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Teachers' Understanding of Culturally and Linguistically Differentiated Instruction for English Language Learners

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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2017

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MA, Stony Brook State University of New York, 2004

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

A large school district in the northeastern United States struggled with teaching middle school English Language Learners (ELLs) to succeed in reading and writing. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding what they could do to increase academic achievement for ELLs. The conceptual framework emerged from Weimer's learning-centered teaching, which aligns with Dewey's social constructivism. Ten purposefully sampled teachers agreed to be interviewed in the attempt to answer the research questions about instructional strategies teachers believed were best to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction for ELLs and what teachers believed could be done to improve ELLs' classroom engagement and motivation for increased academic achievement. Analysis and open, thematic coding of semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and teachers' lesson plans were used to create seven themes, including *differentiated instruction, background knowledge, challenges and difficulties, home-school connection, technology for diverse learners, administration and faculty collaboration, and professional development*. Findings included participants' desire for meaningful professional development where differentiated instruction is modeled to address the cultural and linguistic needs of ELLs. The project was created to deliver this training for all teachers at the site, focusing on culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction, sheltered instruction, and collaborative learning. The findings and project may promote positive social change by improving instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse learners at the local site and similar school districts. Higher academic achievement would provide better opportunities for ELL students.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my two children, Christina and Kevin; my son-in-law, Ron; and my two grandchildren, Sloane and Diem. I would especially like to dedicate this to my husband of 40 years, Dewanand (Dave), whose help and unwavering support has sustained me through this long and arduous journey. I know, without a doubt, that I could not have attempted or completed this exceptionally long journey without him by my side.

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I would like to offer a heart felt thank you to my husband. I would like to thank him for all the sacrifices and extra work he had to endure while I was busy working on this project, which took longer than anticipated. Thank you for allowing me to pursue this endeavor and helping me fulfill my dreams, heart's desires, and academic aspirations.

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Finally, I would like to thank all my friends and family for their understanding and acceptance throughout this process.

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The Local Problem

The number of English Language Learners (ELLs) enrolled in U.S. public schools

has increased every year since 2002–2003 (National Center for Education Statistics

[NCES], 2012). According to (NCES, 2012), in the 2011–2012 school year, ELLs'

enrollment had increased to 4.4 million (9.1%), compared to 4.1 million (8.7%) in 2002–

2003. Public schools in New York State have had a steady increase in ELL enrollment

2011-2012 (New York State Education Department [NYSED], 2014a). Currently, in New

York State public schools, there are approximately 237,634 ELLs who speak more than

160 different languages (NYSED, 2014a). In addition, an estimated 25% of U.S. students

come from families who migrated to the United States and live in homes where English is

not the first language spoken (Samson & Collins, 2012). This statistic has significant

implications for schools in the United States (Samson & Collins, 2012). According to

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (United States Department of Education [USDOE],

2015), a majority of schools could be identified and targeted for support if subgroups,

like ELLs are underperforming (Hough, Penner, & Witte, 2016). The steady increase of

ELLs in U.S. schools highlights the need for changes.

Based on the above statistics, teachers may encounter students with a wide-range

of ability levels in their academic readiness, including speaking, reading, writing,

behavioral, social and emotional skills, and English language proficiency levels

(Tomlinson, 2015). These factors could present challenges for educators to instruct

students using curriculum that has complex content, higher-order, and critical thinking to

align with 21st-century skills and Common Core Standards (CCS) (Tomlinson, 2015). Based on ESSA and CCS, states are held accountable for students' academic advancement in multiple measures, which is far more complex because that equate to different ways the state could identify schools for improvement (Hough et al., 2016). Classrooms need to offer equity for all students. Consequently, leaders at school and district levels must consistently provide educational tools for classroom teachers who service ELLs (Hough, Penner, & Witte, 2016; Tomlinson, 2015). The implementation of research-based teaching practices to assist teachers in addressing the diverse student populations learning needs is vital.

Teachers who lack training in teaching ELLs may face difficulties in instruction given the increasing number of these students in U.S. classrooms (Green, Foote, Walker, & Shuman, 2010; Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, [TESOL], 2013; Zimmerman, 2014). When encountering a diverse student body, teachers must possess the knowledge and skills to reach the needs of every student, including ELLs (Cheesman & Pry, 2010; Samson & Collins, 2012; TESOL, 2013). Compared to non-ELLs, ELLs underachieve in reading and writing on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam. In 2014, 32% of non-ELLs scored 3 or above in the ELA assessment, compared to 3.6% of ELLs. In 2015, 33.8% of non-ELLs scored at this level, compared to 4.4% of ELLs (NYSED, 2015a). Many ELLs are at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts because they cannot read, write, or perform in English, the standard form of instruction (Zimmerman, 2014). To address this issue, I investigated the strategies currently used by a large suburban school district (LSSD, which is a pseudonym) and

how these might be modified to help teachers in addressing the diverse learning needs of ELLs and narrowing this achievement gap.

Definition of the Problem

LSSD is located in a state in the northeastern part of the United States. The problem is that, compared to non-ELLs, ELLs are underachieving in reading and writing on the New York State ELA exam (NYSED, 2014b). Based on New York State's Blueprint for English Language Learners' (ELLs) Success (NYSED, 2014a), school districts must ensure that all teachers can teach ELLs and address diverse learning needs, whether they are related to culture, linguistics, or socioeconomic or disability status. Teachers may be highly qualified to teach content areas but lack training in addressing the diverse learning needs of ELLs, such as bridging cultural and language barriers (National Council for Teacher Education [NCTE], 2008; Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014; Tran, 2015). Teachers need to be prepared to address the problem of underachievement for ELLs (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014). According to Polat and Cepik (2016) and Samson and Collins (2012), all teachers, not just ESL and bilingual teachers, must possess the expertise to address the needs of ELLs in their classrooms.

Given the lack of academic success of ELLs in LSSD, school leaders must increase performance for all students, including ELLs, with diverse learning needs. Linguistically, culturally, and academically, diverse students have not met current U.S. school accountability requirements (Sobel, Gutierrez, Zion, & Blanchett, 2011). Lack of ELLs' success in reading and writing has negative implications for LSSD, because the 2015 ESSA (USDOE, 2015), formerly known as the NCLB Act of 2001, mandated

academic success for all learners, including ELLs. In addition, as part of its Blueprint for ELLs' Success, New York State (NYSED, 2014a), has released eight mandates that schools must implement:

1. "All teachers are teachers of English Language Learners, and need to plan accordingly" (NYSED, 2014a, p. 2).

2. "All school boards and district/school leaders are responsible for ensuring that the academic, linguistic, social, and emotional needs of ELLs are addressed" (NYSED, 2014a, p. 2).

3. "Districts and schools need to engage all ELLs in instruction that is grade-appropriate, academically rigorous, and aligned with the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core and P- 12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)" (NYSED, 2014a, p. 3).

4. "Districts and schools need to recognize that bilingualism and biliteracy are assets, and provide opportunities for all students to earn a Seal of Biliteracy upon obtaining a high school diploma" (NYSED, 2014a, p. 4).

5. "Districts and schools need to value all parents and families of ELLs as partners in education and effectively involve them in the education of their children" (NYSED, 2014a, p. 5).

6. "District and school communities need to leverage the expertise of Bilingual, ESL, and Languages other than English teachers and support personnel while increasing their professional capacities" (NYSED, 2014a, p. 5).

7. "Districts and school communities need to leverage ELLs' home languages, cultural assets, and prior knowledge" (NYSED, 2014a, p. 6).

8. "Districts and schools need to use diagnostic tools and formative assessment practices in order to measure ELLs' content knowledge as well as new and home language development to inform instruction" (NYSED, 2014a, p. 6).

According to Rubinstein-Avila and Lee (2014), Tomlinson (2015), and NCTE (2008), most teachers of ELLs are well intentioned but may not understand the linguistic and cultural needs of ELLs that must be met to promote their language development. As a result, teachers may become frustrated and lose confidence in their abilities (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014; Tran, 2015). ELLs spend most of their instructional time with content area teachers. However, only 20 states provide at least some training in ESL strategies for content area teachers, and the length and depth of this ESL training is not documented or reported (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; TESOL, 2013). In addition, some preservice teachers have received licenses to teach ELLs without instruction in how to align lessons to Common Core Learning Standards (TESOL, 2013). Having ELL-specific training is crucial in addressing ELLs cultural, linguistics, and diverse learning needs for academic achievement (Kolano, Dávila, Lachance & Coffey, 2014). Professional training aligned with a school district's population could positive learning outcomes.

Many factors have contributed to the problem of underachievement for ELLs. One such factor is the lack of training made available to teachers to enable them to deliver instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate, perceptions of ELLs' families and multicultural learners, and motivational and engaging instructional resources

(Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014). In addition, some teachers may not possess the training in ESL methodologies necessary to instruct ELLs in content areas and understand the learning needs of the school district (Desimone, & Garet, 2015). Therefore, it is imperative that all teachers receive professional training in addressing the diverse learning needs of all students.

Rationale

Based on the mandates in the New York State Blueprint for ELLs' Success (NYSED, 2014a), the state's school districts should ensure that all teachers can teach ELLs and address diverse learning needs. My rationale for conducting this study was to better understand how teachers viewed the diverse learning needs of ELLs and how they work to decrease the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. In addition, the problem of ELLs' underachievement affects classroom teachers, who may be highly qualified to teach content areas, such as science and math, but lack training in addressing the diverse learning needs of ELLs (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014; Tran, 2015). Also, professional training that includes bridging cultural and language barriers could help teachers in instructing ELLs (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014; Tran, 2015). School districts could ensure teachers are receiving training to target ELLs' diverse learning needs.

LSSD school leaders are responsible for improving the performance for all students with diverse learning needs. Lack of success for ELLs has negative implications for LSSD because ESSA mandated academic success for all learners, including ELLs. ESSA (2015) stated that if school districts do not make adequate progress after four years of extensive improvements, including professional training for principals and teachers,

the state could intervene (American Federation of Teachers [AFT], 2015). The state could take rigorous actions such as restructuring school-level operations or giving students the choice of choosing their high school (AFT, 2015). The underperformance of ELLs presents a problem in meeting ESSA mandates at the school district under study.

In addition, NYS Blueprint for ELLs' Success outlined eight mandates that schools need to implement. Some of these mandates focus specifically on teachers' plans for addressing the diverse learning needs of ELLs (NYSED, 2014a). In addition, school districts in New York State are responsible for addressing students' academic, social and emotional needs, as well as leveraging all available support personnel to ensure academic success for bilingual, ESL, and other language learners, and align their learning with CCLS (NYSED, 2014a).

Twenty U.S. states stipulate that teachers must receive some training in ESL strategies, though data on the length and depth of this training is not available (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; TESOL, 2013). Furthermore, while federal laws state that school districts must provide research-based professional development to all teachers or staff members who have contact with ELLs, more than 30 states do not provide additional professional development training for these personnel (Education Commission of the States, 2014). In addition, preservice teachers who do receive licenses to teach ESL students often lack knowledge of how to align lessons to CCLS (TESOL, 2013), which is crucial in addressing ELLs' cultural, linguistics, and diverse learning needs for academic achievement (Kolano et al., 2014). ELLs increased in academic performance would address ESSA (2015) educational requirements for school districts.

Definition of Terms

Annual yearly progress (AYP): An accountability measure for U.S. public schools. Each state has set academic goals and criteria for educational advancements of students (NCLB, 2013).

Achievement gap: "The disparity between the average scores of two student subgroups on the standardized assessment is an achievement gap based on data from National Assessment of Education Progress" (USDOE, 2013b, p. 1).

English language learner: "A student being served in appropriate programs of language assistance such as English as a Second Language, High Intensity Language Training, and bilingual education" (DOE, 2013a, p. 1).

Learner-centered: A form of instruction in which instruction is focused on the learner and what the student is learning, and teachers act as facilitators in the learning environment (Weimer, 2013).

Limited English proficient: "Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. Limited English proficient, or "LEP", [learners] may be entitled to" services to benefit their learning needs (USDOE, 2013b, p. 1).

Proficiency levels for English language arts (ELA): Student performance standards for Grades 3- 8 where Level 1= well below proficient, Level 2 = partially proficient, Level 3 = proficient, and Level 4 = excellent (NYSED, 2014b).

Title I: A program that provides funding to students from low-income families and underachieving in schools (USDOE, 2013b).

Title III: A program that provides monies to schools to ensure that students from immigrant families are provided with English language accommodations. It addresses demands placed on U.S. schools to attain higher academic performance for ELLs. Title III aligns with ESSA (NYSED, 2014a).

Significance of the Study

I believe that my research is relevant because ELL with diverse learning needs are the fastest growing population in U.S. schools (Gibson, 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Sleeter, 2012; Song, 2016; Tienda & Haskins, 2011). Furthermore, the ELL population at LSSD continues to increase. Researchers such as Green et al. (2010), Lee et al. (2016), and Tomlinson (2015) contend that factors such as race, ethnicity, culture and language should be considered when addressing the diverse learning needs of ELLs. Educational leaders have found it difficult to choose the best instructional approaches for bilingual/ELLs because of their diverse backgrounds (e.g., differences in native languages, cultures, socioeconomic statuses, prior schooling or lack of any schooling, and parental support) (Green et al., 2010). The current study may also be beneficial to teachers, as they will gain a better understanding of instructional approaches to address ELLs' learning needs in reading and writing.

I contributed to the research seeking to address underachievement of ELLs in reading and writing by examining the importance of implementing culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy in narrowing the achievement gap for ELLs. I examined teachers' perceptions and preparedness to address ELLs' diverse learning needs and meet LSSD learning requirements and New York State mandates. Because teachers in U.S.

public schools encounter diverse learners, every teacher must possess the knowledge and skills in cultural responsive teaching for all students, including ELLs (Samson & Collins, 2012; Song, 2016; Tren, 2015). Culturally responsive teachers could provide instruction to connect with diverse learners.

In addition, school leaders must make informed decisions regarding how teachers can address the diverse leaning needs of ELLs and foster culturally responsive language development (Tomlinson, 2015; Tren, 2015). Implementation of instructional strategies to target the diverse learning needs of ELLs in reading and writing could improve their performance in local and state level standardized tests (Tomlinson, 2015). This study is vital, as the outcome could add value to the body of knowledge required to address ELLs' performance achievement and has the potential to promote positive social change by providing opportunities for all students to achieve academic success.

Research Questions

The guiding question for this study was, what can teachers do to increase academic achievement for ELLs in the school under study? The following are related subquestions I sought to answer in my qualitative case study:

1. What instructional strategies do teachers believe are best to deliver instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs?

2. What do teachers believe can be done to improve ELLs' classroom engagement and motivation for increased academic achievement?

The results of this study demonstrated that administrators and the community at large heard the voices of ESL and content area teachers on what they need to address the

instructional needs of ELLs. Weimer (2013) found that learner-centered instruction may address the diverse learning needs of students.

Review of the Literature

In this section, I review the literature regarding ELLs' underachievement compared to non-ELLs and how teachers address the diverse learning needs of ELLs. The review provided a saturation of literature by examining journal articles and peer-reviewed publications using the Walden University Library, Google Scholar, ERIC, ProQuest, the Department of Education website, the New York State Education website, and various educational websites. Additional references used in the literature review were books borrowed from the local library and purchased online. The search terms used included: learner-centered teaching, constructivism, achievement gap, cultural responsive teaching, ELLs' achievement, teacher preparation and perception, cultural and linguistic diversity of ELLs students, parental involvement, immigrant families, teacher efficacy, collaborative learning, English Language Learners, 21st century learners, immigration and education, bilingual education, and educational policies. The most useful and relevant sources were organized according to topics and subjects closely related to the focus of cultural responsive teaching in order to address the diverse learning needs of ELLs.

The conceptual framework paradigm was learner-centered teaching based on constructivism. Subheadings for the conceptual framework were learner-centered teaching and constructivist pedagogy. The main topics covered in the review of relevant research were teachers' perceptions and preparedness, background of ELLs, immigration policy, state and federal educational policies, ELLs' characteristics, achievement gaps for

ELLs, school support and immigrant families, academic literacy, teachers' self-efficacy, and culturally responsive teaching.

Conceptual Framework

The main conceptual framework for this study was based on Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching theory and Dewey's (1938/1997) social constructivism theory. Each experience may impact a person's future, either positively or negatively (Dewey, 1938/1997; Weimer, 2013). According to Dewey (1938/1997), students bring their experiences and knowledge from their social background and surroundings. For instance, a child learns to speak through responses received from innate babble; consequently, the babbling is transformed into a language from their social experiences (Dewey, 1938/1997). Dewey (1938/1997) and Weimer (2013) believed students are unique in terms of their genetics, cultural and social backgrounds, and present and past experiences; therefore, educators need to take into account the uniqueness of each learner when designing curriculum.

The conceptual framework aligned with a constructivist approach, where learners are the center of instruction. The qualities of constructivist learners are intrinsic motivation, high energy, and commitment (Moore, 2011). "Student motivation is imperative" (Moore, 2011, pp. 19–20). Addressing the varied learning needs of students with diverse backgrounds is the greatest challenge for educators (De Jesus, 2012). When teachers use constructivist learning, they provide students opportunities to build meaning in what they learn, which may lead to academic success (Weimer, 2013).

Weimer (2013) argued that American society focuses on education and demands students become critical thinkers and process complex information, not just practice memorization (Kelley, Siwatu, Tost, & Martinez, 2015; Lew, 2010). Lew (2010) and Weimer (2013) stated that the constructivist approach was focused on curriculum and instruction, placed high demands on students, and encouraged and built upon their current abilities so they achieved skills for college and beyond. Corngold (2010) posited that schools are institutions that nurture and promote learning by presenting students with a variety of content areas and cultural diversity. As explained, based on Dewey's teachings, and supporting Weimer's learner-centered teaching, learning must be:

- Simplifying: gives students opportunities to study different topics gradually;
- Purifying: keeps students away from minor, unappealing, and unreasonable demands of the world;
- Balancing: provides exposure to different social and cultural knowledge; and
- Steadying enables students to embrace diversity outside of school (p. 238)

Weimer (2013) argued that the school environment is where students developed balanced learning and are prepared with range of social skills.

Learner-centered teaching. Dewey (1938/1997) and Weimer (2013) argued that a student-centered educational environment enables students to become responsible members of society with long-term educational benefits. Teachers need to understand that the facilitation of classroom instruction could help or hinder students' learning process (Dewey, 1938/1997; Weimer, 2013). Dewey's (1938/1997) educational philosophy impacted education and contributed to social reform. For example, teachers cannot

change students' past experiences; however, teachers could design lessons that were meaningful and applicable to student's past experiences (Dewey, 1938/1997; Weimer, 2013).

Learner-centered instruction promotes learning for many different types of learners (An & Reigeluth, 2011; Blumberg, 2009; Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012; Weimer, 2013). Teachers may design lessons based on students' suggestions, input, or interest in learning (Lee, 2010; Weimer, 2013). Teachers can also provide opportunities for students to choose activities based on their learning needs. (Lee, 2010; Weimer, 2013). Weimer (2013) posited that teaching must change in five key areas to ensure students are the center of instruction:

1. Balance of power. Teachers allowing students to take some control of their learning to increase student motivation and enthusiasm.

2. The function of content. Using curriculum content to build students metacognitive ability and ability to transfer knowledge from class to class.

3. The role of the teacher. The teacher becomes a facilitator in the learning process and allows students to discover information and content whenever possible.

4. The responsibility for learning. Create a learning environment that promotes autonomous learning by recognizing the uniqueness of the learners; less extrinsic motivation for students may help increase intrinsic learning.

5. The purpose and processes of evaluation. Teachers focus on learning and not grading, provide more immediate, descriptive, formative feedback, and use different forms of assessments.

Weimer (2013) and (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012) stated that learner-centered instruction allows teachers to use differentiated instruction and adjust to diverse learners, such as learners with cultural and linguistic diversity.

Further, Weimer (2013) believed that teacher-centered instruction might not allow students to become critical thinkers; as a result, students may not become independent learners and acquire skills for lifelong success (Weimer, 2013). Teacher-directed learning gives students the idea that course content is taught only for assessment and not material from which they can learn (Weimer, 2013). However, teacher-centered instruction is not purely negative, because students also require discipline and structure (Abdelmalak & Trespalacios, 2013; Weimer, 2013). But, in teacher-directed environments, students can see themselves as powerless (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012; Weimer, 2013). Instructors empower students when they allow them to assist in creating course outlines (Weimer, 2013). Empowering students eliminate the impression that instructors are just transferring knowledge, which could impede the learning process (Abdelmalak & Trespalacios, 2013; Weimer, 2013). Learner-centered teaching demonstrates an understanding of students' culture, language, and past experiences, and supports constructivist pedagogy (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012). Lessons created and designed to connect with learners convey positive messages.

Constructivist pedagogy. Weimer's (2013) learner-centered philosophy aligns with Dewey's social constructivism. Constructivism relates to learner-centered teaching, the notion that knowledge is constructed based on one's previous experiences (Weimer, 2013; Dewey, 1938/1997). Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012) stated that no universal

definition of constructivism exists. Various educators may view it as a theory of learning, of knowledge, or of pedagogy. Learner-centered teaching and constructivism aligned with this study because there has not been one universal truth, but truth based on the perception of events or interacting in the world. Learners constantly encounter ideas and information inconsistent with what they understand to be true and then may change their understanding to incorporate or accommodate this new understanding (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012). Students think about learning and prior experiences when they activate background knowledge during classroom activities.

Constructivist views have been common among educators (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012). Lew's (2010) study showed that teachers often apply constructivist pedagogy with positive results for students. Based on Lew's (2010) research, teachers gave students autonomy by allowing them to design a grading scale used for a class project, and students and their peers considered this activity a success. If school leaders' objective is to improve education and enable all students to be successful, students' needs must be the priority and focus of education (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012). Focusing on how students learn could help to increase students' interest in academic content.

There is a pressing need for ELLs to acquire academic English skills; however, it is challenging for ELLs to learn academic content while becoming proficient in English (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2011; Echevarria et al., 2008). Koyama and Menken's (2013) research showed that schools are unjustifiably at a disadvantage due appearance of poor performance due to beginning ELLs or emergent bilinguals in classrooms. Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012) stated that many studies have shown that constructivist teaching

and learning are powerful in various content areas and address diversity, including students' race, varying ability levels, and socioeconomic status.

Applying constructivist strategies from the research in creating content that engages and is relevant for diverse learners with different culture and linguistic background may also prove appropriate and effective for all students (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012; Tomlinson, 2015). Currently, one of the most influential contributions to education is providing students the opportunity to be actively involved in their learning (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012; Tomlinson, 2015). Constructivist pedagogy provides students the opportunity to become active, responsible individuals who can learn at their own pace based on their own ability level.

Learners with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can challenge educators, as learning English involves many cognitive processes. ELLs have a wide array of cultural and academic abilities and deficiencies that may impede the learning process (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012; Tomlinson, 2015). Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching is based on constructivism with the focus on the learners and interaction with their learning environment. Students need to become proactive in the learning process, and teachers must learn to act as facilitators (Weimer, 2013).

Instructional leaders present opportunities for learners to develop inquiry-based knowledge (Weimer, 2013). Weimer (2013) and Dewey (1938/1997) posited that student-centered instruction such as independent projects, portfolios, journals, cooperative learning, presentations, and varied forms of assessments are teaching practices that employ constructivist teaching.

Constructivist philosophy aligns with the methodology design of this qualitative case study and helps in interpreting teacher-participant responses related to learner-centered teaching. Merriam (2009) posited that there are "multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event" (p. 8); I investigated participants' varying perceptions of the same events. The use of constructivism as the conceptual framework allowed the interpretation of the participants' responses to determine whether learner-centered teaching could impact ELLs' academic achievement. The following section discusses the literature review.

Review of Relevant Research

Teachers' Perceptions and Preparedness

In the United States, schools are continually becoming culturally and linguistically complicated. Teacher candidates require substantial training in cultural and diversity awareness to help students become successful (Taylor, Kumi-Yeboah, & Ringlaben, 2015). Due to inequality, the majority of pre-service teachers are White, and they teach non-Whites in segregated schools (Taylor et al., 2015). The changing demographics in today's' classrooms requires teachers to become better prepared to instruct diverse learners.

A quantitative study conducted by Yeboah and Ringlaben (2015) in a New Latina/o Diaspora area in northwestern Georgia studied 80 pre-service teachers to understand their perceptions of teaching culturally and linguistically underrepresented students. The results demonstrated that most teachers believed there is a need for multicultural education in teacher education programs, and more cultural awareness is

warranted for special need students (Yeboah & Ringlaben, 2015). The participants, full-time college students, ages 18 to 36, 85% White, 13% Hispanic, and 3% other, were education majors in early childhood and secondary education. The teachers welcomed multicultural education and the challenges that come with teaching learners from culturally different backgrounds to help students achieve academic success. The authors posited that teachers need to be proficient in instructing students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, but the effectiveness of multicultural education hinges on the preparation of pre-service educators (Yeboah & Ringlaben, 2015).

Sleeter (2012) stated that after he visited a school connected to an urban teacher education program, he observed that administrators and teachers do not understand that culturally relevant pedagogy is a framework for teaching and learning (Sleeter, 2012). Sleeter (2012) met with some student teachers that explained they were fully prepared in culturally relevant pedagogy; however, their preparation was based on using 10 of the best practices, which were embedded within the college textbook. Sleeter also observed several student teachers reported that their perception of cultural pedagogy was the minimum steps the student teachers' took to understand diversity in the classrooms.

The future of education is in the hands of teacher candidates; therefore, it is imperative that teacher education programs ensure teachers receive culturally relevant instruction (Taylor et al., 2015). It is also important to consider that pre-service teachers are another population with insufficient knowledge of culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Taylor et al., 2015). Institutions preparing teachers to enter into education need to design programs based on the needs of students in today's classrooms.

Rose and Potts (2011) analyzed teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards cultural diversity during their student teaching experience in a multicultural setting. The authors examined a case study and focused on a White middle-class student teacher, Susan, assigned to a third-grade classroom (Rose & Potts, 2011). The sample site was in a Southeastern region of the United States with changing demographics of a mostly White and African-American population. Other students were ELLs from various parts of the world with various cultures, linguistics, and socioeconomic statuses. Susan was resistant to change, and shared that skin color did not matter to her (Rose & Potts, 2011). She taught with the philosophy that all students shared similar beliefs and were the same because they live in the same area and were in the same classroom (Rose & Potts, 2011). Lack of cultural understanding in today's classroom could have negative results for learners and their culture.

Similarly, Susan could not understand that students' culture influenced how they learned, and she demonstrated limited understanding of sociocultural knowledge (Rose & Potts, 2011). The study's results showed that teachers need to examine students' cultural complexity; teachers cannot be proficient in culturally responsive teaching practices if they cannot see and acknowledge the differences cultures presents in students (Rose & Potts, 2011). Teacher preparation and preparedness may have profound effects on ELLs; therefore, teacher education programs need to ensure that educators are prepared to instruct and address cultural and linguistic diversity. The following sections provided information on ELLs in U.S. schools and the importance of teacher preparation and preparedness.

