analytic processes. All themes and discrepant cases were considered in discussions of the findings.

## Issues of Trustworthiness

Data collection and analysis must be precise, consistent, and exhaustive to stand up to scrutiny and be accepted as trustworthy (Naz et al., 2022; Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Saldaña, 2016). In this study, trustworthiness was established by maximizing the four conditions of qualitative research design quality: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017). Nowell et al. described three strategies for increasing the *credibility*, or believability, of the study that I employed: triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking. Although *transferability* is not necessary to establish the rigor or merit of a qualitative study, it can be established by selecting and vividly describing information-rich cases so readers can determine if their context is similar enough to predict a similar phenomenon in their context (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018; Nowell et al., 2017). Patton (2015) added that when the criteria for the case are thoroughly described, case study research can elucidate patterns to inform program improvement and policy decisions in similar contexts. To increase the transferability of this study, I wrote a detailed description of the case and its context so educational leaders can determine the comparability of the site to their own site and make assessments about the applicability of the study's findings for their context. Merriam

(1998) described several strategies for maximizing *dependability*, or the likelihood that the study could be replicated by a fellow researcher, such as triangulation, member checking, peer examination, and disclosure of the researcher's position with regard to the study, each of which is a strategy that I employed in this study. Nowell et al. added that the key to dependability is thorough and clear documentation of the data collection and analytic processes. *Confirmability* describes how clear, logical, and traceable conclusions are from the evidence provided and is reached when credibility, transferability, and dependability are achieved (Nowell et al., 2017). In this study, the use of detailed field notes, and a chain of evidence illustrate that the findings have been derived fairly from the evidence (Nowell et al., 2017).

## Ethical Procedures

The following section lists ethical procedures that were used to protect participants. Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) ensure that all student research adheres to each university's ethical standards and U.S. federal regulations. The IRB process is a rigorous check to confirm that the research methodology is sound and that human subjects are protected throughout the process (Burkholder et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The partner organization has given preliminary consent to participate in this case study pending IRB approval. In adherence to the IRB process, each step in the data collection process will be delineated. As a student researcher, I was appropriately supervised throughout my study and did not begin data collection until after completing the IRB process.

Some key IRB considerations are confidentiality, informed consent, and protecting participants' rights. Because I used snowball sampling, obtaining participants' names and contact information for interviews was necessary. I took the following measures to ensure participants' confidentiality:

- Masked the identity of the partner organization.
- Allowed participants to conduct the interviews in person at a private location of their choosing or over Zoom.
- Used a password protected external hard drive to digitally store and organize a case study database.
- Kept all paper documents in a locked file cabinet.
- Discussed data in such a way that participants could not be identifiable to anyone other than themselves.
- Stored data such as recordings and transcripts without personal information attached, using monikers such as *Teacher 1* and *Teacher 2*.

Before beginning the interviews, I emailed a set of background questions to determine if participants matched the selection criteria. If participants did not meet the selection criteria, I respectfully informed them that they were not a match for the study in a way that did not stigmatize or marginalize them. No known risks, discomforts, stigma, or conflicts of interest were attached to this research topic, and participant recruitment was noncoercive. Participants for interviews were teachers and administrators who are not vulnerable populations. Additionally, participants were extremely unlikely to experience any acute psychological state following interviews.

Informed consent was obtained orally and in writing prior to the interview, with sufficient time for participants to review the documents. The consent form was written so it was easy to understand and there was no language indicating that participants could waive their rights. Participants were encouraged to keep a copy of the informed consent form and to reach out if they had questions about the process or their rights. It included the study's purpose, a description of the data collection processes, a reminder of the state's mandated reporter laws for educators, and an estimate of the time commitment from each participant. Additionally, the consent form included my contact information in case participants had questions or wanted to withdraw consent. Participants were reminded at this time that they had the right to revoke their consent at any point.

## Summary

Qualitative case study research is appropriate for this study because it is a particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic account of how a complex bound phenomenon functions within a context (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). Consistent with the case study tradition, the methodology included multiple data sources: semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators and document analysis. By synthesizing a variety of data sources derived from multiple research instruments, I gained an extensive and in-depth understanding of how integrated ELD is used at one California school site to support LTEL achievement. Interviews were semi-structured, included open-ended questions, and were triangulated with document analysis (Naz et al., 2022). An *a priori* code definition log was used to begin data analysis with *in vivo* codes added in subsequent coding cycles (Saldaña, 2016). Strategies to improve trustworthiness included

peer debriefing, reflexive journaling, member checking, and a chain of evidence (Patton, 2015). All procedures for IRB approval were followed to ensure that the study was completed ethically with no harm to human participants. My approach, design, and methodology aligned with my problem and purpose statements because they allowed for an in-depth understanding of how teachers use integrated ELD practices in content-area classes to increase LTEL achievement in literacy, language skills, and content knowledge (Schoch, 2020). This research allowed for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon at one school site and yielded a thorough case description, which may prove useful within the local context and could be transferable to similar contexts for program improvement and policy decisions.

# Chapter 4: Results

## Introduction

In this qualitative case study, I researched how content-area math, science, ELA, and social science teachers at one California high school used integrated ELD strategies to improve the language, literacy, and content knowledge of their LTEL population. I also examined the role of administrators at the site and district levels in supporting teachers' implementation of integrated ELD practices. I used purposeful sampling to identify teachers and administrators who could speak knowledgeably about the site's integrated ELD implementation in interviews. The use of three distinct interview pools (i.e., teachers, site administrators, district administrators) allowed me to collect various perspectives and experiences, enriching the findings. Additionally, the use of document analysis allowed for the triangulation of data, which improved the trustworthiness of the study and added context to interview responses.

The study's research questions were:

RQ1: How do content-area teachers at one California high school use components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

RQ2: How do site and district administrators support content-area teachers at one California high school in using components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

In this chapter, I present the data collection process, beginning by describing the setting and including environmental and organizational conditions that may have influenced participants' experiences and perspectives. I then discuss the potential impact

of those conditions on data interpretation and analysis. Next, I describe the participants' demographics, the documents collected, and how I recorded and stored data. I then addressed deviations from the original data collection plan, including modifications to strategies used to improve trustworthiness by increasing the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I then explain my recursive analytic process of beginning with a priori codes derived from the conceptual framework, the literature review, and the preliminary analysis of pilot interviews, and then using in vivo codes to represent patterns that emerged organically through repeated analysis. I present patterns to illustrate how the use of codes, categories, and themes emerged. Next, I describe discrepancies in interview data from teachers and administrators. Finally, I frame five themes and explain how these themes address the conceptual framework, research questions, and scholarly literature. The interpretations, recommendations, and implications of this study discussed in Chapter 5 were derived from the themes presented here and are substantiated by quotes from interview transcripts and document analysis.

## Setting

The setting of this study was one traditional, comprehensive California high school. In the fall of 2023, when I engaged in data collection for this study, the school had 1498 students in grades 9-12, and 34% were EL-considered students, 20% were LTEL-considered students, and 35% were reclassified EL-considered students (see Table 3). The site's EL status data for the fall of 2023 are depicted in Table 3. These data present the site's current and former EL population as totaling more than 70% of the student population. Because students currently classified as ELs and students who have

reclassified within the last four years are legally required to receive additional instructional support, scaffolding, and progress monitoring (Monitoring reclassified students, n.d.), most students at this site in fall of 2023 was entitled to receive integrated ELD support within their content-area classes (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

**Table 3**

*EL Status Data for Participant Site for Fall of 2023*

| Student Group | Total Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| All students | 1498 | 100% |
| EL-classified | 515 | 34% of all students |
| LTEL-considered (subset of EL-classified) | 297 | 20% of all students (58% of EL-classified) |
| Reclassified EL-considered | 531 | 35% of all students |
| Never EL-Considered | 452 | 30% of all students |
| Socioeconomically disadvantaged | 1044 | 69.7% of all students |

*Note.* This table was created using data from the California School Dashboard (State of California, n.d.b) and the district's unpublished ELLevation reports (Document 9).

Student achievement at the site was low overall, with all student groups scoring below standard on the CAASPP assessments for math and ELA in the previous year. Still, achievement data for EL-classified students – 58% of whom were LTEL-considered – were lower than achievement data for other students. In Table 4, academic achievement data for all students in the 2022-2023 school year are compared to data from EL-classified students within the same year.

**Table 4**

*Student Achievement Data for Participant Site for 2022-2023*

| Student Group | ELA | Math | College/Career Readiness |
|---|---|---|---|
| All students | 55.3 points below standard | 156 points below standard | 19.2% prepared |
| EL-classified | 120.2 points below standard | 215.8 points below standard | 7% prepared |

*Note.* I created this table using data from the California School Dashboard (State of California, n.d.b).

The site was one of five comprehensive high schools in a district of approximately 30,000 students. This site was expected to serve students of all abilities and language levels who resided within a residency zone through a variety of course offerings. The teaching staff consisted of 72 teachers, 5 administrators, 4 school counselors, a social work specialist, and a variety of community-based partners located onsite to support students' academics, behavior, and mental health. Site staff who were designated to support EL-considered students included one site administrator; a teacher who had been released from 60% of her teaching duties to complete intake for newcomer EL-considered students and track and monitor EL progress; another teacher with one period assigned to coaching teachers in integrated ELD implementation; a bilingual parent liaison; and one bilingual counselor assigned to EL-considered students. The site was formerly organized into wall-to-wall academies, but at the start of the 2023-2024 school year, this model shifted to more flexible pathways for students, a policy change that yielded polarizing reactions from staff. The site previously offered an intervention hour two days a week, but for the 2023-2024 school year, staff voted to eliminate that time for intervention, which was another controversial issue among teachers. The site's most recent Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation self-

study from the 2021-2022 school year discussed at length the need to bolster the use of integrated ELD strategies through improved implementation of the Constructing Meaning™ (CM) framework schoolwide to improve student achievement, engagement, and access to curriculum. The accreditation report read,

> [CM] is an effective, rigorous, and relevant teaching practice in which the school is heavily invested. [The site] has been a [CM] school since the 2015-2016 school year when all staff was trained in one year. Since then, any teachers who join the staff are required to attend [CM] training days. Staff meetings usually also include between 20-40 minutes of [CM] strategies.

The report also recommended strengthening administrative oversight of teachers' use of integrated ELD to improve accountability for implementation and to inform professional development offerings for staff.

Environmental and organizational factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic may also have impacted participants' responses during interviews. All students and staff were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the distance learning format, which the school engaged in for the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year and the entire 2020-2021 school year. However, EL-considered students have a heightened need for interaction in English, which they may not have had at home during the pandemic (Reyes, 2021). Furthermore, LTEL-considered students, who disproportionately come from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Cashiola et al., 2021; Umansky & Avelar, 2022), may have experienced more barriers to distance learning, such as lack of access to Wi-Fi, a quiet study space, or the need to work outside the home (Reyes, 2021).

Accordingly, the 2023-2024 site plan listed several potentially competing initiatives to remediate learning loss from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as credit recovery, curricular adoptions, and an underlying sense of initiative fatigue amongst staff as they worked toward integrated ELD implementation. One participant explained the following.

> I think that after the pandemic, teachers have to deal with a different reality in a lot of stress, and that plays a role in their teaching, you know, in every time that you have a class and you have a group of students for whom you have to modify, it is more work for that teacher. (P3).

Although this study took place more than 2 years after the return to school in person, staff frequently referenced how much harder teaching had become since returning from the pandemic.

## Demographics

The study's participants included seven teachers and four administrators. Participants were given random participant numbers for data reporting, and the correlation of participant numbers to roles was not disclosed to ensure participant confidentiality. The 11 interview participants included one history teacher, two science teachers, two math teachers, two English teachers, two site administrators, and two district administrators. Additional demographic information about years teaching, educational background, and professional experience was collected but was not disclosed because the case study site had a small staff, and revealing additional information would compromise participants' confidentiality. I used the data derived from these interviews in

conjunction with document analysis to yield a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of integrated ELD strategies at the site. Document types and a brief description of their purpose are listed in Appendix F.

## Data Collection

Consistent with the study's proposal, data collection included conducting interviews and gathering documents. I selected participants based on criterion and snowball sampling to identify content-area teachers who used integrated ELD strategies in their classes, as well as site and district administrators who had knowledge of how teachers were supported in using integrated ELD in content-area classes. I interviewed the first interview participant by the district's EL instructional coach, whom I did not interview because she did not meet the selection criteria. I used suggestions from earlier participants to add additional participants until saturation was reached. With an initial goal of 2-4 administrator participants and 4-6 teacher participants, the number of interviews conducted met the study's projected needs and allowed for saturation to be reached.

The interview protocol followed what was detailed in the proposal, with interview appointments and consent for participation obtained via email. Interviews ranged from 30-60 minutes, with nine conducted in person in a private space with a closed door and no other people present, and the last two conducted on Zoom due to me contracting COVID-19. I recorded and transcribed all interviews using the Otter application and stored them in Quirkos using a password-protected account. After each interview, I asked participants to send documents discussed in the interview via email to assist with

document collection, and other documents were gathered from publicly viewable websites. A teacher on-site with release time to support teachers in ELD instruction also assisted in gathering pertinent documents. Additionally, I collected data from an online platform for organizing EL data called ELLevation, which was supported by the district. I kept all documents in a password-protected Google Drive folder.

## Data Analysis

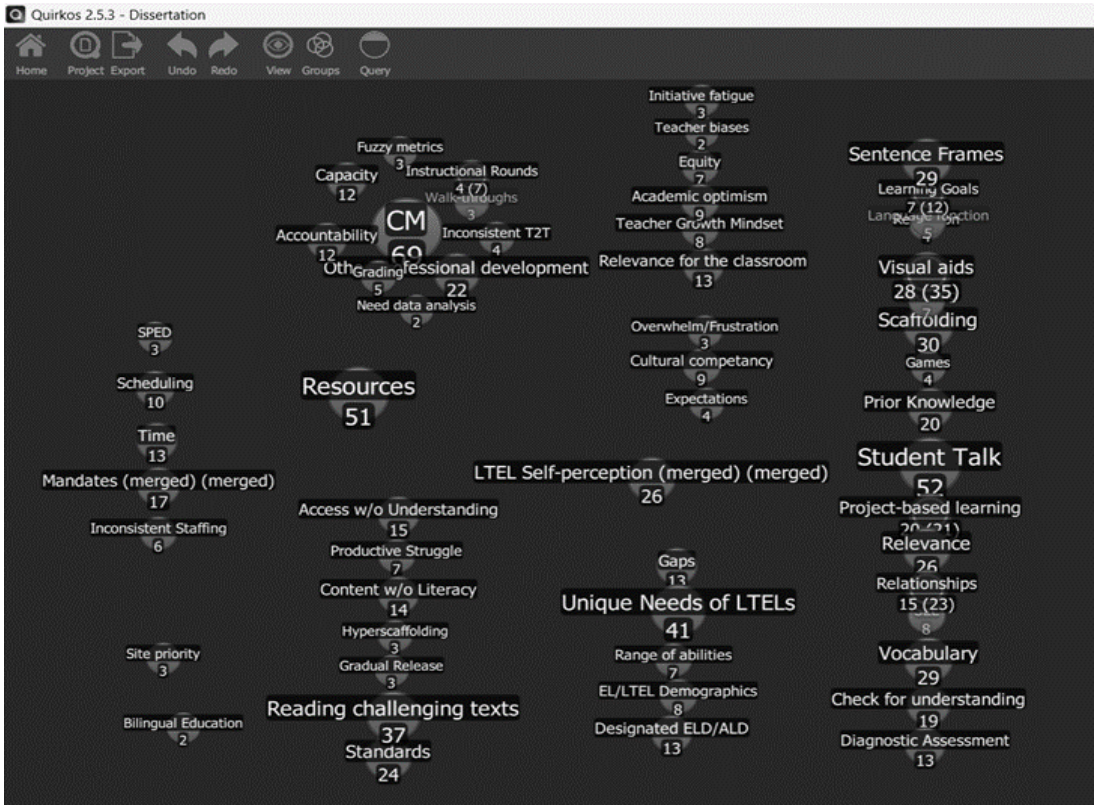
Data analysis followed the plan laid out in the proposal with minor shifts to accommodate the types of documents collected. I coded all interviews using Quirkos and analyzed documents manually using analytical memos. This shift was necessary because several documents included only a small number of items that could be coded, but those isolated data were crucial for answering the research question or providing evidence of the site or district's practices. For this reason, I wrote an analytical memo for each document to allow for a more holistic description of the evidence (Saldaña, 2016).

