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Teachers' Perceptions of the English Learner Professional Learning Plan Professional Development Course

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Natasha N. Ridley

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Walden University
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Abstract

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by

Natasha N. Ridley

MA, Adelphi University, 2003

BS, Empire State University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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December 2019

Abstract

For 4 years, a northern local district in Virginia conducted an intensive staff training on English language learner (ELL) instruction to settle a United States Department of Justice complaint. The local problem was that ongoing professional development to build teachers' instructional skills has not significantly resulted in ELL students' academic improvement. The purpose of this study was to explore and investigate teachers' perceptions of the mandated English learner Professional Learning Plan Professional Development to help address the instructional needs of ELLs. Guskey's characteristics of effective professional development and Bandura's self-efficacy theory provide the conceptual framework for the study. The research questions were designed to examine teachers' perceptions of the needs and influence of professional development for teachers of ELLs. A case study design was used to capture the insights of 5 elementary school teachers through semistructured interviews; a purposeful sampling process was used to select the participants. Emergent themes were identified through open coding, and the findings were developed and checked for trustworthiness through member checking, rich descriptions, and researcher reflexivity. The findings revealed that teachers recognize the need for increased preparedness, instruction informed by colleagues and team support, and on-going professional development. A professional development project was created to provide coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies for teachers to increase their knowledge and skills to instruct ELLs. This study has implications for positive social change by offering strategies and approaches for improving ELL classroom instructional practices.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my late mother, Yvonne, who instilled in me the heritage of faith in Jesus Christ. She always believed in me and taught me the values of education, hard work, and perseverance. In the words of God to Joshua (1:9), "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go," so he also speaks to me. A wish of my mom was for me to finish my Doctor in education and she looked forward to that day when she would behold my doctoral hooding ceremony. Sadly, mom is not here to witness this priceless moment. She would have been proud of me. I also dedicate this doctoral study degree to my husband and daughter, the best cheerleading squad. My husband, who vowed support and patience for a long time, remained consistent as I completed each critical stage of my degree. My daughter was my inspiration in finishing this doctoral degree. I hope eternally to inspire her to be a risk-taker and believe that she can achieve anything in life that she sets her mind to do.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank all of the participants for taking the time to partake in my research study and I want to thank the school principals and district for allowing me to conduct this research. Without their input, I could not have developed this project that increases teachers' knowledge and skill practice in instructing English language learners and in honing their profession. I give a heartfelt thank you all of the members of my committee both past and present for their unwavering support and wealth of knowledge and experience through the doctoral study stages. I thank Dr. Dressler, my first committee chair, and Dr. Weintraub, my committee member for getting me through the prospectus. My deepest gratitude goes especially to Dr. Hinrichs, Dr. Weintraub, and Dr. Lafferty for getting me through the final study stage to publish my doctoral study and to graduate. I thank Dr. Hinrichs, for stepping in and taking the lead as my committee chair and for her valuable, timely feedback and encouragement throughout this scholarly journey that has allowed me to complete this research study. I thank Dr. Weintraub, my committee member, for his invaluable keen reviews and growth-producing feedback. His ongoing support and motivation from the beginning of my doctoral journey to the end has been consistent and rewarding. I thank Dr. Lafferty, the university research reviewer, for his constructive feedback and comments that have fundamentally molded my scholarly work and have guided me to conduct such a relevant study.

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Section 1: The Problem

English Language Learners (ELLs) are a quickly developing population in American schools, with their numbers expanding in volumes (Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2017). Close to 6 million ELLs are enlisted in state-funded schools. It is estimated that by 2025, ELLs will make up 25% of the population (Teachers of English to Speakers Other Languages International Association, 2013); therefore, the preparation, development, and support that teachers of ELLs gain will directly affect the achievement of America's ELLs and the success of this particular population. It is essential to provide teachers who instruct ELL students with professional development opportunities that are relevant to them, for they spend most of their school day in content area classrooms (Smith, 2014). Therefore, teachers of ELLs have stipulated a need for professional development that would provide them with instructional skills and language theories to assure quality instructional practices that might improve their belief in teaching ELLs (Collins & Liang, 2014).