Policies and Background of ELL Students

Because of changes in the nation's demographic profile over the last 30 years, the face of the average student in U.S. public schools has changed. The number of immigrants has increased, and Congress has used this as a framework for a discussion regarding immigration policies. Because an estimated 79% of school-aged children, whose first language is Spanish, are living in the United States, leaders must reform policies that offer assistance for culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011). Forty-one million immigrants lived in the United States based on data from 2012, which is extremely high according to immigration history (Nwosu et al., 2014). This rapid demographic change presents a challenge for public schools in addressing ELLs' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and meeting reforms in educational policies.

In 1968, the Johnson administration acknowledged the need for bilingual programs to address the changing educational needs of rising Limited English Proficient (LEP) students because of the immigration influx (NYSED, 2006). Large numbers of immigrants were granted permission to enter the United States after the Federal Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 removed anti-immigration laws that had been in place for 40 years (NYSED, 2006). The need for educational reform was evident because academic achievements for LEP students were lower compared to native English speakers (NYSED, 2014a). The disparity in achievement between ELLs and non-ELLs is evident at the school district under study and necessitates the need for training to keep abreast of changing needs in today's classrooms.

Another major historical event that affected educational advancement for LEP students is *Lau vs. Nichols* (1974). In it, the Supreme Court ordered that under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the San Francisco Unified School District must offer all students, including Chinese immigrant students, instruction in English. The district was informed that non-English speaking students must receive instruction in an environment where all students are treated equally, regardless of their ethnicities, skin color, race, or country of birth. In addition, school districts were required to provide appropriate programs to help LEP students to, or they run the risk of losing federal aid (DOE, 2005). Programs using pedagogies to address the instructional learning needs of ELLs must be implemented to maintain equal educational opportunities for all students (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011). School districts are held accountable for all students' achievement.

In 1982, in the historic Supreme Court case *Plyer vs. Doe,* the court granted legal and illegal immigrant students the right to learn in the same classrooms as their peers. The court stated that all pupils should have access to an American public education, irrespective of legal rights in the United States bringing an end to segregation. "The deprivation of public education is not like deprivation of some other governmental benefit" (U.S. 203, p. 457). In 2015, states are still trying to identify the best practices and policies to address ELLs' learning needs.

The NCLB Act of 2001, signed by President George W. Bush, required all students to increase proficiency in core subjects such as reading, mathematics, and science by 2014 (NYSED, 2006). Progress was measured yearly using Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to assess the gap between students making academic progress and

students who were not, including ELLs (NYSED, 2006). The English Language

Acquisition Act, a part of NCLB that replaced the Bilingual Education Act, requires

students who attended a U.S. school for more than three years be tested in English

(NYSED, 2006, p.1). This mandate places a high-demand on schools to investigate and

use research-based practices to assist all students.

During his 2010 State of the Union address, President Obama signed an executive

order initiating a goal of ensuring equality of opportunity for all students. The order

stated that it is essential to implement programs offering greater opportunities for

Hispanics, the largest less dominant group in schools, so that they can attain academic

achievement in every phase of the school system in America ("White House Initiative on

Educational Excellence for Hispanics," 2011). "One approach to improving outcomes for

English learners and other language minority students is to reform the entire school,

providing innovative approaches to curriculum, instruction, assessment, provisions for

struggling students, professional development, and other elements" (Calderón, Slavin, &

Sánchez, 2011, p. 108). Schools benefit when leaders make accommodations for

students' diverse learning needs.

State and school district practices are uncertain of the best teaching approaches

that should be used to teach English language and content to ELLs and new immigrants

(Gil & Barback, 2010). There is much debate on the best research-based methodologies

for ELLs' learning outcomes, with possibilities including sheltered instruction, two-way

immersion, and bilingual education (Gil & Barback, 2010). In the United States, all

pupils have the same privilege to public education, regardless of immigration status.

However, under current conditions, ELLs do not enjoy the same access to the mainstream curriculum as their native English-speaking peers (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011). Instructional leaders need to ensure high-quality educational resources to ensure success for all students.

ELLs Characteristics

ELLs have a history of underachieving academic success compared to their counterparts. An estimated 13% of Latinos between the ages of 16 and 24 do not complete high school or have a high school diploma (USDOE, 2014c). Based on The U.S. Census Bureau, by 2021, one in four U.S. school-aged children will be Hispanic (Gándara, 2010). Hence, the fastest growing population in schools is underachieving.

According to the New York State Commission, their primary goal and responsibility is to ensure that all students, including ELLs, garner the necessary skills and prerequisites to be prepared for college, and beyond (NYSED, 2014a). A myriad of factors can hinder the success of ELLs in closing the achievement gap. For several reasons, ELLs have difficulty achieving success, such as lack of school, parental involvement, culture, and linguistic diversity. One particular area of difficulty for ELLs was poor academic skills in English (Hoff, 2013). Schools require a different set of linguistics skills, such as an academic, rather than social, command of language, which ELLs might not possess (Hoff, 2013; Zimmerman, 2014). The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data reported that non-ELLs outperformed ELLs on the core subjects of mathematics, social studies, reading, and science (Kena et al., 2014). The NAEP stated that ELLs received testing accommodations (e.g., additional time and

assessing students in small groups); however, the data does not explain what instructional approaches schools need to implement to close the achievement gap (Kena et al., 2014). Schools need to focus on how to increase ELLs academic performance.

The presence of Hispanics in the workplace is growing continually as the job market continues to demand more education for all applicants, which might negatively affect the United States (Gándara, 2010). While there is no single strategy, innovation or solution that can close the gap between Latino students and their peers, attending to ELLs' specific language needs might provide the best practices in assisting ELLs (Gándara, 2010; Zimmerman, 2014). More educational resources could help to improve the educational outcome for Hispanics, the largest minority group.

Collaborative efforts from school, home, and society addressing the challenge of educating ELLs' diverse learning needs is necessary to decrease the achievement disparity between ELL and non-ELLs (Gándara, 2010). Latinos possess the largest gap between college completion rates when compared to Black and Whites (Gándara, 2010). Over 700,000 culturally and linguistically diverse students' records were closely analyzed, and results showed that students who received most of their education in a second language, not in their first language, demonstrated lack of academic achievement (Thomas & Collier, as cited in De Kleine & Lawton, 2015). In fact, these achievement gaps are predicted to widen at the college level because of the high-academic demands colleges place on students (De Kleine & Lawton, 2015). Schools need to investigate research-based instructional strategies that could assist in closing the achievement gap for ELLs.

For more than three decades, schools have failed to successfully help Latinos complete college; and this fact demonstrated how schools fail to close the achievement gap for students of diversity (Gándara, 2010). The Board of Regents Chancellor of New York, Merryl Tisch, echoed this refrain, saying that the system has consistently failed to meet the needs of ELLs (NYSED, 2014a). Schools needs to implement changes so all students can achieve academic success.

In 2009, based on Arizona's academic achievement test in reading, 74.5% of ELLs did not meet state proficiency standards (Garcia, Lawton, & De Figueiredo, 2012). Arizona implemented the English Language Development Program to help students develop English within a year (Garcia et al., 2012). However, based on research by Cummins (2000), second language learners need to have more than one-year of instruction before academic proficiency can take place. In Arizona, ELLs can only exit the program after they achieve proficiency on the Arizona State examination (Garcia et al., 2012). The English Language Development program requires ELLs to be in an English-only immersion class for 4-hours a day; but in immersion classes, ELLs are denied the opportunity to interact, socialize, and communicate with non-ELLs (Garcia et al., 2012). ELLs placed in immersions classes are denied the opportunity to develop social skills and speaking in English.

When ELLs cannot as effectively communicate in English as native English speakers, they may be misunderstood and labeled as learning disabled (Zimmerman, 2014). ELLs may have difficulty performing tasks that require proficiency in English language, the language of instruction (Zimmerman, 2014). For example, a study

conducted by Alt, Arizmendi, Beal, and Hurtado (2013) showed that students struggle in mathematics when trying to solve word problems that require sufficient English knowledge. Acquisition of English is necessary, not only for reading and writing but solving mathematical word problems.

Students who receive instruction in their first language demonstrated higher academic success. ELLs' performance increased when the same test was administered in Spanish to 21 ELL second grade students from schools in Tucson, Arizona (Alt et al., 2013). The study found that students' math and problem-solving skills increased with instruction in the familiar vocabulary, phrasing, and syntax of their primary language (Alt et al., 2013). In addition to low academic achievement, ELLs' inability to communicate effectively in English may prevent them from socializing with native English speakers, hindering their social developmental skills (Zimmerman, 2014). Culture and diversity knowledge is critical to ELLs' instruction.

Culture and Diversity

U. S. public schools serve 4.4 million ELLs with a wide range of cultural and diverse backgrounds (NYSED, 2014a). When teachers understand and appreciate students' cultural backgrounds, such as differing cultural norms regarding eye contact, voice intonation, gestures, verbal communication, and social interactions, students may be more motivated to participate in classroom lessons (Samson & Collins, 2012; Weimer, 2013). By 2060, the U.S. population will be even more culturally and ethnically diverse; Hispanics "population would more than double, from 53.3 million in 2012 to 128.8 million in 2060" (U.S. Census Bureau [USCB], 2012, p. 1). In 2012, one in six U.S.

residents was Hispanic, by 2060, the Census Bureau estimates that number will rise to one in three (USCB, 2012). Schools must understand that culture influences education and warrants the implementation of cultural diversity in teaching and learning.

ELLs may face loneliness and isolation, which lead to low self-esteem in students and poor performance in school, but cultural awareness from teachers can positively impact students' achievement (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Terry & Irving, 2010). Culture is an "individual's race, ethnicity, native language, disability or socioeconomic status, native language (vocabulary, syntax, dialect), and socioeconomic factors (eligibility for free and reduced lunch)" (Cheesman & Pry, 2010, p. 86). The authors' research demonstrated that educators who embrace students' culture and diversity by creating positive learning environments and designing and delivering lessons with students in mind provided more opportunities for students to become achievers (Cheesman & Pry, 2010; Iwai, 2013; Terry & Irving, 2010). Teachers' empathy in classrooms could empower students.

Fallon, O'Keeffe, and Sugai's (2012) research analyzed 21 qualitative articles and seven quantitative articles related to culturally and contextually instructional strategies. The researchers found that cultural factors are important to pupils, especially families from African-American and Latino backgrounds, and schools must implement culturally responsive pedagogies (Fallon, O'Keeffe, & Sugai, 2012). Such strategies must start with professional development for pre-service, in-service and veteran teachers; however, additional research is required to recommend specific cultural and contextual approaches (Fallon et al., 2012). Fallon et al. (2012) hoped the new strategies and techniques might

target all students to maximize "the academic and social competence of children and youth and for propelling teaching and learning toward culturally and contextually relevant behavioral supports" (p. 218). Instructional strategies and resources that are relevant to ELLs' could enhance learning for all students.

Educators must understand and respect the changing faces in today's classrooms. There are over 70 different languages and cultures in U.S. school districts, with some classrooms hosting as many as ten cultures and seven languages (Terry & Irving, 2010). It would be almost impossible for teachers to learn every language and culture (Terry & Irving, 2010); however, teachers can create learning activities that are fun, engaging, and educational to infuse students' cultural backgrounds, including language, and celebrate, share, and learn about commonalities among students (Terry & Irving, 2010). Educators who may not understand or demonstrate respect for student's cultural diversity can negatively impact students' learning experiences and disenfranchise ELLs (Cheesman & Pry, 2010; Pereira & de Oliveira, 2015). Families and communities play pivotal roles in shaping the cultural values of education, behavior, and home and school communication (Cheesman & Pry, 2010). Demonstrating concerns and support for immigrant families could have positive benefits for schools and communities.

School Support and Immigrant Families

Immigrant youth, either foreign or born in the United States to immigrant parents, comprise one-fourth of 75 million children (Passel, 2011). Currently, there are approximately 30% Hispanic, Asian, and mixed immigrant youth; in 1960, they were only 6% (Passel, 2011). By 2050, it is projected that "Hispanic children will increase to

about one-third" (Passel, 2011, p. 19), while non-Hispanic white children could drop to 40%. Children of immigrants attend schools in every state, but Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Texas have the largest concentration of ELLs (Passel, 2011). According to Passel (2011), California, Texas, and New York share nearly half of all immigrant children among them. The increase of immigrant families could present challenges for educators.

Barriers that affect the achievement of ELLs are communication between teachers and parents and the lack of support for families new to the U.S. (Good et al., 2010). Eighty percent of ELLs who were U.S-born to immigrant parents attended elementary and remained ELLs in middle school and even, in some cases, high school (Calderón et al., 2011). Teachers and parents also agree that immigrant families face overwhelming challenges when living in a new country with different cultural norms (Good et al., 2010; Terry & Irving, 2010; Zimmerman -Orozco, 2011). Some immigrant families live in poverty, work seasonally on farms, and receive low wages; therefore, their priority is economic concerns and providing for their families' daily needs (Good et al., 2010; Zimmerman-Orozco, 2011).

Children of immigrant families start school with fewer academic skills preparing them for future success than do children of native parents (Votruba-Drzal, Coley, Collins, & Miller, 2015). Data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study sample included approximately 10,7001 children born in 2001 in the U.S. to parents from over 100 distinct countries around the world (Votruba-Drzal et al., 2015). "The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study is a multisource, longitudinal study aimed at characterizing the early

home and educational experiences of American-born children and documenting their cognitive and socio-emotional development from birth through kindergarten" (Votruba-Drzal et al., 2015, p. 25). The findings from The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study showed that non-English children placed in English only settings assimilate better and have higher cognitive skills when compared to non-English speaking children placed in a non-English setting (Votruba-Drzal et al., 2015). ELLs are placed at a disadvantage due to lack of English skills.

Schools must demonstrate a welcoming and caring culture to encourage parental involvement in schools (Good et al., 2010; Zimmerman-Orozco, 2011). Immigrant families face challenges reflected by students' poor achievement. Often, parents of ELLs are not proficient in English themselves, in part due to a lack of education in their language of origin, which in turn effects the amount and quality of English spoken in the home, as well as the advancement of ELLs in mastering English (Kim, Curby, & Winsler, 2014). Students are at a disadvantage when they are placed in situations where education is not the focus.

Zimmerman-Orozco's (2011) qualitative results indicated that Hispanic families migrated to the U.S. to provide better opportunities for their children, and wanted their children to become successful in school. When compared to non-ELLs, ELLs might come from loving homes, but they might not academically achieve due to limited educational and economic support at home (Gándara, 2010). Consequently, schools must regard immigrant families as valuable assets and focus on cultural and linguistic resources to enhance the education of ELLs (NCATE, 2008). Limited educational

support for ELLs has negative impact on their academic success; therefore, schools need to implement strategies to address ELLs' underachievement.

Academic Literacy

To address the NYS Blueprint for ELLs' Success, an understanding and knowledge of second language acquisition may help educators become better teachers of ELLs. Proficiency in English must take place for ELLs, in vocabulary, grammar, and knowledge of academic text (Echevarría et al., 2008; Short, Echevarría, & Richards-Tutor, 2011). CCLS requires proficiency for high school, higher education, and beyond (Echevarría et al., 2008; Short et al., 2011; Tomlinson, 2015). Proficiency in English is vital to the success of ELLs. "Academic English includes semantic and syntactic knowledge along with functional language use including understanding of different genres of writing, taking notes from teachers, and applying English using critical thinking skills to complete assignments in all content area classes" (Echevarría et al., 2008, p. 1). Students can benefit and improve in reading and writing if they are presented with opportunities to develop literacy skills.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model was intended for content area teachers to support language development during content instruction (Echevarria et al., 2008; Short et al., 2011). The SIOP Model, when used reliably by teachers who received training increased students' academic performance in language and literacy when compared to students who were not taught using the SIOP Model (Echevarria et al., 2008; Short et al., 2011). ELLs may take up to 2 years to develop conversational fluency or basic interpersonal conversations in English (Cummins, 2000).

Further, cognitive academic language proficiency or academic language proficiency for students may take anywhere from 5 to 7 years to achieve in both oral and written language (Cummins, 2000). Learning a second language needs time and support.

Because of poor literacy skills, ELLs face a myriad of difficulties in struggling to process, understand, discuss, and interact with academic texts (Lesaux, Kieffer, Kelley, & Harris, 2014). For example, language minority students might have trouble understanding complex texts because they have not yet acquired higher-order thinking skills such as text structure and genre, nor have prior knowledge of content area topics (Lesaux et al., 2014). Building fluency in reading and writing continues to pose a challenge for ELLs and struggling learners.

A field trial research study conducted by Lesaux et al. (2014) at a large urban school district in California, served economically and linguistically diverse student population. The study focused on the explicit academic vocabulary instruction of 50 teacher participants and 2,082 students, 71% (1,469) of the students were language minority, with 65% (955) reporting Spanish as their first language (Lesaux et al., 2014). The ELA 20-week program primarily focused on reading materials to engage students and provide opportunities for academic vocabulary enhancement (Lesaux et al., 2014). The findings showed that students improved academic literacy, written language skills, and comprehension of complex texts through explicit vocabulary instruction based on academic words taught in the 20-week program (Lesaux et al., 2014). Students could have performance gains when instructional methods focus on learning deficit.

Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is characterized as a belief in one's skills and ability to accomplish

tasks (Bandura, 1997). Teachers are change agents, and their self-efficacy plays a pivotal

role in classrooms and may influence students' learning outcomes (Bandura, 1997). For

instance, teachers' behavior may result in the desired outcome once they acquire the

skills and wherewithal for instructing the diverse learning needs of ELLs (Bandura,

1997). Because teachers teach in culturally and linguistically complex environments, it is

critical that they increase their knowledge and beliefs and practice self-exploration in

order to develop a deeper sense of understanding and empathic disposition toward

students, including ELLs (Li, 2013; Sleeter, 2012). Supporting students emotionally and

instructionally can improve children's use of language and literacy skills (Guo, Dynia,

Pelatti, & Justice, 2014). Teachers' self-efficacy can be an asset in classrooms.

Teachers' sensitivity to students' emotional needs and desire to provide high-

quality classroom instruction are vital for instructing struggling readers and reluctant

learners (Guo et al., 2014). Students may become interested in learning and increase in

academic performance, especially in reading, when teachers demonstrate to students' that

their achievement is valuable (Guo et al., 2014). Guo et al. (2014) conducted an

experimental study in a Midwest region of the United States using 28 teachers and 108

students in two treatment groups and one comparison group. The main purpose of the

study was to evaluate the effectiveness of high efficacy of teachers, the gains in language

and literacy due to teachers' efficacy, and whether the quality of classroom instruction

impacted achievement (Guo et al., 2014). The findings showed teachers were effective in

keeping students engaged because the learning environment encourages learners. However, there was no significant improvement in students' language and literacy skills, but rather a significant improvement in students' overall performance when teachers possessed high self-efficacy and fostered quality classroom instruction. Teachers' self-efficacy could play a significant role in students' academic success.

Teachers' strong self-efficacy, related to classroom instruction and environment, correlate to student achievement (Guo, Connor, Yang, Roehrig, & Morrison, 2012). A quantitative study of 1,043 students, their families, and their fifth-grade teachers demonstrated that students increased their performance when teachers explicitly demonstrated self-efficacy for students (Guo et al., 2012). Communication between teachers and students produced positive learning outcomes for students (Guo et al., 2012). Academic improvement for students does not take place because teachers spend more instructional time with students, but the quality and the content of instruction are more beneficial (Guo et al., 2012). High-quality instructional resources are required for students' academic achievement.

Teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to students' achievement by accepting the challenges of implementing innovative strategies and using evidence-based instructional tools (Nie, Tan, Liau, Lau, & Chua, 2013). In their qualitative study, Nie et al. (2013) investigated teachers' self-efficacy, constructivism, and teachers' willingness to learn and implement instructional innovations with students in English classes. The stratified, random sample used 40 elementary schools in Singapore, where 2,139 teachers responded to the survey (Nie et al., 2013). The results showed that teachers that foster a

constructivist-style of teaching through self-efficacy was more favorable compared to a teacher-centered, didactic-style (Nie et al., 2013). Teachers with sensitivity to diverse learners are more likely to embrace constructivist instruction (Nie et al., 2013, p. 74). Teachers' efficacy is demonstrated when they foster constructivist education focusing on students' learning needs and less on rote learning (Nie et al., 2013). The success of all students is possible if teachers embrace the diversity of learners present in today's classrooms.

Increased performance for all students, including ELLs, is critical in schools. It is vital that teachers demonstrate self-efficacy and face the challenges prevalent in classrooms using current research-based strategies and best practices to support students with diverse learning needs. Self-efficacy and culturally responsive teaching may help teachers to connect with the increasingly diverse student population.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Incoming students in U.S. schools are increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse. Because of students' diversity, conflict has arisen over what students should learn and the importance of school (Lee, 2016; Tomlinson, 2015). State mandates dictate that students should be able to think well, understand information, develop critical thinking skills, solve complex problems, and communicate in a competitive world (NYSED, 2014a). At local and national school levels, cultural and linguistic diversity present enormous challenges for content area teachers to prepare students for rigorous state tests (Lee, 2016; Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Culturally responsive teaching is a paradigm that focuses on culture and linguistic diversity in classrooms (Lucas &

Villegas, 2013; Rose & Potts, 2011). Because of the diversity in today's classrooms, teachers need to increase awareness of students' varied ways of learning to build on their funds of knowledge.

Schools must be more responsive and aware of 21st-century diversity teaching (Tomlinson, 2015). Lee (2016)and Tomlinson (2015) found that schools are required to provide learning experiences that address the uniqueness of learners. If the objective is for schools to increase academic achievement for students, then teachers must become culturally proficient (Tomlinson, 2015). Changes in how teachers plan and carry out instruction to address the deficit learning, such as students' lack of preparedness in reading, multiple languages, social, emotional, and cultural differences, are vital (Tomlinson, 2015). When lessons are planned based on learners' interests, teachers encourage student motivation.

Disengaged students become interested in learning when they connect their cultural background, beliefs, and practices to instruction (Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 2012). Culture and diversity are complex, and teacher candidates may find culturally responsive teaching daunting (Rose & Potts, 2011). Some universities have taken measures to accommodate teachers' desire to provide equal opportunities for all learners (Reiter & Davis, 2011). Lack of cultural and diversity training contributes to diverse students' underachievement in classrooms (Lee, 2016; Reiter & Davis, 2011). Instruction that focuses on all learners could be rewarding for students and place of learning.

Implications

This study contributes to the current body of knowledge and adds new information regarding how teachers can address the diverse learning needs of ELLs to improve academic achievement. The study's findings can be shared with local and national educational agencies that have similar characteristics to the school district under study. School districts face the challenge of increasing performance for ELLs, the fastest growing cohort in schools across the nation. The findings from interviews, classroom observations and analyses of teacher-participant lesson plans aligned with the conceptual framework, Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching and Dewey's (1938/1997) social constructivism. I could present this project to administrators at the district under study with recommendations based on teachers' perceptions of how they can address the diverse learning needs of ELLs and narrow the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs.

Supporting ESL and content-area teachers with training on an ongoing basis can help them better understand the complexity and diversity of ELLs and increase performance (Doran, 2014; Green et al., 2010). The lack of achievement between ELLs and non-ELLs can be decreased if school leaders provide instructional tools that help teachers with culturally and linguistically relevant approaches (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011; Sleeter, 2012). Increased academic performance for ELLs will satisfy New York State Blueprint for ELLs' Success and ESSA (2015) accountability measures, which is schools must ensure effective instruction for all students, including ELLs.

Assumptions

The underlying assumption of this study is that ELLs underachieve because they are not adequately proficient in English. I also assume that participants respond to interview questions with honesty because they want to know how teachers can address the diverse learning needs of ELLs and help narrow the achievement gap in reading and writing between ELLs and non-ELLs. Finally, I assume that the results of this study can be generalized and applied to other schools districts with similar characteristics.

Limitations

Because of ELLs' lack of success, there was a need for this proposed study. One important limitation of the study was that I was a teacher at one of the schools in which the classroom observations and interviewing participants were conducted, as well as having a personal relationship with some of the ESL teachers at all four middle schools. To avoid a bias in the research, I kept a reflective journal.

Summary

The review of the relevant research demonstrated the need for teachers to have a better understanding of the changing demographics of schools in the United States. The literature supported the need for teacher preparedness and self-efficacy in helping to address the problem of ELLs' underachievement. A plethora of research-based evidence points to the urgency of implementing culturally relevant teaching. Research also validated ELLs' diverse learning needs. This qualitative case study helped to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs.

Educators who instruct ELLs faced a tremendous challenge in teaching the fastest growing population in schools. The ESSA (2015) requires that all public schools employ trained ESL teachers. Even though ESL teachers are employed in the school, in reality, ELLs are in classrooms with content area teachers for a large part of the school day, and those content area teachers might not understand approaches needed to address the diverse instructional needs of ELLs. Due to a national increase in ELLs, which now constitutes 4.4 million students, or 9.1% of the nations' schools, there is a great concern over how schools can address the learning needs of ELLs and close the achievement gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs (USDOE, 2014a). School districts are responsible for providing training and resources to address students' learning needs to satisfy state mandates.

Teachers are accountable for meeting state standards even if students are not the same along the continuum of literacy development and not at the "same point in grade-level along the framework (or continuum) of a standardized curriculum" (Cantrell, 2010, p. 11). Educators need to implement pedagogies that engage and build students knowledge that could lead to academic achievement (Weimer, 2013). The success of ELLs is crucial in meeting New York State mandates. Educators know that effective and high-quality instruction can produce positive learning outcomes for students. Educators need to utilize research-based practices and proven ELL methods in order to stimulate and encourage ELLs to learn English as a second language.

The research findings support the need to implement instructional approaches and ensure that ELLs have ample opportunities to increase performance and address

underachievement in reading and writing. ELLs need to be successful in schools in order to add value to a global society and economy. Section 1 discussed the conceptual framework and literature review. Section 2 explains this study's methodology, research design, participants, setting, gaining access, researcher-participant relationship, measures for ethical protection, data collection, data analysis, role of the researcher, and conclusion.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to better understand how teachers view the diverse learning needs of ELLs and try to decrease the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. A qualitative design enabled me to ask "how" and "why" questions and better understand participants' perspectives (see Yin, 2014). In this section, I discuss the various aspects of a qualitative study and my reasons for choosing a descriptive case study design.

A descriptive case study design was appropriate, I believe, because it provided the opportunity for close interaction with district participants during interviews and classroom observations (see Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). I used a bounded case study to elicit teachers' perceptions of how ELLs with diverse learning needs could improve their academic achievement. My main goal was to better understand schools' approaches to working with linguistically diverse students. A bounded case study aided in gathering participants' experiences and perceptions. I chose a qualitative case study design rather than a quantitative one because I wanted to explore participants' perceptions through interpretation rather than hypothesis testing.

Further, a mixed-method approach was not suitable because I am not interested in obtaining data taken from experiments and surveys (Merriam, 2009). Also, a mixed-method is time consuming and could extend the nature of this study. By using a case study design, I was able to be in close contact with participants in a natural setting, as advised by Merriam (2009). Using a case study design, I was able to interview, observe,

and analyze teachers' role in the academic performance of ELLs. I was also able to better understand how teachers provide instruction to address the diverse learning needs of ELLs.

I rejected ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and narrative designs. Although ethnography is similar to a descriptive case study, it would require long-term immersion and observations of the group in its setting (Glesne, 2011; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Lodico et al., 2010). I rejected ethnography because of the greater time commitments it requires (see Glesne, 2011; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Lodico et al., 2010). Phenomenology is similar to a case study, but it requires use of a wider range of participants (Lodico et al., 2010). I deemed this design as unnecessary to answer my research questions.