I began the process of coding interviews using Quirkos while still in the interview stage by creating a quirk (i.e., a symbol) to represent each a priori code (Appendix D). Then, when I analyzed the second interview, I noticed new potential patterns emerging, so I created a second code definition log for in vivo codes (Appendix E), each of which I also assigned a quirk in Quirkos (Saldaña, 2016). I then applied the a priori and in vivo codes to subsequent interviews and continued to add in vivo codes until the final interviews, when I determined that I had reached saturation because I was adding a few new codes (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Mason, 2010). After I coded each interview, I returned to all previous interviews and reread them to determine if I could apply the newly added

in vivo codes to the interviews that I had already coded (Saldaña, 2016). This constant comparative analysis process meant that I read the first interview more than 10 times, and I read the later interviews fewer times (Burkholder et al., 2020; Saldaña, 2016). Still, I analyzed the later interviews with a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon, using a more complete code definition log and requiring fewer rounds of analysis. This process yielded 47 codes that I grouped into eight categories, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Saldaña, 2016). I then engaged in selective coding by choosing to focus on categories that seemed most relevant to the research questions and that were supported by data and scholarly literature. These considerations allowed me to refine the categories to those most germane to the research proposal (Burkholder et al., 2020; Saldaña, 2016).

**Figure 1**

*Quirkos Codes, Categories, and Code Frequencies*




***Interview Analysis Process***

The multistep analytical coding process revealed the categories and codes listed in Table 5. Although eight categories emerged from the interview data, I selected only six categories for further exploration through triangulation with document analysis; the category of LTEL self-perception lacked direct relevance to the research questions or the conceptual framework, and the category of barriers to implementation could be woven into the other six categories.

**Table 5**

*Categories of Codes with Research Questions Addressed and Frequency of Codes*

| Category | Research Question Addressed | Codes Included (with Frequency of Code References) |
|---|---|---|
| Integrated vs. designated ELD | RQ2 | CM (69), adoptions (13), ELD/ALD sections (5), release .2 (4), tutoring (3), district instructional coach (2), bilingual aid (2), EL support teacher (1) |
| LTEL ≠ All EL | RQ1<br>RQ2 | Unique needs of LTELs (41), gaps (13), integrated/designated ELD (13), EL/LTEL demographics (8), range of abilities (7) |
| Teacher mindset | RQ1<br>RQ2 | Relevance for the classroom (13), academic optimism (9), growth mindset (8), equity (7), inconsistent staffing (6), low expectations (4), initiative fatigue (3), overwhelm/frustration (3), teacher biases (2) |
| Constructing Meaning | RQ1 | CM (69), other professional development (22), capacity (12), accountability (12), instructional rounds (7), grading (5), inconsistent implementation (4), administrative walkthroughs (3) |
| Instructional strategies | RQ1 | Student talk routines (52), visual aids/modeling (35), sentence frames (30), vocabulary development (29), visual aids (28), relevance (26), building relationships/SEL (23), project-based learning (21), prior knowledge (20), check for understanding (19), learning goals/language function (17), diagnostic assessment (13), games (4), repetition (4) |
| Need for Rigor | RQ1<br>RQ2 | Need for rigorous reading (37), standards-based learning (24), access without understanding (15), content without literacy (14), productive struggle (7), hyper-scaffolding (3), gradual release of responsibility (3) |
| ~~Barriers to integrated ELD implementation~~ | ~~Neither~~ | ~~Mandates (17), time (13), scheduling (10), inconsistent staffing (6), dual identification in special education (3)~~ |
| ~~LTEL self-perception~~ | ~~Neither~~ | ~~Afraid to try (4), give up (5), shame (3), don't realize they're LTELs (3)~~ |

### *Document Analysis Process*

After completing both an *a priori* and *in vivo* coding process, I used the categories derived from the recursive analytical process and progressive focusing (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018) as a lens to write analytical memos about each document (See Appendix G) which contained a description of each document, a summary of the relevant content, and my analytical notes follow. I analyzed documents holistically by reading each in its entirety to gain context and a comprehensive understanding of how the site was implementing integrated ELD. I then used keyword searches determined by the

coding of the interviews to ensure that I had noted all salient lines or data. I then wrote an analytical memo for each document, describing the data's significance in relation to the research questions and reflecting on how the data presented in the documents related to the data presented in the interviews. This consequential analytical method is more frequently used in mixed methods analysis because it incorporates the triangulation of multiple types of data sources to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

The triangulation of data from interviews and documents led to the selection of five themes, which led to the study's conclusions and recommendations (Burkholder et al., 2020; Saldaña, 2016). I presented a detailed chain of evidence to elucidate how the raw data were coded, categorized, and triangulated to determine the final themes for discussion. This systematic approach to thematic coding allowed for progressive focusing on emergent themes to draw logical conclusions about findings through an iterative, logical, data driven process (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). The conceptual framework of the ZPD ensured that the analytic focus remained on how LTEL-considered students learn language, literacy, and content knowledge. Additionally, the research questions helped ground the analytic process in considerations of how integrated ELD was implemented at this site to improve LTEL-considered students' access to language, literacy, and content knowledge. Tables 6 and 7 show the progression from *a priori* codes to *in vivo* codes to categories to themes in support of each research question.

**Table 6**

*A Priori-Codes, In Vivo Codes, Categories and Themes to Support RQ1*

| *A Priori* Codes | *In Vivo* Codes | Categories | Themes |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Unique needs of LTELs | LTEL ≠ All EL | LTEL ≠ All EL |
| | Gaps in learning | | |
| | LTEL demographics | | |
| | Range of abilities | | |
| Student motivation | Standards-based instruction | Integrated/designated ELD | Integrated/designated ELD |
| Expectations | Perception of LTEL-considered students | Academic optimism | Academic optimism |
| | Constructing Meaning | Constructing Meaning | Constructing Meaning |
| | Reading challenging texts | Instructional strategies | |
| | Professional development | | |
| | Initiative fatigue | | |
| PD Transfer | Equity | | |
| | Academic optimism | | |
| | Teacher growth mindset | | |
| | Vocabulary | | |
| | Sentence frames | | |
| | Student talk | | |
| | Learning goals | | |
| | Visual aids | | |
| | Games | | |
| Oral discourse | Prior knowledge | | |
| | PBL | | |
| | SEL | | |
| | Vocabulary | | |
| | CFU | | |
| | Diagnostic Assessment | | |
| +Scaffolds | Content without literacy | Need for literacy and rigor | Need for literacy and rigor |
| -Scaffolds | Access without understanding | | |
| | Gradual release of responsibility | | |
| | Hyperscaffolding | | |

**Table 7**

*A Priori Codes, In Vivo Codes, Categories and Themes to Support RQ2*

| *A Priori* Codes | *In Vivo* Codes | Categories | Themes |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Unique needs of LTELs<br>Gaps in learning<br>LTEL demographics<br>Range of abilities | LTEL ≠ All EL | LTEL ≠ All EL |
| | Resource allocation<br>Site priority | Integrated/designated ELD | Integrated/designated ELD |
| | Constructing Meaning | Constructing Meaning | Constructing Meaning |
| Expectations for LTELs<br>Student motivation<br>Mandates | | Academic optimism | Academic optimism |
| Assessments<br>Reclassification<br>Scheduling<br>Time<br>Instructional resources<br>SPED<br>Capacity | Inconsistent staffing<br>Grading<br>Accountability<br>Inconsistencies teacher-to-teacher<br>Initiative fatigue | Barriers to integrated ELD implementation | |

## Evidence of Trustworthiness

As per the proposal, I employed a multifaceted approach to enhancing the trustworthiness of this study, using the following research-based strategies for increasing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

### Credibility

I used strategies suggested by Burkholder et al. (2020) and Ravitch and Carl (2021) to enhance the study's credibility. First, I used an interview guide with a detailed script for the preliminary comments, questions, and post interview conversations pertaining to documents and referrals of additional participants (See Appendix A). I also used an interview guide with questions for teachers (See Appendix B) and administrators (See Appendix C). Throughout the interviews, I asked probing and clarifying questions as

needed and was careful to keep a neutral tone and avoid leading questions. I edited transcripts to ensure that audio recordings were transcribed correctly and showed fidelity to participants' words. Additionally, I triangulated data by conducting interviews with three categories of participants (i.e., teachers, site administrators, and district administrators) and comparing interview data to various documents. My doctoral chair and I met regularly to engage in peer debriefing of research design, data collection methods, analytical processes, and conclusions. Finally, I engaged in member checking twice by allowing participants multiple opportunities to correct their transcripts and offer commentary on a final summary of the study's conclusions.

**Transferability**

Consistent with the proposal, I addressed the issue of transferability by writing thick descriptions of the setting – including both the school and district contexts – research design, data collection methods, data analysis, and the study's conclusions, so fellow researchers and practitioners could consider the applicability of findings to other sites as appropriate (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018).

**Dependability**

To increase the likelihood that other researchers could replicate this study, I wrote detailed field notes and maintained a reflexive journal to mitigate bias. I also wrote a statement of positionality to articulate my subjective orientation to the data. Additionally, I engaged in member checking and peer examination of the data, conclusions, and discussion. My adherence to the interview guides increased consistency in data collection, as did the use of qualitative codes, an *a priori* code definition log (see

Appendix D), and an *in vivo* code definition log (see Appendix E). I also used Quirkos to ensure I drew conclusions from the participants' words and the code frequencies. I then confirmed and contextualized participants' words by triangulating them with a diverse collection of documents created by the district, site, participants, and outside agencies (Saldaña, 2016).

### Confirmability

I established the confirmability of this study by describing in clear, logical, and traceable language how I reached the conclusions (Nowell et al., 2017). Additionally, the use of detailed field notes and a chain of evidence to show the progression of raw data to codes, categories, and themes also increased the likelihood that a reasonable, knowledgeable researcher would come to similar conclusions (Nowell et al., 2017). The multifaceted array of strategies used to improve the trustworthiness of this study ensures that its findings have been derived fairly from the evidence.

## Results

The problem addressed by this study was that little is known about how teachers at one California high school include components of integrated ELD in their content-area classes to increase LTEL achievement or how site and district administrators support this work. The combination of interview data and document analysis yielded abundant relevant data to address the research problem and questions, which I have synthesized into five themes:

1. There was a tendency to conflate the needs of LTEL-considered students with the needs of other EL-classified students.

2. The staff showed varying levels of academic optimism for their LTEL-considered students and their site's ability to meet their needs.
3. There were limitations to the use of the site's use of the integrated/designated ELD framework.
4. The site embraced the CM instructional framework amidst concerns about the effectiveness of the model.
5. Teachers tended to prioritize content and student work completion over teaching students to engage in high-level literacy and productive struggle.

This section further explores these analytical themes using participants' own language when possible; however, I paraphrased data when a sentiment was repeated similarly multiple times or by multiple participants. For the sake of brevity, I chose not to present all relevant data, with only the most salient or representative quotes presented. To ensure confidentiality, I randomly assigned the eleven participants numbers, which I stated as "P11" for "Participant 11," and so on.

**Conflating LTEL and EL Status**

Although the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) and *California State English Learner Roadmap* (California Department of Education, 2022) require differentiated programming and support for LTEL-considered students to meet their unique needs, the district's LCAP – a data driven three-year plan written to influence decision-making and improve transparency around resource allocation districtwide – consistently generalized EL-classified students. Despite LTEL-considered students in grades 6-12 constituting 67% of EL-classified students (Document 9), support for EL-classified students was

universally described as targeting all EL-classified students without distinction and the need for improved focus on LTEL instruction was not specifically noted in the LCAP. Instead, sixteen actions for improving EL achievement were listed: Multi-tiered systems of support, social emotional learning, extended learning programs, specialized academic programs, preschool literacy, instructional technology supports, training in standards-based instruction, training in data analysis and protocols, leadership capacity-building, classified training and support, recruitment and retention of highly-qualified staff, increasing and improving communication, family education opportunities, student outreach and support programs for students with disabilities, student outreach and support programs for emerging and bilingual students, and specialized supports for families. This list focused heavily on supports outside the classroom, with only two directly targeting instruction for EL-classified students: social emotional learning and training in standards-based instruction.

Additionally, LTEL-considered students were mentioned directly in the LCAP only once: “Staff will implement, monitor and adjust supports and services for emerging bilingual students, including but not limited to, the addition of specific sections and courses to support the needs of newcomer EL-considered students and long-term English language learners.” Supporting data were not disaggregated for LTEL-considered students or other EL-classified student groups. This signals a need for districtwide differentiation between the needs of LTEL-considered students and other EL-classified students. The data also suggest a districtwide emphasis on addressing the holistic needs

of EL-classified students, and initiatives to target teaching and learning for EL-classified students were less extensive.

The tendency to overgeneralize LTEL-considered students with other EL-classified students could also be seen at the site level in the SPSA. This document was used for strategic planning based on data and input from a variety of stakeholders to discuss programming and resource allocation for the site. The SPSA indicated a need for increased attention to instruction and support for LTEL-considered students: "Because we are the primary school site for 'Newcomer' English Language Learners, strategies targeting the needs of the long-term English Learners can fall out of focus." Although the site plan acknowledged a lack of focus on LTEL-considered students, it also indicated a heavy investment in improving access to a standards-based curriculum for all students, with an emphasis on CM implementation to meet the needs of EL-classified students. Still, the lack of achievement data and discussion of LTEL-considered students as a unique group may indicate a need for additional sitewide focus on this population.