The Local Problem

The local problem being studied was that ongoing professional development to build teachers' instructional skills has not significantly resulted in ELL students' academic improvement. In the United States, 9.3% of public-school learners throughout the 2013-2014 school year took part in programs for ELLs, and in the state of the local district, 7.5% partook of programs for ELLs (United States Department of Education [DOE], 2015b). It is important that schools develop reliable systems in which leaders and

educators who work with ELLs are knowledgeable and equipped with the best instructional practices.

This local district was out of compliance with the USDOJ's requirement in providing appropriate English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) services for ELLs, including qualified English as a second language (ESL) teachers, English language development (ELD) teachers, and sheltered content teachers (USDOJ, 2013, 2015). Educators are not adequately prepared to work with ELLs, and they lack professional knowledge for teaching ELL students, considering the increasing federal government requirements that target teacher quality and student accountability (de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013). School district educators must comply with the laws of the USDOJ and Office for Civil Rights regarding the education of ELL students. ELLs are at a disadvantage in learning when teachers lack the knowledge and skills that ELLs need (Villegas, 2018).

Teachers lack preparation for teaching ELLs, and this deficiency will have severe implications for academic outcomes and future life opportunities of ELLs. Coady, Harper, and de Jong (2015) explored relationships between ELL-particular learning and abilities created in their readiness program and the instructional practices teachers use to advance ELLs learning, and revealed that teachers who were instructing ELLs rarely used appropriate instructional practices to help the English language development of ELLs. Instead, they used regular instructional strategies and on-the-run scaffolding techniques with ELLs (Coady et al., 2015). Many states are only in the beginning steps of creating procedures for methodically giving ELL-related in-service professional development for

working instructors (de Jong, 2014). The need for professional development and training geared at teachers who instruct ELLs is critical.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

For 4 years, the local district was mandated to do an intensive staff training to properly serve its ELL population. However, ELL students have not significantly improved academically. Ongoing professional development to build teachers instructional skills to help enhance student results remains a work in progress.

According to an accountability report from the local district under study, overall ELL performance in reading has remained in the low to mid 60th percentile for 4 years (2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018) as compared to non-ELLs. The percentile for ELLs in 2017 (62nd) showed little to no significant difference from their past scores in 2016 (65th), 2015 (61st), and 2014 (62nd). The overall ELL performance in writing remained in the high 40th percentile to low 50th percentile for 4 years (2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018) as compared to non-ELLs. The percentile for ELLs in 2017 (51st) little to no significant difference from their score in 2016 (49th), 2015 (48th), and 2014 (51st). In addition, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2017) reported that the reading and writing scores for fourth grade and eighth grade students in Virginia public schools showed a significant difference in achievement gaps for ELLs.

The ELL population is at risk of failure in schools if they are not educated equitably and adequately in schools (Fisher & Frey, 2017). Content teachers who instruct

ELL students might be especially in need of high-quality ELL preparation because they are accountable to document ELL students' progress. Moreover, ELL teachers expressed a need to find out how to help students of different ability levels achieve and know how to incorporate ELL instructional methods genuinely into their present practice (Collins & Liang, 2014). An additional concern is the lack of adequate instruction specifically geared toward ELLs to address their instructional needs (USDOJ, 2013). This is especially critical because the ELL population has grown significantly between 2013 and 2017 according to school quality profiles from the web site of the local district under study.

Background of the Problem

After several years of the local district not offering a full spectrum of services to ELLs and the teachers of these students, the USDOJ declared that the district was not in compliance with federal law. The USDOJ (2013) reported evidence of a systemic failure to give equal educational opportunities to ELLs in local state-funded schools, and it looked for lawful cures through the federal court system. The reported evidence constituted inadequate ELL services for ELL pupils, an insufficient number of adequately qualified teachers and administrators, scarce ELL materials, delays in the district's communications with LEP parents, inadequate systems for recognizing and assisting ELL students with disabilities and assuring nondiscriminatory discipline of ELL pupils, a meager process for families to opt-out of ELL services, and a lack of efficient monitoring and evaluation of the district's ELL programs. Starting in the 2013-2014 school year and

proceeding for no less than 3 years, the USDOJ's Office for Civil Rights required the local school district to enhance support for roughly 13,000 ELLs districtwide.