Phenomenological research involves spending large amount of time with participants. The researcher then reflects and makes interpretations from observations and interactions, before engaging in in-depth data collection (Lodico et al., 2010). Grounded theory was not a consideration because it would require that I constantly compare the data collected from different interviews, field notes, or documents to derive a theory about the situation after analysis of data (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Merriam, 2009). I decided not to use a narrative design because it requires being focused on participants' personal stories (Glene, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Researchers analyze collections of photographs, interviews, journals, letters, autobiographies, and other materials for meaning (Glene, 2011; Merriam, 2009). A descriptive case study enabled me to examine

teachers' perceptions on approaches related to ELLs' cultural and linguistics learning needs.

Use of a descriptive case study design was the best way, I determined, to explore my central and guiding questions. As Merriam (2009, p. 43) noted, "Descriptive means that the end product of a case study is a rich, thick description," related to teacher participants' experiences in the study. "Thick" description involves providing factual, textual accounts of participants' responses (Merriam, 2009). Teacher participants lived experiences provided a narrative related to ELLs' underachievement at the school under study. The knowledge and information gained from the study participants were important in guiding this study on the best instructional approaches to address students with diverse learning needs to increase academic achievement. I found that study participants added valuable information when they answered interview questions.

Participants

The participants were purposefully selected from among ESL teachers and teachers who taught Grades 6- 8 at four middle schools in LSSD. I interviewed the participants to gather detailed information about their lived experience. Glesne (2011) suggested that researchers gain access to the number of participants, sites, or activities they need to answer their research questions. I interviewed 10 participants and they included ESL, bilingual, and content area teachers working with ELLs at my study site. Creswell (2012) posited that it is best to interview a small number of participants because data from a larger number of participants may become difficult to manage and the results might not provide the needed depth. I determined that having 10 participants would

provide the necessary depth for my analysis. Table 1 includes information about the

participants.

Table 1

Participants' Teaching Experience and Content Area Specialization

Participants	Years of teaching	Grade level teaching	Content area specialty
1	21	Grades 6,7 & 8	English as a Second Language/English as a New Language
2	13	Grades 7&8	Social Studies
3	16	Grade 8	English Language Arts
4	21	Grades 7-12 (8th grade only for past 4 years)	Social Studies
5	16	Grades 7-12	Bilingual Social Studies
6	18	Grades 7&8	English as a Second Language
7	12 (2 years at this district and 10 years at another district)	Grades 6-8	English as a Second Language/English as a New Language and Reading Teacher for 10 years
8	12	Grade 7	Science
9	11 (1 year at this district and 10 years in a California school district	Grade 6	English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and Home Language Arts (Spanish)
10	1	Grade 8	Bilingual Social Studies

Setting

The LSSD is a Title I and Title III school district. In qualitative research, the investigator decides on a site based on the main phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2012). This site was located in a state in the northeastern part of the United States. The LSSD had a total enrollment of 18,488 students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 for the 2015-16 school year (NYSED, 2016), an increase of 6% for 2014-15 school year, which was 17,554 student enrolled (NYSED, 2015a). The district had 11 elementary schools, four middle schools, a freshman center, and two high schools.

The demographics of the district showed that the student population consists of 82% Hispanics, 11% Black, 30% ELLs, 13% students with disabilities, and 88% economically disadvantaged students (NYSED, 2016). The district employed 1,092 full-time classroom teachers (NYSED, 2016) and they are predominantly White American (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015). This site was an ideal fit, because I wanted to examine teacher's perceptions of what they can do to address students' diverse learning needs.

Means of Gaining Access to Participants

Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided consent before participants were contacted regarding the nature of the study and participants' expectations (Glesne, 2011). Once the study was approved by the IRB, (approval #04-06-16-0270026), the superintendent's office was contacted by letter via district email. I met with the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education and explained my study, but she only granted me permission to use the school at which I currently teach. I reached

out to my building principal for help, and after lengthy discussions with the assistant superintendent of secondary education and my building principal, we agreed I would be granted access to all four of the district's middle schools. However, to ensure the data collection process would not interfere with my daily duties, the data collection outside my schools only took place on personal leave days. Next, I contacted the other buildings principals via district email to gain approval to interview ESL and content area teachers. After receiving approval from the principals, I sent out letters via the district email (Appendix B) to the potential participants explaining what the study entailed and the amount of time required for the interview (see Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The letter also asked for permission to conduct at least one classroom observation per teacher-participant.

The letter sent to potential participants explained the type of research, the plans for the results of the research, potential dangers that might be encountered, and how long the interview would last. I also asked for permission to use a recording device during the interview and promised confidentiality and anonymity (see Glesne, 2011; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). I informed participants that the interview would only take place if they consented, that there was no obligation to participate, and they could decide not to do the interview without giving notice (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). I demonstrated respect for participants' place of work and respected their rights if they became uncomfortable in answering any questions, which was essential throughout the research process.

Researcher-Participant Relationship

In a case study, the main data collection tool is the researcher (Yin, 2014). I established a relationship with participants at the site to "gain access, create rapport, develop trust, and interact" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 140). The email I sent to participants, as explained earlier, initiated collaborative, researcher-participant relationships. I wanted participants to feel comfortable and relaxed during interviews and classroom observations. I assured them that the data I collected would be kept confidential to protect their privacy.

The data remains confidential. All names were removed, and numbers were assigned when discussing the sampling site and location to protect identity. I remain the only person to see the data I compiled, and I have stored them in a secure place, where they will remain for five years before destruction, in accordance with university policy. I provided assurance that the data collected was solely for this study and the resulting project.

The participants understood the demographics of the sampling site and contributed valuable insight in answering questions about instructional approaches that address ELLs' academic performance in this case study. I may have believed that ESL teachers have better training to address the instructional learning needs of ELLs and narrow the achievement disparity between ELLs and non-ELLs because of the pre-service training methodologies that ESL teachers receive and professional development training they attend. But my work as an ESL teacher may have engendered bias that content area teachers do not understand the complexity of second language learners and

their cultural and linguistic diversity. I was aware of these preconceived biases and took preventative measures against them. I put participants at ease and handled any unforeseen situations professionally (Lodico et al., 2010). The participants were not forced or in danger at any time during the data collection process, and I focused on being respectful, nonjudgmental, and encouraged a friendly, warm climate.

Role of the Researcher

To avoid researcher biases and pre-notions, I followed research guidelines and remained professional at all times. Ethical dilemmas are not only a set of prescribed rules, and protocols, but a demonstration of sensitivity and values toward participants (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research is subjective, however, preventative measures and safeguards against biases were addressed by the research questions before conducting interviews.

I had been an ESL teacher at one of the middle schools in LSSD for 14 years, teaching Grades 6 through 8, including students with learning disabilities and special education students. I do not have a supervisory position; therefore, participants were comfortable and open when answering questions during the interview process. I have attended several workshops and professional development courses on differentiated and sheltered instruction, such as The SIOP Model. To prevent biases, I avoided personal views or beliefs, applied rigor to the data collection process, remained professional, and demonstrated respect for the participants and education site. Throughout the study, I continuously verified the data collected to ensure accurate findings.

Measures for Ethical Protection

In research, protection from emotional and physical harm is critical, but qualitative research takes place in a natural setting and does not impose harm upon participants (Lodico et al., 2010). As an ethical researcher respectfully gathering data from sample participants, all ethical and legal requirements were adhered (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). In addition, "IRB committees typically scrutinize research proposals" to ensure that participants will be notified of any potential risk and "possible gains for science" (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 147). I was obligated to apply ethical concerns for human subjects similar to those applied in medical research (Yin, 2014). During the research period, strict protocols were followed, as well as school district rules and procedures, when seeking answers to the overarching questions. There was no contact with students; thus, students' rights were not an issue or concern. Upon completion of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) training, I received a certificate from the NIH Office of Extramural Research. Through this case study, I sought protection of participants and school leaders when communicating, interacting, and collecting information, as well as ensure confidentiality, and adhere to IRB requests (Lodico et al., 2010; Yin, 2014).

Qualitative Research Validity and Reliability

Although I could never have captured all the facts of reality, I ensured that the data collected were consistent and dependable. In order to ensure validity of the data, it was important to accurately report findings based on the research questions and ensure the findings are non-conflicting with the data collected (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). To add internal validity, I employed member checking to prevent investigator's bias by

having the participants review interview transcripts (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). The participants were given the opportunity to revise the transcript for accuracy and listened to the recorded audio when necessary. I wanted participants to concur that the information gathered made sense and was reliable (Merriam, 2009). It was important to understand participants' perceptions to discover a phenomenon and apply rigor to the data collection process and increase the validity of the findings (Merriam, 2009).

I also employed an audit trail to check for reliability and dependability by providing detailed information on data collection, categorizing, and decision making during the study (Merriam, 2009). During the research process, I recorded daily happenings in a journal consisting of questions, reflections, thoughts, ideas, and resolutions to any questions or issues I experienced (see Merriam, 2009).

External Validity

Case studies are not generalizable; however, guidelines were followed to ensure validity (Yin, 2014). Classroom observations were used to examine teachers' artifacts and increase validity by triangulating the data. In addition, participants that were interviewed had different levels of expertise and knowledge to corroborate the findings of this qualitative study. To increase validity, a series of steps, including conducting interviews and classroom observations, analyzing lessons plans, and applying member checking, were followed (Merriam, 2009). Trustworthiness was also crucial to add to the effectiveness of this study. Thus, measures to establish reliability, dependability, and external validity strengthened the case study by triangulating the results before arriving at themes, as explained below (Creswell, 2009).

Data Collection

I used specific sample of ESL teachers and content area teachers instructing ELLs for this case study. Data for the case study were collected using three approaches: (1) interviews, (2) classroom observations, and (3) examination of teachers' lesson plans (Lodico et al., 2010). The interview questions (Appendix C) aligned with the problem statement. The questions were open-ended and less structured. This format allowed participants to express themselves freely and allowed the researcher to employ more probes (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research guidelines were followed during the data collection process (see Lodico et al., 2010), and the iPhone6 plus Voice Memo and Voice Record Pro were used to record the interviews and prevent corruption of the data.

Interviews

The interviews took place at a predetermined location away from disruption. All the teachers chose to conduct the interviews at their school, either during their lunch or lesson preparation time or after school hours. Before interviews began, participants signed a letter of consent. Principals were very accommodating in providing coverage if the interviews went past 42 minutes. The in-depth interviews were approximately 45–60 minutes long. Permission was given to record the interviews and document participants' responses to interview questions. The participants were asked 10 open-ended, semi-structured questions. Follow-up questions were asked, because semi-structured interviews allowed interviewees to feel comfortable when answering questions and provide more open answers to the research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). One interview, at

the request of Participant #1, was continued two days later because the participant forgot to include valuable information during the first interview.

The interview process presented opportunities to learn about what cannot be seen through classroom observations and explore alternative explanations of what is seen, a unique strength of qualitative inquiry (Glesne, 2011). During the interview process, the researcher listened carefully to participants as they responded to questions. Reflective notes were taken, and this process helped organize my thinking processes for data analysis (Glesne, 2011). In the data collection process, because I was the primary data collection instrument, I played a proactive role in every stage of the qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Merriam 2009).

Triangulation

Using triangulation helped to corroborate the findings and added internal validity. The three methods employed when applying triangulation were, (1) interviews, (2) classroom observations, and (3) analysis of teachers' lessons plans and artifacts. The interviews were the key source of data collection, but classroom observations and analysis of teachers' lesson plans helped to validate themes (Creswell 2012; Merriam, 2009). Classroom observations and lesson plans increased the validity of interview findings and added rigor to the study (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). I used a checklist to record my observations (Appendix D).

Data Analysis Results

The preferred method for conducting data analysis is to carefully examine the data collected, identify repetitive information, and avoid being overwhelmed (Merriam, 2009).

In this study, the data collection process took 8 weeks to complete, while the interviewing process took 6 weeks (Glesne, 2011). Internet and e-mail technology and application software such as Microsoft Office were used in all stages of data collection to assist in data clarification and increase accountability (Glesne, 2011). The interview transcripts were scrutinized after transcription to arrive at themes based on the research questions. Furthermore, classroom observations of participants provided objectivity to the interview responses.

Classroom observations helped to corroborate findings from the interviews and created themes. Content area teachers were not adjusting their speech to accommodate for ELLs or students with disabilities, although it was evident that at least five out of ten of the classrooms had more than a few diverse learners. One of the ESL teachers I observed accommodated for diverse learners by differentiating instruction using several strategies, such as repeating directions three times in slow, deliberate speech, using the Smartboard to display visuals, and handing out copies for students to see the text while they listened to the audio. Another ESL teacher showed a video and gave students the article to follow along with. Providing students with the article helped visual learners. I also observed that some students were disengaged and doing other things, like going through their binders or being disruptive.

Collaborative learning or group work was not evident in the lessons. The instructions were teacher-centered, which prevented students from participating or engaging in the lessons. Opportunities to foster teamwork, such as discussing and sharing ideas while practicing English speaking, were not given to students. "Without special

preparation, even good teachers may find it difficult to meet the needs of English language learners" (Gándara & Santibañez, 2016, p. 32). Further, I observed that all the classrooms had either a Smartboard or Aquos Board, yet most of the participants used interactive technology to function as projectors. Neither a written nor verbal objective nor lesson aim was communicated to students.

Many of the lessons were teacher-centered or teacher directed, and I observed that students often failed to participate or work collaboratively. The classroom observations provided only a snapshot of what takes on a daily basis to address the diverse learning needs of ELLs, but it cemented the need for the theme of differentiated instruction. Critical analyses of participants' lessons were crucial during data analysis and assisted in deriving categories.

Most participants had detailed plans for the week. However, there was no indication of how they differentiated lessons for diverse learners. The bilingual and non-tenured teachers provided details for addressing literacy and ELLs' diverse learning needs. The lesson plans showed that tenured and veteran teachers did not provide detailed lesson plans for the administration. Upon further analysis, the year on one lesson plan was 2012, an indication that this was a recycled lesson plan. Several participants only wrote the page numbers of the teacher's guide on lesson plans and the date they would be teaching the topic. Analysis of participants' lessons plans was another piece of evidence that helped provide empirical evidence for the coding process.

How and When Data Were Analyzed

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed within 24 hours of the face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were transcribed using the Microsoft Word processing program and playing the recorded audio using Google Voice. Following transcription, the audio was replayed to verify that every word was transcribed from audio to print. I specifically ensured accurate information was typed into Microsoft Word. I then applied preliminary exploratory analysis, which made sense of the interview transcripts before breaking them into parts to determine if more data was needed (Creswell, 2012).

I scrutinized the results of the data to ensure quality, credibility, and accuracy. I rigorously analyzed all the information I gathered to arrive at meaningful conclusions. I organized then the data was by assigning a number to each participant. After the completion of member checking, which entailed emailing each participant the transcribed interviews and receiving permission and confirming the information was correct, the data were ready to be analyzed. During the analysis phase, I carefully read the transcribed interviews approximately five times to gain in-depth knowledge of the transcripts before I began the coding process.

I organized the spoken, observed, and perceived data during data analysis (see Glesne, 2011), and I applied thematic analysis. I appropriately applied thematic analysis to questions taken from real life stores that asked the question "what," and converted them into a narrative (see Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). I carefully read and analyzed topics with specific coding, and then I dissected the transcripts (see Merriam,

2009). I methodically applied this process to all interview transcripts to reveal where the participants had discussed the topic. The data is ready for coding, which took approximately six weeks to complete.

Coding

The coding phase was critical in identifying themes or categories from the interviews. Codes were used to assist in identifying themes and categories and also functioned as a common ongoing data collection process (Merriam, 2009; Yin 2014). I aimed to reduce the number of codes to a smaller, more manageable number by categorizing them into themes (Creswell, 2012). Reading the transcriptions at least five times before coding enabled me to build in-depth knowledge of the data collected from participants during the interviews (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). I searched topics in each interview using Microsoft Word, and I coded the topics in different colors. Microsoft Word features assisted in locating repeated textual data throughout the transcripts; however, I was ultimately responsible for assigning codes (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). During the coding process, I made an attempt to understand the sample participants' perceptions of their real-life experiences (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Recurring codes came from the participants' interviews and assisted in identifying themes or categories.

As the transcript was read, I made notes by hand using a notepad to document recurring chunks of text from the interview questions. I reviewed handwritten notes and I color-coded the transcripts for each observation. The color-coded text helped me to identify emerging categories or themes, and I reread the themes and consolidated from 11

themes to six. For example, I discovered that participants 1, 3, 4, 7, and 8, discussed

phonics, scaffolding, frontloading, and vocabulary lessons and I assigned theme:

phonology/vocabulary instruction. However, after meticulous analysis, I determined that

they belonged to the theme: differentiated instruction. Five to seven themes are sufficient

to discuss the findings of the study (Creswell, 2012).

After I identified similar chunks of data with the same theme and assigned a color

to each theme, I created a chart in Microsoft Word and copied and pasted the

information, which helped streamlined the processes of coding and identifying themes

(see Glesne, 2011; Yin 2014). Although interpreting and analyzing qualitative data is

time-consuming, I ensured the information was accurate to increase the data's reliability

and validity. The following chart is an example of what I created to aid in organizing the

themes.

Open coding

Table 2

Coding Chunks of Data to Identify Themes

Open coding	Themes	Examples of Participants' Words
Reading/writing/speaking	#1:	#3. We have sentence frames all around
Working collaborating	Differentiated	the room so if they are stuck they can go
Visuals	Instruction	back and use it as a basis for
Pre-teaching vocabulary	(color-coded	communicating.
Use first language	yellow)	#4. I do projects; show visuals (clips,
Scaffolding		movie scenes, pictures).
Different Lexile-reading	#2:	#5. I also give them like clues or little
materials	Background	context clues what I call hints or life-
Writing prompts	knowledge	saving words
Cloze reading	and academic	#6. If they have to write a paragraph or
Word walls	success	an essay…they may have sentence
Sentence frames	(Color-coded	starters, they have something in there
Chunking	orange)	that gives them a start, as opposed to it
Ongoing assessment		being blank, which is what we would
Frontloading vocabulary		give to the general education students.

To locate evidence of themes, the process was methodical and guided by the following research questions: "what can teachers do to increase academic achievement for ELLs in the school under study?" The following are related sub-questions that guided this qualitative case study:

1. What instructional strategies do teachers believe are best to deliver instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs?

2. What do teachers believe can be done to improve ELLs' classroom engagement and motivation for increased academic achievement?

I was open to all plausible themes, took note of all possible answers, and applied open coding (Merriam, 2009). This process enabled me to identify categories or themes as they emerged. There were seven main themes derived from the data, with four sub-themes. The four themes without sub-themes are differentiated instruction, background knowledge, technology for diverse learners, and professional development. The three themes with sub-themes are challenges and difficulties for academic success, with sub-themes (1) SIFE students and (2) ELLs special education; home-school connection and ELLs' achievement, with sub-theme socio economics; and administration and faculty collaboration, with sub-theme co-teaching model. The following sections discussed the themes and sub-themes.

Theme 1: Differentiated Instruction

All 10 teachers interviewed discussed the importance of providing instruction in a simplified way to assist ELLs with comprehension. Throughout the interviews, the need for differentiated instruction kept resurfacing based on some of the strategies or

approaches teachers implemented during instruction. Some participants also expressed concerns about not knowing how to differentiate instruction for mixed-ability levels. They provided a detailed description of how they tried to provide support for ELLs to address their diverse learning needs. Some teachers reported that if they have the time to focus more on differentiating lessons for students who lack understanding of content, students' grades would improve. Examples of how students improved by changing seat assignments and providing more assistance, whenever time permitted, were provided.

A veteran teacher-participant added that if lessons were structured well and simplified, no matter the level, students could excel and succeed; it is the design of the lessons and the presentation by educators that benefits students. Participant 1 stated, "you just cannot give them (students) a story and expect them to read it and answer five questions without providing any background knowledge. You give them upfront vocabulary that is going to come up in the lesson." Participant 4 expressed a lack of knowledge in differentiating. She said, "if I have students with different ability levels, I am not aware of it. I assume that they are all at the same level." The participant shared that the same generic reading and writing activity was given to all students, but ELLs just wrote one big paragraph. She further explained, that in her opinion, they had no writing or grammar skills, and she knew right away that they were ELLs. Some of the teachers shared that differentiating instruction could help students understand the content and learn English at the same time, but that this process takes a lot of time and planning, which they did not have.

Theme 2: Background Knowledge and Academic Success

All 10 teachers interviewed discussed the importance of providing instruction in a simplified way to assist ELLs with comprehension. Throughout the interviews, the need for differentiated instruction kept resurfacing based on some of the strategies or approaches teachers implemented during instruction. Some participants also expressed concerns about not knowing how to differentiate instruction for mixed-ability levels. They provided a detailed description of how they tried to provide support for ELLs to address their diverse learning needs. Some teachers reported that if they have the time to focus more on differentiating lessons for students who lack understanding of content, students' grades would improve. Examples of how students improved by changing seat assignments and providing more assistance, whenever time permitted, were provided.

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shared that differentiating instruction could help students understand the content and learn English at the same time, but that this process takes a lot of time and planning, which they did not have.

Theme 2: Background Knowledge and Academic Success

Participant 10, a bilingual social studies teacher, stated, "as far as culture goes, I feel that students lack prior knowledge. I constantly try to bring prior knowledge when it comes to American history because it is not something that is very much talked about in their native countries or native land." Other participants expressed concerns that ELLs' limited exposure to American cultures, such as not taking trips to museums or libraries, can impede the learning process. Another teacher reported that when students do not possess background knowledge, they struggle because they feel they cannot catch up with their peers.

Participant 5 stated, "usually when I think of my students' cultural needs, as a Social Studies teacher, one of the things that I noticed a lot of them is that they do not come in with any prior knowledge of social studies, at least American history." Eight teachers explained that ELLs have gaps in their education when entering a United States school. For example, their ability might only be at a 3rd or 4th grade level, but they are placed in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade. Three teachers reported that some of their students were illiterate in their native language (Spanish), and therefore lacked cognitive and social skills.

Many of the participants explained the importance of using visuals and providing students opportunities to do hands-on projects. Participant 8 added that using a lot of

props, showing visual representations of scientific materials or objects, and allowing ELLs to create projects are methods that build background knowledge and lifelong learning. Participant 2 explained that ELLs are behind in English with reading and writing because they do not have the background knowledge or prior knowledge to move forward. She also emphasized that is it difficult to move forward with reading content if ELLs are stuck on vocabulary words.

Theme 3: Challenges and Difficulties for Academic Success

Teachers of ELLs face a variety of challenges. The biggest challenge, according to participant 10, was providing and accommodating for as many as five different ability levels present during one class period. The content area teachers also explained that 30 students in one class period had mixed ability levels, including ELLs, and some students have little or no writing skills. The blend of ELLs and non-ELLs is a huge challenge in addressing students' diverse learning needs. According to participant 2, "you know, it is very frustrating, our classes are so big, and there is never enough time in the day to address each situation individually." The same teacher also expressed that some students reached out for extra-help, but not all learners are brave enough to seek out teachers' assistance if they get lost in the content. Teachers expressed concerns about not having training in designing lessons to address the learning needs of three to five different ability levels in a single class period. They were frustrated that teaching to the middle led to high-ability level students becoming bored and the low-ability level students becoming lost.

The participants, overall, would like to see changes in how students are placed in classrooms, or if not possible, they would like specific training on how to more efficiently differentiate lessons. There is not enough time in a school day to do all that we have to do, explained participants 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8. They were concerned that large class sizes made it difficult to connect with all learners. In addition, some participants expressed that ELLs are quiet and that this could be attributed to lack of confidence. Participant 2 explained that ELLs do not want to show they are having difficulty with the class work, so they do not ask questions, and that is a major problem. Participants stated that when students ask questions, it indicates they are interested in the lesson and eager to learn. This finding was validated during the classroom observations, where I observed that the same students typically volunteered information.

Participant 8 shared that she did not have great success with her students, just challenges, such as the students missing assignments due to absences, and not fully understanding or grasping science. She indicated it was simply difficult to get ELLs caught up and understand science information, because 7th grade science has a lot of vocabulary. Homework also emerged as a major challenge. Most participants stated that either they did not assign homework because it never got done or they offered extrinsic motivation to complete assignments. Also, an increasing population in the school district is students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), and participants explained that this created feelings of frustration and challenges for some teachers.

Sub-Theme 1: SIFE students. This sub-theme is important in answering the research questions, which many participants discussed in their interviews. Teacher-

participants expressed that SIFE students are often labeled as "bad" kids or the most misbehaved in school. Participants shared that SIFE students come into classrooms without any knowledge of how to behave in school settings and culture. Three of the participants also reported that they lacked social and psychological skills. The classroom observations from two participants substantiated this finding, "They are also illiterate in their first language, which is Spanish, so it is very frustrating, even when vocabulary words are translated to help with instruction," explained participant 5. Participant 7 worried that the SIFE students did not want to learn the alphabet or read picture books, what they should be reading, because they feared being ridiculed by their peers. SIFE students are a huge challenge because they have the ability of kindergarten students, yet are in middle school, emphasized participant 7.

Social and emotional aspects are huge concerns, and all of these issues added to teachers' challenges in addressing SIFE students' cultural and linguistic needs. Participant 6 explained that these SIFE have breaks in their learning, so they come to the United States and ended up in a situation where they did not go to school every day. I also observed how some students could not focus or follow teachers' directions, even though the activity being taught was interactive. "It's challenging just to bring them up to the level when they missed so much in their early life, and I do not have training or experience in teaching this population," explained participant 7. Participant 2 stated that ELL special education students are placed in classrooms with ELLs, and this presented a different set of issues and challenges.

Sub-theme 2: ELLs' special education. This theme arose several times in the data analysis. Participant 1 articulated this concern best by saying; "this population is placed in the same classroom setting as ELLs, which is a disservice to these students because there are no ESL special education classes in this district." She also stated more time was needed with these students to be able to meet the needs of the content area. They cannot perform at the same pace and level as other students within the classroom, reiterated this teacher participant.

Participant 7 expressed concerns that when ELLs do not know English, they are classified as ESL students; sometimes the problem was not only just English acquisition, but also a learning disability. She shared that she currently has at least six students who exhibited signs of learning disabled or challenged, and she recommended them for testing. These students were not only exhibiting issues in English classes, but in their bilingual classes. The challenges are substantial, because ELL and ELL special education are inclusive and such an arrangement is a shame, voiced participant 7.

Theme 4: Home-School Connection and ELLs' Achievement

During analysis of the data, chunks of text indicated a disconnect between home and school related to students' academics, and this theme is important in addressing the cultural and linguistic needs of ELLs. Many of the participants shared the same feeling that one of the biggest challenges to effective ELL instruction is parental involvement. Teachers stated that contacting parents was difficult for them because of the language barrier.

In most instances, participants stated that students were translating for the parents at home, and the children did not tell the parents exactly what was going on with their academics. Teachers also reported a relationship between ELLs' academic success or lack thereof and the poverty level in the district. Three teacher-participants are bilingual teachers, and they explained that they do not seek out parental support, even though they speak Spanish, because parents are usually busy working two or even three jobs to take care of their family's basic needs, such as food, clothing, and daily necessities. However, they also expressed concern about the lack of home-school connection. While they expressed empathy for families, they also shared concerns that students could do better academically if parents were at home to supervise the kids and find out what was going on at school.