Site and district staffing decisions also showed a need to differentiate for LTEL-considered students. EL staffing to support integrated and designated ELD included three bilingual aids. It is noteworthy that when asked how the district supported LTEL-considered students, three participants (P1, P3, P8) first referenced these bilingual aids, who would support newcomer EL-considered students but would not assist LTEL-considered students, who are typically orally proficient. P3 acknowledged, "Although [the bilingual aid position is] generally used for the kids who are not considered LTELs" (P3). The allocation of .2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to support newcomer EL-

considered students, which several participants also mentioned as an LTEL support, would not benefit LTEL-considered students.

Many participants discussed supporting all EL-classified students similarly, with several teachers using the same supports for all students. One participant explained, “At a site like mine, where there's [LTEL-considered students] and… [a] broader spectrum of bilingual students, it's pretty much for me going to be the same supports” (P9). Another participant said,

> I don't know if I change, specifically, how I [teach] for English language learners, as opposed to students who are non-English language learners who may be seeing this as like some sort of repetitive, easy scaffold step… It's a low entry, so the English language learners are able to follow along because it's not such a complex idea, right… So I don't know if I… do it differently for [LTEL-considered students] (P11).

Another participant acknowledged that she currently does not differentiate for EL-classified and LTEL-considered students differently and expressed a desire to create scaffolds for the various levels of EL-classified students in her classes. This participant stated, “I have notes that are scaffolded at different levels. Right now, there's really… only… one…, but in the future, I'd like to have multiple, so that I can better meet the needs of kids who are in different places” (P2). Another participant referenced a site and districtwide need to focus more on LTEL-considered students’ needs specifically, saying, “The LTELs are not our focus. It's, unfortunately, a little bit of sink or swim” (P3).

Several participants expressed that teachers didn't always know who their LTEL-considered students were or what they needed to be successful. To help staff know their students, the site had engaged in data work at the start of the school year. One participant explained,

> Every year, we start the year [with] a demographic breakdown and trying to underline to the teachers that this is our students. This isn't some mystery population in somebody else's classroom. [We show] them how to identify the English learners and the long-term English learners. (P1)

Three months after this training, three participants accurately summarized the site's EL demographic data as constituting approximately one-third of the student population (P1, P2, P4), with one participant accurately adding that a little more than half of the EL population was comprised of LTEL-considered students (P4). Another participant (P11) stated incorrectly that the total number of EL-classified students at the site was 18-20%, reflecting the potential need for further demographic data review with some staff.

Although not all staff knew who their EL-classified or LTEL-considered students were, participants were generally aware of the specialized needs of LTEL-considered students. One participant stated,

> Teachers come in, and if they haven't been clued into what's happening at this site, they can be teaching the wrong kids and not really get it. And then they're like, 'I don't know why these kids aren't doing the right thing.' And it's like, 'Well, because you're not giving them what they need' (P1).

Another participant added, “We have to ultimately make sure that [content-area teachers] are also trained [to connect] content with our [LTEL-considered students]” (P4).

Although there was a consistent lack of differentiation for LTEL-considered students, participants referenced equity concerns and discussed a desire to provide students with the support they need to be successful. One participant explained, “An English teacher serving students in California is going to be serving [LTEL-considered students], so if I want to do this job, that's what I need to be able to do” (P2). One participant (P7) described choosing her credential program and making the decision to work at the participant site as a social justice issue. Two other participants (P1 and P4) described using an equity lens for decision-making, planning, and resource allocation. Although participants consistently generalized the needs of LTEL-considered students with other EL-classified groups, participants consistently showed an orientation toward equity in discussions of EL-classified students as a broader group.

**Varying Levels of Academic Optimism**

Staff at the site also exhibited varying levels of academic optimism, which can be defined as a school culture that has a strong academic orientation, collective efficacy of staff, and faculty trust in parents and students (Marcos et al., 2021). Participants consistently showed a strong desire for an academic orientation, with all teachers discussing their use of standards-based lessons and a desire to help LTEL-considered students access them. However, as one participant explained, the staff’s high aspirations for students were not always evident in classroom practices:

> I think most of the teachers have the will. And what we're working on at this point is the know-how. We're getting everybody rowing in the same direction, and I think what frustrates teachers frequently is having actual actionable strategies and tools to accomplish what they want to do. (P1)

The staff's capacity for integrated ELD was seen by several participants (P1, P3, P4, P8) as low, despite the school having implemented CM for the past nine years. Thus, although participants expressed a desire for a strong academic orientation for LTEL-considered students, the perception of low collective efficacy indicates diminished ' at this site.

Regarding trusting students, the third strand of academic optimism, all teachers expressed a belief that LTEL-considered students could be successful when given appropriate supports. One participant linked teachers' generally strong belief in students' potential to the various professional development experiences that had been provided for staff by saying, "I think that one of the most beneficial things [about] various professional development is believing that your students, regardless of their backgrounds and their language abilities, can get to a level that everyone is excited about" (P5). This trust in students mirrors the teachings of the CM framework, which all teachers had been trained in, showing a strong transfer from the professional learning opportunities offered and the mindset of participants.

It follows that a professional growth mindset was also noted among participants. One participant said, "The most important thing for me to continue to work on [is] for me to find strategies… that work for [LTEL-considered students]" (P6). Another reflected,

> Teaching takes a very careful blend of… both pride and humility… If what we were doing… was working, we probably wouldn't be having this interview, right? But obviously… we have to be willing to keep exploring because no one has the answers, and that's the humility part. But there's also the confidence part… knowing that your approach… is actually addressing [LTEL-considered students' needs] and trying to blend the two to continue to improve. (P5)

Several participants referenced instructional rounds, which were teacher-organized walkthroughs of other teachers' classrooms, as evidence of teachers' professional growth mindsets to improve student outcomes. One participant explained, "Instructional rounds… here at the school [are] not facilitated through the district, but our teachers here" (P2). This focus on professional learning was underscored by teachers' active participation in teacher-led classroom walkthroughs, as evidenced by data from document analysis (Document 8), and strengthened the academic optimism of staff for their LTEL-considered students.

Although participants exhibited a mindset oriented toward equity, academic optimism, and a strong professional growth mindset, many also expressed concerns that their fellow educators have low expectations for this population. One participant explained,

> [LTEL-considered students] get labeled by… teachers as dumb or lazy or incompetent, or, you know, the stereotypical, 'Oh, they come from a culture where they just don't value education,' and then all of these despicable

> generalizations about, about what kinds of assets they're bringing with them, and not recognizing the strengths that they have. (P1)

Another discussed how low expectations for LTEL-considered students influence both policy and practice,

> What underlies a lot of all of [decision-making] is the mindsets of our teachers, of our administrators… of our district administrators and district managers... Just what do we expect from groups of kids? And what… do we… believe students are able to accomplish? And… where can they… how far do we think those kids can go? Because I think there are a lot of preconceived stereotypes and generalizations. (P3)

It is notable that discussions of bias were frequently grounded in discussions of other educators' practices and were never referenced in relation to participants' own perceptions or attitudes.

Similarly, academic optimism was compromised by the fact that most teachers referenced a belief in the need for integrated ELD in school, but not always in relation to their own instructional practices. One explained,

> I think that most teachers see it as important. A lot of teachers see it as more important for other teachers… This would be super helpful in the math classes or super helpful in an English class, so there's a little bit of other people's problem mixed into it. (P1)

One participant described their department as being relatively aligned in terms of content but not in terms of instructional practices, saying, "The way [curriculum] gets taught

might be pretty different among the different department members" (P5). Another participant said, "At my site, particularly, I've always had a free range of what I do lots of freedom" (P9). Yet another described the current integrated ELD implementation plan for the site as follows: "I don't know if there is an actual plan. I think it varies teacher by teacher… Obviously, the fact that I can't answer this is one problem" (P3). One participant argued that the norming of grading should come before the norming instructional strategies, saying,

> [Teacher-to-teacher consistency] is something that we're really working towards. The first step towards that is trying to normalize grading practices, because once teachers notice, once they normalize their grading practices, then there's nothing really else to blame for student outcomes except for classroom practices (P1).

Several participants referenced the variability of integrated ELD implementation as being linked to the site's high rates of turnover among the staff because the site was known regionally as a high-needs school, which has historically led to long-term vacancies, inconsistent teaching teams, and the perpetual need to restart professional development initiatives with appreciable portions of the staff (P1, P7, P10). The need for additional time for staff to collaboratively plan to align instructional practices was clear.

**Limitations to Integrated/Designated ELD**

The district's instructional framework for integrated and designated ELD was consistent with the *California State English Learner Roadmap* of 2017. The district and site allocated significant resources to support LTEL-considered students through integrated ELD and designated ELD. The site allocated three sections of a designated

ELD course known as ALD. One participant explained that for “language support, [LTEL-considered students] get ALD and then in their core content classes they are supposed to receive also language support… and that's what we call integrated ELD” (P8). Multiple participants (P3, P4, P8) said the district gave funding for the ALD course to the site from the district. One added that LTEL-considered students were expected to have both designated and integrated ELD in their content-area classes:

> The money that comes from the district for the ALD classes… doesn't support the content-area classes specifically, but the assumption is the students would have an ALD class [and] would also have this content-area class with this trained teacher using CM. (P8)

Notably, only three ALD classes were created when at least 11 would have been necessary for every LTEL-considered student to have access to a designated ELD class. This indicated that the only language instruction given to approximately 75% of LTEL-considered students was in their content-area classes, underscoring the importance of the implementation of integrated ELD strategies in content-area classes.

The district also supported integrated ELD implementation through the CM instructional framework. One participant explained, “We use most of our money in professional development” (P8), and another said,

> And that's why we've adopted wholeheartedly the [CM] platform. I don't know if it's called a platform or a protocol or what but [CM] is basically the primary toolkit that we've been pushing with to make that happen. And ultimately, it's a commitment of time and money to make sure that the teachers are getting the

> professional development and the opportunity to refine and retool their lesson plans to fit and give the kids the scaffolding and supports that they need (P1).

Another participant referenced the significant investment required for CM implementation, saying, “The training of [CM] is costly because we pay for all those subs so [teachers] can come” (P3). Integration of the CM framework also required the district to purchase instructional materials from the publisher, pay for licenses for individual teachers to use the online portal, provide substitutes for teachers to attend off campus training, and fund instructional coaches to deliver the content of the four day training, as well as to provide ongoing support for implementation as needed. One participant noted that additional site-based allocations were necessary to support the district’s CM implementation, so the site plan had been adjusted to provide for “collaboration time so that people can work with their course-alike groups to develop curriculum, agree on some common standards, and look at vertical integration of their curriculum to make sure [they] identify… essential standards” (P1). The teacher who had been given .2 FTE release for new teacher support and integrated ELD implementation also contributed to teacher-to-teacher alignment.

It is noteworthy that the district’s approach to integrated and designated ELD implementation had evolved little in the last decade. A comparison of the 2012 and 2024 draft plan indicated that the district’s vision for supporting EL-considered students remained very similar from 2012 to 2024 despite a rapidly growing body of research in this field. The 2024 draft stated that it followed the *California State English Learner Roadmap* that was passed in 2017; however, the plan for LTEL-considered students was

nearly identical to the plan from 2012, implying that it had not been carefully revised to include current research-based approaches to meeting the needs of LTEL-considered students. Furthermore, within the 108-page 2024 plan, LTEL programming was given less attention than other programs, with LTEL-considered students being mentioned only 22 times, compared to bilingual programming, which was mentioned 129 times. It is also significant that the majority of students in bilingual programs were not EL-classified and that few were LTEL-considered students at the time of the study because the district's bilingual programs were almost exclusively in elementary schools. These data points taken together suggest that EL programming had been given less attention districtwide than other programs and initiatives, and that of the programs designed for EL-classified students, those for LTEL-considered students were given lower priority than those for other EL-classified students. The fact that the 2024 plan was dated 2020 but had not yet been adopted due to delays from COVID-19, which ended three years prior to the current study, could indicate a lack of prioritization of EL programming districtwide.

**Constructing Meaning Embraced Amidst Concerns**

Participants agreed that integrated ELD was a valuable resource for LTEL-considered students to achieve at high-levels in content-area classes, and all referenced CM as foundational to the site's integrated ELD implementation. The site has been consistently working to integrate the CM framework sitewide since 2015 to help teachers bolster their instructional toolkits for integrated ELD. As one participant remembered, "We saw that we had English learners that… were not progressing at the secondary level.

We decided that we needed a framework to address the instruction of those students" (P8). One participant explained the need for CM:

> If you go into an earth science class, the kids need to be reading and writing and listening and speaking [in] every class, every day. And so we've been [working] with… teachers across the content-areas to get them to see ways to integrate strategies for the students to practice their English skills. (P1)

Another described the implementation of the CM framework to meet the need for integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students as follows:

> The most relevant [professional learning] to support [LTEL-considered students was CM]… We had to do that training our first year as a teacher here, and I think it was at least… four or five days… They gave us the binder, and it has… different strategies that you could use in it… I thought [it] was pretty useful. They also… gave us some time to work on things and content-area-specific stuff. And… I don't use every single thing I learned in that meeting, but I've definitely used some of those tools on that… I can't think of anything else, honestly, that's just for LTELs or English language learners. (P7)

This description of CM as being a thorough, well-resourced, and useful professional learning experience was reinforced by every participant, with several describing it as the only relevant formal professional development offered to teachers to help them meet the needs of LTEL-considered students (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P8, P10, P11).

Further evidence that the CM framework was universally viewed as valuable for supporting LTEL-considered students follows. One participant explained,

> I think the scaffolding piece, that's really where… [CM comes] into play... It's increasing access for our English learners to be able to participate, to understand, to respond to, you know, whatever the content is, be it in math, science, history. And… I feel like… the push is… making the content digestible and accessible to students. (P3)

Another explained how CM helped students organize their thoughts by saying, "But like they all pretty much wrote really good paragraphs and use the academic language. And… if they wouldn't have had those CM things, there would be all kinds of numbers over here" (P10). One participant explained that she liked "having, for example, the sentence frames to… help the students with their grammar and spelling because sometimes they get stuck on… how to write something" (P7). Yet another explained that CM allowed teachers to "meet the needs of all students, but LTELs specifically" (P4). Teachers and administrators alike perceived a high value in CM for integrated ELD implementation.

The site's commitment to CM was evidenced by financial investments in sustaining and deepening implementation of the longstanding initiative. 100% of new teachers receiving intensive CM training to support integrated ELD implementation, and 85% of returning/veteran teachers participating in refresher professional development. Resources allocated for CM included pay for release time ($8000), replenishment of CM instructional materials ($10,000), training and professional development for teaching

staff ($18,217.35), substitute teachers for collaboration time for teams ($6000), additional pay for teachers to work on common assessments and student data ($11,048.64), .2 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) for EL support coordinator ($45,000), EL intervention sections ($60,000), and classroom supplies and materials ($10,000). One participant stated, "There is one teacher… who [is] well-versed in CM, and so he does have a period, which the principal will call a CM period… This particular teacher has time to plan and has time to meet with teachers, so it's time to push in support" (P4). Teachers who wished to collaborate on integrated ELD implementation were also paid extended hours or given release time. Additionally, the district funded two districtwide coaching positions to support 57 sites in instructional and curricular support for all EL-classified students, although one was vacant at the time of the study. These data reflect an investment in increasing the instructional focus on all EL-classified students. Several participants estimated that this site received the majority of district coaching support (P1, P3, P8), showing an allocation of additional resources to meet the needs of the EL-classified students.