From the USDOJ review of the ELL services provided at one of the district's middle schools, the middle school was identified as noncompliant in terms of providing adequate and appropriate ELL services to all ELL students through qualified teachers. To resolve this issue, the school district provided second language acquisition training for middle school teachers of ELL students. During the 2011-2012 school year, the local middle school and the USDOJ amended the original agreement. The amended agreement stated that the teachers were noncompliant in providing ELL services for ELL students and that the school district was noncompliant at the middle school level in terms of its Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974 obligation. Under the amended agreement, the district was required to provide a restructured professional development plan to teachers of ELLs at the middle school over 2 school years (2011-2012 and 2012-2013). An initial complaint to the USDOJ concerning the ELL program in a middle school in the district prompted a broad examination of ELL programs offered by every one of the 93 schools in the region. From this examination, several issues were identified, including a lack of appropriate services for ELL students, an insufficient number of appropriately qualified educators and directors, and insufficient ELL materials.

As part of the settlement agreement, the district was required to offer (a) a specific amount of instruction for ELLs each day, (b) sheltered instructional techniques, (c) student grouping according to English Learner Professional Learning Plan (ELPLP) levels, and (d) integrated classes where ELLs are grouped with non-ELLs for subjects

like physical education, art, and music. In addition, the district was required to implement the ELPLP for all non-ESL-endorsed sheltered instruction and special education teachers of ELs. Fulfillment of 40-45 hours of mandatory professional development over 3 years and no less than 15-20 hours of site-based mandatory followup training was required for teachers under the ELPLP. The local implementation of the agreement included creation of what the district called an ELPLP. After 4 years, the USDOJ acknowledged that the district had conformed to the terms of the settlement agreement.

In this district, teachers have not to date been asked about their perceptions of ELPLP professional development. ELPLP professional development on educator applications with ELLs have not been sufficiently studied. The purpose of this study was to explore and investigate teachers' perceptions of mandated ELPLP professional development to help address the instructional needs of ELLs. This problem was explored by using a qualitative bounded case study to get a deep understanding of teachers' perceptions.

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

A steady increase in the ELL population has made unusual requests regarding public educational institutions and districts to create large-scale professional development programs geared toward teachers who instruct ELL students (de Jong, 2014). This call for quality professional development opportunities promoted an interest in providing a content-related implementation of professional development for teachers instructing ELLs because of the substantial increase in ELL students in American schools.

The USDOJ first identified the noncompliance issues at the local middle school during an investigation of EEOA complaints regarding their ELL program. ELL students' rights are of high importance because of groundbreaking federal cases such as *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), in which the educational system abused the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by neglecting to give a fitting language guideline, and *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981), in which the school system was required to provide guidance on how to support programs for ELL students. Moreover, Collins and Liang (2014) noted that teachers of ELL students had indicated a need for professional development that would provide them with instructional abilities to assure them excellent instructional applications and heighten their levels of trust in educating ELL students. The problem I addressed was the academic achievement gap between ELL students and non-ELL students.

Knowledge of teachers' perceptions regarding instructional programs and professional development are essential for the academic achievement of ELLs as compared to their non-ELL peers. The perceptions of ELL teachers regarding the relevance of content and professional development are significant for training developers, educators, and school administrators in terms of providing appropriate professional development experiences. Exploring teachers' views when planning professional development is beneficial. The purpose of this qualitative bounded case study was to explore and investigate teachers' perceptions of a mandated ELPLP professional development to help address the instructional needs of ELLs. I gathered comments from teachers regarding the training that they experienced in the area of instructional approaches for ELLs.