Participant 4 said, "parental involvement is a problem. I speak little Spanish and not well, and you know it is hard to communicate with the parents." Some teachers explained that parents have a different cultural set of understandings of U. S. schooling requirements. Participant 2 said, if parents cannot speak the language of instruction, English, I cannot communicate with them, and that is a huge challenge. We rely so many times on the students to being able to translate for their parents, but the ELLs do not have a grasp of English either and that is when the school-home relationship suffers. This participant said "I believe that I am doing these parents and the children a bit of disservice without being able to bridge that gap."

Teachers also indicated that parents might have other priorities and difficulties, such as immigration, survival, transportation, lack of education, and language barrier.

"Obviously, if parents are busy providing for their family and trying to survive by providing food and shelter, then education and learning English is not so important," reported participant 3.

Another participant emotionally expressed concerns for some of her ELLs because they traveled to this country by crossing the border, leaving his/her mother behind, so he/she lived alone in one room in a house. Participant 9 explained that many students that was his/her classroom lived in one room, not in apartment buildings, but in single rooms in houses shared by older men and women. Participant 9 shared stories of the unpleasant conditions students lived in and wished that the school district could provide assistance for students with this dilemma. It is evident to most of the participants that socio-economic status plays a significant role in education in this district.

Sub-Theme: Socio-economics. Socio-economics was a term participants used when sharing their knowledge about lack of academic success for ELLs. Since this theme is connected to the existing research, it is included as a sub-theme for discussion. Participant 5 explained that socioeconomic status placed you at a starting point. Students have to move forward from that starting point, but that starting point begins at very different places for different people, several participants stated. Participant 5 continued to explain, "So for everyone, it is very different."

"Socioeconomics plays 100 percent role in any one's education and it goes hand-in-hand with students' achievement in education," said participant 5. Others explained that ELLs isolated themselves from non-ELLs for fear of being stigmatized because they did not speak English or wear the style of clothes their counterparts did. Teachers also

mentioned that some of the ELLs had low self-esteem and did not want to take risks by venturing out of their comfort level and socializing with the general population of the school. Teachers expressed concerns that ELLs were doing themselves a disservice by choosing to remain complacent.

Participant 3 expressed that the percentage of students on free and reduced lunch was an indicator of what we were "dealing with in our district, and something needs to be done." Participant 5 indicated the need for community programs to help out families, apart from religious organizations. Most of the participants stated that the low socio-economic situation in this school district places students at a disadvantage in academic achievement. Participant 6 reported that her middle school students went home to take care of younger siblings and helped out around the house because families did not have the finances to hire a babysitter; however, two participants shared stories about students who succeeded because they had the drive and motivation.

One teacher participant was very emotional in explaining that high school challenged some ELLs. She explained that when she taught at the high school level, some of her students had part-time jobs and went to school, but they could not handle the stress of doing both, so they dropped out of school by Grade 12 because they needed the money. Participants also shared stories of early pregnancy, and involvement with gangs and drugs as indicators of financial struggles at home. Staying in school or achieving academic success were not priorities for some ELLs.

Theme 5: Technology for Diverse Learners

This theme emerged from the range of codes that connected to teachers' explanation of using technology as a teaching tool to provide support for ELLs' diverse learning needs. All participants reported that they used some kind of technology on a daily basis to provide instruction and help students' motivation. All 10 participants explained that they utilized instructional resources such as BrainPop or Scholastics to supplement lessons for ELLs. BrainPop features differentiated lessons for independent learners to learn at their own pace, participants explained. The teachers indicated they also used BrainPop video clips to activate or build prior knowledge. Two participants explained the importance of teaching their students how to use PowerPoint to create presentations. Participants 7 and 9 explained that they noticed a big difference in students' learning and engagement when they used computers to create/design projects.

Three participants reported that students were more engaged and interested in completing assignments when their students used technology for projects. Participant 5 explained that students' reading levels increased based on Scholastic Reading Inventory scores, which were administered quarterly. In addition, two participants reported that instructional time spent using NEWSELA, a website that provides nonfiction literacy and content lessons at three different Lexile levels, helped to improve students' reading comprehension. They observed students were excited whenever they got the opportunity to work with computers. Participant 9 shared that ReadWorks, a website that provides differentiated reading for Lexile levels ranging from 200 to 800, helped improve students' reading/comprehension skills. However, most of them expressed concerns that

there were not enough computers in classrooms for students to use technology as an instructional tool on a regular basis.

Due to increasing student enrollment, administrators were forced to convert a computer lab into a classroom in one of the middle schools, leaving just one computer lab with 30 computers for the entire student body, participant 4 reported. This limited the use of technology as an instructional tool for diverse learners, continued Participant 4. Participants 5 and 8 expressed concerns about not being able access computers because there were only five computers in the classrooms, and implementing a rotation system took a long time to get projects done.

Rosetta Stone is another program that the ELLs can use to build English skills, stated some participants. All teachers explained that they used Smartboards or Aquos Boards to assist with instruction. Participant 10 explained that many websites helped mainstream students, but were not designed for ELLs, who needed extra reinforcement at home or Spanish-English translation. Also, some participants stated that most ELLs did not have the luxury of computers at home, so it was crucial to give them opportunities to acquire computer skills in school.

Theme 6: Administration and Faculty Collaboration

All participants expressed strong views regarding collaboration between administration and faculty, a recurring code that aligned with sub-research question #2. Some participants reported that collaboration with administration is missing. Participant 7 said, "I really haven't seen much sharing of ideas. It's just seems like too many other things during the day that needed to be taken care of." Most participants shared that

having available time was an issue, which may have prevented collaboration with administration. Eight of the 10 participants explained that not all administrators were willing to share ideas, collaborate and/or to just come in and visit classrooms to understand what was going on or inquire about what they might need help with. Participant 3 reported that she got help only if she went to administrators. She stated that administrators had good intentions, but did not always follow through. Also, explained some participants, administrators might have other pressing issues to handle. Six participants explained that administration did not provide enough assistance for new teachers, especially in sharing ideas about how to assist students with learning difficulties.

Participant 10 complained that support from high above is needed and explained that, at times, they had to count on colleagues for that support or worked collaboratively by sharing materials, ideas, and experiences. Most participants expressed concerns that administrators only made visits to classrooms during informal walkthroughs and formal observations for evaluative purposes, but had never stopped in to offer assistance.

A veteran participant explained that administrators' lack of knowledge in ELL methodologies or approaches might be reasons they did not provide the necessary support or collaboration. However, she also shared that in the school year 2015–2016, the principal was more receptive to her ideas and suggestions for the upcoming school year (2016–17).

Participant 8 complained that in the 15 years he/she had been a science teacher in the district, he/she had not seen any support or collaboration from administrators;

therefore, he/she refrained from seeking their leadership. All participants agreed that the only collaboration or sharing of ideas conducted was during faculty meetings, but they would like more support on an individual basis. Participant 5 said, "I have had some administrators who would give some ideas as how to tweak a lesson, or give a suggestion here or there but as far as like sharing ideas it is really done through those means." Another participant shared that she would like more collaboration, and communication needed; based on information that she got from other colleagues in the building, lack of collaboration had been going on for years. Participant 9 said, "sometimes I do not even get a good morning but I still say good morning." Based on the overwhelming responses from participants, collaboration among teachers was also absent.

All the participants shared that collaboration among teachers was vital to students' academic success but was missing in all four middle schools. They all attributed this to lack of time. Participant 10 expressed her feelings about lack of collaboration from her colleagues, and stated that the only time ideas were shared was during faculty meetings. Two participants shared that they were excluded from department meetings they should have been included in. They also shared that because some colleagues refused to collaborate, implementation of response to intervention (RTI) for students never took place, and those students were left struggling in classrooms. If colleagues do not make time to collaborate, plan, and practice RTI and other great ideas, students will be affected, explained Participant 10.

Participant 7 said, "teachers that I need to collaborate with, one does not want to be bothered." However, participant 2 reported that the new initiative, Instructional

Rounds, had helped her collaborate with colleagues, and she was hopeful that this initiative would take off in the coming school year. This participant continued to explain that it would allow teachers to regain control of their classrooms and replace the powers taken away by state mandates or union issues. In addition, four participants discussed co-teaching; a new teaching model the district had adopted that school year (2015–2016) based on state mandates and the co-teaching model presented many challenges.

Sub-Theme: Co-teaching model. It was important to discuss this sub-theme because the co-teaching design impacted instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs' achievement. Five teacher-participants were co-teachers for at least one class period. Two participants, who were ESL/ENL teachers, were employed as full-time co-teachers in five different classrooms for five periods per day. Participants explained that time is wasted traveling to five different locations and preparing lessons for up to five different grades or ability levels. The two ESL/ENL veteran teacher participants shared their unhappiness about the set-up of the co-teaching model. The participants complained that this new teaching method had not worked well because it presented many challenges and difficulties. However, some participants explained that it could be successful if the administration provided training and had planned better. During two classroom observations, participants appeared uneasy in the presence of the co-teacher, but once the co-teacher left the room, they seemed more relaxed.

Participant 3 stated that co-teaching worked to his advantage because he had a skilled partner and a class size of 15, which he stated was essential for the co-teaching component to be effective. This participant explained that with a class size of 30 students

and a pre-service teacher this model would not work. One participant explained that both teachers must have mastery within their craft, and blend their skills, ESL and ELA styles, teaching and strategies, to instruct ELL and ELA students in the same class. Several other participants agreed that class sizes needed to be small, but said that personality issues could be detrimental to the co-teaching model. If teachers did not get along, the co-teaching model could be a disaster, stated participants.

Participant 1 stated that partnering two veteran teachers was not going to work because there would be resistance and the situation could become uncomfortable for both teachers. Participant 1 suggested that pre-service teachers and veteran teachers would be better as partners because veteran teachers could act as mentors. Participant 6 explained that the only positive thing about co-teaching was that there were two teachers in the classroom, although this also created some negative aspects. A major negative was that ELA content area teachers had never taught ESL and did not understand ELLs' specific learning needs. Participant 6 complained that, "I have to ensure that we plan lessons to encompass every student's needs." This participant shared that ELLs were placed in difficult situations because they did not know who their teacher was, causing confusion and trust concerns.

Two participants reported that the co-teaching situation was delicate. However, Participant 8, having been in a different co-teaching situation for approximately five years, stated co-teaching was a success. The name for the co-teaching model used in the participant's science classroom is called a class within a class (CWC). Participant 8 reported that in her first year, she had a co-teacher who did not work out, but then a

different teacher partnered up with her, and the situation continues to work well. It is a science classroom, with approximately 12 ELL special education students, and 13 mainstream science students, stated Participant 8. This participant reported that a special education teacher with a content specialty in English and Social Studies, went into the science classroom one class period to assist with instruction and provided additional instructional support to ELL special education students. Participant 8 stated that she has been very comfortable with CWC set up one period a day to address her students' diverse learning needs.

Theme 7: Professional Development

Professional development and learning was identified as a theme because of its recurrence during thematic analysis. All the participants expressed the need for professional development, specifically to address ELLs' cultural and linguistic instructional needs. The district has invested time and money in The SIOP model, and all but two participants have received SIOP training, however, three participants, who are ESL/ENL teachers, shared that they have been to the same SIOP training three or more times. These participants strongly voiced their opinions that content area teachers should be the ones targeted for SIOP training because the New York State ESL content specialty examination, TESOL, prepared ESL teachers with methodologies to instruct ELLs. Participant 1 said, "The workshop is not for ESL teachers, because we have been trained in that for so long, but it is for content area teachers." However, although most of the participants had attended SIOP workshops, classroom observations did not show that they were implementing sheltered instruction with ELLs.

Another workshop that participants discussed was Collins Writing. Participant 7 shared that she had attended this workshop three times in the two years she has been in the district. However, this participant explained that she would like to attend workshops dealing with SIFE students and learn how to address their cultural, linguistic, and illiterate needs in their first language at the middle school level. During classroom observations, I observed that participants lacked knowledge in how to address the learning needs of this population. Also, the class was large which made it difficult for this particular participant to observe and attend to each individual student needs. Reciprocal Reading was another initiative that the district began, but most teacher-participants were not on board with this method, because it took a long time for students to learn the steps involved. First, teachers needed to understand the approaches before they could teach it to their students. Most participants shared that they did not have the time to learn the Reciprocal Reading strategy. One participant shared that Reciprocal Reading would not work for entering ESL/ENL students. Participant 6 shared that she had achieved success with Reciprocal Reading because she invested time in learning the strategy and teaching it to her students.

Participant 4 shared that ELLs did not like to read out loud in groups because if they mispronounced a word, or they did not say the words correctly, they might be embarrassed by their peers. "They might not want to talk, but they might want to be doing their work independently because they are not sure of themselves," said participant 4. Participant 8 complained that Reciprocal Reading was time-consuming, and it had

taken time away from lessons in the science curriculum. This participant also stated that he/she did not have enough time to teach to the district's final examination.

The district under study offered different workshops for teachers. A few of the participants had attended professional development training based on the work of Robert Marzano. Also, Instructional Rounds, a new initiative that the district began two years ago, only reached the middle schools in the 2015–2016 school year; only three participants were cohorts in the training. Participant 3 shared that professional learning is all about teachers teaching teachers and discussing which strategies would benefit students' learning needs based on observations by colleagues. The observations by colleagues were non-evaluative, explained Participant 3.

Participant 2 shared that the goal or objective of Instructional Rounds is focused on the learning that takes place in the classroom, and those patterns can drive the school's professional development. Participant 2 explained that teachers made recommendations on what professional development was needed; especially in a high-needs district like this one, the focus would be on ELLs. She reiterated that teachers might have specific needs, which might be different from what the administrators and upper administrators envision. Participant 2 explained that having professional development people hands-on and accessible is vital. "You're expected to know everything in typical professional development, in the meanwhile, we do not know anything, but I think when professional development is done right, it does work and the investment is there," said participant 2.

Participants 1 and 2 explained that their school conducted very traditional classrooms, meaning kids sat in rows and teachers stood upfront lecturing. Participant 2

reported that this school district had started to break down the barriers and was trying to differentiate instruction. This was evident during several classroom observations, where teachers lectured in front of the classrooms via teacher-centered directed instruction and students were seated in rows. This participant also shared there was a need for more training on differentiated instruction and the ease of lesson planning, which could benefit teachers and students. Some of the lesson plans demonstrated that teachers could use more assistance with planning differentiated instruction. Most of the participants reported that the best type of instruction is the hands-on approach and real-life experiences. The classroom observations and lesson plans corroborated the finding that teachers could benefit from training on how to differentiate instruction.

Classroom Observations

The classroom observations of participants were 42 minutes long, one class period. The observations were conducted following interviews. All 10 participants allowed observation. During classroom observations, an Observation/ Checklist Guide (Appendix E) was used to ensure the researcher remembered as much as possible from the observations (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Lodico et al., 2010). The observations revealed information that some teachers did not feel comfortable disclosing during their interviews (Merriam, 2009). However, it was impossible to observe everything (Merriam, 2009), so I chose to focus on a set of items relevant to the research questions and study's focus

The notes from the observation/checklist helped to draw conclusions; therefore, accurate note taking was important (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam 2009). I kept a

reflective journal to record any feelings or emotions during observations. "Reflective field notes allow the researcher to reflect on their feelings, values, and thoughts to increase their awareness of how these might be influencing their observations" (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 212).

During classroom observations, I concentrated on certain events, actions, and behaviors closely related to the research topic and conceptual framework. It is important to note that during one of the classroom observations, the students were taking an end of unit test. Observations were also conducted near the end-of-the-school-year, and some teachers might have just been reviewing for upcoming state examinations. The classroom observations assisted in identifying and solidifying themes in the coding process.

The classroom observations presented the opportunity to substantiate interview findings. I observed that some participants taught one-size-fits-all lessons and did not attempt to accommodate students' diverse learning needs. It was evident that there were many ELLs present during lessons. For example, participant 4 lectured for about 30 minutes without stopping to check for understanding in a class with 19 students. I also observed that in a bilingual classroom, students were given autonomy but were not engaged in collaborative learning. The classroom observations provided an opportunity to verify and check for alignment with the interview responses.

During other observations, several participants did not pre-teach academic vocabulary words, which presented a challenge for ELLs in comprehending nonfiction text. Another participant handed out reading materials while students listened to an audio recording, which presented a distraction to the listening activity. This justified the

findings from the interviews that teachers did not fully understand ELLs' diverse learning needs. In contrast, two ESL teachers' participants modified their speech, circulated the classroom, and translated directions in Spanish to assist students in completing assignments. Several bilingual and ESL classrooms displayed brightly colored, educational posters and students' artifacts. This observation verified that participants demonstrated their knowledge of ELLs' cultural and linguistic needs by fostering a learning environment for different learning styles.

Participant 7 had a class of 25 SIFE students, who demonstrated they did not know how to behave in a classroom setting. A few tried speaking in Spanish to get help with the assignment, which was describing four pictures shown on the Smartboard. It appeared that most of the students did not have the vocabulary knowledge necessary in English, so they became disruptive and disengaged in the task. During observations in other classes, some students were not engaged during the lesson because they were sleeping, eating, drinking water, and looking out windows. Consequently, the data derived from classroom observations cemented the need for collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs.

Analysis of Lesson Plans

I was granted permission to analyze teachers' lessons plans and classroom materials and gain insight into what may or may not be implemented to accommodate for diversity. Combining documents provided by teachers, as well as curricular or instructional materials posted online through the school, with interviews and observations provided a "rich source of information" that added depth to answers of the research

questions being investigated (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 57). During the interviews,

most participants stated that they have tried to modify instruction to address the diverse

learning needs of a class. However, their lesson plans authenticated that they did not

design their lessons to accommodate diverse learners.

The lesson plans showed that only three participants provided accommodations

for diverse learners and indicated learning standards. Seven of the lesson plans only

indicated the page numbers they planned to teach, without any indication of what the

topic of the unit or lesson would entail. Only two participants provided detailed lesson

plans, including Common Core Learning Standards and accommodations for diverse

learners. One ESL teacher lesson plan showed differentiated instruction, but most of the

other plans did not. Three of the lesson plans were online printouts generated from the

curriculum they used, and one had a date of 2012. Thus, the lesson plans helped to

construct themes and corroborate the findings.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases appeared in a couple of places in the data. Out of the 10

participants interviewed, only one provided a different answer regarding administrative

support. This participant explained that the principal at her building had an open door

policy. She spoke with passion about his support for ESL/ENL teachers and his empathy

for them. She explained that he understood the struggles they experienced with the

diverse learning needs of ELLs and the new co-teaching model. This discrepancy did not

alter the findings, but it confirmed that administrative support is warranted. Another

discrepancy discovered during classroom observations was that only two teachers used

the Smartboard or Aquos Board the way they should be used but all participants stated that they used the interactive boards to differentiate instruction. Three other teachers' lesson plans showed that that they planned for some form of differentiation based on the examination of their lesson plans.

A discrepancy was also found when one co-teacher shared that the co-teaching model could be beneficial if both professionals are seasoned veteran teachers in their content specialty, but another teacher stated that it could only be successful if a pre-service or first-year teacher teamed up with a veteran teacher. Also, one participant, who was a teacher-leader for Instructional Rounds, shared that if Instructional Rounds materialized for the next school year (2016–2017), it would be great to encourage and promote collaboration; a different participant, who was a cohort, disagreed. She explained that when colleagues make classroom visits for observations, even in a non-evaluative context, it could be intimidating and skew the data. Another discrepancy was discovered where seven participants expressed that connecting with parents is difficult, but three participants, all bilingual teachers, disagreed because they explained that parents have other urgent demands than monitoring their child's school work. Those discrepancies did not alter the findings, but solidify the need for collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs and promoting engagement and motivation for increased academic achievement.

Discussion of the Findings

The research question guiding this study was, what can teachers do to best address the needs of ELLs to increase academic achievement? Teachers explained, shared, and

presented their perceptions of instructional strategies and approaches that they

implemented in instructing students. The two sub-research questions teacher's provided

answers for were as follows:

1. What instructional strategies do teachers believe are best to deliver instruction

   that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs? Some of these

   strategies are frontloading vocabulary, using visuals, phonemic awareness,

   scaffolding instruction.

2. What do teachers believe can be done to improve ELLs' classroom

   engagement and motivation for increased academic achievement? Teachers

   shared that using collaborative learning, instructional technology, home-

   school connection and collaboration with colleagues and administration can

   improve students' engagement and motivation.

The themes I discovered were differentiated instruction, background knowledge,

challenges and difficulties, home-school connection, technology for diverse learners,

administration and faculty collaboration, and professional development. The interviews,

classroom observations, and analysis of lesson plans assisted in the construction of these

themes. All participants expressed their perceptions of what they believed ELLs' need to

improve academic performance. Most participants explained that ELLs' language barrier

needed to be bridged before they can become successful.

Participants 1, 4, 7 and 8 shared that it was difficult to teach three or more ability

levels in one class period. In addition, some participants expressed concerns that when

students come to the United States, learning a new language for academic success is not

the only challenge; they also have to learn the social language, which is English, and adapt to a new social culture. Two participants shared that SIFE and ELLs' special education also presented a different set of challenges that teachers are unprepared to deal with because they have not received formal pre-service education on the demographics. Hence, teachers answered and validated the importance of delivering instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs.

The perceptions of the participants indicated that ELLs are not fully prepared to take the same state examinations as non-ELLs. Some participants reported that most of the ELLs did not have parental supervision at home to ensure they were studying for tests, so it was extremely difficult for ELLs to raise their performance. Further, some participants reported that socio-economics was a contributing factor for those parents unavailable to provide assistance at home for their children.

Sub-research question 1 was answered by participants as they discussed instructional practices that they used to instruct ELLs, such as video clips, scaffold instruction, build background/prior knowledge, modify speech, pre-teach vocabulary, phonics instruction, translate from English to Spanish, and visuals. In order to encourage ELLs' classroom engagement and motivation for increased academic achievement, they also incorporated hand-on projects, instructional technology as a learning tool, and tried to collaborate with other staff members. They also expressed concerns about lack of parental, administrative, and collegial collaboration and support. They attributed these problems to language of instruction barrier (English) and lack of time in a school day. However, some participants stated that offering extrinsic motivation, simplifying/

modifying instruction, group work, and implementing technology are some practices they used to help increase motivation and engagement. The answers for sub-research question 2 cemented the need for collaborative learning for ELLs to increase academic achievement.

The findings are related to the conceptual framework of Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching as well as Dewey's (1938/1997) social constructivism theory. A person's present or past experiences are related to the current practical learning process, and students' upbringings are crucial to educational outcomes, stated Dewey (1938/1997) and Weimer (2013). Weimer's (2013) learner-centered teaching focuses on students' experiences, backgrounds, and interests and encourages an environment that promotes active learning.

The findings indicated that there is a need for collaborative learning. In the following section, a project is presented that addresses collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs to promote engagement and motivation for increased academic achievement. "Culturally responsive teaching is the behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning" (Gay, 2013, p. 50). Based on teachers' perceptions during data collection, it was determined from veteran and untenured teachers that it is important for teachers to collaborate with peers and administration to address the cultural and linguistic needs of students in today's classrooms. Gay (2013) stated that cultural diversity must be embraced and multicultural education and diversity need to become part of schools' curriculums to promote equality

for all races. Participants explained during the interviews that collaboration was missing among staff members and administration. Most participants shared their perceptions on differentiated instruction, but these perceptions were not fully supported by classroom observations and lesson plans. Collaborative learning could promote an environment that encourages learning and builds better relationships with faculty and staff to foster a positive school culture, and students could benefit by improving academic performance.

Conclusion

Teachers face a tremendous challenge in educating and addressing ELLs' diverse learning to improve performance. While researching, much debate about ELLs was encountered about the need for reform using research-based best practices to address the needs of the fastest growing population in schools nationwide. However, there is little focus on how teachers can teach ELLs and design and utilize materials and instructional tools that are culturally, linguistically, and engaging for all learners. The findings also aligned with the conceptual framework of learner-centered teaching and Weimer's (2013) and Dewey's (1938/1997) social constructivism theory that students incorporate their backgrounds into learning and experiences are critical to learning.

Amaro-Jiménez (2014) posited that cultural awareness is important for school success. Understanding different cultural norms, such as looking at a person when speaking in some cultures is a form of disrespect but that is not an America cultural norm (Amaro-Jiménez (2014). Gay (2013) recommended that teachers who have knowledge and experience working with cultural and linguistically diverse students could impart that knowledge to teachers who lack cultural awareness. Gay (2013) explained that cultural

diversity learning provides students the opportunities to acquire knowledge, experiences, and exposure to various ethnics and cultural groups and these experiences are not found in formal schooling. "Scholars know that culture impacts learning," and findings showed that differentiated instruction is beneficial to all students (Hinnant-Crawford, Faison, & Chang, 2016, p. 290).

The project in Appendix A will be a three-day professional development training for teachers in all content areas, including ESL/ENL teachers and administrators regarding collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs. It is imperative ELLs have equal educational opportunities for positive learning outcomes, and school leaders need to ensure that schools provide instructional tools for teachers that enable them to help ELLs close the achievement gap. The success of all students will address the new mandated ESSA of 2015, and New York State Blueprint for ELLs' Success accountability measures. ESSA stated that schools must be accountable and provide evidence that all students in the district, including, minority sand students with diverse learning needs, are provided with the highest-quality education to increase performance in ELA and Math and become college ready (U.S. Department of Education, 2015.) It is crucial that all students enjoy the same educational opportunities to ensure academic success.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

I identified seven areas of concern among participants related to addressing the needs of ELLs and increasing their academic achievement. These include differentiated instruction, background knowledge, challenges and difficulties, home-school connection, technology for diverse learners, administration and faculty collaboration, and professional development. Based on my findings, I designed a project involving professional development intended to help meet the needs identified by participants. The project (see Appendix A) provides three daylong professional development workshops/trainings on collaborative learning. The workshops/trainings include culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs to increase academic achievement.

Description of the Project

Teachers at the school district under study have been mandated to increase their students' performance scores in ELA and math for New York State Examinations. Findings from this study showed that differentiated instruction, background knowledge, challenges and difficulties, home-school connection, technology for diverse learners, administration and faculty collaboration, and professional development are important practices that help meet the needs of ELLs. My project includes three professional development trainings for the district on collaborative learning. I included culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs as a central feature of these trainings.

I selected this project based on the responses of participants during face-to-face interviews, along with classroom observations and critical analysis of lesson plans. All participants indicated that their awareness of culture and language and the diverse learning needs of students is important in helping them ensure the academic success of ELLs. Most of the participants stated that they lacked the knowledge needed to differentiate instruction because of time constraints and, in some cases, they use a one-size-fits-all type instruction. Some of the participants stated that they lacked opportunities to collaborate and share ideas about ELLs' learning needs with faculty and administration.