This appreciation for CM has led to a shared vision for integrated ELD and dedication to CM implementation that was referenced by several participants. One participant said, "[With] integrated ELD, we have… kind of like a drive here" (P4). Another participant emphasized the site's dedication to CM implementation, saying,

> Our school has for a long time… been a [CM] school… Every teacher has been trained… or is in the process of the [training]. Administrators… have done a really good job at making sure that teachers know that it's not an option. (P1)

Another participant described the site's dedication to CM implementation as less universally wholehearted:

> I believe… close to 95% or higher of [the] teachers have been trained in [CM], which is one of the main… strategies for supporting LTELs. And I think that it is with some dragging feet. There are people who do it [and] there are people who don't. (P3)

Another issue raised with the universal training of teachers in the CM framework was that teachers were often trained in their first year in the district and gradually forgot their training (P1, P3, P5, P8, P9). The district attempted to remedy this by offering additional on site professional "refreshers, just for the folks who it's been a while, [to] bring it right back to the forefront, so [this site] is probably the most supported and [has] the highest amount of teachers… trained… in CM" (P8). Although not every teacher had embraced the CM framework, several participants voiced that all teachers at the site had been trained in CM, used its tools to varying degrees, and saw the need for its implementation.

These data indicated that the site saw the need to improve LTEL instruction, had invested significant site funds to meet that goal, and was engaged in practices to support integrated ELD implementation via the CM framework. Although there was a desire to support LTEL-considered students at the district and site levels with investments of financial resources, data for LTEL-considered students and resource allocations were not disaggregated from the general EL population in the LCAP or the SPSA. This again revealed an institutional tendency – that follows from longstanding state and district

policy – to perceive, plan for, and address the needs of all ELs similarly without considering the distinct needs of each EL student group, such as newcomer EL-considered students, on-track ELs, students at risk of LTEL consideration, LTEL-considered students, and students dually identified as EL-classified students in need of special education services.

Although this study's participants saw theoretical value in CM, the varying levels of implementation from teacher to teacher warranted further exploration of the framework's use sitewide. One participant explained experiencing challenges with CM implementation:

> I would advocate to the wall for the value of [CM] and how critical it is for these kids. And yet, between you and me, the amount of times that I actually integrated structured student talk in my classroom was close to never, just because pragmatically, it felt like surviving the period was more important than experimenting with new things that might just be lame or causing… the kids to go into a mutiny or something. (P1)

The idea that participants may have described the value of CM in ways that did not reflect their actual usage of the framework was underscored by the site's need for increased administrative accountability to ensure CM implementation. Several participants referenced these administrative walkthroughs (P1, P3, P4), and one said, "I think that [administrative walkthroughs are] helpful, because then [the site] can really… say… here's some patterns… and what we're not seeing, and what we would like to see"

(P4). Another participant said accountability for integrated ELD implementation needed to be coupled with more resources:

> My ideal would be [that] teachers have so much more time for planning, so much more time for development, fewer students, but that we also hold people accountable. Like… we have writing assessments and this is what kids need to be able to write and read you know. [But] that's not… where we are focusing our time and energy (P3).

Another participant reinforced the need for additional resources to support CM implementation, saying,

> And I think that money well spent would be pulling out strategically course-alike grade-level groups that work together and giving them a quick refresher but really focusing on providing time because time is a more precious resource and education than money. (P1)

The need for both increased resources and accountability for improving CM implementation nearly a decade into its adoption by the site is noteworthy and may suggest issues either with the model itself or its appropriateness of the site.

Another barrier to CM implementation was the perception of initiative fatigue amongst staff. One participant explained, “Teachers are maxed out, and… many feel burned out” (P3). This participant went on to say, “It feels like we're half-assing it all the time. And maybe that's just the vibe in a post-pandemic educational setting where we're just dog paddling through it and hoping that something sticks” (P3). Another participant

reinforced the idea that initiative fatigue may have interfered with integrated ELD implementation, saying,

> I think that some teachers have initiative fatigue essentially. And… there's always something new coming down and down the pike. And the most cynical, I believe, are just kind of waiting it out until the next trend in educational technology or toolkits comes along. (P1)

Teacher burnout and initiative fatigue in a post-COVID educational landscape are thus issues that must be explored and addressed in relation to CM implementation.

Time was also seen as a barrier to the effective implementation of CM strategies. One participant said, "[Teachers are] teaching all day long, and sixth period comes, and they're exhausted and, 'Yay, now I'm gonna go completely retool all of the lessons I've built up over the last 12 years' isn't going to be an easy sell" (P1). Another participant added, "And my guess is they don't feel like they have enough time to really go in-depth and support kids who they perceive – and probably correctly – are pretty far behind in certain skills" (P3). Although CM was universally touted as the most valuable resource for implementing integrated ELD in content-area classes, the consensus among educators that the framework required copious time that they did not have.

Teachers cited several research-based instructional strategies as being the most useful for their implementation of integrated ELD, many of which were featured in the CM framework. Table 8 delineates participants' views of the most-used instructional strategies for integrated ELD, according to participants. All participants referenced the importance of sentence frames and all but one referenced the importance of structured

student talk routines. Teachers were more likely to reference vocabulary development, accessing prior knowledge, gamification, repetition, and project-based learning, and administrators were more likely to reference writing effective language goals or establishing the language function of a lesson as key to effective instructional practices to support LTEL-considered students. These findings mirror the scholarly research on instructional strategies discussed in the literature review. Consistent with scholarly research, teachers found that accessing prior knowledge, explicit teaching of vocabulary, and cooperative conversations (e.g., student talk) were frequently referenced. Translanguaging was discussed by only one participant (P11) and engaging in grade-level reading and writing was seen as a consistent challenge.

The 2022 Western Association of Schools and Colleges self-study report was a tool for reflection and continuous improvement required for WASC accreditation. This report was written collaboratively by teachers and site administrators who were working in cross disciplinary teams. The study discussed at length the school's focus on CM as the primary mechanism for improving LTEL achievement, deeming CM the site's most successful and longest standing initiative and stating that since 2015-2016, all teachers have been trained in CM. Still, the report stated that survey data suggested CM was "not being implemented consistently nor with fidelity." The report also described the school's intention to redouble its commitment to improving student outcomes across subjects by integrating new pedagogical strategies in all content-areas, citing the current level of CM implementation as both an area of strength and an area for growth. Notably, CM was referred to repeatedly as a means of improving access to grade-level literacy regardless of

subject area, although data collected for this study suggested a lack of high-level literacy activities, again calling into question either the efficacy of the CM framework or the district and site's implementation of it. This need for additional data collection was noted in the WASC report, which said the site had a compelling need to gather data to ascertain the effectiveness of the CM program in improving student achievement.

Staff meeting agendas explained how time for administrator directed professional meetings was used to further the school's vision and mission. The WASC report stated that staff meetings typically included 20-40 minutes of review of instructional strategies to support integrated ELD, but staff meeting agendas indicated that this was accomplished at only 3/6 (50%) of staff meetings in the fall of 2023. At these meetings, the on site teacher coach was given 30 minutes to review CM strategies and data from instructional rounds (i.e., teachers observing other teachers to study elements of effective instruction). Of the three staff meeting agendas analyzed for this study, two reviewed the elements of a CM lesson (i.e., having a learning goal with content, language, and product); vocabulary development through bricks and mortar; student talk; student supports through frames and templates; and the use of frames that were high leverage and portable. The other staff meeting in which CM LTEL instruction was discussed focused on engagement, assessment, accountability, and structured student talk. The lack of emphasis on high-level literacy was noted in all meeting agendas.

The CM instructional framework was designed to be a five-day training for content-area teachers but was consolidated in this district into four days of training that were six hours each. Each day had a dynamic slideshow with approximately 100 slides

that included research-based pedagogy and participatory activities for teachers. The six components of the framework were backward design, language as a part of content teaching, structured student talk, interactive reading and note-making, academic writing support, and the use of assessment to refine instruction. Of the core components of CM, more time over the four days was allocated to backward design, language as a part of content teaching, and structured student talk.

Throughout the four-day training, teachers engaged in task analysis several times to determine the language necessary for students to complete tasks, which would allow them to create or provide appropriate scaffolds. The topics of interactive reading and notetaking, academic writing and support, and the use of assessment to refine instruction were concentrated on the last two days of the institute, alongside significant chunks of unstructured time for teachers to plan CM lessons. The three components of a CM lesson were explained as content, language function, and product; however, notably, a literacy goal was not required. Instructional strategies most discussed included structured student talk, vocabulary development, sentence frames, and notetaking while reading. CM repeatedly referenced the need to help students engage in productive struggle, but the level of scaffolding CM demonstrated contradicted this teaching, with many notetakers and activities providing most of the language necessary for students to complete a task (e.g., “In order to __, it is important/essential to __.”).

Another important element of the CM framework was academic optimism, which was described as educators’ belief in students’ abilities to be academically successful with appropriate support. Gradual release of responsibility was discussed on three slides

on Day 2 only, out of approximately 400 total slides, and was explained as, “I do, we do, you do together, you do on your own.” Although the importance of gradual release was emphasized, teachers were not explicitly shown how to do this, which may be why several interview participants expressed and demonstrated reluctance in handing the responsibility for learning over to students.

**Content Prioritized over Literacy and Rigor**

All teacher participants referenced, described, or provided examples of standards-based lessons. Many discussed the use of visual aids, videos, and image analysis to deliver content standards. One participant explained that the district’s instructional focus has been,

> How are we helping kids access this material? Not, how are we really supporting their high-levels of literacy? And even how [are they] learning… high levels of academic language? Because… we know [that] is where the gaps… for a lot of our long-term kiddos [are]. Their literacy levels aren't fully developed. (P3)

This emphasis on the delivery of content over high-level reading activities was seen as pragmatically necessary by many participants because of the perception that LTEL-considered students are reluctant readers and that literacy skills were a primary barrier to their academic achievement... One teacher reflected,

> The way I'll have LTEL students access [content] is really… image analysis… [using] primary sources and really trying to understand what's the main idea here… and not always trying to keep the main concept, but you know, simplify the [assignment] some extent. (P6)

As one participant stated, “Many [LTEL-considered students] are not reading at [grade level]” (P8). One participant said, “One thing I've noticed [is] there's a huge range within… EL students. Some of them are… just amazing… verbally… but then when it comes to reading, that can be a struggle” (P6). Another concurred that reading is the primary barrier for LTEL-considered students: “Speaking usually comes first… What they struggle with is reading, and where they kind of get stuck. And then they become [LTEL-considered]” (P4). Another participant added, “[LTEL-considered students] have… great potential, like tons of potential, but they just don't have the literacy skills… to succeed at grade level in the classroom” (P6). Another added, “And a lot of them, instead of reading to learn, they're still… learning to read” (P10). One participant emphasized that students need more language and literacy instruction, saying,

> If [students] don't learn the actual language and literacy, they're not able to communicate what they're doing [with content] with other people. And that's the whole reason to do it. No one just works in their little isolated silos without working with other people. [Content] is a tool that's used to communicate and to, to create, to build to explore, and to see you have to have language to do that. (P5)

The need for increased attention to high-level literacy skills for LTEL-considered students was heard from all but two participants. Another reiterated the belief that LTEL-considered students were likely to avoid reading tasks and described the usefulness of audiobooks for delivering content, saying,

> So when they can't access the content, because their reading skills aren't at that level, then they check out and just refuse to engage all together, saying, ‘Oh, well,

> I don't like reading,' [but] I can say, 'Well, did you know that there's an audiobook? (P2).

Other participants emphasized the need to teach LTEL-considered students via teacher-to-student interaction because of LTEL-considered students' tendency to avoid reading: "For those students, asking them questions about it, teaching them verbally about the concept is much stronger than having them read… A lot of them are just not going to a lot of the time" (P6). Another participant reinforced the need for direct instruction over reading to learn content, saying, "And so frequently, teachers will assign a chapter or five pages or something, but the real meat of the learning seems to be when the teacher engages with the students about that content with kind of alternative auxiliary resources" (P1). The need for students to access content knowledge was a priority over the development of high-level literacy skills

**Table 8**

*Most-Used Instructional Strategies*

| Instructional Strategy | Frequency | Frequency of Teacher References | Frequency of Administrator Responses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Structured Student Talk | 52 | 7/7 | 3/4 |
| Visual Aids | 35 | 6/7 | 3/4 |
| Sentence Frames | 30 | 7/7 | 4/4 |
| Vocabulary Development | 29 | 7/7 | 1/4 |
| Establishing Relevance | 26 | 6/7 | 3/4 |
| Project-Based Learning | 21 | 4/7 | 0/4 |
| Building Relationships/Social Emotional Learning | 23 | 4/7 | 3/4 |
| Accessing Prior Knowledge | 20 | 7/7 | 0/4 |
| Check for Understanding | 19 | 3/7 | 1/4 |
| Determining Language Goals and Function | 17 | 2/7 | 4/4 |
| Diagnostic Assessment | 13 | 2/7 | 1/7 |
| Gamification | 4 | 2/7 | 0/4 |
| Check for Understanding | 4 | 2/7 | 1/4 |

*Note*. This table was created using code frequency data from interviews for this case study.

Providing LTEL-considered students access to content knowledge over literacy and language development was largely seen as necessary to help LTEL-considered students pass their classes and graduate from high school. One participant explained, “So I think [LTEL-considered students’] very unique need is that they're kind of stuck academically between, ‘You're not at level,’ and, ‘We need you to graduate, so we need you to pass these classes” (P4). This push for on-time graduation may be in part why the instructional focus became “access [to the] curriculum and producing work in English crosses all subjects. It's something that we've been pushing very hard on” (P1). To get students to access and complete assignments, teachers were put in a position of needing to prioritize content and work production over literacy objectives. As one participant described:

> There are classes… where students can demonstrate their understanding of the topic without actually writing or saying anything… And I think… it's very dangerous to see that and then to get caught in this trap of… because that's possible, a student can draw a really beautiful picture without explaining the different artistic elements that are required to make that beautiful picture. They must know it. And so the same thing for [content knowledge]. They [can do it], but they don't need to really explain it to me. And because of that, I don't need to teach them any language whatsoever for doing this. All I need to do is show them [the content]. And it's one of my… biggest concerns… What is our purpose here? (P5).

This participant was not the only participant who objected to teaching content without literacy, with several others (P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P8, P10) also expressing a desire to have students read academic texts in content-area classes for the sake of literacy development alone. Still, the general perception was that this was not happening sitewide and there was a need to refine the district and site's implementation of the literacy strand of the integrated ELD model (i.e., language, literacy, content knowledge).