Definition of Terms

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

English Learner Professional Learning Plan (ELPLP): The ELPLP is an individualized plan that is required for all non-ESL-endorsed sheltered, instructional, and special education teachers of ELL students (USDOJ, 2013).

English as a second language (ESL): ESL is a program involving techniques, methodologies, and special curricula designed to teach ELL students English language skills, which may include listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural orientation. ESL instruction is usually in English with little use of native languages (USDOE, 2018).

English language development: Direct and explicit instruction about the English language that provides a systematic and developmentally-appropriate approach to teaching language within the context of academic content from grade level curriculum (USDOJ, 2013).

English language learner (ELL): ELLs are between the ages of 3 and 21, enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school, not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English, and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant. ELLs can have difficulties speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language such that these

difficulties effectively deny the opportunity to participate fully in society (USDOE, 2017).

Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974: Civil rights statute which prohibits states from denying equal educational opportunities to individuals because of their race, color, sex, or national origin. It prohibits states from denying equal educational opportunities to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation for students in instructional programs (USDOE, 2018).

Restructured professional development plan: This plan is a comprehensive building-based professional development plan for all middle school professional staff, including administrative staff, that focuses on practical classroom application of instructional strategies appropriate for delivering content for ELLs within the context of standards-based unit planning, instruction, and assessment (USDOJ, 2011).

Second language acquisition training for educators (SLATE): SLATE provides training for educators of ELLs and is a staff development model course that incorporates the district's vision, philosophy, and ESOL program procedures for ELLs (USDOJ, 2010).

Sheltered content instruction: This type of instruction is a model for teaching grade-level content to English learners (ELs) by integrating English language and literacy development into content area instruction. Sheltered content instruction systematically incorporates an array of teaching strategies that make content more comprehensible and accessible to ELs while promoting their English language development both in English

learner-only and English learner + non-English learner inclusionary instructional settings (USDOJ, 2013).

   Title I: This federal program provides financial assistance to support instructional programs in school divisions and schools with high numbers or percentages of low-income students to ensure that all children meet challenging content and achievement standards. It also authorizes federal grant programs that provide funds for services to migrant children and neglected and delinquent children (USDOE, 2017).

Significance of the Study

   The study might contribute knowledge regarding teacher perceptions of professional development and instructional programs that are designed to help overcome language barriers that hinder equal participation of students. Perspectives on language policies for ELL students are usually recognized through specific arrangements that influence unique language programs for ELL students.

   This research might be a benefit to professional educators in a northern district in Virginia by providing insights regarding effective instructional delivery of content to ELL students. Very little research has been conducted to determine what instructional strategies most benefit ELLs.

   Preparing educators to teach and work effectively with ELLs is an educational need and challenge that US public schools face (Feiman-Nemser, 2018). Teachers who choose to instruct ELLs must partake in professional development and training to gain knowledge and skills to enable them to teach in these diverse classrooms (Feiman-Nemser, 2018). The purpose of this qualitative bounded case study is to explore and

investigate teachers' perceptions of a mandated ELPLP professional development to help address the instructional needs of ELLs. I gathered comments from teachers regarding the training that they experienced in terms of instructional approaches for ELLs. This study has implications for positive social change by offering strategies and approaches for improving classroom instructional practices for ELL students.

Research Questions

This study addressed perceptions of inadequate ELL instructional services for ELL students by exploring and investigating teachers' perceptions of mandated ELPLP professional development. I investigated whether the ELPLP accomplished its intended goals. The resulting research questions were used to guide this study:

RQ1: : What are teachers' views of the influence of mandated ELPLP training on instructional services concerning ELLs in schools?

RQ2: What suggestions do teachers of ELL students have to improve professional development for the teaching of their students?

The answers to these questions will assist school district leaders in planning future professional development that will not only satisfy the needs of teachers, but also improve the achievement of ELLs.

Review of the Literature

American state-funded schools included 4.8 million ELLs in fall 2015, a higher number than fall 2000, which was 3.8 million (USDOE & NCES, 2018). This surge has resulted in new laws regarding professional development and training for teacher educators and school leaders to follow to ensure the academic success of ELLs.