The development and design of this 3-day professional development workshop is the outcome based on the findings of the teachers' perceptions. The target audience for this training is middle school teachers and administrators at LSSD. The sessions will use PowerPoint presentations, YouTube video clips, and hands-on and online activities. On Day 1, participants will complete Session 1, where they discuss second language acquisition, components of differentiated instruction, multiple intelligence theory, and learning styles. Session 2 will focus on sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013) in order to address background knowledge, academic content/literacy, lesson preparation, and differentiated instruction based on learning styles. Session 3 will involve examining instructional technology as tools for differentiated instruction that can be used to build engagement and collaboration. The effects of creating a positive school climate for all students will also be explored. I believe that these sessions will provide educators with techniques and instructional

strategies to foster engagement and motivation for all students within the classroom setting.

Goals of the Project

The overall objective of the project is to provide support for teachers in the implementation of collaborative learning using differentiated instruction. Teacher-participants in my study indicated different levels of training in addressing the learning needs of ELLs using methodologies in TESOL, SIOP model, scholastic adaptive technology, various reading programs on the Internet, and years of teaching ELLs. Participants may also have acquired knowledge from collaboration with colleagues, professional workshops, conferences, faculty/departmental meetings, and independent study/learning. The findings delineated that teacher-participants were at varying levels of preparedness to differentiate lessons for ELLs with cultural and linguistic diversity. By the end of the 3-day training, participants will have knowledge about various instructional approaches and components of differentiated instruction, the infusion of culture and language to enhance ELLs' performance, and practices to increase ELLs' background/prior knowledge. They will also be more culturally and linguistically aware of ELLs' diverse learning needs.

Rationale

Collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs has become an important topic not only in the district under study but in schools nationwide, because ELLs are the fastest growing population in U.S. schools (Calderón, Slavin & Sánchez, 2011; Lee, 2016; Tran, 2015;). The purpose of this 3-day long

professional development project is to offer teachers in the school district an opportunity to address students' diverse learning needs through differentiated instruction. In Gándara and Santibañez's (2016) study, teacher-participants shared that they wanted more ELL-focused professional development, which is an indication that adequate training in ELL methodologies does not take place. Even though most of the participants in the current study have had some type of ESL training, either in preservice or district initiated training, most of them expressed interest in receiving more training in differentiated instruction.

By participating in project trainings, teachers may be able to gain skills in differentiated instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs. Project trainings will also offer opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues of all disciplines, including ESL. Administrators will also be invited to attend so they have the opportunity to better understand what teachers need to address their students' diverse learning styles. Administrators will also be able to work collaboratively with teachers to share ideas on different instructional approaches that can be used during formal classroom observations. I also designed this project to help teachers learn about instructional methods that can increase ELLs' performance in ELA and math assessments, which is required by ESSA (USDOE, 2015) and the New York State Blueprint for ELLs' success (NYSED, 2014a).

Review of the Literature

My review of the literature for this project centered on how teachers of students with diverse learning needs could benefit from differentiated instruction to increase their

students' academic performance. I researched topics such as professional development, differentiated instruction, multiple learning styles, sheltered instruction, background knowledge, instruction for ELLs, technology and collaboration for the framework of this project in order to design these professional development workshops. The following databases were accessed in locating references for the literature review from Walden's library: Education Research Complete, Google Scholar, and ProQuest. The Boolean search terms consisted of topics such as *professional development, differentiated instruction, The SIOP Model, multiple learning styles, collaboration, collaborative learning, English language learners, home-school connection, instructional technology, background knowledge, technology and differentiated instruction, sheltered instruction and academic language/success.* Professional development is an integral part of increasing pedagogical knowledge and keeping abreast of instructional approaches that connect with today's changing faces in schools. The literature review includes evidence supporting professional development as the framework for this project. The design of the conceptual framework of the study focuses on learner centered teaching and constructivist teaching, which aligns with professional development training to enhance success for all learners.

Professional Development

Professional development is crucial for professional educators. High-quality professional development should align with school goals, state and district learning standards (DeMonte, 2013; Dever, & Lash, 2013; Lee, 2016). Professional development should help teachers develop competency knowledge and utilize research-based practices

to address diverse learners cultural, linguistics, and academic needs (Tran, 2015). The SIOP model, (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013), aligned with differentiated instruction, building background knowledge, collaborative learning, students' learning styles, and sheltered instruction, is one research-based method this project will utilize.

The SIOP model, which is currently in use in many public schools across the United States, has demonstrated positive results on students learning (Braden, Wassell, Scantlebury, & Grover, 2016; Polat, & Cepik, 2016). Research shows that it is crucial for teachers to have competencies in second language acquisition to help ELLs become effective in simultaneously learning English and content (Braden et al., 2016; Tran, 2015). Studies conducted within the last five years have shown professional development is effective when workshops are directed toward student learning and teachers return to their classrooms to integrate the learned practices with confidence (Desimone, & Garet, 2015), the basis of these 3-day long workshops. In addition, professional development should not take place one, but teachers need training consisting of 20 hours or more (Desimone, & Garet, 2015). Professional development training that is relevant to teachers can enhance students' performance.

In order for professional development to improve teaching instruction and student learning, five factors need to be addressed; (1) content focus; (2) learner centered teaching and learning; (3) schools goals, teachers' knowledge, and students learning needs; (4) continued professional development throughout the school year; and (5) collaborative learning within the school (Desimone, & Garet, 2015; Stewart, 2014). I used research to develop this project and the workshops will provide teachers the

opportunity to plan, practice, and reflect on their instructional strategies. They will focus

on students' work and on how students learn. The professional development will take

place at intervals allowing teachers time to implement and evaluate the new knowledge in

their teaching practices (Stewart, 2014). Additionally, the workshops will present

opportunities for teachers to keep abreast of emerging educational standards and reforms.

The complexity of the Common Core State Standards places educational demands

on classrooms across the country. Teachers instructing ELLs are highly impacted (Kibler,

Walqui, & Bunch, 2015), but professional development can assist in addressing these

challenges. Teachers need high-quality professional development training in

methodologies related to ELLs' cultural and linguistic needs to ensure academic gains (de

Jong, Harper & Coady, 2013; Stewart, 2014). Tran's (2014) research demonstrated that

students' learning increased after teachers attended training and integrated new teaching

methods relevant to their students' diverse learning needs, as explained below.

Tran's (2014) mixed methodology research showed that teachers who attended

professional development workshops of 16 or more hours had increased knowledge and

competencies in working with ELLs. Tran (2014) explained that participants indicated

the following specific ESL strategies were beneficial during professional development

training: "slowed speech, repetition, highlight vocabulary, high levels of peer interaction,

peer support, visual scaffolds, and clarification of tasks" (Tran, 2014, p. 100); these

strategies are related to sheltered instruction or the SIOP model. The workshops for this

study will utilize the SIOP model. Often used for professional development to enhance

learning for all teachers, including ESL teachers, the SIOP model integrates differentiated

and sheltered instruction to support the learning needs of ELLs and non-ELLs in student centered environments (Braden, et al., 2016; Polat & Cepik, 2016). Professional development training should research-based strategies to target school districts' demographics.

Professional development should address some of the challenges that educators confront with language minority students, since schools in the United States are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse (Molle, 2013). Wong, Indiatsi and Wong (2016) stated that one challenge participants in their study faced was the lack of cultural knowledge of all the different cultures prevalent in one class period. Professional development in cultural knowledge would help teachers develop a thorough understanding of language, educational beliefs, learning abilities, ethnicities, and economic background of different cultures (Wong et al., 2016), which this workshop will address. Valuable instructional transformation must occur regardless of educators' philosophical beliefs and experiences (Kibler et al., 2015). Professional development must be fully aligned with lessons so that when teachers return to their classrooms they can easily integrate new knowledge in student instruction (Desimone, & Garet, 2015). Training resources need to be meaningful, so that teachers will implement them in lesson planning.

Results from the present study found that participants wanted training relevant to ELLs' learning needs, and the professional development workshops will present instructional tools on how to meet the diverse needs of 21st century learners (Kereluik, Mishra, Fahnoe & Terry, 2013). Participants from Kolano, Dávila, Lachance & Coffey's,

(2014) research explained that their confidence in instructing ELLs increased when they gained knowledge of their students' individual learning needs and cultural and linguistic diversity. Lack of data on teachers' preparedness is an indication that education programs may not preparing pre-service teachers with pedagogy necessary to accommodate the cultural and linguistic diversity of students prevalent in today's classrooms (Kolano et al., 2014). The findings from this study also indicated the need for better understanding of differentiated instruction. The design of the 3-day long workshops will utilize differentiated instruction and present opportunities for colleagues to share ideas regarding best practices and what does and does not work in real time teaching.

Professional Development and Differentiated Instruction

Professional development pertaining to effective differentiated instruction can help teachers connect with ELLs' diverse learning needs. "Differentiated instruction is an instructional practice based on constructivist theories" (Millen & Gable, 2016, p. 3) that addresses the learning needs of students using a variety of teaching methods (Tomlinson, 2015). Dewey posited that a best practice in education is to determine how learning is related to students' interest (Dewey, 1938/1997). Professional development will provide educators with teaching practices on how to deliver the same curriculum by tailoring learning activities to meet students at their ability levels through implementation of differentiated instruction (Millen & Gable, 2016; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2014; Watts-Taffe et al., 2012). Based on the design of the differentiated instruction components of content, process, and product (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2014), teachers would be able to design lessons according to their students' ability levels and interests.

Classroom instruction requires educators to plan and design lessons that are challenging for the variety of learners present in a class period (McCarty, Crow, Mims, Potthoff, & Harvey, 2016; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2014). The workshops from this study will offer differentiated instruction activities that can assist students in striving for higher educational outcomes. Recent studies have shown that students improve in word reading and reading comprehension when teachers implement differentiated instruction using flexible learning groups, learning centers, and assignments based on students' interest (McCarty et al., 2016; Tomlinson, 2015; Watts-Taffe et al., 2012). Differentiated instruction is the preferred teaching strategy over teacher-directed instruction (Abdelmalak & Trespalacios, 2013; McCarty et al., 2016; Tomlinson, 2015). Students can benefit when teachers use approaches and resources that align with students' learning needs.

Teachers will have the opportunity to learn how to scaffold lessons to support students' literacy needs. Scaffolding lessons is when teachers extend support to students, such as providing sentence frames or slower speech, in completing tasks they could not perform on their own (Kibler et al., 2015). When teachers scaffold lessons, they assist students in achieving competency and challenge students to excel to the next level (Kibler et al., 2015; Tomlinson, 2015). Designing lessons and curriculum that are challenging and rigorous develops critical thinkers and promotes optimism in students' learning process (Tomlinson, 2015; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2014). Teachers will build students' confidence and competencies when they understand that students are

impressionable and "teaching up" (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2014, p. 3). Students can be engaged when lessons are modified based on their learning prefereences.

Differentiated instruction in a science classroom helped students to understand and remember information taught. The exploratory study of Braden et al. (2016) used 147 student participants in Grades 6-7 to explore their perceptions on what motivates and engages them in a science classroom. Several students indicated that hands-on projects, labs, and experiments helped them to understand and apply content knowledge when doing experiments (Braden et al., 2016). Working in groups and being hands-on helped them to remember "stuff", explained one student (Braden et al., 2016, p. 446). Providing instructional opportunities by designing lessons for students to become proactive could help students develop their intellectual knowledge while discussing, problem solving, and creating projects (Braden et al., 2016; Hung, Young, & Lin, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015). Using this differentiated instruction could tap into students' knowledge base, leading to higher academic performance and engagement in learning.

Professional development training should utilize instructional materials relevant to schools' demographics. Braden et al. (2016) and Kelley et al. (2015) explained that workshops provide opportunities for teachers to implement culturally familiar assignments that make learning meaningful for students (Braden et al., 2016; Kelley et al., 2015). Using meaningful teaching materials that students can connect with creates more long-term benefits in remembering and understanding the information (Braden et al., 2016; Kelley et al., 2015). Teachers can allow students to offer suggestions, ideas, or questions to drive lessons and respond to different interests or needs by giving each

student the opportunity to choose an activity of interest to their individual learning needs (Davis, 2013; Markos, 2016; Weimer, 2013). Differentiated instruction focuses on language development and lessons customized for all learners (Baecher et al., 2012; Millen & Gable, 2016). Training that addresses students' cultural and linguistic needs can result in student achievement and collaborative learning can have positive benefits.

Differentiated instruction and collaborative learning. One objective of these 3-day long workshops is to present opportunities for teachers to engage in collaboration by exchanging ideas on successes and challenges faced with ELLs in their classrooms. "Collaboration is when two or more people work together towards a common goal," explained a participant, and one important goal was to help students understand ideas, and subject matter being taught to achieve academic success (Hamilton-Jones, & Vail, 2014, p. 79). When teachers utilize collaboration by sharing professional duties by exchanging lessons plans, classroom expectations/ behavioral concerns, and resources, students can achieve greater success (Kirchhoff, 2015). Collaboration between administrators and teachers can lead to effective school improvement and cultivate a positive learning environment for students (Kitchen et al., 2016; Lunenburg & Irby, 2014). Providing opportunities for collaboration aligns with student centered learning (Braden et al., 2016). Collaboration also presents opportunities for students to develop various foundational skills in English.

Collaborative activities can help students build motivation and present opportunities to practice speaking in English. One collaborative activity teachers can utilize with students is book discussions, which develop cognitive and social skills for

learners (Braden et al., 2016; Kirchhoff, 2015). Kirchhoff (2015) research used 41 ELL participants who responded to a survey regarding book discussions; they emphasized that face-to-face collaboration presented opportunities for them to improve their speaking ability in English and build their social skills (Kirchhoff, 2015). The student participants also stated that they were more motivated and interested in reading due to collaborative activities (Kirchhoff, 2015). Teamwork can assist learners to develop confidence in social and cognitive skills.

However, there are challenges to collaboration in the co-teaching model. The school district under study utilizes a co-teaching model to service ELLs, so addressing collaboration during the workshops will be beneficial to teachers and administrators by illustrating and discussing how best to collaborate to address students' diverse learning needs. The pertinent challenges of co-teaching collaboration are "power, one teach-one assist, and school-wide recognition of collaboration" (Kirchhoff, 2015, p. 81). Kitchen, Gray and Jeurissen's (2016) study posited that principals when shared their feelings on what it takes to reach out to teachers to foster collaboration, they promoted positive learning for students.

Principals can also encourage a learning environment wherein teachers are able to communicate, discuss, and exchange ideas on curriculum and ensure teaching and learning for students (Kitchen et al., 2016). Kitchen et al. (2016) stated that principals attended training in teaching English to speakers of other languages in order to better understand ELLs with cultural and linguistic diversity. Kitchen et al. (2016) also explained that active participation of principals demonstrated that collaborating and

empowering teachers promoted a safe and happy school environment where students'

growth and knowledge are at the forefront. A body of research shows that when

principals allow teachers to work meaningfully in teams for extended time periods,

students improve in the learning process (Braden et al., 2016; Fullan, 2013; Kitchen et

al., 2016). Technology is a tool for differentiating instruction and encourages

collaborative learning.

      Differentiated Instruction and Technology. Technology is the current trend in

education. A body of evidence has agreed that technology related-instruction has positive

effects on students' learning via the integration of software such as PowerPoint slides,

video clips, clickers, and blogs during instruction (Hsu, 2017; Lumpkin, Achen & Dodd,

2015). Teachers across content areas have noticed students are more engaged and

challenged when technology is used in lessons (Hung et al., 2015; Lumpkin et al., 2015).

Students also understand and recall information more readily because of the visual

images presented in video clips and PowerPoint slides (Hsu, 2017; Lumpkin et al., 2015),

and using visuals helps to address one diverse way of learning. Teachers can also use

digital writing as an instructional tool to assist students in becoming better writers

(Hodges & Morgan, 2017). Students can blend reading and writing and incorporate

images and videos to enhance their writing (Hodges & Morgan, 2017). The workshops

for this study provide opportunities for teachers to interact with various websites that

integrate technology in classroom instruction.

      Computer technology plays an integral part in 21st century classrooms. Because

technology is here to stay and students are considered digital natives, it is beneficial to

use technology as a tool for differentiating instruction for today's learners (Lumpkin et al., 2015). In 21st century education, learning is accelerated with challenges and wonderful opportunities with flexibility, creativity, challenges, and complexity that are quite contrary to past educational goals and objectives (Kereluik, Mishra, Fahnoe & Terry, 2013; Lumpkin et al., 2015). Weimer (2013) explained that students' excitement for learning is based on different interests, background knowledge, ability, and reasons for success. Using technology to differentiate instruction can help students become more productive by increasing their motivation and helping them to feel connected to the digital world (Hodges & Morgan, 2017; Hus, 2017). Professional development allows teachers to hone skills and acquire new teaching practices, such as sheltered instruction, and tap into students' knowledge base.

Differentiated Instruction and The SIOP Model

The SIOP model is sheltered instruction for all students (Echevarria et al., 2013). Based on empirical research funded by the U.S. Department of Education, sheltered instruction focuses on content and language objectives (Merritt et al., 2017). Examples of sheltered instruction include building on students' prior knowledge and utilizing multimodal activities such as gestures, visuals, graphic organizes, and front-loading vocabulary words (Merritt et al., 2017). The SIOP model contains 30 items grouped into eight components that help make content comprehensible for ELLs. They include, (1) lesson preparation, (2) building background, (3) comprehensible input strategies, (4) interaction, (5) practice and application, (6) lesson delivery, (7) review, and (8) assessment. The SIOP model is a framework that provides teachers with different ways to

plan and deliver high-quality instruction using learner-centered instruction to increase students' involvement in learning (Echevarria et al., 2013). Students can increase academic achievement when teachers use methods that address students' diverse learning needs.

The SIOP model was tested on 346 students in Grades 6-8; the predominant language was Spanish, with more than 50% from low socio-economic backgrounds. Further, based on pre- and post-tests, participants scored much higher after receiving SIOP model instruction when compared to students who did not receive SIOP model instruction (Echevarria et al., 2013, 2008; Song, 2016). The findings demonstrated that ELLs had positive academic gains due to implementation of sheltered instruction.

Sheltered instruction is beneficial to ELLs and provides opportunities for them to advance in content areas and become proficient in English (Markos & Himmel, 2016; Song 2016). Teachers need training in sheltered instruction, which is a form of differentiated instruction, to assist ELLs in content area achievement gains (Baecher et al., 2012; Song, 2016). The SIOP model is effective when teachers know and understand students' unique learning styles while designing lessons to connect with learners.

Differentiated Instruction Practices

There are various instructional practices in differentiating instruction that bridge learning for students with cultural and linguistic diversity and improve academic performance. "Teachers have to meet their students where they are and understand that there may be as many different places as there are students in the classroom" (Hinnant-Crawford et al., 2016, p. 290). Teachers can integrate practices that align with students'

multiple ways of receiving instruction (Collier, Burston, & Rhodes, 2016). When teachers are aware of students' multiple ways of learning and their readiness level, differentiating the content, process, and product can address learners' diverse learning needs (Taylor, 2015). Teachers can take inventory of students' learning styles to effectively differentiate lessons (Hsu, 2017; Taylor, 2015). Students have variety of ways to become interested in learning.

Learning Styles. Adults use different learning styles to engage in activities that resonate with their personality, experiences, and job endeavors. According to Knowles, Holton, & Swanson (2012) there are three types of learners, (1) goal-oriented learners who seek attention to fulfill a need or interest, (2) activity-oriented learners who engage in activity for social purposes, and (3) learning-oriented learners who continually pursue knowledge its own sake. The workshops from this study will present the opportunity for teachers to understand their own learning styles and reflect upon their students preferred ways of receiving instruction. Teachers typically instruct students based on their own preferred way of learning.

The professional development workshops will model how teachers can use multiple student learning styles to engage learners in the instructional process. For instance, some students may prefer teachers use charts and visuals, while others may prefer to sit and listen to everything a teacher says (Braden et al., 2016; Markos, 2016; Taylor, 2015). A body of evidence shows that students, like adults, are motivated when assignments connect to their own learning preferences and lessons are student-centered (Davis, 2013; Taylor, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015). Research has shown that students

improve in several subject areas such as reading, English, and mathematics when they are aware of their own learning styles (Cheema & Kitsantas, 2016; Collier et al., 2016; Taylor, 2015). Designing and utilizing lessons that connect with students preferred style of learning could build students' interest.

The Multiple Intelligences (MI). Gardner (2006) posited that individuals have multiple intelligences, rather than just a single intelligence. Gardner argued that MI theory offers eight different approaches teachers can use to tap into students' learning styles They are, (1) Verbal/Linguistic (*word smart*), (2) Logical/Mathematical (*number smart*), (3) Visual/Spatial (*picture smart*), (4) Bodily/Kinaesthetic (*body smart*), (5) Musical (*music smart*), (6) Interpersonal (*people smart*), (7) Intrapersonal (*self smart*), and (8) Naturalist Intelligence (*nature smart*) ((Baş, 2010, pp. 168-169). People use their different intelligences to find solutions to problems by being inventive and creative. Students can demonstrate their intelligence by utilizing one or more intelligences (Baş, 2016; Collier et al., 2016; Maftoon & Sarem, 2012). Gardner (2006) posited that educators could implement all eight MI to teach effectively, a theory that validates Weimer's (2013) constructivism learning. Students could become proactive in their education when lessons focus on students' learning preferences.

Teachers demonstrate concerns for diverse learners when they facilitate instruction using research-based strategies that encourage higher-order and critical thinking skills among students (Collier et al., 2016; Hsu, 2017; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2014). A mixed method study comprising 46 diverse learners in two different mathematics classes showed academic gains after students received instruction that

integrated music into their curriculum (An, Capraro & Tillman, 2013). Students'
motivation and engagement were encouraged through the use of various interactive
resources (An et al., 2013; Braden et al., 2016; Collier et al., 2016). This approach helped
students acquire mathematical skills that can be applied in real-world situations (An et
al., 2013). When students are excited about learning, they could increase academic
performance.

Teachers could encourage students in the learning process by implementing
resources applicable to learners' interest. Collier et al. (2016) and (Yeh, 2014) research
demonstrated that there were noticeable differences in students' extrinsic behavior
because of the multiple teaching approaches and exposure to a learning environment that
encourages students' diverse learning styles. For example, learners who possess skills in
interpersonal intelligence can enjoy activities in large groups with lots of communication,
while learners with intrapersonal skills liked working alone doing journal writing or
independent research projects. Ample empirical studies demonstrated that the application
of MI theory has shown remarkable improvement for ELLs (Collier et al., 2016;
Ghamrawi, 2014; Yeh, 2014). Educators can use MI theory to customize instruction,
target diversity in classrooms (Collier et al., 2016; Ghamrawi, 2014; Maftoon & Sarem,
2012), and activate background/prior knowledge to encourage students' interest in
academics.

Background/Prior Knowledge

One area that contributes to ELLs learning is background knowledge, which may
improve students' comprehension and engagement in instruction. Teachers can activate

students' prior knowledge relevant to the content and integrate topics that encourage students to think about their learning and construct motivation (McNeil, 2011; Weimer, 2013; Vaughn et al., 2017). When students' contribute their knowledge during instruction, they experience positive learning benefits (McNeil, 2011; Vaughn et al., 2017). Ample research studies have shown that background knowledge impacts students' performance in school (Neuman, Kaefer & Pinkham, 2014; Wong et al., 2016). Educators need to utilize students' current funds of knowledge to encourage success.

The findings from the present study indicated that students lacked background knowledge, and the workshops will present opportunities for teachers to increase students' knowledge base. Students are better prepared to understand content when they have prior knowledge of vocabulary words related to the topic being taught or discussed (Kelley et al., 2015; Neuman et al., 2014, Wong et al., 2016). In order to build literacy, students may require an understanding of metaphors, idioms and other terminology related to the informational text for comprehension and critical thinking (Gibson, 2016; Neuman et al., 2014). All students, including ELLs, bring a wide variety of knowledge to the classroom, and teachers can provide learners the opportunity to participate by using activities to empower students (Bautista et al., 2011; Kelley et al., 2015). Increasing students' self-confidence could promote and encourage success in the learning process.

ELLs face the daunting task of acquiring English simultaneously with content instruction, but lack of background knowledge impedes the learning process (Vaughn et al., 2017). Wong et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative case study using 25 English as a Second Language pre-service teachers, who reported ELLs' varying proficiency levels

and insufficient background knowledge as one of the major challenges in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. For example, scaffold is when teachers build upon students' prior knowledge by using a set of familiar vocabulary words to conduct reading and writing activities by building confidence so they can complete assignments successfully (Fullerton, McCrea-Andrews, & Robson, 2015; Smit et al., 2017; Vaughn et al., 2017). Researchers stated that scaffolding is a teaching strategy that helps to make learning easier in speaking and writing (Collier et al., 2016; Smit, van de Grift, de Bot, & Jansen, 2017; Wong et al., 2016). Teachers can use scaffolding to build upon students' prior knowledge, which is using a set of familiar vocabulary words to conduct reading and writing activities so students can complete assignments successfully (Fullerton, McCrea-Andrews, & Robson, 2015; Smit et al., 2017; Vaughn et al., 2017). Teachers need to adjust and teach lessons to tap into ELLs' preexisting abilities in order to build academic literacy.

Academic Literacy

Academic literacy and some understanding of second language acquisition can help all teachers become teachers of ELLs and address the NYS Blueprint for English Language Learners' Success. Olson, Matuchniak, Chung, Stumpf, and Farkas (2017) explained teachers who received 46 hours of professional development in academic literacy reported that they became more confident and encouraged to integrate new strategies. Because teachers applied the new learned strategies during instruction, ELLs' performance improved (Olson et al., 2017). Expansive research demonstrated that teachers can develop teaching competency for diverse learners when they display basic

knowledge of how people learn and acquire language (Olson et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2016). ELLs' take approximately two years to reach conversational fluency in English, known as Basic Interpersonal Conversations (BICs), but Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), or academic language proficiency for students, may take anywhere from 5 to 7 years to achieve in both oral and written language (Cummins, 2000). Learning a new language is difficult, challenging and daunting (Olson et al., 2017) and it takes time to acquire CALP (Bautista et al., 2011). ELLs may possess minimum skills in BICs to get along with peers or interact socially, but they must acquire CALP for performance achievement.

Teachers of ELLs need appropriate training to address the multiple learning needs in their classrooms (Hinnant-Crawford et al., 2016; Olson et al., 2017; Samson & Collins, 2012; Short et al., 2011). While some teaching approaches demonstrate promising results, they may not effectively support the academic learning needs of ELLs (Olson et al., 2017; Samson & Collins, 2012). In addition, phonological awareness and vocabulary assist with comprehension of text when reading and writing (Vaughn et al., 2017), and when teachers purposefully teach phonology and vocabulary, students may be able to build fluency in reading, writing, and speaking (Elbro & Buch-Iversen, 2013; Samson & Collins, 2012; Vaughn et al., 2017). Several authors posited that explicitly teaching vocabulary to students learning a second language increases understanding of text complexity (Elbro & Buch-Iversen, 2013; Olson et al., 2017; Vaughn et al., 2017) Additionally, vocabulary knowledge is listed as one of the most important linguistic domain for ELLs (Tran, 2015). Finally, meaningful, high-quality professional

development training can prepare teachers to address students' cultural and linguistic diverse learning needs.