Ironically, the tendency to simplify lessons and provide abundant scaffolds to facilitate access to content standards and increase student work production may have been counterproductive, as some participants noted that the use of integrated ELD strategies often led to students completing work that showed little understanding of the content. One participant said, "One challenge that I face is… having students really understand how they're expressing themselves or sometimes… the content knowledge" (P9). Another added that students often complete work that they do not understand, saying, "Even the LTELs, they all scored either three or four [on the last common assessment]. And… even though [a] majority of them didn't actually understand the concept was wrong. It was like almost right but they got the wrong answer" (P10). This participant went on to explain that LTEL-considered students often received high marks on assignments because of their use of the CM scaffolds for language:

> I just think like grammar wise… as far as like putting together… a sentence that sounds and looks good. I feel like [CM] is good at that. But as far as really understanding the material and using it properly. Maybe not as effective. (P10)

The use of language scaffolds for writing was referenced as a key tool to increase student work completion, but several teachers expressed concerns about students' grasp of content standards.

One participant further problematized the CM framework – or the district's current implementation of it – directly, saying,

> I wouldn't say with a full heart that even CM definitely… hits the nail on the head with high-level reading and writing skills. I do feel like it's a lot of… 'How can our kids access this work?' And so it's like an entry point more than I would say high-level reading and writing, and I think this is… at the crux of where we're failing our kids. (P3)

This participant described the oversimplification of lessons at the site as prevalent, saying,

> We tell people… we don't want folks to water content down, which is true, we don't, but sometimes that means, that's a slippery slope. Scaffolding and watering down is, it is different, but I don't know how artfully people are able to do that. (P3)

One participant described her lessons as "super scaffolded" and said, "I want to avoid ever having them start with a blank piece of paper because that's the most intimidating thing that you could have" (P2). This participant went on to say, "I honestly never really take the scaffolds off. Because if I do, they freeze and often won't do the assignments" (P2). Another participant reinforced the idea that LTEL-considered students require high-levels of scaffolding to engage in rigorous learning activities, saying, "Another barrier

[is] if [LTEL-considered students] don't know something, they just won't do the assignment. Like they'd rather just not even try" (P7). Yet another participant described their experience with LTEL-considered students avoiding challenging tasks as:

> Often… I'll give them a prompt, but then I will very quickly if I don't think that they're understanding the prompt… or they haven't started yet… I will be like, 'Hey, how's it going? Do you understand? Do you understand the assignment? Like what do you need help with? (P6)

These findings supported some participants' perceptions that LTEL-considered students either cannot or will not engage in the cognitive struggle necessary to engage in complex learning tasks, or that teachers need further training in how to get students to persevere through rigorous learning activities.

This perception that LTEL-considered students either cannot or will not persevere through rigorous learning activities without extensive scaffolding was prevalent among participants and may have interfered with teachers' willingness to have their students engage in the productive struggle laid out in Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD, which necessitates students problem-solving in collaborative settings to make meaning from relevant content. The CM program, too, describes the need for productive struggle as necessary for learning language and literacy. The first lesson for teachers in the CM framework described productive struggle:

> The fact is the only way anyone can learn the language that figures in advanced literacy is through literacy, and only by noticing, grappling with and thinking about the ways forms and structures relate to meaning in the materials read

> grappling with and thinking about the ways forms and structures relate to meaning in the materials read.

Although the concept of productive struggle is foundational to the CM framework, not a single participant mentioned it, nor did any teacher reference the need for gradual release of responsibility. One participant described the need for LTEL-considered students to engage in more rigor by saying,

> Where we fall short is the prior question about the high-levels, right? Because how do we get them being able to get there? I don't think… we're there yet. In our training and our understanding, and definitely not in our execution (P3).

Although other elements of CM's philosophical underpinnings (e.g., the need for equitable access and academic optimism) had transference to participants' teaching philosophies and practices, the concept of productive struggle did not.

Site teachers provided lessons that they created or used in their classes that they felt showed their application of integrated ELD strategies to support language, literacy, and content acquisition. These materials revealed a range of usage of the three strands of integrated ELD, with some instructional materials having few scaffolds for productive language and others sequenced with highly structured language frames for every sentence. It is important to note that the teachers interviewed who provided documents for analysis were known to be the most effective users of integrated ELD at the site by administrators and other teachers alike, so the challenge of providing "just right" scaffolding in some classes suggested a sitewide area for growth.

Notably, many teachers included links to videos or other visual aids in their lessons, but there appeared to be less emphasis on high-level reading to learn content. Additionally, class banks for vocabulary or quotations were common, and although this practice may have assisted with the completion of writing tasks, such as essays and common assessments, the use of a list of quotations or other content supplied by the teacher or other students may have negated the need for students to critically read and identify pertinent evidence on their own.

Additionally, it was difficult to ascertain the degree to which teachers engaged in the gradual release of responsibility from isolated lessons. Although teachers typically demonstrated the first and second steps in the gradual release process (i.e., "I do" and "We do"), the heavy reliance on class banks and partner work indicated that the gradual release of responsibility may typically not move beyond the "We do" or "You do together" stages to full student independence, mastery of skills, or internalization of language structures in the "You do on your own" stage.

Rubrics provided by teachers for common and individual assessments included comprehension of reading and academic language in addition to content standards, indicating that teachers were working to incorporate the three strands of integrated ELD into their lessons and assessments. It was also noted that the rubrics typically used a 4 point scale, with 4 being mastery of the topic/skill, 3 being some understanding of the topic/skill, and 2 and 1 showing little-to-no understanding. The use of a 3/4 to indicate some understanding is noteworthy because this may suggest low expectations for student mastery of the material, and many students receiving high grades in content-area classes

may have relatively low levels of mastery of standards. This analysis was corroborated by interview data suggesting that students who appeared to be doing well on assessments by using the scaffolds for integrated ELD may not have understood the content standards.

These documents provided evidence of administrative oversight and accountability for teachers' use of integrated ELD in the classroom. At the time of this study, site administrators routinely engaged in brief, informal, unannounced visits to classrooms using a checklist of the qualities of effective teaching that they had deemed site priorities, which were:

- Classroom rules and procedures were posted
- The learning goal was posted/visible for the duration of the class
- The learning goal contained content, language function, and a student product
- The agenda was shared to help students track the lesson
- The lesson was chunked into a variety of activities
- The teacher checked for understanding
- Structured student talk routines were utilized
- Strategies/tools to ensure equity and accountability were used
- The teacher was actively engaged with students in learning.

The fact that the posting of rules and procedures was the first item on the checklist may suggest that student discipline and classroom management were areas of concern for administrators. Also noted by administrators were the types of language activity observed throughout the lesson (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, writing) and the level of student engagement (i.e., authentically on task, compliant/passive, disengaged/disruptive). In the

fall of 2023, site administrators completed a cumulative 128 walkthroughs throughout the semester, which contradicts the SPSA's description of 30-40 administrative walkthroughs being done each week. Of the 128 total walkthroughs completed over four months, 84 were logged by administrators in a shared spreadsheet and reflected the following observations of classrooms. Site administrative walkthrough data from informal administrative classroom walkthroughs is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9**

*Data from Informal Administrative Classroom Walkthroughs*

| Classroom Observation | Frequency of Observations |
|---|---|
| Teachers engaged in helping students | 78/84 |
| Students listening | 58/84 |
| Checks for understanding | 57/84 |
| Students reading | 54/84 |
| Students writing | 50/84 |
| CM learning goal posted | 48/84 |
| Use of equity tools for participation | 44/84 |
| Students talking | 29/84 |
| Teachers using structured student talk routines | 13/84 |

*Note.* This table was created using data provided by the site for informal administrative walkthrough observations.

It is also significant that the levels of student engagement were classrooms with students engaged (62/84), mixed engagement (17/84), and students not engaged (4/84). The data indicate that students were engaged in their learning, although primarily in quiet activities such as listening, reading, and writing. Additionally, it is noteworthy that structured student talk routines were the least observed phenomenon, with 13/84 classroom visits evidencing this practice. Still, teachers referenced structured student talk

routines far more than any other integrated ELD strategy, suggesting that although there was a strong belief in the value of this strategy, there was as yet a disconnect in most teachers' abilities to implement it.

### Disparate Perspectives Based on Educational Roles

Although teachers, site administrators, and district administrators tended to agree about the need to implement integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students, they disagreed on the primary barriers. Teachers were much more likely to describe students as anxious or fearful of making a mistake in class or getting the answer wrong, with six out of seven teachers discussing student mindset as a barrier. Conversely, administrators were more likely to cite the need for teachers to create culturally responsive, safe environments where LTEL-considered students would feel comfortable taking risks. Additionally, all administrators discussed federal and state mandates as having a strong influence on district and site practices, sometimes leading to practices that the administrator knew were not in students' best interests. In contrast, teachers never mentioned mandates, including reclassification. Finally, another critical distinction between administrators and teachers was that all administrators discussed the need for more rigorous coursework, although all teachers discussed the challenges of teaching students at the current level of rigor.

## Summary

Abundant data collected from interviews and document analysis were used to answer the research questions. In relation to the first research question, content-area teachers used components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-

considered students, teachers showed a strong reliance on and appreciation for the CM instructional framework. Many participants also acknowledged that the program itself – or the district or site's current implementation of it – was limited because students tended to complete assignments that mitigated the need for productive struggle, and they did not always appear to understand their learning. Perhaps due to the longstanding presence of CM at the site with ongoing sessions to refresh staff on the components of the CM framework, teachers showed high-levels of academic optimism in their belief that LTEL-considered students could achieve at high-levels but showed lower academic optimism when considering their staff's ability to meet those needs. Additionally, teachers and administrators alike tended to conflate the needs of LTEL-considered students with all EL-considered students and did not differentiate between the disparate levels of EL proficiency. Many participants agreed that there was a need for increased high-level literacy activities across the curricula. Similarly, teachers described their LTEL-considered students as being fearful of challenging activities, and many scaffolded their assignments to make them more accessible, perhaps mitigating the need for students to engage in productive struggle.

Of the instructional strategies mentioned, teachers frequently referred to the importance of structured student talk, but data from classroom walkthroughs indicated that this practice was infrequently implemented. Other commonly discussed instructional strategies for integrated ELD were the use of visual aids and modeling, sentence frames for productive language, vocabulary development, establishing the relevance of assignments by linking them to students' lives, building relationships with students,

teaching social emotional learning, project-based learning, activating prior knowledge, checking for understanding, establishing learning goals and identifying the language function of lessons, and engaging in diagnostic assessments, and diagnostic assessments to drive instructional decision-making.

Regarding the second research question about how administrators supported content-area teachers in using components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students, the district and site's primary offering for teachers was the CM framework. Since 2015, teachers new to the site have been required to participate in the districtwide CM 4-day training to learn foundational tools for implementing integrated ELD. This pedagogical base was supplemented by the district's offerings of full day CM refreshers for teachers who were not in their first year to be released from their classrooms for a day to review CM philosophies and strategies.

Additionally, site administrators supported teachers in using CM through 30-minute mini-lessons on CM strategies at every other staff meeting, allocating .2 FTE for a site teacher to coach other teachers in CM implementation, and creating a walkthrough rubric using many of the elements of CM to increase accountability. The site also prioritized its integrated ELD offerings over the allocation of course sections for designated ELD for LTEL-considered students because they believed that they could better meet the needs of this population through integrated ELD. These findings were further explored in Chapter 5 in conjunction with the discussion of interpretations of the themes, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and the study's conclusions.

# Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

## Introduction

In this qualitative case study, I aimed to explore how integrated ELD was implemented at one California high school with a high population of LTEL-considered students. Using interviews with teachers and site and district administrators, as well as document analysis, I sought to determine how teachers used components of integrated ELD and how administrators supported this work. Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD was the conceptual framework that grounded the study in the teaching of the interplay between language, literacy, and content knowledge. The following research questions framed this study:

RQ1: How do content-area teachers at one California high school use components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

RQ2: How do site and district administrators support content-area teachers at one California high school in using components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

Data derived from interviews and documents were used to answer the research questions and frame the following themes, which are further explored in this chapter:

1. There was a tendency to conflate the needs of LTEL-considered students with the needs of other EL-classified students.
2. The staff showed varying levels of academic optimism for their LTEL-considered students and their site's ability to meet their needs.

3. There were limitations to the use of the site's use of the integrated/designated ELD framework.
4. The site embraced the CM instructional framework amidst concerns about the effectiveness of the model.
5. Teachers tended to prioritize content and student work completion over teaching students to engage in high-level literacy and productive struggle.

Each of these themes related to both research questions and was used to guide the study's conclusions and recommendations.

## Interpretation of the Findings

### Need to Differentiate LTEL Instruction

There was a tendency at the state, district, and site levels to perceive, plan for, and address the needs of all ELs similarly without considering the distinct needs of on-track EL-classified students, students dually enrolled in special education and EL programs, LTEL-considered students, and students at-risk of LTEL status. Multiple data sources indicate that the site saw the need to improve LTEL instruction, had invested significant site funds to meet this goal, and was engaged in practices to support integrated ELD implementation. Investments of financial resources, data for LTEL-considered students, and resource allocations were not disaggregated from the general EL population in the California School Dashboard, the LCAP, or the SPSA. The scholarly research on this issue is clear: LTEL-considered students have unique characteristics that distinguish them from other EL-classified students and require specialized instruction and care (Artigliere, 2019; Shin, 2020; Strong & Escamilla, 2022).

The current case study confirmed that nearly a decade after this legislation was signed into law, there continues to be a need to distinguish between the various student groups encompassed by the EL label. The use of the same set of supports for newcomer EL-considered students, on-track EL-classified students, students dually enrolled in special education and EL programs, LTEL-considered students, and students at-risk of LTEL status does not meet federal and state requirements for differentiation. However, at the district, site, and classroom levels, participants and documents confirmed that instructional planning is directed at a homogenous EL student population, with LTEL-considered students given limited differentiation and potentially less attention overall than other EL student groups, such as newcomer EL-considered students. In the LCAP and SPSA, support for EL-classified students was universally described as targeting all EL-classified students without distinction. This finding in the current study is consistent with scholarly research indicating that content-area classes with a high population of LTEL-considered students are often taught using instructional strategies not designed to meet their needs (Hopkins et al., 2022; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). This signals a need for districtwide differentiation between the needs of LTEL-considered students and other EL-classified students, such as newcomer EL-considered students.

Another key finding was that limited planning was done at the district level for LTEL-considered students, and many of the planned action items were not in place at the time of this study. Although the EL Master Plan stated that extensive tutoring and support would be available to LTEL-considered students, no before or during-school academic intervention opportunities were available for students at the participant site, with minimal

options available after school and summer interventions limited to credit recovery for failed courses. Additionally, the EL Master Plan emphasized the need for LTEL-considered students to take a designated ELD class in conjunction with integrated ELD to expedite academic growth, but fewer than one-quarter of LTEL-considered students were placed in an ALD class, and the only ELD support they received was the integrated ELD strategies in their content-area classes. The Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) solidified the requirement for a distinct LTEL label and mandated designated and integrated ELD classes to meet the unique needs of LTEL-considered students nationwide, rendering the district out of compliance with requirements for designated ELD. Thus, of the limited support intended to meet the unique needs of LTEL-considered students, much of it was not happening at the site at the time of the study.