Exploring and investigating teachers' perceptions of a mandated ELPLP professional development program for instructing ELLs is vital for academic success of this growing population, particularly in this local district school.

Researchers, educators, and policymakers have long debated whether it is useful to equip ELLs to succeed in schools where instruction is in English or their native language. As teachers gain knowledge to understand strategies and theories for instructing ELLs better, they will make informed educational judgments regarding the interests of their ELLs as well as their interests and the content that they teach, which in turn will help ELLs achieve academic success.

In this literature review, I synthesized published books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and reliable scholarly publications. First, I searched using these key phrases and words: *English language learners*, *ELL professional development*, *ELL population*, *compliance of services and English learners*, *civil rights in schools*, *teacher efficacy, self-efficacy*, *ELL instruction*, *ELL professional development, teacher preparation and ELLs, and effective professional development for teachers instructing ELLs*. The databases used were Education Research Complete, Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), EBSCOHost, ProQuest, Education Research Complete, Education from SAGE, and Google Scholar. The related literature is organized in terms of the following areas: (a) conceptual structure, (b) historical overview of the problem, (c) noncompliance issues in schools, (d) growing ELL populations, (d) instructing ELLs, (c) need for preparing and training teachers instructing ELLs, (d) need for effective professional development

relevant to teachers instructing ELLs, and (e) efficacy-inducing approaches regarding professional development.

Conceptual Framework

Guskey's research-based characteristics of effective professional development were used for the conceptual framework of this research. I examined literature on professional development and current mandatory ELPLP professional development on teacher self-efficacy to identify abilities to provide ELL services. An additional conceptual framework lens involved self-efficacy. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy provided knowledge regarding teachers' self-determination and reliance on implementing mandated ELPLP training for educators instructing ELLs. This dual lens will provide a clear direction to help faculty who will be delivering instruction to ELL students. This conceptual framework was used for this doctoral study because it was most appropriate to explore and investigate teachers' perceptions of mandated ELPLP professional development to help address the instructional needs of ELLs and their ability to instruct ELL students. The literature on professional development and current mandatory ELPLP professional development on teacher self-efficacy was used to identify skills to provide ELL services.

Historical Overview of the Problem

The population of students whose primary language is other than English continues to grow. According to Goldenberg (2013), the population of ELL students exceeds 5 million students. Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 increased attention on the academic performance of ELL students, but it has not fundamentally

improved their performance (Goldenberg, 2013). Hamann and Reeves (2013) explained that this lack of improved performance has occurred because of different decisions—who should educate ELL students, how ELL students ought to be instructed, what ELL students are required to know—that go on between ESL and mainstream educators in numerous educational systems. Hamann and Reeves further noted that the remedying of this lack of improved performance in the ELL population will require changes to professional development that will support and encourage the sharing of ideas to help ELLs in schools.

Franco-Fuenmayor, Padrón, and Waxman (2015) conducted a mixed methods study of 21 elementary schools in a suburban school district with 225 bilingual/ESL instructors to examine instructional practices for ELLs. Franco-Fuenmayor et al. also considered training opportunities provided to educators of ELLs, and noted that instructors could benefit from increased professional development in terms of (a) the expectation that they should explore bilingual projects, (b) vocabulary and language progression, (c) proficiency, (d) program usage, (e) innovation teaching, and (f) differentiating learning. Additionally, Franco-Fuenmayor et al. stated that teachers felt that current professional development opportunities did not focus on helping them improve how they set up their ELL programs so that they would be useful in their schoolhouse.