Summary

A review of the literature supported the importance of high-quality professional development providing opportunities for active collaboration with colleagues to design lessons related to their content knowledge (Desimone, & Garet, 2015; Tran, 2015; Van Driel & Berry, 2012). Empirical research also concluded that professional learning happens over time, not just on isolated occasion, and provides learning opportunities for teachers to connect past experiences with the current knowledge gained from professional development (Simoncini, Lasen, & Rocco, 2014; Olson, et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2016). The findings indicated that teacher-participants needed more planning time, resources and strategies to help ELLs increase academic achievement. They also shared they could benefit from more professional guidance to implement collaborative learning in differentiated instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs. The design and schedule of the workshops will help to address the needs of the participants. Teachers will have the opportunity to become active learners by participating in discussions, asking and responding to questions, completing hands-on activities, taking an online survey of their learning styles, and working in groups based on their personal interests. When teachers are proactive in professional learning, their knowledge is enhanced (Olson et al., 2017; Simoncini et al., 2014). The following section discusses the project description.

Project Description

I developed the research-based project based on the findings of the project study and is outlined below. Factors that could affect the implementation of the project are discussed, including resources and supports needed to make the project successful, barriers that can hinder the implementation and timetable and potential solutions to these barriers, a proposal for the implementation, and the roles and responsibilities of the students and others.

The project (Appendix A) provides a 3-day long professional development training focusing on collaborative learning and differentiated instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs. Appendix A includes a daily agenda of the workshops components, activities, PowerPoint presentations with presenter notes and references, evaluations, and handouts. The participants will be able to download or link resources they found useful or discovered during further inquiry. I will act as the workshop presenter and facilitator.

Implementation

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Resources required for implementation of this three-day professional development are a room suitable to accommodate 30-35 teachers and administrators, five or six round tables, an Interactive Whiteboard, a laptop, videos, and PowerPoint presentation software. The district will provide the site for the workshops, but the library would be an ideal location. The roundtables would facilitate small and large group discussions, hands-

on activities, and collaboration. The director of the ELA department will have to grant approval to make this professional development workshop possible.

Existing support. I will need approval from the coordinator of the ELA department, and the site and room must be available to make this 3-day professional development workshop possible. I believe that I will receive the support from the coordinator of ELA department, because she consistently seeks teacher volunteers to conduct presentations on classroom methods they have used to benefit ELLs. She is also an advocate for teacher-led training. I will utilize the school district faculty shared folder on the servers to upload relevant resources for future use. Also, the room will need to provide access to the required equipment: a computer, whiteboard, and round tables to facilitate collaboration.

Potential barriers and solutions. The biggest barrier to implementing this workshop would be the completion of three professional development sessions in one school year. Teachers would need to be out of their classrooms for 3 days, requiring substitute teachers. Teachers may be resistant to attending the workshops because they do not want to take time away from their classrooms and miss valuable instructional time with their students. Teachers might also feel that they have attended workshops on differentiated instruction before and would not gain new knowledge or insight on how to address the diverse learning needs of ELLs. Funding for substitute teachers could pose a problem, because school districts do not always have the extra money due to budget cuts. A possible solution to this barrier is to conduct the three-day professional development workshops during district required professional development days. This solution would

reduce the cost of hiring substitute teachers and prevent teachers from leaving their

classrooms. Teachers may then be more receptive to the workshops.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Once the study is finalized, I will set up a meeting with the director of the English

language arts department. I will share this study's findings and the professional

development that was created and designed as a result of these findings with the director.

The professional development workshops will be for ELA and mathematics teachers; all

teachers serving ELLs can attend. The workshops will focus on collaborative learning

using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs; they will allow

teachers to collaborate and formulate best practices that connect with their learners and

the demographics in the local school setting. The workshops would discuss research-

based strategies and best practices, such as differentiated instruction, SIOP model, and

collaborative learning, to connect with the themes from the findings. Using this approach

will help model how teachers can implement differentiated instruction with students in

their classrooms. Teachers will also be given the opportunity to collaborate with

colleagues using their own curriculum to design a lesson unit across content areas that

can be utilized in classroom instruction. The projected completion time to create and

present the professional development workshops should take about four to five months,

with implementation at three different times from September 2017 to January 2018. I

decided on this timeframe because the district usually has their required professional

development days in September, and substitute teachers would not be needed. This

timeframe would also provide teachers ample time to implement differentiated instruction before state examinations in April and May.

Roles and Responsibilities of Students and Others

The facilitator. My role will be the facilitator of the project during the workshops. As the facilitator, I will ensure that all resources are obtained and the necessary arrangements are made, approved, and gathered at the workshops location. I will encourage a learner-centered atmosphere by offering participants the opportunity to complete activities in groups based on their interests. I will also allow participants to exchange ideas, teaching experiences, and other vignettes related to ELLs and diverse learners.

Students. Students are not directly involved in this project, but they may benefit from differentiated instruction based on the lessons teachers generate. Students will be given a chance to complete an inventory of their learning styles, which may help them in the way they receive instruction to address their individual learning needs.

Teachers. The teachers' role will be to design quality lessons and units of study incorporating differentiated instruction. Teachers need to participate in professional development to build cultural competencies and increase confidence in ELLs learning abilities (Choi & Morrison, 2014). Hopefully, teachers will continue to collaborate with colleagues to address ELLs' diversity and encourage higher academic achievement.

Administrators. Administrators will have several responsibilities related to the professional development workshops. They will need to grant approval for the workshops themselves, and provide time for teachers to collaborate with their colleagues regarding

the knowledge they have gained from the workshops. It is also recommended that administrators attend the workshops to ensure they are aware of teachers' learning needs to address the cultural and linguistics needs of ELLs. Administrators and districts need to provide professional development because it is an integral part of the school system (Hopkins, Lowenhaupt, & Sweet, 2015). Administrators must support teachers on an ongoing basis with instructional tools to facilitate learning for all students (Hopkins et al., 2015) and demonstrate a supportive and welcoming environment. Administrators' are responsible for fostering a school culture that is caring and encouraging. They can also empower teachers to take risks and promote self-efficacy for teachers and students. A collaborative working environment will assist in setting the climate for academic success.

Project Evaluation Plan and Stakeholders

I created an evaluation to rate the effectiveness of the professional development workshops. I designed the 3-day professional development workshop to help participants become knowledgeable on various instructional strategies, approaches, and components for differentiated instruction by infusing culture and language in order to enhance ELLs' performance (see Choi & Morrison, 2014). They will learn to implement the SIOP model, incorporate ELLs multiple learning styles, and I present opportunities for participants to collaborate with colleagues and administrators. I will offer a variety of practices designed to build ELLs' background and/or prior knowledge in order to increase cultural awareness. The will get to examine various instructional technologies that can be used to promote engagement and collaboration. This project focuses on collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs. It incorporates

many differentiated instruction strategies that I will model for participants so they can return to their classrooms and implement them with students.

Evaluation of the workshops is critical to understand teachers' needs and expectations. The three primary goals that will be evaluated are, (1) measure, (2) understand, (3) learn; but the overall objective is to assess the effectiveness of the information presented about the program (Berriet-Solliec, Lebarthe, & Laurent, 2014). At the end of each workshop, an evaluation is included consisting of Likert-style questions to obtain teachers' opinions and feedback. I will provide three short writing prompts at the end of the survey to facilitate open discussions and plan for future professional development workshops. Professional development is crucial for increasing schools' performance, and educational philosophers, policy-makers, and specialists have identified the urgency of professional training in raising educational standards (Blandford, 2012).

As the facilitator of this project, I hope teachers are able to address the cultural and linguistic learning needs of ELLs using differentiated instruction. I created the 3-day professional development workshops by consulting research and utilizing recommended best practices (Hopkins et al., 2014). I also created and designed an evaluation approach to assess the effectiveness of the study's professional development workshops. As part of the evaluation process, I will compile formative and summative data and use it to analyze what is essential to the project's success (Lodico et al., 2010). I will collected the formative data at the end of each workshop, and the feedback from participants will provide valuable information in making adjustments or changes to future professional development workshops. I will email participants the summative evaluations.

I will send participants the summative evaluations via the school district email. At the end of the school year, one year after the professional development workshops are presented, I will send out a survey to participants and request their feedback on the effectiveness of the professional development training they attended. I will use a Likert-style survey for them to indicate if they noticed any difference in students' performance and if they implemented some of or all the strategies presented during the professional development workshops.

The goal-based evaluation approach is appropriate for these professional development workshops because their training sessions were created based on a set of goals (Huber & Harvey, 2013). The main goal of the professional development program will be to enable teachers to acquire a better understanding of differentiated instruction and address students' diverse learning needs. The ultimate goal is to empower teachers who attended the workshops to implement differentiated instruction with ease in their lessons. Professional development is designed to build upon teachers' knowledge, and evaluation gauges the strength of what was learned and practiced with students following the training (Huber & Harvey, 2013). I will offer opportunities for the workshop participants to collaborate, share ideas, and target areas of concerns that they mentioned during data collection. The results of the project evaluation will assess the effectiveness of how teachers assist ELLs to increase performance in reading and writing for academic success. I created and designed the workshops for teachers based on study participants' needs, but the workshops may benefit several stakeholders in the district.

The key stakeholders are teachers who will benefit from gaining new knowledge on instructional strategies to address diverse students' learning needs (Choi & Morrison, 2014). The administration is also a stakeholder, as they provide opportunities for collaborative learning and allowing teachers to stay abreast of new educational methods and strategies. Students are considered stakeholders, as they will benefit from classroom instruction from their teachers based on their learning profiles and ability levels. The ESSA (2015) holds states accountable for the success of all students, including ELLs, and requires that students demonstrate academic progress, leading to proficiency in English (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016). The community may benefit once students are better prepared for college and beyond to become successful and productive members of society.

Project Implications Including Social Change

There are several implications for ESL students and the local community. Middle school teachers at the school under study may expand their knowledge of instructional tools to assist culturally and linguistically diverse ELLs in increasing performance in ELA and math assessments. All schools in the district have ELLs who may benefit from the findings of this study. The study presents teachers with the opportunity to partake in a 3-day professional development workshop where they can increase their knowledge of culturally and linguistically appropriate learning in differentiated instruction. Ample research posited that ELLs cannot succeed in a one-size fits all teaching model, but content needs to be differentiated using techniques, strategies, and educational methods

to address diversity in learning (Cardenas, 2015; Wong et al., 2016). Instructional resources that focus on students can have positive outcomes.

Teachers should be able to foster learner-centered teaching based on the training received during the 3-day workshops. They can also observe the results from the lessons they designed and taught in their classrooms. Teachers may increase their self-confidence and self-efficacy by knowing they are fostering an environment that connects with learners' preferred ways of receiving instruction. In the workshops, teachers will discover teaching resources that apply to their content areas and school curriculum that is achievable and promotes learner-centered instruction. Learner-centered instruction ensures that all students are motivated, challenged, and engaged in instruction (Weimer, 2013). Students will benefit by improving on New York State ELA and mathematics assessments. Consequently, high-quality teaching and learning can assist students in their English proficiency, leading to higher academic success.

The professional development has the potential to promote social change by advocating for teachers and administrators to foster a positive school climate through collegiality and collaboration. Another potential social change can occur if administrators encourage and support teachers who attend the workshops to become leaders by sharing the knowledge and experience they gained with other colleagues and new teachers in the district. Effective differentiated instruction can enhance achievement for teachers, students, administrators, parents, and members of the community. Further, school districts with similar demographics can benefit from collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction appropriate for ELLs.

Conclusion

The goal of this professional development project is to provide teachers with instructional tools relevant for collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs as they plan and design lessons. "All staff and leaders serving ELLs must be provided continuous professional development on effective research-based practices" (Cardenas, 2015, p. 34). The curriculum must address the state's standards related to rigor and relevance to ensure the highest achievement in subject areas as measured by required state's examinations (Cardenas, 2015). Offering teachers the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and administrators and reflect on research-based best practice such as differentiated instruction is crucial for professional growth. Students also enjoy success as teachers facilitate learning in a learner-centered environment and connect lessons to their ability levels and learning styles.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of what can increase academic achievement for ELLs in the school district under study. Analysis of data provided me with an in-depth view of participants' perceptions, motivations, and rationale for use of certain instructional strategies. I created the project with the intention of presenting a forum to share the information I collected with teachers.

In Section 4, I discuss the strengths and limitations of the project and offer recommendations for alternate approaches. This section also includes my self-reflections and analyses on scholarship, leadership, and my role as both a practitioner and a project developer. I conclude with a discussion of the project's potential to affect social change, its applications, and implications for future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

This project possesses many strengths. Professional development provides the opportunities for colleagues to collaborate, keep abreast of new teaching strategies, and offer feedback for future workshops (DeMonte, 2013). One of the strengths of the project is that I expect it to be cost effective and time efficient for LSSD and its stakeholders. The district has a contractual agreement to provide professional development sessions for teachers, and if the study's workshop sessions are conducted during the required professional development days provided by the district, costs related to hiring substitute teachers will be avoided. Because teachers will be required to attend, any concerns about effects on afterschool activities will be avoided.

Presenters conducting professional development training do not always possess an understanding of the local situation. For example, a presenter may not fully understand the teaching dynamics, culture and linguistic diversity, or demographics of a school (Hopkins et al., 2015). As a result, training can fail to relate or connect with participants. The proposed training sessions created from this project are immediately relevant to the teachers who instruct ELLs and diverse learners. Teachers will have the opportunity to reflect on and think about research-based strategies and best practices (see Choi & Morrison, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2015) that could have a positive impact on their school district.

Teachers will also have the opportunity to collaborate by creating and designing lessons, providing instant feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of lessons, and exchanging ideas or knowledge with colleagues to improve student learning. Teachers instructing ELLs demonstrated deficit knowledge in integrating science content and language (Lee et al., 2016). After professional development intervention, teachers' confidence increased and showed improvements in their teaching practices (Lee et al., 2016). The professional development created as a part of my project will present opportunities for teachers to learn as students (Lee & Buxton, 2013).

Collegiality could be encouraged when professional development training is teacher-led; which can lead to more acceptance and receptiveness of this intervention (Gulamhussein, 2013; Hopkins et al., 2015). The three training sessions, designed for teachers at LSSD, may encourage and motivate teachers to listen and work collaboratively with colleagues because they are exploring instructional approaches that

will positively impact students. A final strength of this project is that teachers will have the opportunity to reflect on the training, which should allow them to review how differentiated instruction can help address their students' diverse learning needs. Reflection should help teachers consider ways they can create and implement high-quality instruction to connect with all students' learning needs.

One limitation may be the time requirement to dedicate 3 days to professional development. The time teachers will need to be away from their classrooms to attend three workshops on the same topic may also act as a limitation. Another possible limitation relates to the funds needed to pay for substitute teachers. School districts often face a shortage of funds or resources to provide professional development (Desimone & Garet, 2015). If three dedicated staff days are not available for this training, substitutes may be needed to conduct the training throughout the school year, which could be costly. As discussed earlier, one way to circumvent this concern is by scheduling training sessions from this study during the required professional development days provided by the district.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Alternative approaches could be applied to address the limitations of this project. One way to circumvent the concern of lack of money is to schedule workshops during the preplanning days set aside by the district for professional development training. Another solution would be to use technology to broadcast workshops and/or make them available via live streaming or recording. An additional alternative to a lack of contractual preplanning days could be to divide the training into smaller portions that could be

delivered throughout the school year during shorter, planned meetings. This would allow teachers to review project information over a longer period of time. Discussions could also begin at the start of the meeting to maximize the allotted time. A different approach to delivering this information is through a white paper, which could provide more in-depth information on research-based instructional strategies and differentiated instruction for teachers of ELLs. The study's district can use such a document to create its own training that it could then deliver at its discretion.

Scholarship

I have learned much about scholarship throughout the research process, from beginning my research study to developing the project. I faced several challenges in completing this project study. One was the length of time necessary to develop my research foundation. Having this time, however, allowed me to gain knowledge and become a critical thinker and researcher. I was ultimately able to describe a problem, create research questions, and conduct a literature review relevant to culture, language, and differentiated instruction for ELLs.

I have come to a greater understanding of the possible impacts of collaborative learning that involves the use of culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction on all students, including ELLs. The research and interviews I conducted illustrated a variety of strategies that teachers can implement when creating and designing lessons. I used differentiated instruction with my students previously, but my research has allowed me more in-depth knowledge of the various steps involved in differentiated instruction.

These steps include content, process, and product. They culminate in lesson plans that reach students at varying ability levels.

My doctoral courses enabled me to develop a framework for the project study. I examined and analyzed recent research-based literature, a process that gave me the opportunity to acquire skills as a researcher and educator. I eventually designed my project using the philosophies of educational theorists and research-based best practices from educational experts, which I learned about in courses taken at Walden University. This process also presented me with the opportunity to add to the field of educational strategies for diverse learners, including ELLs, and lend a professional voice. All the knowledge and experience I gained have assisted in sharing my knowledge with colleagues and administrators on the topic of differentiated instruction and its relevance in today's classrooms. Finally, it became obvious that dedicated and gaining new knowledge, as explained above, is what social change consists of, and shows the real meaning of a change agent.

Project Development

Developing a project was a critical component in addressing the problem identified from this study's findings. It became apparent that professional development presenting the concept of differentiated instruction was necessary based on themes discerned from the findings. The district under study has a large population of ELLs, thus, it necessary to offer effective professional development to support teachers with effective instructional tools to target ELLs' diverse learning needs (Lee & Buxton, 2013).

The research on collaborative learning for cultural and linguistic differentiated instruction helped to formulate the 3-day professional development workshops.

Presenting professional development in an environment that encourages teamwork enables teachers to share ideas, develop lesson plan units, and reflect on various topics to increase or gain knowledge in differentiated instruction. All components of the project's development and evaluation were guided by current research (Hopkins et al., 2015). This project was developed to provide meaningful learning opportunities for teachers to help them build upon students' cultural knowledge and make learning relevant (Lee & Buxton, 2013). I chose and decided on the relevance of resources that could be used to personalize instruction for diverse learners' needs. I also realized that an evaluation is crucial for any professional development training; hence, an evaluation was created to assess the effectiveness of each workshop, as discussed in Section 3.

Leadership and Change

I learned several valuable lessons about leadership and change throughout this process. Educational leaders who continue to build and hone skills in teaching philosophies can assist in providing teachers with best practices for promoting students' achievement. I wanted to examine the lack of achievement for ELLs and seek solutions to help increase performance on New York State assessments. I have learned through research that differentiated instruction is a possible solution for change in students' performance. After researching relevant literature on differentiated instruction, I adjusted the way I delivered differentiated lessons to my diverse learners. I had used differentiated instruction in the past, but I have learned more strategies and how to accommodate for

varying ability levels in the same class period. In addition, I gained insight on how to collaborate more effectively with colleagues from my department and design lessons that align with students' learning needs.

I have also discovered that administrative support is an integral part of educational changes. Providing support and guidance are important aspects of leadership. I have also received support and guidance from faculty members at Walden, who are dedicated to promoting student achievement. My doctoral journey has helped me to acquire the confidence as an educator and researcher to positively impact my local community and society. This project study can be used to address the needs of content area teachers with struggling ELLs in their classes. Finally, the most prevalent potential change is the success of our school and students due to the collaboration between teachers and administrators.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I have grown as a scholar by completing this project study, which was challenging, especially while teaching full time. I always had an interest in acquiring more knowledge on differentiated instruction and meeting the diverse learning needs of students, including ELLs. I also knew that one-size-fits-all instruction does not meet the needs of all learners and have become cognizant of the variety of ways students learn. I have been able to implement strategies to connect with my learners and assist them in English as a second language. I have also taken a proactive approach in incorporating

instructional resources that are culturally and linguistically relevant to students' learning needs.

I have become more aware of the need to build ELLs' background knowledge before teaching a topic by showing video clips or visuals. The research I have conducted has informed me of several new strategies that may benefit ELLs. I have acquired greater knowledge in differentiated instructing using content, process, and product and the importance of meeting students at their ability levels. Many challenges in implementing differentiated instruction were discussed in the research, but I also encountered successful approaches. Differentiated instruction is a teaching method that takes time to master, and it must be used reliably and continually before it can become a part of daily classroom instruction. I have also increased confidence in my ability to utilize and share material, visuals, interactive computer games, teaching resources, strategies, and website links with colleagues on differentiated instruction.

The foundation courses I have taken at Walden assisted me in my project study. During my research and courses, I attained knowledge of educational theorists and philosophies that guided me in choosing a theoretical framework for my project study. I have also enhanced and improved my understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, data collection, and analyses. I have gained experience as a critical and analytical reader because of the large volume of peer-reviewed empirical articles cited, which was one of the most challenging and integral parts of my research. Through this journey toward becoming a scholar-practitioner, I realized that, to influence

students' achievement, it is crucial to collaborate, share ideas, be proactive, be dedicated

and committed to my beliefs, and advocate for educational changes.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

The field of education is continually changing, and it is critical that educators

continue to become lifelong learners, grow professionally, and keep abreast of changes in

education. As a teacher of ELLs, I understand the importance of and requirement to meet

the needs of learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse. I fully believe ELLs

add to the richness and tapestry of their classrooms. However, there is the need for

awareness of challenges ELLs face in learning content while simultaneously learning

English. The scholarly articles I have read provide exposure to the lack of achievement,

ELLs' struggles to learn English, and the best practices for addressing this problem

nationwide. I better understand what schools and districts in other states around the

country face and feel more connected to them, in some ways, not isolated.

During this doctoral process, I became more familiar with the Every Student

Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, the New York State Blueprint for ELLs' Success, and the

impact each will have on my district and students. I possess a deeper understanding of the

support needed to strengthen, enhance, and reform educational goals and reality. I have

knowledge that research and data-driven information assist in educational reforms. The

doctoral process has exposed me to educational literature, mandates, laws, and reforms

that impact teaching and teachers' ability to address the learning needs of all students for

academic achievement. This journey has assisted me in developing self-confidence and

efficacy, sharing resources with colleagues, involving myself in discussions, mentoring,

and implementing different components of differentiated instruction. I have learned that it is imperative to remain proactive and stay informed of research-based, educational practices, and changes.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

The development of this project was the result of collected and analyzed data. Developing the 3-day professional development workshops has been a beneficial learning experience. This project has the potential to help content area and ESL teachers identify how differentiated instruction can be implemented in their classrooms to accommodate all learners. The project was created based on the information I received from data collection, mainly the interviews. Some of the activities used in the training are related to the themes discovered from the interviews. I made sure some of the activities are differentiated so that teachers can practice differentiation while collaborating and sharing ideas with colleagues. I also provided opportunities for teachers to use a hands-on approach during the workshops, and used lessons, video clips, and vignettes that are relevant to ELLs' learning needs.

I provided an atmosphere that encourages teamwork so teachers can be involved in differentiating lessons as they collaborate and design lesson units. I wanted to empower teachers to enrich their teaching and learning experiences during the training sessions. As a project developer in this study, I also realized the need for teachers to self-reflect, so I provided opportunities for reflective learning during the workshops. This experience has increased my confidence as an educational leader, researcher, and project

developer to meet middle school teachers' need to receive training in utilizing cultural and linguistically differentiated instruction.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

An integral part of any successful working environment is collaboration among colleagues to promote trust and collegiality (Young, Hill, Morris, & Woods, 2016). Teachers need to have planned time to share and participate in meaningful discussions regarding students' achievement (Young et al., 2016). The professional development workshops are based on interviews that sought to identify what teachers' can do to increase academic achievement for ELLs. I read and researched a tremendous volume of articles and books on the topics of academic achievement for ELLs, collaboration, and differentiated instruction, which led to the design of the professional development workshops for teachers.

This project has the potential to influence change by offering support and instructional strategies to teachers at LSSD as they collaborate and differentiate instruction in order to improve students' academic achievement. This project is just one of many forums that can be utilized as a platform to improve teachers' understanding and knowledge of collaborative learning using differentiated instruction appropriate for improving ELLs' academic gains. Societal change is possible when teachers design and deliver lessons appropriate for different ability levels, as well as work collaboratively to meet the needs of all learners, which could lead to higher academic achievement. This project may have a positive impact on the local community as students increase

performance on New York State assessments and become more confident learners and proficient English readers, writers, and speakers.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

I investigated ELLs' underachievement in reading and writing on state assessments when compared with non-ELLs. During the data collection stage, I learned that teachers and administrators benefit from collaborative learning using culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction for ELLs. In addition, research indicated a lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge as it relates to ELLs academic achievement. Comments from participants in the study also revealed that time was a barrier to meaningful collaboration and sharing ideas on what works best for students.

Consequently, I developed the professional development workshops to assist teachers and administrators in broadening their knowledge on differentiated instruction. When they attend professional workshops, teachers want to be presented with new knowledge and insights that are immediately transferable to students' learning and performance. The workshops present opportunities for teachers to develop and deliver high-quality instruction for diverse learners. Teachers in content areas such as math, social studies, science, and English will be able to implement differentiated instruction learned in the three training sessions. The implications for this project include teachers and administrators attaining a better understanding of differentiated instruction that can result in increased students' academic performance. I designed and created the project development workshops with the intent to enhance learning and performance for ELLs.

The opportunities for future research are significant, since ELLs are the fastest growing population in today's schools (Lee et al., 2016). Research indicated that school leaders have the most important role in affecting the learning outcomes for students' achievement (Herman et al., 2017). There is a need for future research on collaborative learning environments between teachers and administrators, since most participants shared that they lacked adequate support from administrators. Future research may focus on how administrators can best offer guidance, encouragement, and organizational support as teachers adjust instruction to implement differentiated instruction for all learners, including ELLs. The district could also offer regular professional training to investigate whether teachers have received the support required for differentiated instruction and if they have implemented methods reliably and with fidelity.

Conclusion

Section 3 presented a comprehensive look at the professional development workshops developed for this project. The development of this project was a result of the data collected from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. This qualitative case study can help raise awareness of what teachers can do to increase ELLs' academic performance using differentiated instruction strategies. The project's strength was collaborative learning, and the primary weakness was a potential lack of funds for the 3-day professional development workshops. The possible solution to this problem is to conduct workshops on the district's preplanned professional learning days, which would eliminate the cost of paying substitute teachers.

Also, I included in this section, my personal reflections as a scholar, practitioner, leader, and project developer. I reflected upon what I have learned throughout the process of writing this paper, along with designing the professional development project based on the findings from my study. I also offered a reflection on the project's potential for social change and suggested recommendations for future research and how the project could be used to benefit teachers and students in the future.

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Appendix A: Teachers' Perceptions of the Use of Culturally and Linguistically

Differentiated Instruction for ELLs

Background

A qualitative case study was conducted to determine why ELLs' at the LSSD

were underperforming in ELA and Math on New York State Examinations when

compared to non-ELLs. The findings indicated that while some teachers are better

prepared to teach ELLs with diverse learning needs, some could benefit from

professional development workshops in collaborating with colleagues and to differentiate

instruction that is culturally and linguistically for ELLs. Given that a majority of

participants agreed that they teachers and administrators could benefit from collaboration

and differentiated instruction, this PD was designed to provide assistance in their

instructional planning to improve academic performance for ELLs''.

Target Audience

This training is for middle school teachers and administrators at the LSSD. This

training workshop will focus on teachers' understanding of cultural and linguistic

awareness of ELLs using differentiated instruction. It will also provide educators with

techniques and instructional strategies to foster engagement and motivation within the

classroom setting for all students, including students with diverse learning needs.