In addition to the need for increased support for LTEL-considered students, there is also a need to raise expectations for LTEL achievement. District and site documents for planning and practice, such as the EL Master Plan and the "catch-up intervention plans" that were used multiple times per year in conferences with LTEL-considered students, de-emphasized 4-year college and emphasized high school achievement, graduation, and the ability to get a living wage job. There is a need for educators to reevaluate what they think their LTEL-considered students are capable of and raise expectations for them by celebrating their status as nearly biliterate individuals who have continued to persevere despite inadequate instruction for many years.

**Need to Increase Academic Optimism**

Although all teachers were dedicated to the academic success of their students and believed that with the right support, they could thrive academically, there was less belief in the collective efficacy of the site to provide this support. Some teachers recognized their own struggles to implement integrated ELD to meet the needs of their LTEL-considered students, although others described the struggles of their peers or of the site more broadly. Marcos et al. (2021) discussed the importance of academic optimism for engaging sites with a high population of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and defined this concept as trust in students, collective efficacy of staff, academic emphasis, and organizational health. Although all participants, in this case, spoke positively about their LTEL-considered students, there was a strong belief that these students would be unlikely to engage in rigorous tasks without ample scaffolding, particularly reading tasks. Collective efficacy was also low, with teachers reporting an understanding of the value of integrated ELD but showing concern that integrated ELD was not being implemented effectively sitewide despite the prior decade of focused attention by site and district administrators. The need for high-level literacy and rigorous coursework was also noted and showed a need to improve the collective vision of the staff to include a stronger academic orientation. Finally, the site's constant staff turnover and the increased stress due to the return from the COVID-19 pandemic speak to the site's organizational health, and although many of the staff remained committed to the site and had been working there for years, the constant vacancies also reflected a need for improved organizational health. Developing a strong school culture by improving these

components of organizational health is key to improving the overall academic optimism of schools with most students with a low socio-economic status (Marcos et al., 2021), and LTEL-considered students are more likely to attend schools where the student population is from a lower socio-economic bracket (Cashiola et al., 2021; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). The success of a site in implementing integrated ELD to support LTEL-considered students is fundamentally tied to the site's ability of the site to develop a strong sense of academic optimism.

**Need to Explore the Integrated/Designated ELD Model**

Interview data suggested that the site strategically chose to place most LTEL-considered students in classes other than ALD because it was believed that other courses may have been more beneficial to their overall well-being and academic attainment. Still, although the question of whether LTEL-considered students should be placed in ALD classes is as yet unclear, the fact that placement in designated ELD is a federal and state requirement (California Department of Education, 2014; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015) and a priority of the draft 2024 plan bears consideration. It also reflects a lack of a clear alternative approach to educating LTEL-considered students effectively, and it is possible that LTEL-considered students may be better served in courses other than designated ELD.

This site's practice of scheduling most LTEL-considered students without a designated ELD class is a practice that is shared by many high schools that choose not to place their LTEL-considered students in designated ELD classes (Hopkins et al., 2022). The decision to ignore the mandate for LTEL-considered students to receive designated

ELD in the current case study was not the result of a lack of care for LTEL achievement, with multiple participants expressing that they felt many LTEL-considered students were better served taking other classes. This practice, although not in compliance with federal or state mandates, is supported by scholarly research stating that the benefits of designated ELD that other EL student groups experience are generally not shared by LTEL-considered students (Hopkins et al., 2022) because time spent in designated ELD displaces time accessing grade-level standards (Hopkins et al., 2022; Shin, 2020; Umansky & Porter, 2020) and access to college preparatory classes (Flores & Lewis, 2022; Mendoza, 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Nguyen (2021) also argued that LTEL-considered students should not be separated from their peers for a designated ELD class. There is a need to rethink the designated ELD approach to supporting LTEL-considered students. The existing integrated/designated ELD model of providing language instruction for LTEL-considered students was built on the notion that students would be receiving both parts of the model, and if most LTEL-considered students are not taking designated ELD, the model must be reconsidered.

The lack of prioritization of LTEL programming could stem from the markedly low expectations for LTEL-considered students reflected in the 2024 draft of the EL master plan. The first need listed for this population was motivation and engagement, and the primary actions to support LTEL-considered students were placement in specialized ELD classes (ALD), providing integrated ELD instruction in content-area classes, and having academic counseling to ensure LTEL-considered students were taking the correct classes for “secondary school promotion/graduation requirements.” Notably, college was

not mentioned here, nor was it mentioned directly in the overall goal for the LTEL program, which was "for students to attain academic English proficiency and basic academic skills and graduate from high school prepared for living-wage employment and a post-secondary educational program. The program is designed to assist students to accelerate their progress in high school." This de-emphasis on 4-year college for LTEL-considered students and emphasis on high school achievement, graduation, ability to get a living wage job, and potentially engage in some type of post-secondary education reflect a lack of a college-going culture for LTEL-considered students and low expectations for their academic achievement. Finally, the district's use of a "catch-up intervention plan" for each LTEL-considered student, which was described as an individualized academic plan that teachers would use to discuss their pathways to EL reclassification with each EL-classified student, suggested that the district's primary goal for these students was reclassification from ELD, potentially over college attendance or attainment of a 4-year degree, and failed to celebrate their status as nearly biliterate individuals.

Furthermore, several of the goals and actions listed in the 2024 draft had not been implemented in the fall of 2023. The use of before, during, after school, and summer interventions to support LTEL-considered students was discussed in the 2024 plan, but at the time of the study, no before or during school academic intervention opportunities were available for students at the participant site, with minimal options available after school, and summer interventions limited to credit recovery for failed courses. Additionally, the 2024 plan's emphasis on LTEL-considered students taking ALD classes to receive designated ELD instruction was countered by less than a quarter of the LTEL-

considered students at the participant site being enrolled in ALD in the spring of 2024. Interview data suggested that the site strategically chose to place most LTEL-considered students in classes other than ALD because it was believed that other courses may have been more beneficial to their overall well-being and academic attainment. Still, although the question of whether LTEL-considered students should be placed in ALD classes is as yet unclear, the fact that placement in designated ELD is a federal and state requirement (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; California Department of Education, 2014) and a priority of the draft 2024 plan bears consideration and reflects a lack of a clear alternative approach to educating LTEL-considered students effectively, and it is possible that LTEL-considered students may be better served in courses other than designated ELD. Further quantitative research is necessary to consider the effectiveness of designated ELD in supporting LTEL-considered students in achieving reclassification from EL programs, improving school engagement (e.g., attendance, discipline), graduating, matriculating to college, and attaining a 4-year college degree.

### Need for Further Research on Constructing Meaning

The CM instructional framework was referenced by every participant as the best, if not the only, professional development offered to help teachers meet the needs of LTEL-considered students. Site and district administrators and document analysis confirmed that CM was the primary toolkit for integrated ELD instruction. The provision of such a toolkit was essential because scholarly research showed that secondary teachers tend to believe that they are subject-area experts who are not adequately prepared to support the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students (Luna, 2020; Umansky &

Avelar, 2022; Umansky & Porter, 2020). Effective teacher preparation is critical for the effective instruction of LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019) because the classroom teacher's instructional and pedagogical knowledge have proven to be strong predictors of students' ultimate success in both language and content mastery (Harklau & Ford, 2022; Vera et al., 2022). This research is confirmed by the current study's participants, who asserted that CM improved the quality of their instruction to meet the needs of their LTEL-considered students, which is noteworthy because adequate instruction is one of the most important factors determining the academic success of EL-classified students (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Porter, 2020).

The CM framework has had value for the current study site because it is ingrained in the school system with strong buy-in from staff, every new teacher undergoing the 4-day training, frequent refreshers at staff meetings, and district-wide release days to review the CM framework for teachers who are not in their first year. CM meets a well-documented need for schools to create structures for ongoing professional development to support teachers in improving their instructional practices for designated and integrated ELD (Nguyen, 2021). The use of CM as a foundation for instruction at the study site was essential because the school consistently experienced high turnover and staffed more teachers with less experience, which is consistent with research that found that EL-classified students are more likely to have less experienced, lower-skilled teachers with inferior curriculum (Harklau & Ford, 2022; Strong & Escamilla, 2022).

In addition to the value of the framework for facilitating the implementation of integrated ELD to meet the needs of LTEL-considered students, there was also a need to

gather implementation data for CM, determine the program's efficacy to meet the site and district's needs for integrated ELD, and retool implementation of the framework. The possibility that participants may have described the value of CM in ways that did not reflect their use of the model was underscored by the site's need for increased administrative accountability to ensure CM implementation. An example of this is teachers referencing the importance of structured student talk routines far more than any other integrated ELD strategy, although administrative walkthroughs revealed that this was the least observed instructional strategy used in classrooms. This suggests that although there may be a strong belief in the value of CM's structured student talk routines, there was a disconnect in most teachers' abilities to implement it, indicating that this is perhaps another area where the theoretical value of the strategy was not consistent with its practical application. The need for increased resources and accountability to implement the CM model may be further evidence of the need to explore the efficacy of the CM model in a school as under resourced as the study site. With teachers reporting high-levels of burnout and limited time in the instructional day and academic calendar, it is possible that CM may not be a viable mechanism for integrated ELD. Vaughn et al. (2022) explained that EL achievement increased when teachers received professional development that they considered feasible and not unduly taxing, and the CM model may require more from teachers than they have the capacity to provide.

Additional concerns about the CM model arose regarding the issue of facilitating high-level work, particularly in relation to literacy. For example, a model CM lesson has three required components – content, language, and product – but omits the need for

literacy within each lesson. It follows that the lack of emphasis on high-level literacy was noted in all staff meeting agendas where CM strategies were reviewed. Instead, instructional strategies most discussed included structured student talk, vocabulary development, and the use of sentence frames for student output. Although CM repeatedly referenced the need to help students engage in productive struggle, the high-level of scaffolding demonstrated in scaffolded note-takers and activities provided most of the language necessary for students to complete tasks. Additionally, the use of highly structured scaffolds for all reading and writing activities may contradict Vygotsky's (1978) recommendation to teach content by allowing students to struggle collaboratively in relation to real, relevant tasks that engage students in struggling through complex literacy activities to make meaning and develop their language abilities.

**Need for High-Level Literacy and Productive Struggle**

Data collected in this study indicated that of the three strands of integrated ELD, content was often prioritized over language development and high-level literacy. Because most LTEL-considered students have had low reading and writing scores throughout their educations (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Shin, 2020; Shin et al., 2022), educators reported that many were less likely to engage in rigorous reading activities. Possibly because of the high population of LTEL-considered students at the study site, teachers found ways to help students learn content while circumnavigating the need for high-level reading and writing. This finding reinforces the scholarly literature on the rigor gap between classrooms with a high population of LTEL-considered students and classrooms without as many LTEL-considered students (Murphy & Torff, 2019; Nguyen, 2021). There often

a lack of opportunity in content-area classes with a high population of LTEL-considered students to engage productive struggle, as these classes are often taught using instructional strategies not designed for LTEL-considered students (Hopkins et al., 2022; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022).

The use of instructional strategies such as communal quote banks and direct instruction to convey content may have short-term expediency for lesson completion but may ultimately prohibit LTEL-considered students' growth in high-level literacy. Because literacy is more tied to instruction than oral achievement, which can be learned without adequate instruction (Rhinehart et al., 2022), LTEL-considered students are thus less likely to acquire high-level literacy skills because they lack access to activities that require them. For LTEL-considered students to develop high-level literacy, there is a need to refocus instruction on the three strands of integrated ELD with an emphasis on the literacy strand. Shin et al. (2022) recommended that LTEL-considered students be exposed to a breadth and depth of texts and explicit teaching of reading comprehension across the curricula. Although many current participants described their belief in the importance of reading to learn, and although administrative walkthrough data indicated that students were often reading in classes, participants consistently expressed concern for their LTEL-considered students' ability to read critically and their willingness to do so. Scholarly research indicated that high school teachers reported needing professional development designed to help them transfer new curricular approaches and instructional strategies surrounding literacy within their content-areas classes (Vera et al., 2022). This finding is consistent with the findings of the current study.

Many participants also discussed the challenge of engaging LTEL-considered students in rigorous learning tasks. This is consistent with scholarly literature that indicated that LTEL-considered students often present as disillusioned and unmotivated to their teachers (Csorvasi & Colby, 2021). Shin (2020) agreed that many LTEL-considered students become more academically disengaged and disconnected because they do not receive enough academic support. These feelings of frustration may lead LTEL-considered students to be less willing to engage in complex tasks, which is consistent with the findings of the current study, in which many participants described the tendency of students to become frustrated and to give up without engaging in productive struggle to solve rigorous learning tasks.

Teachers in this study were very sensitive to their LTEL-considered students' heightened tendency to experience frustration and give up on their assignments when they perceived them to be challenging. Teachers showed a strong desire to meet their LTEL-considered students where they were, both in terms of academics and motivation, by providing ample scaffolds to make learning accessible. This led many teachers to spend abundant time scaffolding their assignments to make them accessible for LTEL-considered students, perhaps at the cost of the productive struggle that facilitates high-level learning. Additionally, the need for LTEL-considered students to pass their classes and graduate on time could have contributed to the hyper-scaffolding teachers felt was necessary for LTEL-considered students to complete grade-level coursework.

Several participants in this study discussed low expectations as a key component of current instructional practices. This is consistent with scholarly research that has found

that even when teachers developed the capacity and resources to teach EL-classified students effectively, a rigor gap remained because teachers did not think EL-classified students could handle rigorous coursework that incorporated higher-order critical thinking skills (Murphy & Torff, 2019). One example of the lowering of expectations can been seen in teachers giving students a score of 3 out of 4 on a grade-level common assessment to indicate some understanding of the material, as many students may be receiving high grades in content-area classes while having relatively low levels of understanding of standards. This analysis was corroborated by interview data suggesting that students who appeared to be doing well on assessments by using the scaffolds for integrated ELD may not have understood the content standards. The CM framework may also have contributed to hyper-scaffolding and a reduction in productive struggle. Although CM emphasizes the importance of gradual release of responsibility, no teacher referenced or showed evidence of incorporating this practice into their pedagogy.

Teachers who participated in this study were known for their effective use of integrated ELD, so the challenge of providing "just right" scaffolding may be a sitewide area for growth. Finally, administrators tended to recognize the need for more rigor, although teachers expressed frustration with getting their students to engage in productive struggle at the current level of rigor. This finding suggests that those who work outside the classroom may not fully grasp the struggles teachers face in raising rigor for LTEL-considered students, although those inside the classroom may have become acclimated to lower levels of rigor and may not see them as problematic. There is a need to provide

teachers with more support in engaging in the gradual release of responsibility to raise rigor rather than just telling them to do so.

## Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation to trustworthiness that arose from the execution of this case study was that it was limited to only one site, so it could neither determine causation nor was it generalizable (Schoch, 2020). Still, rich, thick description was given of the site's demographics and structure, so there is the potential for similar sites to apply these findings to their contexts. Another limitation was the strong reliance on participants to report on instructional practices accurately and that I did not conduct my own classroom observations to verify the accuracy of their statements. Still, the incorporation of document analysis, including data from administrative walkthroughs, served as a tool to triangulate data sources and improve the credibility of the study. Yet another limitation was the potential for bias as a former teacher of LTEL-considered students who had used many of the instructional methods discussed by participants, including CM. To address the possibility of my biases predetermining the study's conclusions, I established a consistent chain of evidence from the participants' own words to the codes, categories, themes, recommendations, and implications that are discussed here. Additionally, I used a reflexive journal to process potential biases throughout the data collection and analysis process, and debriefed my findings and conclusions with my chair.

## Recommendations

Although this case study contributed to the body of research on using integrated ELD to promote LTEL achievement, further research is needed to improve LTEL

instruction. Additional qualitative research is needed to understand instructional strategies for increasing LTEL-considered students' potential to engage in high-level literacy and productive struggle. Although whole instructional frameworks may be considered quantitatively, additional observational data are needed to explore what factors contribute to students' willingness to engage in rigorous, high-level literacy activities, and what actions teachers can take to contribute to those factors.

Further quantitative research is needed to determine if there is a correlation between participation in designated ELD classes and reclassification, high school graduation, and college attendance rates. Prior research has suggested that the placement of LTEL-considered students in such classes can be problematic because they are stigmatizing and can conflict with students' ability to take other college-preparatory electives (Biernacki et al., 2023; Nguyen, 2021). If designated ELD is determined to be an effective model for improving LTEL-considered student achievement outcomes, additional guidance is required to assist schools in reducing the stigma of such classes and creating a viable pathway to a college preparatory education. Further quantitative research is also necessary to consider the effectiveness of CM in supporting LTEL-considered students in achieving reclassification from EL programs, improving school engagement (e.g., attendance, discipline), graduating, matriculating to college, and attaining a 4-year college degree. Another topic for further study could be the effectiveness of the CM framework in various school environments or with different populations of EL-classified students.

## Implications

This case study was significant because LTEL-considered students continue to lack access to educational resources and opportunities, despite federal and state mandates for academic support. LTEL-considered students often do not have access to grade-level content-area coursework (Artigliere, 2019; Luna, 2020; Umansky & Avelar, 2022), remain effectively trapped within the EL and LTEL labels, and experience correlated educational barriers (Cabral, 2022). By studying how teachers at one high school site with a high population of LTEL-considered students and an instructional focus on LTEL achievement used an integrated ELD model to increase LTEL achievement, I have contributed to the gap in research on current instructional practices for LTEL-considered students (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022). Although not generalizable, this exploratory research has the potential to affect positive social change by giving a foundation for future research on effective LTEL instruction (Schoch, 2020), which could lead to improved instructional practices and increased LTEL achievement in secondary content-area classes, graduation rates, and college and career readiness (Artigliere, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Umansky & Avelar, 2022).

Findings from this study may propel educational entities to more effectively plan for LTEL-considered students as distinct from other EL-classified students and design learning activities to meet their unique needs. The conflation of LTEL-considered students with other EL-classified students marks a failure to differentiate for the unique needs of LTEL-considered students that must be rectified through changes in policy and practice at the state, district, site, and classroom levels. Additionally, the educators who

participated in this study saw the value in supporting LTEL-considered students academically and understood the need for integrated ELD instruction. Many expressed a strong desire to engage students in high-level literacy and productive struggle but lacked the tools to do so. Teachers' ability to implement integrated ELD strategies was also limited by the pragmatic realities of their daily experiences and high-levels of burnout from a post-COVID-19 educational landscape. This scrutiny of the model may lead to improving implementation, refining the model itself, or revealing supplemental materials or practices that could fill the instructional needs that CM can not. Finally, findings from this study indicate a need to reconsider the interplay between integrated and designated ELD because the current ELD framework at the federal and state level is predicated upon the notion that students receive both components of the instructional model. However, scholarly research indicates that placement in a designated ELD class may be damaging for LTEL-considered students, and this study from the field indicates that schools may opt to keep their LTEL-considered students out of the designated ELD model because they feel that is in their best interest to do so. Further, the mandate for designated ELD must be reconsidered for LTEL-considered students because schools should not be forced to circumvent mandates to meet the needs of their students. Additionally, removing the mandate for designated ELD would fundamentally change the integrated ELD model, and further research is needed to understand how the integrated ELD model would need to shift to accommodate this change.

## Conclusion

The *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) ruling stated that EL-classified students should achieve

proficiency in English as quickly as possible and that they should not become so academically deficient while they are learning English that they cannot achieve parity with their native-speaking peers once they have mastered English. Fifty years after this ruling, the majority of LTEL-considered students in the U.S. were born in the U.S. and have gone to U.S. public schools throughout their educational careers (Rhinehart et al., 2022; Shin, 2020; Siordia & Kim, 2022); still, they remain classified as ELs, a label that they never asked for nor consented to (Umansky & Avelar, 2022). EL-classified students do not become LTEL-considered due to their inherent qualities but because of a systemic failure to adequately prepare them for grade-level coursework within five years (Edelman et al., 2022; Shin, 2020; Strong & Escamilla, 2022).

Current instructional practices violate the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling, which prohibits the segregation of students by race in educational settings. Because LTEL-considered students are overwhelmingly Latino and male (Cashiola et al., 2021), mandates that they be separated from their non-EL-classified peers in designated ELD classes are segregatory. This systemic failure to adequately support LTEL-considered students must be addressed by continuing to research and refine the instructional practices that will assist them in reclassifying from EL programs, graduating from high school on time, and completing their post-secondary goals, including 4-year college (Artigliere, M, 2019; Clark-Gareca et al., 2019; Shin, 2020). By studying on school's use of integrated ELD strategies to support LTEL-considered students, I have contributed to the body of scholarly research on LTEL instruction that may help LTEL-

considered students access their right to an equal education with appropriate speed, as guaranteed by the *Lau* (1974) and *Brown v. Board* (1954) decisions.

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# Appendix A: Introductory and Concluding Statements for Interviews

## Introductory Statement for Interviews

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study. I appreciate your generosity with your time and expertise.

Before we get started, I wanted to share a bit about myself and why I am doing this study as part of my doctoral research. I was a classroom teacher for 21 years, and I taught in California throughout my career. I taught many English learners over the years and became increasingly interested in exploring the learning experiences of the particular group of English learners known as long-term English learners (LTEL-considered students), as well as the instructional strategies teachers can use to help this population progress academically. My current research will explore how one school with a high population of LTEL-considered students delivers instruction in content-area classes (i.e., math, science, ELA, social science) to meet the needs of LTEL-considered students in terms of literacy, language, and content knowledge. To do this, I am completing a case study of one California high school and will be interviewing teachers and administrators and analyzing documents, such as lesson plans, professional development agendas, and meeting memos and minutes to come to my findings.

There are a few terms I would like to make sure we are using in the same way throughout this interview:

LTEL-considered student: While there is no standard definition of an LTEL-considered student, for the purposes of my study and our interview today, I am referring to an LTEL-considered student as an English learner who has been attending U.S. public schools for six years or more.

Integrated ELD: Integrated ELD is the practice of content-area teachers – such as math, science, ELA, and social science – teaching academic language and literacy in conjunction with their content-area standards.

Do you have any questions about either of these terms?

All of my questions for you today relate to LTEL instruction. Your answers today will help me answer my research questions. My research questions are:

RQ1: How do content-area teachers at one California high school use components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

RQ2: How do site and district administrators support content-area teachers at one California high school in using components of integrated ELD to meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?

In the coming weeks, I will transcribe the interview and send it to you to check for accuracy. You will be welcome to make corrections or add context to any of your statements at that time. I will also send you a summary of my findings at the conclusion of my study, and you will be welcome to make corrections or additions at that time. Your anonymity will be preserved in data recording, analysis, and reporting, so while you may recognize your own words, they will not be identifiable to others.

I am obligated to remind you at this time that the state's mandated reporter laws require me to report any suspected child or elder abuse or neglect.

I previously emailed you the informed consent for this study, and you consented to participate via email. I wanted to share that document with you again at this time and confirm your consent. Please review this document and if you still agree to participate, say, "I consent."

Before we get started, do you have any questions?

I would like to record the interview today to make a transcript of what you shared with me. Do I have your permission to record?

Okay, I'm going to start recording now.

[START RECORDING]

**Concluding Statement for Interview**

Thank you so much for your time today. I really do appreciate you sharing your thoughts and experiences with me. If you change your mind about participation, email me at the email address we used to arrange the interview.

As part of my research, I will analyze documents such as curricula, lesson plans, lesson handouts, meeting notes, and professional development agendas. Would you be willing to share any of these documents with me?

I am still actively recruiting participants for my study. Do you have contact information for someone who would be a good candidate for this study, or would you be willing to forward my digital invitation to others you think might be interested? Thanks!

When I have completed transcribing your interview, I will share it with you so you can check it to ensure its accuracy. I will also share the completed dissertation with you before submission so you can give feedback on the findings.

Again, I deeply appreciate your time and will be in touch soon

# Appendix B: Interview Guide for Teachers

1. Provide an example of how you encourage student talk in your classes. How did you come to this approach?
2. Provide an example of how you help students access their prior knowledge. How did you come to this approach?
3. Provide an example of how you help LTEL-considered students access complex reading tasks for [your discipline]. How did you come to this approach?
4. Provide an example of how you help LTEL-considered students complete writing tasks relevant to [your discipline].How did you come to this approach?
5. Provide an example of how you help LTEL-considered students learn the vocabulary necessary for students to be successful in [your discipline]. How did you come to this approach?
6. Please select a concept or a standard that is central to [your discipline]. How do you scaffold this concept for LTEL-considered students? How did you come to this approach?
7. Please describe a lesson you have taught that elicited positive LTEL engagement. How did you come to this approach?
8. What barriers do you perceive to teaching language and literacy in conjunction with content knowledge in [your discipline]? What steps have you or educators at your school taken to overcome those barriers?
9. What curricular materials do you use in your class? What is your rationale for using this curriculum?

10. How well would you say these curricula meet the instructional needs of LTEL-considered students?
11. Please list the three most relevant professional development experiences you have participated in during your time in this district that have helped you support LTEL-considered students in your content-area classes. Briefly describe each one. How, if at all, has participation in these professional learning experiences changed your instructional practices for working with LTEL-considered students?
12. Out of all the things we've talked about today—or maybe some topics we've missed—what should I pay the most attention to? What should I think about when I write up your interview?

# Appendix C: Interview Guide for Administrators

1. Please describe the district's master plan for supporting EL-classified and LTEL-considered students. How did your district come to this approach?

2. Please describe this site's approach to LTEL support. How did this site come to this approach?

3. Please describe how this site supports LTEL-considered students in learning high-level reading and writing skills. How did this site come to this approach?

4. Please describe this site's approach to scaffolding content-area classes to meet the needs of LTEL-considered students. How did this site come to this approach?

5. Please describe how resources are allocated to support LTEL instruction at this site. How did this plan come to be?

6. Please describe any professional development opportunities at the site or district level to support LTEL instruction. Can you describe any other PD opportunities to support teachers in LTEL instruction? How well did these professional development opportunities meet the needs of teachers to support LTEL instruction?

7. Please describe curricular adoptions in the content-areas. How well do these materials support LTEL-considered students in learning language, literacy, and content knowledge?

8. What barriers do you perceive to teaching language and literacy in content-area classes at this site? How have teachers and district and site administrators at the site worked to overcome those barriers?

9. Out of all the things we've talked about today—or maybe some topics we've missed—what should I pay the most attention to? What should I think about when I write up your interview?

# Appendix D: A Priori Code Definition Log

| Code | Definition |
|---|---|
| Mandates | Instructional decisions impacted by federal, state, and district mandates |
| Assessments | Instructional decisions impacted by perceptions of a need to prepare students for standardized assessments |
| Reclassification | Instructional decisions impacted by perceptions of a need to prepare students for reclassification |
| Scheduling | Instructional decisions impacted by perceptions of scheduling issues for students and teachers |
| Time | Instructional decisions impacted by perceptions of limited time |
| Instructional resources | Instructional decisions impacted by the perceptions of the availability of instructional resources |
| SPED | Instructional decisions impacted by dual identification of special education and LTEL-considered students |
| Expectations | Instructional decisions impacted by perceptions of LTEL-considered students' capacity for grade-level work |
| Student motivation | Instructional decisions impacted by perceptions of student motivation |
| Oral discourse | Instructional decisions impacted by a desire to promote students' oral discourse |
| + Scaffolds | Evidence of adding instructional supports to promote access to complex tasks that students could not currently access on their own |
| - Scaffolds | Evidence of removing additional supports once students have mastered the skills necessary to engage with complex tasks on their own |
| Capacity | Instructional decisions impacted by perceptions of the capacity of staff to implement components of integrated ELD |
| PD Transfer | Evidence of professional development crossing over into teachers' practices |

# Appendix E: In Vivo Code Definition Log

| Code | Definition |
|---|---|
| Inconsistent Staffing | Challenges with implementation arising from inconsistent staffing or vacancies |
| Site Priority | Integrated ELD is seen as a site priority |
| Standards | Evidence of standards-based curriculum |
| Reading Challenging Texts | Discussion of the challenges with or need to read grade-level texts |
| Content w/o Literacy Access w/o Understanding | Evidence of the delivery of content standards without engaging in high-level literacy skills |
| Gradual Release | Evidence of students completing work without understanding the content standards |
| Hyper-scaffolding | Discussion of practices that include a gradual release of responsibility, or lack thereof |
| | Evidence that work is highly scaffolded for students and is potentially over-scaffolded |
| Resources | Discussion of resources allocated to improve the instruction of LTEL-considered students |
| Grading | Discussion of challenges presented in grading the work of LTEL-considered students |
| CM | Discussion of the Constructing Meaning instructional framework for integrated ELD |
| Professional Development | Discussion of effective professional learning besides CM |
| Accountability | Discussion of the need for more administrative oversight to ensure teachers are implementing integrated ELD strategies |
| Instructional Rounds | Evidence of administrators observing teachers informally or teachers observing one another for professional learning |
| Inconsistent T2T | Evidence of inconsistent integrated ELD implementation from teacher to teacher |
| Initiative Fatigue | Discussion of educators being frustrated by new educational initiatives and being unwilling to engage |
| Equity | Discussion of an equity mindset or social justice goals |

| | |
|---|---|
| Academic Optimism | Evidence that teachers believed their LTEL-considered students could achieve at high-levels when given the appropriate supports. |
| Teacher Growth Mindset | Evidence that teachers are reflective about their instructional practices and are excited to continue growing in their ability to meet the needs of LTEL-considered students |
| Irrelevance for the Classroom | Discussion of teachers feeling that integrated ELD is irrelevant to their classroom practices |
| Cultural Competency | Discussion of teachers embracing and celebrating students' cultures, mitigating biases about LTEL-considered students, and maintaining high expectations for student achievement |
| LTEL Self-perception | Discussion by educators of how LTEL-considered students see themselves and their academic potential |
| Sentence Frames | Discussion of teachers using sentence frames for language output, whether written or oral |
| Student Talk | Evidence of teachers incorporating structured student talk routines to promote oral discourse |
| Learning Goals | Discussion of teachers identifying learning goals and language function for their lessons |
| Visual Aids | Evidence of teaching content standards through visual aids |
| Games | Evidence of gamification in teachers' lessons |
| Prior Knowledge | Evidence of teachers activating prior knowledge as an instructional strategy |
| PBL | Discussion of project-based learning as a means of engaging LTEL-considered students |
| SEL | Discussion of the need for teachers to establish relationships with their students, create a safe learning environment, and/or teacher social-emotional learning |
| Vocabulary | Discussion of teachers providing direct instruction about target academic or content vocabulary |
| CFU | Discussion of teachers needing to check for student understanding |
| Diagnostic Assessment | Discussion of using a diagnostic or other formative assessments to determine students' levels and create appropriate scaffolds |