Growing Noncompliance Issues in Schools

Two districts in Virginia, including the site of the local problem and 28 school districts across the state were out of compliance regarding ELL services for all ELL

students that their teachers provided, which violated the EEOA. In 2010, the United States started more than 70 compliance examinations concerning social equality infringement against ELLs (Oyeleye, 2013). Furthermore, school divisions are required to identify ELLs' English proficiency levels and provide adequate adjustments and assistance for their instruction, as outlined in the pledge of equal protection under the law guaranteed in the 14th Amendment of the *Constitution of the United States of America*. However, ELLs receiving appropriate services and accommodations will lead to an unfavorable effect should the federal government continue to allow state governments to set policy concerning ELLs (Hamann & Reeves, 2013). ELLs have the right to obtain and receive an essential education, regardless of their proficiency levels.

Growing ELL Populations

With the expanding population of ELLs in American schools, greater attention is being paid to teaching English to children and adults. The ELL population in the United States has grown 60% as compared with 7% growth of the non-ELL student population (Chao, Schenkel, & Olsen, 2013). During the 2012-2013 school year, 485 million ELLs studied in American schools (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015).

Serving the increasing ELL population is a demand, especially when elements of the educational system are not serving it well. Growth in the ELL population has led to significant regulations in schools and produced an urgent call for professional development intended for educators in school communities that previously neglected ELLs (de Jong, 2014; Hansen-Thomas, Grosso Richins, Kakkar, & Okeyo, 2016). Educators and politicians must be on the front line to encourage change and growth.

Therefore, it is important that teachers and administrators who are responsible for planning and implementing professional development critically examine the adequacy of whatever they do (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Instructing ELLs

Instructing ELLs is a critical responsibility for teachers. Uro and Barrio (2013) stated that students whose home language is not English struggle scholastically. Therefore, providing a productive learning environment for ELLs is a priority because they have difficulties in terms of learning educational content concurrent with the language (Li, 2013). Li (2013) said these instructional practices strengthen comprehensible input, support social collaboration, link to the real world, and supply supportive learning environments. All students can have a productive learning experience when educators provide valuable support and create a safe atmosphere that lowers students' anxiety. A student's motivation to learn, self-esteem, and comfort level can be elevated in a positive school environment.

Differentiated learning is another strategy that teachers use to support ELL students in the classroom (Tucker, 2016). Framing instructional practice and preparing for every school child's language development and level of mastery provides ELLs with opportunities to build confidence in terms of academic subject matter. For example, Tucker (2016) shared the flipped classroom instruction model that enables ELLs to pace their learning during a class task or project using technology, so ELLs can stop or pause, rewind, and review learning videos that the teacher creates. Having the opportunity to control their own pace of learning in school is a useful instructional practice for ELLs

(Tucker, 2016). Another proven instructional strategy for ELLs is the station rotation

model that integrates technology to allow teachers to group students by language

capability, learning level, or composing capacity, and then, at that point, design exercises

at the learning stations ensure that students are academically challenged and engaged

(Tucker, 2016). A classroom can be arranged into various learning stations for students to

work in those stations while the teacher works one-on-one or with selected small groups

to teach a strategy or concept. Differentiated instruction implies instructing so that every

child, regardless of capacities, can prevail with the fundamental means to reinforce his or

her needs (Castro, 2016). Instruction can be differentiated because students learn at

different rates and through multiple means.

Important projects that were developed for teachers who instruct ELLs and school

leaders include specific instructional strategies, practices, skills training, professional

development, and interventions to serve and meet the learning needs of this increasingly

diverse population. Project EXCELL entails carefully chosen strategies that were

considered vital in supporting educators teaching content and language to ELLs. In

addition, August and Garrett (2016) implemented the Mathematics and English Language

Development Project (Project MELD) to assist ELLs in meeting grade-level expectations

in math and English literacy. The goal of Project MELD was to supply scaffolds for

mathematics curriculum to sustain learning for ELLs (August & Garrett, 2016).

Need to Prepare and Train Teachers Who Instruct ELLs

Educating all students to enter the future workforce is the responsibility of the

teacher and school district. However, most teachers who instruct ELLs are not equipped

to create lesson plans that can improve their language, academics, and psychological

growth (Bautista, 2014). Moreover, most educators including preservice teachers do not

have the professional training that would help them address the problems of language and

culture that are presented in their classrooms (Howard, Levine, & Moss, 2014). Hence,

better and more relevant teacher training for ELLs is demanded (Smith, 2014).