Rationale for Professional Development

The expectation is for participants to utilize the knowledge and understanding that

they have learned from this PD workshop upon its completion. It is hoped that

participants will become aware of the learning needs of ELLs, be more reflective

educators, collaborate and share ideas, whether success or disappointments with colleagues and administrators. Also, they will implement high-quality differentiated instruction that is culturally and linguistically appealing to ELLs and it will be evident and observable in formal classroom evaluations.

Goals and Objectives of Professional Development

A three-day training is planned for a future professional development workshop and each session will be 5.5 hours long. The coordinator of ELA will determine the location of the PD workshop. The room will be set-up with an Aquos Board, district laptops for each participant, Internet connection, and round tables to facilitate small group collaboration. On day 1, participants will complete Session 1, day 2 participants will complete Session 2, and on day 3, participants will complete Session 3. The administrators and coordinators can use the goals and objectives to plan future professional development workshops and decide the best time of the school year to begin implementation.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the PD, participants will:

- Become knowledgeable of various instructional strategies, approaches and components for differentiated instruction, infusing culture and language to enhance ELLs'' performance, such as:
    - The SIOP model
    - The MI Theory
    - Lesson preparation using content, process, and product.

- Become knowledgeable about the variety of practices to build ELLs'' background

  knowledge or prior knowledge.

  - o Cultural and language awareness

  - o Academic literacy

Examine various instructional technologies and websites that can be used to

promote engagement and collaboration between faculty and administration and classroom

instruction for students.

Sessions and Activities

Day 1: Session 1

Participants' understanding of differentiated Instruction (DI) that is Culturally and

Linguistically Appropriate for ELLs.

Objectives:

- Understand the philosophy of differentiated instruction

- Understand and recognize the various components of differentiated

  instruction: process, content, product, and learning environment.

- Understand the benefits of differentiated instruction and multiple intelligence

  (MI) theory using students' diverse learning styles, including their cultural

  and linguistic backgrounds.

Session 1 Activities:

- A1.1a – (15 minutes). Whole Group. Welcome and getting to know you activity.

  After that, they will get in a group based on their favorite brand of chocolate.

- A1.1b – (30 minutes). Buzz Group: Viewing/discussion a video.

  o They will view a view a YouTube video (5:30 minutes) (Culture and

    Language: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiJ8-2hAqm4). The video

    presents an inspirational look at how language and culture transcend

    boundaries of individual perception and understanding.

  o After watching the video, they will respond to this question in a whole

    group discussion: What does culture and language mean to them?

- A1.2a – (30 minutes). Buzz Group. Viewing a YouTube video (11:40 minutes) on the reformation of public education. Participants will be asked to answer this questions before they view the video:

  - What are some reasons to reform education?

    http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms.html

- Participants will think about these two questions while they watch the video:

  1. Why differentiated instruction is important to students' diverse learning needs, including culture and language?

  2. Why is it important for ELLs to increase performance in ELA and math?

- A1.2b. – (30 minutes). Small group activity. Elbow partner: Identify their learners. They will answer this question:

  - Why is understanding different culture important in learning English or any language?

- Participants will list all of the differences between students (culture and language), which may account for the various ways we should match the learning to them. After participants have brainstormed their list, they will share it with another participant until they come across one person who did not have one on their list. Continue sharing list until they hear or get one that they did not have and write it down. They can do this until they have two or three new items on their list.

- A1.3 – (15 minutes). Small group discussion. Participants will be divided into small groups, each group consisting of four-six participants: They will respond to this question before watching the video:

    o   How do you plan for the unpredictability in the classrooms?

    o   They will then view this video (3:46 minutes) (Carol Tomlinson): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpy6rDnXNbs. (Handout #A1.3). After that, they will share their answers with the group.

- A1.4a. – (30 minutes). Table Discussion: Learning Styles: Multiple Intelligences: What do you know about learning styles? Do you know your learning styles?

    1. After responding to the questions, they will watch a video on MI Theory (3:56 minutes) (http://youtu.be/cf6lqfNTmaM).

    2. They will then take an online survey to identify their own learning style and the will see the results at the end of a 5-minute questionnaire (http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-assessment).

    3. They will then list various activities related to their content area that they give to their students to address individual learning styles. Teachers will be given a MI survey to bring back to the classroom so they can administer the survey to their students (Handout #S1.4: Students Multiple Intelligence Survey Learning Profiles).

- A1.4b. – (15 minutes). Think-Pair-Share. Participants will discuss the following questions to lead them into the PowerPoint presentation for differentiated instruction:

1. What are some activities in your content area that you give to students to address individual learning styles?

2. How does a multiple intelligence classroom model lend itself to differentiated instruction?

- A1.5a – (2.0 hours). Small group. Participants will watch a YouTube video (3:45 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpy6rDnXNbs and will respond to this question before they watch: What is differentiated instruction? They will then view a PPT presentation on differentiated instruction and the components:

  o Process

  o Content

  o Product

  o Classroom environment

During the presentation, participants will be presented with interactive discussions.

- A1.6. – (30 minutes). Small group. Participants will design a lesson unit based on their content area incorporating DI and MI Theory.

  o Each participant will have a role and they will follow the DI model presented during the PPT and they will have a handout to follow.

- A1.7 – (10 minutes). Reflective Questionnaire. Fill out a questionnaire with short answers regarding the training. (Handout #A1.7)

- A1.8 – (5 minutes). Evaluation survey. (Handout #A1.8)

Handout #A1.3: Why differentiated instruction

1. What differentiation is? (Participants will list as many items that they feel differentiated instruction is about.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What differentiation is not? (Participants will list as many items that they feel differentiated instruction is not)

_____

_____

_____

3. What are the potential benefits and challenges of using differentiated instruction classroom model for Common Core instruction?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Handout #A1.4: Learners' Profiles - Multiple Intelligences

Survey for Students (page 1 of 2)

Questionnaire for Children

Put a check next to each sentence that describes you.

Area 1
_____ I like to listen to songs on the radio or a CD.
_____ I like to watch music videos on TV.
_____ I like to go to music concerts and hear live music.
_____ I can easily remember tunes, raps, or melodies.
_____ I take music lessons, singing lessons, or play a musical instrument.
_____ I can learn new songs easily.
_____ I like to sing.

Area 2
_____ I like art classes.
_____ I like to draw, paint, and make things with clay.
_____ I enjoy putting puzzles together.
_____ I like to build things using blocks, Legos, and models.
_____ It is fun to play video games.
_____ I can create a picture in my mind to help me think things through.
_____ I notice the different styles of things, such as clothes, cars, and hairstyles.

Area 3
_____ I like to read books, magazines, and comic books.
_____ I have a good vocabulary and like to learn new words.
_____ I enjoy writing e-mails to my friends.
_____ I like to write.
_____ It is fun to play word games such as Scrabble and Mad Libs, do crossword puzzles, and acrostics.
_____ I think it would be fun to keep a journal of my thoughts and ideas.
_____ I like to talk to my friends on the telephone.

Area 4
_____ I like to play with animals and take care of them.
_____ I like going to zoos, parks, or aquariums.
_____ I like being outside.
_____ I like to hike, walk, or run outdoors.
_____ I like to observe nature's changes, such as thunderstorms, rain, snow, and sunshine.
_____ I help to recycle and take care of our environment.
_____ I pay close attention to things in my environment such as trees, rocks, flowers, birds, bugs, and squirrels.

Area 5   _____ I like to do science experiments and go to science museums.
_____ I find arithmetic and math problems interesting.
_____ It is fun to solve mysteries.
_____ Numbers are really interesting to me.
_____ I like games like chess or computer games where you have to think a lot.
_____ I like TV shows like *ZOOM*, *National Geographic*, and *Nova* that talk about science and math.
_____ I can do math problems in my head and make good estimates.

Area 6   _____ I like to dance.
_____ I like to play sports such as baseball, soccer, hockey, or football.
_____ I like to build models or do beading, sewing, macramé, or carpentry.
_____ I enjoy acting in plays or skits or playing charades.
_____ I like to move when I am thinking about things.
_____ I like activities such as the martial arts, tennis, running, jogging, biking, skateboarding, or gymnastics.
_____ I can sometimes "feel" the right answer.

Area 7   _____ I like to be with my friends often.
_____ I like to help those who need help.
_____ I like to read books or see movies about people and their lives.
_____ I can usually tell how other people are feeling.
_____ It is fun for me to organize activities at home and at school.
_____ I would rather spend time with others than spend time alone.
_____ I like to talk in class discussions.

Area 8   _____ I like doing things by myself.
_____ I would rather work by myself than with other students.
_____ I like to spend time thinking or writing about things that matter to me.
_____ I like to play computer games.
_____ I usually know what my feelings are.
_____ I like to write my thoughts and feelings in a diary or journal.
_____ I know what things I am good at, and what things I am not so good at.

Scoring—*Count up the number of responses you had for each area. The areas that you check show how you are smart in the different areas.*

_____ = Area 1 (Music Smart)   _____ = Area 5 (Math Smart)

_____ = Area 2 (Picture Smart)   _____ = Area 6 (Body Smart)

_____ = Area 3 (Word Smart)   _____ = Area 7 (People Smart)

_____ = Area 4 (Nature Smart)   _____ = Area 8 (Self Smart)

A score of 5 or more indicates a very strong area; a score of 3–4 indicates a moderate area; and a score of less than 3 indicates a developing area.

Handout #A1.8: Evaluation Survey: DI Workshop

Participant Name (optional): _____ Grade Level: _____
 Job Title/Subject Area: _____Date: _____

Years in present position? (Circle one)   <1   1-3   3-5   5+

Please complete the survey by choosing what best describes the training you received using the scale below.

0=N/A 1=Strongly disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly agree

• Objectives were clearly communicated.	
• Handouts supported the presentation.	
• Content could be easily applied to everyday classroom practices.	
• The presenter was knowledgeable on differentiated instruction in addressing the learning needs of ELLs.	.
• The presenter was engaging and provided a variety of activities to promote engagement and better understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity.	

1.   What did you enjoy most about today's training?

_____

2.   What did you learn today that you would apply into your teaching practices to address ELLs learning needs?

_____

3. Please provide any suggestions or comments for future workshops?

_____

Day 2: Session 2. Objectives and Agenda

Objectives

Participants' will:

- Understand the benefits of using Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol

  (SIOP) Model to address the needs of all learners, including ELL, SIFE, and

  students with diversity.

  - Building background/prior knowledge

  - Sheltered instruction

- Create a lesson plan unit across content area using the SIOP model and

  differentiated instruction addressing content and language objectives in a

  collaborative environment to foster collegiality and co-teaching experience.

Activities

- A2.1. – (30 minutes). Ice-breaker (Two in each group). Participants will introduce

  themselves and explain one thing they have learned the hard way about the topic:

  ELLs and their cultural diversity. I will post their lessons learned on a flip chart

  and will use them throughout the training.

- A2.2. – (30 minutes). Whole discussion: Participants will watch this video (8:30

  minutes) and then answer the following questions:

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lVGbz4EqyGs

  - What is the difference between content and language objectives?

    a. Participants will be asked to write content and language objectives for a lesson in their content specialty area (any topic of interest to them or a unit that they are currently teaching).

- A2.3. – (30 minutes). Think-pair-share. Why is it important to inform students about the language objective of the lesson?

    b. Provide participants with samples of verbs based on Blooms taxonomy that can be used for content and language objectives. (Handout #A2.3: Verbs for Language/Content Objectives).

    c. Participants will discuss then share out: What are the four components of language objectives?

- A2.4 – (1.0 hour). Grouping by content area (4 in a group). Participants will answer this question before viewing the PPT presentation: Do you feel that SIOP can connect with all learners? Why or why not? What is one thing that you know about SIOP instruction?

    o After watching the slide presentation on The SIOP model, they will get into groups (a copy of the presentation will be provided to participants)

    o Turn and talk to your elbow partner: What are two things that you did not know about SIOP

    o How do you think you can begin to use SIOP in your classes for all students?

- A2.5. – (30 minutes). Buzz Group. Building Background. Participants will discuss this question before the share out: What are the three features in the SIOP model?

Show a video clip (2:43 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytXeEFCTMbg, on the importance of

building background knowledge and the various ways that teachers can activate or

build students prior knowledge for engagement in the lesson. Discussion to follow

and based on the following questions:

- o What are some ways that you build background knowledge?

- o How can you connect students' culture and language when building

  background knowledge?

- o How can you use technology to assist with background knowledge?

- A2.6. – (1.5 hour). Participants will be asked to design a lesson plan in their

  content area addressing content and language objectives using the SIOP model.

  They will also be given a lesson plan checklist using the SIOP Model (Handout

  #A2.6: Checklist) to guide their lesson preparation. They could use their laptop to

  type the lesson plans so they can email it to other group members at the end of the

  training or put in the faculty shared folder on district servers.

- A2.7. – (15 minutes). Reflection on SIOP. (Handout #A2.7)

- A2.8. – (15 minutes). Evaluation survey (Handout #A2.8)

Lesson Plan Checklist for
The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

Preparation

____ Write **content objectives** clearly for students:

____ Write **language objectives** clearly for students:

____ Choose **content concepts appropriate** for age and educational background level of students.
List them:

____ Identify **supplementary materials** to use (graphs, models, visuals).
List materials:

____ **Adapt content** (e.g., text, assignment) to all levels of student proficiency.
List ideas for adaptation:

____ Plan **meaningful activities** that integrate lesson concepts (e.g., surveys, letter writing, simulations, constructing models) with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking.
List them:

Building Background

____ **Explicitly link concepts to students' backgrounds and experiences**.
Examples:

____ **Explicitly link past learning and new concepts**.
Examples:

____ **Emphasize key vocabulary** (e.g., introduce, write, repeat, and highlight) for students.
List key vocabulary:

Comprehensible Input

____ Use **speech** appropriate for students' proficiency level (e.g., slower rate, enunciation, and simple sentence structure for beginners).

____ **Explain academic tasks** clearly.

____ Use a **variety of techniques** to make content concepts clear (e.g., modeling, visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, gestures, body language).
List them:

Strategies

____ Provide ample opportunities for students to use **strategies**, (e.g., problem solving, predicting, organizing, summarizing, categorizing, evaluating, self-monitoring).
List them:

Source: Echevarria, J., Vogt, M.E., Short, D., & Montone, C. (1999). *Lesson plan checklist for the sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP)*. Unpublished manuscript, Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

Handout #A2.6: SIOP Checklist – 2 of 2

_____ Use **scaffolding techniques** consistently (providing the right amount of support to move students from one level of understanding to a higher level) throughout lesson.
List them:

_____ Use a variety of **question types including those that promote higher-order thinking** skills throughout the lesson (e.g., literal, analytical, and interpretive questions).
List them:

Interaction

_____ Provide frequent **opportunities for interactions** and discussion between teacher/student and among students, and encourage elaborated responses.

_____ Use **group configurations** that support language and content objectives of the lesson.
List the grouping types:

_____ Provide sufficient **wait time for student responses** consistently.

_____ Give ample opportunities for **students to clarify key concepts in L1** as needed with aide, peer, or L1 text.

Practice/Application

_____ Provide **hands-on materials** and/or manipulatives for students to practice using new content knowledge.
List materials:

_____ Provide activities for students to **apply content and language knowledge** in the classroom.
List them:

_____ Provide activities that **integrate all language skills** (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking).
List them:

Lesson Delivery

_____ **Support content objectives** clearly.

_____ **Support language objectives** clearly.

_____ **Engage students** approximately 90–100% of the period (most students taking part and on task throughout the lesson).

_____ **Pace** the lesson appropriately to the students' ability level.

Review/Assessment

_____ Give a comprehensive **review of key vocabulary**.

_____ Give a comprehensive **review of key content concepts**.

_____ Provide **feedback** to students regularly on their output (e.g., language, content, work).

_____ Conduct **assessments** of student comprehension and learning throughout lesson on all lesson objectives (e.g., spot checking, group response).

Source: Echevarria, J., Vogt, M.E., Short, D., & Montone, C. (1999). *Lesson plan checklist for the sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP).* Unpublished manuscript, Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

Handout #A2.7: Reflection on SIOP Workshop

1. What did you learn today that you would apply into your teaching practices to

    address ELLs learning needs?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. How would you improve this workshop?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Please provide any suggestions or comments for future workshops?

    _____

    _____

    _____

Handout #A2.8: Evaluation on SIOP Workshop

Session 2: Understand the benefits of using the SIOP Model

Participant Name (optional): _____ Grade Level:_____

 Job Title/Subject Area: _____Date: _____

Years in present position? (Circle one)   <1   1-3   3-5   5+

Please complete the survey by choosing what best describes the training you received using the scale below.

0=N/A   1=Strongly disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly agree

• I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.	
• This workshop lived up to my expectations.	
• Content could be easily applied to everyday classroom practices.	
• The presenter was knowledgeable on sheltered instruction, including background knowledge and lesson objectives.	.
• The workshop activities stimulated my learning	
• The presenter was well prepared and helpful.	
• The pace and level of activities were appropriate	
• The workshop was a good way for me to learn about SIOP Model.	

1. What is least valuable about this workshop? _____

_____

2. What is most valuable about this workshop? _____

_____

Day 3: Session 3: Objectives and Agenda

Objectives

Participants' will:

- **Content Objective:** Understand how to differentiate instruction by using

    collaborative learning to address the needs of all learners, including ELL, SIFE,

    and students with diversity

    o Learn the elements of cooperative learning

    o Learn what is takes for students to work successfully in cooperative groups

    o Identify ways to implement cooperative learning strategies into the

        classroom

    o Use instructional technology for collaborative learning.

- **Language Objective**: Create a lesson plan using collaborative learning strategies

    by designing a jigsaw puzzle in content areas.

Activities

- A3.1. – (30 minutes). Ice-breaker (Two in each group). Participants will introduce

    themselves and explain one thing they have learned the hard way about the topic:

    collaborative learning with students.

- A3.2. – (30 minutes). They will view a YouTube video (3:20) on differentiated

    instruction and then discuss. Does this apply to them? How do you feel when

    students scores do not reflect what you believed you have taught them and they

    have learned?

    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kn8faeuQjE0

- Activity 3.2a. I will show three slides and explain the purpose of the collaborative learning and the objectives.

- A3.3. – (2.0 hour). Interactive Whole discussion: Participants will watch PPT presentation on collaborative learning. During the presentation, participants be involved in small group discussion and collaborative to discuss, and share out ideas based on questions or activity posed during the presentation.

- A3.4. – (1.0 hour). Small group (4-5 participants). Handout #A3.4: Jigsaw Model will explain steps in creating and managing jigsaw learning activities. The participants will be put into groups using a jigsaw model to create a lesson plan for their content area. They will need their school computers for this activity.

    o After they are finished, they will get back to their group and the expert will share what they discovered about the lesson topic.

- A3.5. – (30 minutes). Browse the worldwide web for instructional websites. I will provide some links that will assist with online collaborative learning.

    o Participants will share out how they can use the sites that they found or are interested in for collaborative learning instructional activities with students.

        ▪ Participants will be asked to place the links in the district faculty shared folder so all staff members can have access for lesson planning.

- A3.6. – (20 minutes). Reflection on the workshop and video (2:33 Minutes). Whole group discussion on what they learned and how they could use this model

with their students to increase engagement and motivation and respond to the

video (Activity #A3.6: Reflection for Day 3: Sessions 3 Workshop).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_m9nReouVY

- A3.7. – (10 minutes). Evaluation. (Activity #A3.7: Evaluation for Day 3: Session

  3 Workshop).

Handout #3.4: Jigsaw puzzle for Parts of Speech
(http://www.dailyteachingtools.com/cooperative-learning-jigsaw.html#5)

I would think that you would need at least two class periods or perhaps three, depending on the ability level of your students.

As you know, grammar seems to be a difficult area for many students. The eight parts of speech seem to be learned at various grade levels but then quickly forgotten by students.

This jigsaw activity may increase retention time.

This takes very little preparation. All that you would need are resource books with examples of the parts of speech. And, if you're a language arts teacher, you probably have these readily available in your classroom.

Step 1: Form teams and assign a leader. Each group should be four students. There are eight parts of speech and each student will become an expert on two of the parts of speech.

Step 2: The leader should help the group members each choose 2 parts of speech. You will probably need to group the parts of speech into two sections. Although you may determine what goes in each section, I prefer to use the following:

1. noun, pronoun, adjective, verb
2. adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection

Then tell your kids that they are to find out the following about each part of speech:

1. Definition
2. 10 examples of words
3. Rules about using the part of speech
4. Unique qualities about the part of speech
5. Use two examples of a part of speech in a sentence and underline the part of speech.

Step 3: Once the students have found out the information about the two parts of speech, you may want to set up four stations in the room (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb).
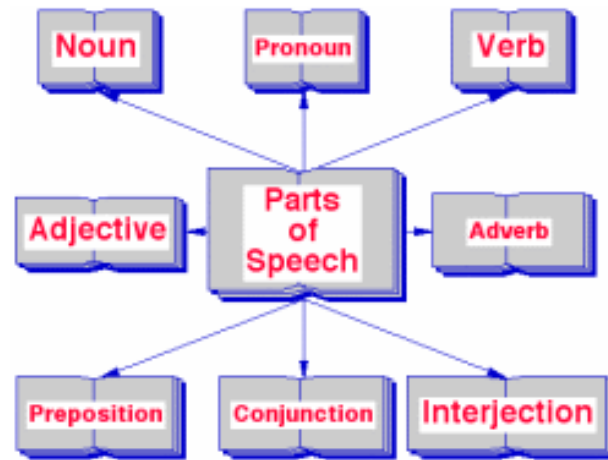
Then, you can have four of the eight part of speech experts meet together and then switch to (pronoun, preposition, conjunction, interjection).

The experts need to talk to each other and make sure that they have their information correct.

Step 4: Students go back to their original group after the two expert group sessions. Each expert then shares what he or she learned. I strongly urge you to have group members take notes.

Step 5: After each group member or expert has presented, ask students to study their notes for a quiz over the information on the following day.

Handout #A3.6: Session 3: Reflection on Cooperative Learning

1. What have you learned about cooperative learning?_____

    _____

    _____

2. What questions do you have about cooperative learning?_____

    _____

    _____

3. If you have used collaborative learning before, what changes might you make in

    your practice related to cooperative learning?_____

    _____

    _____

4. What support might you need to make these changes?_____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Handout #A3.7: Evaluation on Collaborative Learning

Session 3: Collaborative Learning using Differentiated Instruction.

Participant Name (optional): _____ Grade Level:_____

 Job Title/Subject Area: _____Date: _____

Years in present position? (Circle one)   <1   1-3   3-5   5+

Please complete the survey by choosing what best describes the training you received using the scale below.

0=N/A   1=Strongly disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly agree

• I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.	
• This workshop lived up to my expectations.	
• Content could be easily applied to everyday classroom practices.	
• The presenter was knowledgeable on collaborative learning, including cooperative learning and the process.	.
• The workshop activities were engaging and increased my knowledge on cooperative learning activities and technology for differentiated instruction	
• The presenter was well prepared and helpful.	
• The pace and level of activities were appropriate	
• The workshop was a good way for me to learn about more cooperative learning activities and differentiated instruction.	
• The presenter provided online websites that I could use with my students to promote engagement and motivation.	

1. What is least valuable about this workshop?_____

    _____

2. What is most valuable about this workshop?

    _____

References for Activities

Activity – S1.1: Brown, J. (2011). Language and Culture [Video file]. Retrieved from (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiJ8-2hAqm4)

Activity - S1.2:
Robinson, K. (2010). Changing Education Paradigm. [Video file]. *Ted Talk*. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms.html

Activity – S1.3: (Handout #1: Learner Profiles)
Connell, J. D. (n.d). Brain-Based Strategies to Reach Every Learner. *Scholastic Teaching Resource*. Retrieved from
 http://www.ctevh.org/Conf2015/Workshops/412/412a.pdf

Activity S1.4a. Tomlinson, C. (2011). Carol Tomlinson on Differentiation: Proactive Instruction. Retrieved from QEP VideoCoursesForTeachers. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZA3_PXs4CsQ

Activity - S1.4a: Videos:
McKnight, H. (2011). Multiple Intelligences [Video file]. Retrieved
from http://youtu.be/cf6lqfNTmaM

Activity - S1.4b: 5-minute online MI Survey for Teachers.-
Shearer, B. (n.d.) Edutopia. Multiple Intelligences Self-Assessment. Retrieved from
 (http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-assessment)

Activity - S2.2
Echevarria, J. (2012). SIOP Activity: SIOP Model for Teaching English Learners - Lesson Delivery. Meyerson Academy. [Video file]. Retrievied from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lVGbz4EqyGs

Activity - S2.3
Vogt, M. (2012). Component 2: Building Background. Pearson SIOP Model. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytXeEFCTMbg

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZA3_PXs4CsQ

[Video file]. *Pearson SIOP Model*. Retrieved
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BvIijRQMek

Activity A3.2:

Majiomae's (2010). Differentiated Instruction. [Video file]. Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kn8faeuQjE0

 Activity - A3.6: Hague, S. (2013). The Power of collaboration. Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_m9nReouVY

Multimodal PowerPoint Presentation: 3-Day Professional Development Workshops

Power Point Presentation

Three-day Professional Development (PD) Workshop Session 1

Collaborative Learning using Culturally and Linguistically Differentiated Instruction for ELLs

Presented by
Poorandai Itwaru
Walden University Doctoral Candidate

1

Purpose

3-day PD Workshop was designed and created to support teachers and administrators with culturally and linguistically differentiated instruction methods for all students including ELL to increase academic success.

2

Outline of Training Sessions

Session 1. Participants' understanding of differentiated Instruction for ELL students and diverse learners to help increase academic performance.

3

Session 1 Objectives

Participants will:
- **Understand the philosophy of differentiated instruction**
- **The components of differentiated instruction:**
  - Process, content, product, and learning environment
- **The benefits of differentiated instruction to address students' diverse learning styles.**
- **Multiple intelligence (MI) theory to identify students' learning styles.**

4

Activity 1.1: Welcome and Getting to Know You

- What is your favorite kind of chocolate?

- What does culture and language mean to you? Please share your thoughts and ideas after watching the video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiJ8-2hAqm4

5

Activity 1.2a: Changing paradigms

Think about these questions as you watch the video:

1. Why is differentiated instruction important to students' diverse learning needs, including culture and language?
2. Why is it important for ELL students to increase performance in ELA and math?

SIR KEN ROBINSON
CHANGING PARADIGMS

http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms.html

6

Activity 1.2b: Identify learners

- **Brainstorm a list of differences between learners (culture and language):**
  1. Share your list with other participants until you come across one person who does not have that on their list.
  2. Continue doing this for 5 minutes until you have two or three new items on your list?
- **Why is understanding different culture important in learning English or any language?**

Only Through A Multicultural Education Can Children Reach Their Full Potential

7

Activity 1.3: Why differentiated instruction:

1. What kind of learning is DI?

What is DI?	What is DI not?
Please list as many items that you feel DI is.	Please list as many items that you feel DI is not.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vampv8rDnXNbs.

8

Activity 1.4a: Learning Styles (MI Theory) and DI

1. Watch a video on MI Theory.

2. Take an online survey to identify your learning style.
   (http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-assessment).

9

Motivational quote

If we only learn methods, we are tied to those methods, but if we learn principles, we can develop our own methods.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

10

Activity 1.4b: Connect Learning to MI Theory.