# Appendix F: Documents Collected for Analysis

| Document Number | Document Title or Description | Document Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Document 1 | Local Control Accountability Plan 2023-2024 | 3-year plan for the district required by the state to examine data, set goals, plan actions, and allocate resources to improve student performance |
| Document 2 | 2024 Draft EL Master Plan | Comprehensive plan for the district's EL and dual language services |
| Document 3 | School plan for student achievement 2022-2023 | Annual school site plan |
| Document 4 | Site master schedule | Site schedule of classes |
| Document 5 | CM presentations<br>Day 1 presentation<br>Day 2 presentation<br>Day 3 presentation<br>Day 4 presentation<br>Full day refresher<br>Tools and templates | CM professional development 4-day introductory series, as modified by district coaches and site staff<br>Annual optional CM full day refresher training for teachers districtwide who already completed the initial training<br>CM language scaffolds for integrated ELD |
| Document 6 | Staff meeting agendas for 2023-2024<br><br>September 6, 2023<br>November 1, 2023<br>January 24, 2023 | Ongoing site-led professional learning for implementation of integrated ELD |
| Document 7 | Teacher-supplied lessons with integrated ELD | Site teachers' application of integrated ELD to their lesson plans |
| Document 8 | Administrator classroom walkthrough tool<br>Walkthrough data | Evidence of administrative oversight and accountability for teachers' use of integrated ELD in the classroom |
| Document 9 | ELLevation data | District and site demographic and achievement data for LTEL-considered students |
| Document 10 | WASC report | Self-study report for accreditation |

# Appendix G: Analytical Memos for Documents

## *Summary of Analytical Memos*

**Document #1:** Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)

**Purpose:** Data driven three-year-plan for LEAs to receive state funding that drives decision-making and resource allocation

**Analytical Memo:** The district's LCAP was driven by four goals with the fourth focusing on the needs of particular student groups whom data indicated were in need of additional support, including EL-classified students. However, LTEL-considered students were explicitly mentioned only once: "Staff will implement, monitor, and adjust supports and services for emerging bilingual students, including but not limited to, the addition of specific sections and courses to support the needs of newcomers and long-term English language learners." Data were given only for EL-classified students as a larger group, and all supports for EL-classified students were described as targeting all EL-classified students. This signals a need for more differentiation of the needs of LTEL-considered students from the needs of other EL-classified students, such as Newcomers. The LCAP listed sixteen actions for improving EL academic achievement: Multi-tiered systems of support, social-emotional learning, extended learning programs, specialized academic programs, preschool literacy, instructional technology supports, training in standards-based instruction, training in data analysis and protocols, leadership capacity-building, classified training and support, recruitment and retention of highly-qualified staff, increasing and improving communication, family education opportunities, student outreach and support programs for students with disabilities, student outreach and support programs for emerging and bilingual students, and specialized supports for families. This list of districtwide actions focused heavily on supports outside of the classroom, with only three activities directly targeting instruction: social-emotional learning, instructional technology supports, and training in standards-based instruction. This suggested a strong emphasis on addressing the needs of the whole EL-classified student but also showed the need to prioritize actions that will improve teaching and learning for EL-classified students.

**Document #2:** EL Master Plan

**Purpose:** The district's current and previous master plans for EL and dual language programs

**Analytical Memo:** The 2024 Draft EL Master Plan that was retrieved from the district's website was still marked "Draft" despite being 12 years old. The 2024 plan was dated 2020 but had not been adopted due to delays from COVID. The draft was 108 pages but mentioned programming for LTEL-considered students only 22 times, while in contrast, bilingual programming was discussed 129 times. It is noteworthy that the majority of

students in bilingual programs are not EL-classified. [1] The 2024 draft stated that it followed the *California State English Learner Roadmap* that was passed in 2017; however, the plan for LTEL-considered students was nearly identical to the plan from 2012. This indicates that the district's plan for meeting the needs of LTEL-considered students has not been carefully revised to include current research-based approaches.

**Document #3**: Single Plan for Student Achievement

**Purpose**: Site data analysis, planning, and resource allocation

**Analytical Memo:** The site plan (SPSA) indicated a need for increased attention to instruction and support for LTEL-considered students, saying, "Because we are the primary school site for 'Newcomer' English Language Learners, strategies targeting the needs of the long-term English Learners can fall out of focus." Similar to the LCAP, data were not disaggregated for LTEL-considered students and supports were indicated as being appropriate for all EL-classified students. The site plan showed a heavy investment in improving access to a standards-based curriculum for all students with a heavy emphasis on CM, which was designed for LTEL-considered students. The SPSA also stated a goal of 100% of new teachers receiving intensive CM training and 85% of returning/veteran teachers participating in refresher professional development. Site administrators were reported to do 30-40 informal classroom walkthroughs per week. It was also reported that most teachers post learning and language goals each day and incorporate activities that encourage the use of academic language in class. These data indicated that the site sees the need to improve instruction of LTEL-considered students, has invested significant site funds to meet that goal, and is engaged in practices to support integrated ELD implementation via the CM framework.

**Document #4:** Site Master Schedule

**Purpose:** Site schedule of classes

**Analytical Memo:** The site schedule of classes listed only three designated ELD classes for LTEL-considered students, indicating that the only language instruction approximately 75% of LTEL-considered students received within their school day was in their content-area classes. This underscored the importance of the integration of integrated ELD strategies in content-area classes.

**Document #5:** Constructing Meaning Materials

**Purpose:** Constructing Meaning professional development 4-day introductory series as modified by district coaches and site staff, annual optional CM full day refresher for teachers districtwide, language scaffolds for integrated ELD

**Analytical Memo:** The CM instructional framework was designed to be a five-day training for content-area teachers but was consolidated in this district to four 6-hour days

of training. Each day had a dynamic slideshow with approximately 100 slides that included research-based pedagogy and participatory activities for teachers. The six components of the framework were backward design, language as a part of content teaching, structured student talk, interactive reading and note-making, academic writing support, and the use of assessment to refine instruction. Of the core CM components, more time over the four days was allocated to backward design, language as a part of content teaching, and structured student talk. Teachers engaged in task analysis several times throughout the four day training to determine the language necessary for students to complete tasks, which would allow them to create or provide appropriate scaffolds. The topics of interactive reading and note-making, academic writing and support, and the use of assessment to refine instruction were concentrated to the last two days of the institute alongside significant chunks of unstructured time for teachers to plan CM lessons. The three components of a CM lesson were explained as content, language function, and product, but notably, a literacy goal is not required. Instructional strategies most discussed included structured student talk, vocabulary development, sentence frames, and note-making while reading. CM repeatedly referenced the need to help students engage in "productive struggle," which was explained as "the way anyone can learn the language that figures in advanced literacy is through literacy, and only by noticing, grappling with and thinking about the ways forms and structures relate to meaning in the materials read." Still, the high-level of scaffolding CM demonstrated contradicted the need for students to engage in productive struggle, with many scaffolded note-takers and activities providing the majority of the language necessary to complete a task (e.g., "In order to __, it is important/essential to __."). Another important element of the CM framework was "Academic optimism" which was described as educators' belief in students' abilities to be academically successful with appropriate support. Gradual release of responsibility was discussed on three slides on Day 2 only, out of approximately 400 total slides. Gradual release of responsibility was explained in the CM training as, "I do, we do, you do together, you do on your own." While the importance of gradual release was emphasized, teachers were not explicitly shown how to do this, which may be why some teachers expressed and demonstrated difficulty in handing the responsibility for learning over to their students.

**Document #6:** Staff meeting agendas 2023-2024 (September 6, 2023, November 1, 2023, January 24, 2023)

**Purpose:** Allocation of staff meeting time for integrated ELD professional learning

**Analytical Memo:** The WASC report stated that staff meetings typically included 20-40 minutes of review of instructional strategies to support integrated ELD. However, staff meeting agendas indicated that this was accomplished at only 3/6 (50%) of staff meetings in the fall of 2023. At these meetings, the teacher who had been allocated a .2 for instructional coaching was given 30 minutes to review CM strategies and data from instructional rounds (i.e., teachers observing other teachers to study elements of effective instruction). Of the three staff meeting agendas analyzed for this study, two reviewed the

elements of a CM lesson: have a learning goal with content, language, and product; vocabulary development through bricks and mortar; student talk; student supports through frames and templates; and use of frames that are high leverage and portable. The other staff meeting in which CM LTEL instruction was discussed focused on engagement, assessment, accountability, and structured student talk. The lack of emphasis on high-level literacy was noted in all meeting agendas.

**Document #7:** Teacher lessons with integrated ELD strategies

**Purpose:** Site teachers' application of integrated ELD to lessons

Analytical Memo: For this study, teachers were asked to provide evidence of integrated ELD strategies in their content-area classes. These materials revealed a range of usage of integrated ELD strategies, with some instructional materials having no scaffolds for productive language, while others were sequenced with highly structured language frames for every sentence students would need to produce. It was difficult to ascertain the degree to which teachers engaged in the gradual release of responsibility from isolated lessons, but there appeared to be an all-or-nothing phenomenon when it came to scaffolding productive language. It is important to note that the teachers interviewed who provided documents were known to be the most effective users of integrated ELD at the site by administrators and other teachers, so the lack of appropriate scaffolding in some classes suggests a site-wide area for growth. Many teachers included links to videos or other visual aids in their lessons, but there appeared to be less emphasis on high-level reading to learn content. Class banks for vocabulary or quotations were common. While this practice assists with the completion of writing tasks such as essays and common assessments, the presence of a list of quotations supplied by the teacher and other students may negate the need for students to critically read and identify pertinent evidence on their own, reducing their need to engage in rigorous reading. Evidence of gradual release of responsibility was noted, with teachers typically demonstrating the first and second steps (i.e., "I do" and "we do"). However, the heavy reliance on class banks and partner work indicates that the gradual release of responsibility may typically not move beyond the "We do" or "You do together" stages to full student independence, mastery of skills, or internalization of language structures in the "You do on your own" stage. Rubrics provided by teachers for common and individual assessments included comprehension of reading and academic language in addition to content, indicating that teachers were working to incorporate the three strands of integrated ELD in their lessons and assessments. It was also noted that the rubrics typically used a 4-point scale with 4 being mastery of the topic/skill, 3 being some understanding of the topic/skill, and 2 and 1 showing little-to-no understanding. The use of a 3 to indicate some understanding is noteworthy, as this may suggest low expectations for student mastery of the material, and many students receiving high grades in content-area classes may have relatively low levels of understanding of content. This analysis was corroborated by interview data that suggested students who appear to be doing well on assessments by using the scaffolds for integrated ELD may not understand the content standards.

**Document #8:** Administrator classroom walkthrough tool and data

**Purpose:** Evidence of administrative oversight and efforts to ensure teacher accountability for the use of integrated ELD in the classroom

**Analytical Memo:** Site administrators routinely engaged in brief, informal, unannounced visits to classrooms using a checklist of the qualities of effective teaching that they had deemed site priorities, including: Classroom rules and procedures were posted; the learning goal was posted/visible for the duration of the class; the learning goal contained content, language function, and a student product; the agenda was shared to help students track the lesson; the lesson was chunked into a variety of activities; the teacher checked for understanding; structured student talk routines were utilized; strategies/tools to ensure equity and accountability were used; and the teacher was actively engaged with students in learning. The fact that the posting of rules and procedures was the first item on the checklist may suggest that student discipline and classroom management were areas of concern for administrators. Also noted by administrators were the types of language activity observed throughout the lesson (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, writing) and the level of student engagement (i.e., authentically on task, compliant/passive, disengaged/disruptive). In the fall of 2023, site administrators completed a cumulative 128 walkthroughs throughout the semester, which contradicts the SPSA's statement that 30-40 administrative walkthroughs are completed each week. Of the 128 walkthroughs completed, 84 were logged by administrators in a shared spreadsheet and reflected the following observations of classrooms: teachers engaged in helping students (78/84), students listening (58/84), checks for understanding (57/84), students reading (54/84), students writing (50/84), CM learning goal posted (48/84), use of equity tools for participation (44/84), students talking (29/84), and teachers using structured student talk routines (13/84). It is noteworthy that student talk was a clear area of struggle for teachers, which was corroborated by interview data. It is also significant that the levels of student engagement were as follows: Classrooms with students engaged (62/84), mixed engagement (17/84), and students not engaged (4/84). It is clear from this data that most students were engaged in their learning, although primarily in quiet activities such as listening, reading, and writing.

**Document #9:** ELLevation Data

**Purpose:** District and site demographic and achievement data for EL-classified and LTEL-considered students

**Analytical Memo:** These data were used primarily to describe the case study context and create tables with student demographics, EL statuses, and academic achievement.

**Document #10:** Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Report

**Purpose:** 2022 self-study report for reflection and continuous improvement required for WASC accreditation

**Analytical Memo:** This report was written collaboratively by teachers and site administrators who were working in cross disciplinary teams. They discussed at length the school's focus on CM as the primary mechanism for improving LTEL achievement. The report deemed CM the site's most successful and longest-standing initiative, stating that since 2015-2016, all teachers have been trained in CM, but said survey data suggested that CM was "not being implemented consistently nor with fidelity." The report also stated the school's intention to redouble its commitment to improving student outcomes across subjects by integrating new pedagogical strategies in all content-areas and cited the current level of CM implementation as both an area of strength and an area for growth. Notably, CM was referred to repeatedly as a means of improving access to grade-level literacy regardless of subject area, although much of the data collected have suggested that students are receiving access to content through videos, visual aids, and lectures more than through high-level literacy activities. The self-study also noted that there was a compelling need to gather site data to ascertain the effectiveness of the CM program in improving student achievement. Finally, resources for CM implementation were listed, including the presence of an on-campus teacher-coach and the two district EL coach positions, one of which was vacant in the fall of 2023 when data for this study were collected.