1. What are some activities related in your content area that you give to students to address individual learning styles?

2. How does MI classroom model lend itself to DI?

Tell me, I forget.
Show me, I remember.
Involve me, I understand.
-Carl Orff

11

Differentiation

"Differentiation can be accurately described as classroom practice with a balanced emphasis on individual students and course content."

Tomlinson & Imbeau. (2010) - Leading and Managing A Differentiated Classroom

12

Activity 1.5a: Components of differentiation

1. Presentation of differentiated Instruction: how DI is done:
   - Process
   - Content
   - Product
   - Classroom environment

DIFFERENTIATION Content Environment Process Product

The Differentiated Classroom

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpy6rDr

13

Differentiated Instruction

Created and designed
By
Poorandai Itwaru
Walden University Doctoral Student

14

What is Differentiation?

"Differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that teachers should adapt instruction to student differences. Rather than marching students through the curriculum lockstep, teachers should modify their instruction to meet students' varying readiness levels, learning preferences, and interests. Therefore, the teacher proactively plans a variety of ways to 'get at' and express learning."

(Tomlinson, C.A, 1999)

15

Main reason for differentiation

Students in our school are not the same. They are culturally and linguistically different and these differences matter in school and classrooms, by demonstrating respect for learners differences, differentiated instruction could improve academic success.

16

Research based findings

- DI is based on the assumptions that students have diverse learning styles: needs, abilities, socio-economic status, culture, language, so classroom activities should account for their differences.

The Differentiated Classroom   (Tomlinson, C., 2000)

17

Research based findings

- The multiple intelligences (MI) theory states that people have different intelligences and learn in many different ways.

(Gardner, H. 1983)

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

18

Research based findings

- "Differentiation is classroom practice that looks eyeball to eyeball with the reality that kids differ, and the most effective teachers do whatever it takes to hook the whole range of kids on learning".
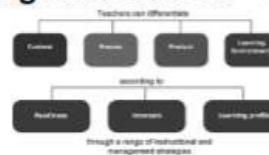
  - Carol Ann Tomlinson

19

The components of DI

- **Process = What**
- **Content = How**
- **Product = Show What you Know**
- **Learning Environment = Where**

20

189

Process

Process is how students come to understand or make sense of the content.

1. Selects learning goals
2. Pre-assesses students' grasp of those goals
3. Designs several equally *respectable* tasks
   - To meet those same learning goals
   - With varying degrees of challenge and support

21

DI - Process

- Two or three levels of the same assignment are presented
- Levels differ in depth and complexity
- Students have the opportunity to actively learn the SAME concept

22

Examples of Process Activities

- Fun and games
- Projects
- Choices (Intelligences)
- Centers
- Tiered lessons

23

Process - Tiering

- When tiering, you should be teaching *the same objectives* to all students, content mastery should take *the same amount of time*, and, most importantly, each student should be *challenged* to do his/her best at whatever level he/she is performing.

24

How DI works: Content

- What the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information using standards and learning objectives

Examples:
- Using reading materials at different Lexile levels
- Audio tape reading materials
- Spelling or vocabulary at students' ability levels
- Summarizing by creating PowerPoint presentations.

25

How DI works: Content

Examples:
- Using visuals or manipulatives
- Matching vocabulary with pictures
- Reading partners
- Re-teaching an idea or skill for struggling learners
- Providing more challenging materials for advanced learners

26

How DI works: Content

Learning activities that engage students, leading to mastery or understanding :
- Using visuals
- Reading partners
- Re-teaching an idea or skill for struggling learners
- Providing more challenging materials for advanced learners

27

How DI works: Product

- Providing the same activities for all learners with the same important understandings and skills but offering varied levels of challenges, difficulty, and support based on students preferred learning style.
- Setting-up learning centers in order for students to explore their interests.

28

How DI works: Product

- Designing hands-on projects for learners who need them.
- Adjusting the length of time tasks may take to complete in order to accommodate the needs of diverse learners (high or low).

29

How DI works: Product

Culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit.

30

How DI works: Product

- Culminating assignments require learners to apply, practice or extend what was learned.
- Examples: Providing options
  - Writing a book report
  - Designing a project

31

How DI works: Product

- Working independently or in small groups on their products.
- Allowing learners to design their own activity based on rubric

32

How DI works: Learning Environment

- The set-up of classrooms should provide safe and supportive learning environment.
- Flexible classrooms could help learners to become more effective, build a sense of community and demonstrate respect

33

How DI works: Learning Environment

- Setting up routines for help when teacher is not readily available
- Providing work areas for quiet work, as well as collaboration
- Choosing materials representing different cultures and linguistic backgrounds.

34

Activity 1.5b: Design a Lesson Unit

Please get in groups of 4 within your own content area.

- Assign a role for each member:
- Use your laptop to type the lesson plan.
- Lesson plans should incorporate DI and MI methods.
- Use your school curriculum to help design the plan.
- Address language across content area
- Clear objectives
- The lesson plans should include a formative assessment.

35

Activity 1.6: Small Group Discussion

Each participant will given a letter to form new groups to answer the following questions.

1. How could you implement DI and MI theory in the classroom after viewing and discussing these two theories?
2. How is language connected to content areas?
3. How can you infuse language into content areas? What are some learning activities you can use with your learners?
4. What is the relationship between culture and language?

36

A1.7. Reflective Questionnaire

Please take a few minutes to leave me your feedback by filling out the reflective questionnaire.

37

A1.8. Evaluation Survey

Thank you for your participation, please fill out the survey for future workshops.

38

References for Session 1: Videos

Activity - A1.1: Brown, J. (2011). Language and Culture [Video file]. Retrieved from
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UB-2hAqm4]

Activity - A1.2:
Robinson, K. (2010). Changing Education Paradigm. [Video file]. Ted Talk. Retrieved from
http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms.html

Activity – A1.3: [Handout #1: Learner Profiles]
Connell, J. D. (nd). Brain-Based Strategies to Reach Every Learner. Scholastic Teaching Resource. Retrieved from
http://www.cbvh.org/Conf2015/Workshops/412/412a.pdf

Activity 1.4a. Tomlinson, C. (2011). Carol Tomlinson on Differentiation: Proactive Instruction. Retrieved from OEP
VideosCoursesForTeachers

Activity - A1.4b: Videos:
McKnight, K. (2011). Multiple Intelligences [Video file]. Retrieved from http://youtu.be/cfSIqfNTruM

Activity 1.4b: 5-minute online MI Survey for Teachers.-
Shearer, B. (n.d.) Edutopia. Multiple Intelligences Self-Assessment. Retrieved from
[http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-assessment]

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Tomlinson, C. (2001, 1995). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classroom*http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/108011.aspx

Tomlinson, C. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD

Wesel, C. (2014). What is Differentiated Instruction? Examples of How to Differentiate Instruction in the Classroom. Retrieved from http://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/teaching-strategies/examples-of-differentiated-instruction/

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Sheltered Instruction

SIOP® Model of Sheltered Instruction

3
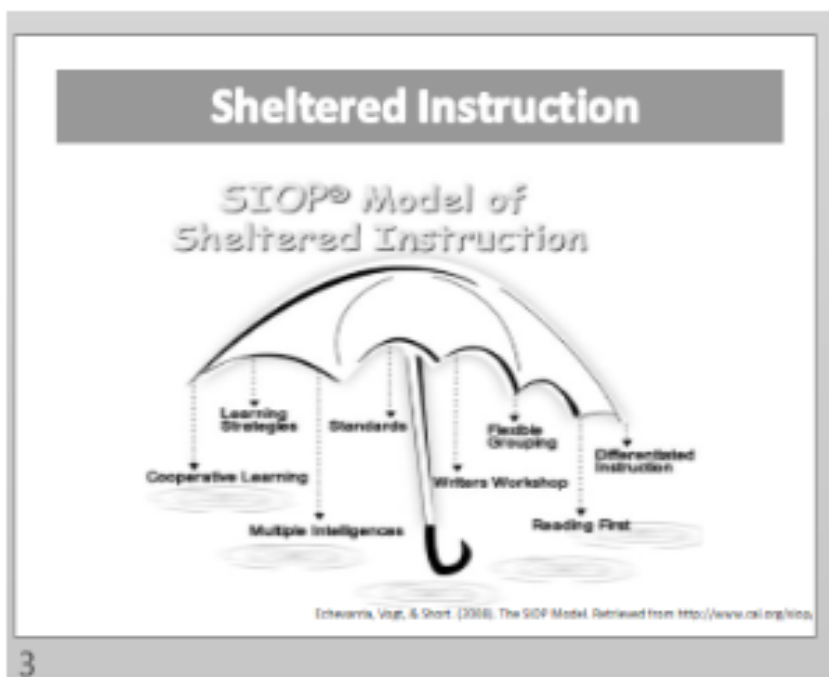
Session 2: SIOP Model Professional Development Workshop

Collaborative Learning using Culturally and Linguistically Differentiated Instruction for ELL Students

Created and designed
By
Poorandai Itwaru
Walden University Doctoral Student

1

A2.1. Welcome: Ice-breaker

Please introduce yourself and share one thing that you have learned the hard way about ELL students and their cultural diversity.

2

A2.2. Watch a Video

1. Watch a video and complete the following:
   1. What is the difference between content and language objectives?
   2. Participants will be asked to write content and language objectives for a lesson in their content specialty area (any topic of interest to them or a unit that they are currently teaching).

21

A2.3. Think-pair-share

Discuss and share out:

1. Why is it important to inform students about the language objective of the lesson?

2. What are the four components of language objectives? (Use Blooms taxonomy.)

22

A2.4: Lesson Objectives

Content Objectives	Language Objectives
Participants will be able to:	Participants will be able to:
1. Understand and review Sheltered Instruction by viewing video clips and then identify key reasons for using the eight components of the SIOP Model.	1. Discuss Sheltered Instruction by evaluating factors that affect learning a second language.

23

Why sheltered instruction?

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model is a research-based and validated model of sheltered instruction used throughout the United States. Professional development in the SIOP Model helps ESL and content area teachers plan and deliver lessons that allow English learners to acquire academic knowledge as they develop English language proficiency.

24

Reasons for sheltered instruction

Students in our school are not the same. They are culturally and linguistically different and these differences matter in during classroom instruction. Sheltered instruction is purposeful teaching of the language necessary for ELLs and diverse learners to understand content.

25

What does research say about SIOP?

The SIOP Model can be viewed as an instructional model and as a tool for training and evaluating educators who work with ELLs. Several studies have found that participation in professional development and the continued use of observations, rating rubrics, or checklists similar to those used with SIOP have increased teachers' use of targeted instructional techniques such as sheltered instruction.

Crawford et al., 2014;
Giouroukakis, V., & Honigsfeld, 2010).

26

A2.5. The SIOP Model

Before viewing the PPT presentation, please answer the following:

1. Do you feel that SIOP can connect with all learners? Why or why not?
2. What is one thing that you know about SIOP instruction?

After viewing the slide presentation please answer the following questions.

1. Turn and talk to your elbow partner: What are two things that you did not know about SIOP
2. How do you think you can begin to use SIOP in your classes for all students?

27

Components of The SIOP Model

1. **Lesson Preparation** – language and content objectives drive instruction
2. **Building Background** – vocabulary development, student connections
3. **Comprehensible Input** – ESL techniques
4. **Strategies** – metacognitive and cognitive strategies
5. **Interaction** – oral language
6. **Practice & Application** – practice all 4 language skills
7. **Lesson Delivery** – meet objectives
8. **Review & Assessment** – review vocabulary and concepts

28

How is a Sheltered Instruction different?

A sheltered SIOP® classroom is *systematic*, *consistent*, and *concurrent* focus on teaching both:

academic <u>content</u> AND
academic <u>language</u>

To all students, including ELL students.

29

Unpacking Lesson Preparation

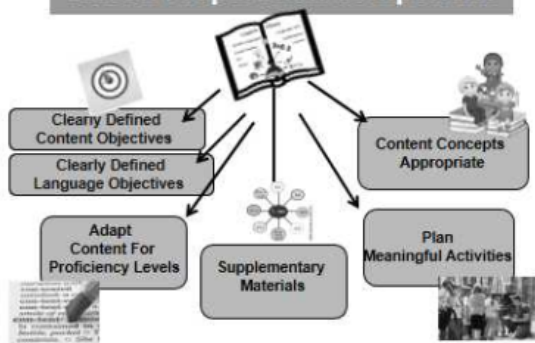| Content Objectives	Language Objectives
Participants will be able to: 1. Explain the importance of including language and content objectives in lessons. 2. Adapt content to students proficiency levels. 3. Design and integrate meaningful activities into content areas	Participants will be able to: 1. Explain the importance of meaningful academic activities for all students.

30

Lesson Preparation Component

Clearly Defined Content Objectives

Clearly Defined Language Objectives

Adapt Content For Proficiency Levels

Supplementary Materials

Content Concepts Appropriate

Plan Meaningful Activities

31

Why Language Objectives?

Academic achievement requires academic language proficiency.

Academic language proficiency involves the vocabulary, language patterns, and register specific to individual content areas.

Academic language proficiency is developed through sustained content-based language instruction.

.

32

How to Write Content Objectives?

Write Content Objectives that:
- Will be read by students, for students
- Will be easy for students to understand
- Are given orally and in writing
- Are tied to a specific grade-level content standard

.

33

How to Write Language Objectives?

Write Language Objectives that:
- Will be read by students, for students
- Will be easy for students to understand
- Are given orally and in writing
- Are related to the tasks necessary to master the content objective.

34

How to Write Language Objectives?

Write Language Objectives that:
- Will be read by students, for students
- Will be easy for students to understand
- Are given orally and in writing
- Are related to the tasks necessary to master the content objective.

35

Building Background Knowledge

Content Objectives

Participants will be able to:
3. Recognize the importance of connecting students personal experiences to lesson ideas.
4. Identify strategies for connecting past knowledge with new learning.

Language Objectives

Participants will be able to:
3. Examine text to determine key vocabulary for students to know.
4. Include a wide-range of vocabulary activities into lessons.

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Link Concepts to Students' Background Experiences

- Discuss students' previous personal and academic experiences to help bridge meaning.
- Question students' backgrounds to preview an upcoming topic.
- Following discussion, relate students' input and directly apply it to the new concept.

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How to Connect Students' Cultural and Linguistic Background

- Review content and language objectives from prior lessons
- Refer to past notes
- Pull out old power points
- Establish routines that require students to "go back" into past lessons
- Identify notes by lesson
- Journals
- Connect to previous units
- Connect to other content areas

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Other ways to bridge past learning

- KWL Chart: Have students individually or as a class create a KWL chart to refer back to throughout the unit.
- Questioning: Ask a simple question, "Who remembers what we did yesterday?" and solicit responses.
- Student Journals: Have students write or draw what they have learned in a journal or notebook.

39

How to Link Students' Background

- Realia (REAL OBJECTS), photos, and illustrations: Teachers and/or students bring in "real items" to bring the new concept to life.

- Anecdotal Accounts: Teachers and students share personal experiences through oral, written or drawn explanations. Teacher may prompt through questioning.

40

How to Teach Key Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is important in comprehension

- Self-selection: Encourage studen vocabulary words that they feel for their understanding
- Word Wall: Display vocabulary words related to the new concept being taught.
- Multiple ways: Have students identify, illustrate, define and write sentences with vocabulary words.

41

Metacognitive Strategies

- Predicting/Inferring
- Self-questioning
- Monitoring/Clarifying
- Evaluating
- Summarizing
- Visualizing

42

Cognitive Strategies

- Previewing/Rereading
- Establishing a purpose for reading
- Making connections
- Reading aloud
- Highlighting
- Taking notes
- Mapping information
- Finding key vocabulary
- Mnemonics

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Social/Affective Strategies

- Interaction/questioning
- Cooperative learning
- Group discussion/self talk
- i.e.. Think/Pair/Share

44

Social/Affective Strategies

- Interaction/questioning
- Cooperative learning
- Group discussion/self talk
- i.e.. Think/Pair/Share

Social/Affective Strategies

Teacher-Centered	Teacher-Assisted	Peer-Assisted	Student-Centered
Lecture	Drill & Practice	Role Playing	Rehearsal Strategies (repeated readings)
Direct Instruction	Discovery Learning	Peer Tutoring	Elaboration Strategies (imagery)
Demonstration	Brain-storming	Reciprocal Teaching	Organizational Strategies (graphic organizers)
Recitation	Discussion	Cooperative Learning	

A2.5: Building Background Knowledge

After viewing the video, please discuss the following questions:

1. What are some ways that you build background knowledge?
2. How can you connect students' culture and language when building background knowledge
3. How can you use technology to assist with background knowledge?

A2.6: Design Lesson Plan

Please design a lesson plan in your content area addressing content and language objectives using the SIOP model. Please the SIOP checklist to guide your lesson preparation. You could use you rlaptop to type the lesson plans so you can email it to other group members at the end of the training or put in the faculty shared folder.

A2.7: Reflection on SIOP Model

Thank you for your time. Please give your feedback/reflection for future workshops.

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A2.8: Evaluation survey

Thanks for your participation. Please fill out evaluation survey!!

50

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SIOP Works. (2012) . Pearson SIOP Model. [Video file]. https://www.youtube.com/user/PearsonSIOPModel

Meyerson Academy. (2012). SIOP Model for Teaching English Learners - Lesson Delivery.[Video file]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVGbz4EqyGs

Freeman, B., & Crawford, L. (2014). Creating a middle school mathematics curriculum for English-language learners. *Remedial and Special Education, 29*(1), 9-19. DOI: 10.1177/0741932507309717

Echevarria, J., Short, D., & Powers, K. (2008). Making Content Comprehensible for Non-Native Speakers of English: The SIOP Model. *International Journal of Learning, 24*(11). Retrieved from http://commongroundpublishing.com/

Giouroukakis, V., & Honigsfeld, A. (2010). High-Stakes Testing and English Language Learners: Using Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Literacy Practices in the High School English Classroom. *Tesol Journal, 1*(4), 470-499. doi: 10.5054/tj.2010.240193

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Buttaro, L. (2014). Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Model. [Power Point slides]. Retrieved from http://www.isnetworked.org/uploads/1405531591_Buttaro_siop%20power%20point_One.ppt.

No Author. (2016). SIOP Model. Retrieved on January 8, 2017 from https://www.wou.edu/~brownbr/Classes/GLAD-SIOP/SIOP%20files%20Beaufort%20Co%20SO/SIOP.ppt.

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Slide 53

Collaborative Learning using Culturally and Linguistically Differentiated Instruction for ELLS

Presented by
Premanda Bruno
Walden University Doctoral Candidate

Slide 54

Educational quote

What children can do together today, they can do alone tomorrow.

— Vygotsky, 1965

CLC

Slide 55

Purpose

This is last of the 3-day workshops, which was designed and created to support teachers and administrators in collaboratively learning differentiated instruction methods to increase engagement and motivation for all students for academic achievement.

Slide 56

Day 3: Session 3: Collaborative Learning

Content Objectives:
Participants' will understand how to differentiate instruction by using collaborative learning to address the needs of all learners, including ELL, SIFE, and students with diversity.

* Learn the elements of cooperative learning
* Learn what is takes for students to work successfully in cooperative groups
* Identify ways to implement cooperative learning strategies into their classrooms.
* Collaborating using technology differentiated instruction

Language Objective

Language Objective
Create a lesson plan unit across content area using collaborative learning strategies to address content and language objectives.

57

Activity 3.1: Ice-breaker

- **Participants will introduce themselves and explain one thing they have learned the hard way about the topic of collaborative learning with students.**

58

Activity 3.2: Students' engagement

Think about these questions as you watch the following video:

1. **Did this ever happen to you?**
2. **How do you feel when students scores do not reflect what you believed you have taught them and they have learned?**

59

A3.2a. What is collaborative learning?

Think about your own experiences with cooperative learning, as both a learner and as a teacher. Discuss with your table mates the pros and cons of using this strategy. Record your responses on paper.

60

What is Collaborative Teaching?

It is:

Co-teaching: Teachers have equal responsibility.

Teaching across content: For example, ESL teachers work with content area teachers to address diverse learner needs.

Parallel teaching: Class is divided into two groups with one teacher for each group teaching the same lesson

Lead and Support: One teacher mentors another.

Haynes (2007). Two teachers can be better than one. 3.6-7. Essential Teacher 4.

61

Questions to ask when planning collaborative learning instruction

1. What knowledge will students learn?
2. Which strategies will provide evidence that students have learned that knowledge?
3. Which strategies will help students practice, review, and apply that knowledge?
4. Which strategies will help students acquire and integrate that knowledge?

62

Which strategy will help students?

1. Which strategies will help students practice, review, and apply that knowledge?

2. Which strategies will help students acquire and integrate that knowledge?

63

Why use cooperative learning?

- Promote student learning and academic achievement
- Enhance student satisfaction with their learning experience
- Help students develop skills in oral communication
- Develop students' social skills
- Promote student self-esteem
- Increase student retention
- Develop a community of learners

64

Activity 3.3: Presentation on Collaborative Learning

Educational goals:
- Involvement and engagement
- Co-operation and teamwork
- Community responsibility

65

Under Collaborative Learning Umbrella

Collaborative learning

Co-operative learning

Learning communities

Discussion groups

66

Assumptions about cooperative learning

Please discuss with your partner what are some assumptions of students' learning.
- Learning is an active constructive process
- Learning depends on rich contexts
- Learners are diverse
- Learning is inherently social

67

Research recommendation on Cooperative Learning Group

1. Organizing groups based on ability levels should be done sparingly.
2. Cooperative learning groups should be rather small in size.
3. Cooperative learning should be used consistently and systemically, but should not be overused.

68

Five Elements of cooperative learning

1. Positive interdependence
2. Face-to-face interaction
3. Individual and group accountability
4. Interpersonal and small group skills
5. Group processing

69

1. Positive interdependence

- Each group member's efforts are required and essential for group success

- Each group member has a unique contribution to make to the joint effort because of his or her resources and/or role and task responsibilities

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2. Face-to-face interaction

- Orally explaining how to solve problems
- Teaching one's knowledge to others
- Checking for understanding
- Discussing concepts being learned
- Connecting present with past learning

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3. Interpersonal and small group skills

- Keeping the size of the group small (3-5)
- Giving an individual test to each student.
- Randomly examining students orally.
- Observing each group and recording the frequency with which each member contributes to the group's work.
- Assigning one student in each group the role of checker.
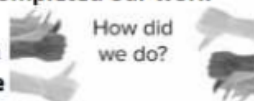- Having students teach what they learned to someone else.

72

5. Group processing

- Group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships
- Describe what member actions are helpful and not helpful
- Make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change
- Reflect on how well we completed our work (academic)
- Review data/information
- Make a goal for next time

How did we do?

75

Pros and cons of cooperative learning

- How does the list of pros and cons about using cooperative learning that you generated at the beginning of this training reflect the generalizations from research and the recommended classroom practices for collaboration?

76

What does the teacher do?

- Group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships
- Describe what member actions are helpful and not helpful
- Make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change
- Reflect on how well the groups completed their work (academic)
- Review data/information
- Make a goal for next time

77

Activity 3.4. Sample of Jigsaw learning

Modeling cooperative learning using a jigsaw puzzle.

Please get in groups of 4 within your content area.

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Activity 3.5. Interactive Websites

The following sites have instructional technology to be used with cooperative learning to promote e-learning to connect with students diverse learning styles.

All of the best K-5 online, interactive, educational games and simulations in one place!

http://interactivesites.weebly.com/

This link has 34 ways you can use Google docs to promote collaboration. Choose one that you are interested in, and follow the directions:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1KRts 3A_nrnwpr40hxZY9eKrRzu7pxFajKUEBay6foR8 /embed?slide=id.i0

79

A3.6. Reflective Questionnaire

Please take a few minutes to leave me your feedback by filling out the reflective questionnaire.

80

A3.7. Evaluation Survey

Thank you for your participation, please fill out the survey for future workshops.

81

References for Session 3

Activity – A3.2: Majicmac's (2010). Differentiated Instruction. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kn8facuQjE0

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Appendix B: Initial Contact Letter

Dear Fellow Educators,

My name is Poorandai (Chano) Itwaru. I am an ESL teacher at the XXXX, as well as, a doctoral student in the Ed.D at Walden University. I would like to invite you to participate in an upcoming study intended to measure teachers' perceptions concerning their preparedness to address diverse learning needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) for academic achievement.

Your role in this study will be to participate in a taped interview, lasting about 50-60 minutes. I would also like to conduct one 42-minute classroom observation. I will be inviting 8-10 teachers from the middle school to participate in this study.

Confidentiality is an upmost concern in this research. From the beginning of the research you will be assigned a pseudonym. Any data that concerns the district, school, or job will be given a pseudonym. All research that is gathered will be placed in a locked filing cabinet in a place that is off campus and will be kept for 5 years.

Please respond to this email by April 11, 2016 to let me know your interest and availability.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Poorandai (Chano) Itwaru
Doctoral Student at Walden University
(xxx) 123-5555

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What kind of instruction do you currently have in place to address ELLs' cultural and linguistic needs?

2. What kind of effective reading and writing instruction do you have in place for ELLs?

3. What is your greatest success or challenge in meeting ELLs' diverse learning needs in your school?

4. How do you consistently and purposefully collaborate or share ideas to promote achievement for ELLs in content areas?

5. What do you regularly do to address the instructional learning needs of ELLs?

6. What kind of materials and instructional resources do you utilize to align with Common Core Learning Standards to address ELLs linguistic, and cultural learning needs?

7. Are there quality instructional resources available for you to use with ELLs to meet their literacy needs? If so, please explain.

8. How do administrators in this school collaborate or share ideas with you to improve the instructional learning needs of ELLs?

9. What kind of specialized training have you had either in your teacher preparation program or in professional development training to prepare you to teach ELLs?

10. Is there anything else that you would like to add or comment on that I may have missed regarding the instructional learning needs of ELLs' in your classroom?

Appendix D: Observational Protocol/Checklist Guide

Date of observation:_____ Start Time:_____ End time: _____

Classroom:_____ Subject and grade level:_____

Number of students: _____

Name of Participant (pseudonym): _____

Please note: I will observe classrooms where the teacher states that ELLs are present. The entire class will be observed and the presence/absence of ELL teaching methods, differentiation of lessons, and adjusted accommodations will be observed. It is not necessary to know which students are ELL, only that the teacher indicates these students exist in the class. I will observe whether or not there are best practices present during instruction.

Research Questions:

1. What instructional strategies do teachers believe are best to deliver instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for ELLs?

2. What do teachers believe can be done to improve ELLs' classroom engagement and motivation for increased academic performance?

		Reflective Comments/ Notes
The physical setting	• What is the physical environment like? • What kinds of behavior is the setting designed for? • What kinds of technologies are in the room?	

Participants	• Describe who is in the setting, the number of people, and their roles. • Why are they there? • Where does the teacher provide instruction? • How is instruction provided? • How is learner-centered teaching encouraged? • How is the teacher accommodating ELLs? • What methodologies or instructional approaches being used?	
Conversations	• What kinds of class discussions are used to show that students are engaged/motivated? • Are the conversations related to content of the lesson? • How are the discussions fostering learner-centered teaching? • Are all students, including ELLs involved in the conversations?	
Subtle factors	• Unplanned activities • Nonverbal communications • Disruptions (bathroom passes and announcements, etc.) • What should happen and does not happen?	