Furthermore, Howard et al. (2014) said courses taught in their teacher preparation

programs lack the lecture elements of the ELL population.

The quality of instruction and services for educating ELLs is essential to address

the needs of this group because they have a second language deficit. A growing demand

for teachers, preferably language educators, is to work with ELL students and increase

their readiness to teach them. Preservice instruction and training for in-service are

possible design measures to obtain progress to improve teacher effectiveness (Samson &

Collins, 2012). It is critical that teachers have adequate knowledge that meets the

individual needs of all students, including individuals who struggle with English (Samson

& Collins, 2012). Quality instruction for ELL students requires teachers who are gifted in

terms of an assortment of curricular and instructional techniques.

Need for Effective ELL Professional Development

Professional development can help teachers gain specific skill sets and knowledge

to discharge their professional duties. Teachers can put into practice what they learned

from training. Teachers can find it difficult to meet the needs of ELLs if they do not get

appropriate preparation (Gándara & Santibañez, 2016). According to a national

assessment of Title III, a federal grant to improve education, there is an absence of skills among standard classroom educators attending to ELL needs.

Providing ELL educators with professional development and training cannot be neglected because the United States faces an unusual demand for teachers to be well-prepared to educate this population and compete in a globalized economy (Smith, 2014). Lee et al. (2016) examined the effect on educators' science knowledge and instructional practices, and said course designers could address the training necessary for instructors' science learning and instructional practices.

Teachers of ELLs in small districts in the US said they were efficient in using instructional techniques and strategies in ESL in various school environments (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016). Educators are realistic in terms of their beliefs regarding professional development. They understand that professional development can increase their insight and aptitudes and add to their development (Guskey, 2002). Professional development is a valuable tool because teachers can learn new ideas and strategies to keep abreast of current trends specific to their professional performance (Guskey, 2002).

Coady et al. (2015) said that teachers who were instructing ELLs rarely used appropriate instructional practices to help the English language development of ELLs. Instead, they used regular instructional strategies and on-the-run scaffolding techniques with ELLs (Coady et al., 2015.) Many states are only in the beginning steps of creating procedures for methodically giving ELL-related in-service professional development for working instructors (de Jong, 2014). Professional development and training geared at teachers who instruct ELLs is critical.

Efficacy-Inducing Approaches in Professional Development

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and goals on professional development have meaningful connections to the education environment. Bandura (1989) stated that their primary references to viability data direct the skill experiences in performance mastery about professional development. Bandura (1989) provided this example regarding the four-performance mastery: (a) recognize persons who are like oneself, engage in professional development, and improve training as a display of perseverant effort; (b) social persuasion has the capacity to succeed and remain in control of self by possessing abilities of influence and develop beliefs: (c) individuals who show strong efficacy foster positive perspectives: and (d) individual beliefs in their capabilities are developed and strengthened.

Structural mastery tasks are given to people in steps that will bring success and avoid putting them immediately in circumstances in which they would be expected to fail. Structural mastery allows individuals to carry out tasks in steps that will bring achievement thereby avoiding the conditions that would normally bring them failure (Bandura, 1989). An increase in a teacher's self-beliefs in the efficacy of mastering new strategy skills can be evident when a teacher efficiently demonstrates an ability to understand, use, and apply cognitive skills learned from training and professional development (Bandura, 1989).

Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, and Hardin (2014) conducted a study of 41 teachers at two school districts in a suburban industrial area to examine the connection between teacher efficacy and self-efficacy regarding differentiated instructional professional

development. The findings demonstrated that the efficacy of the teacher and the teacher's feelings of efficacy positively correlated with higher number of professional development hours in differentiated instruction. Additionally, the study further expressed that the efficacy of the teacher was an essential element for the implementation of the differentiated instruction regardless of the school level or content area that the teachers taught (Dixon et al., 2014). Although teachers learn the strategies presented during professional development in differentiating, they might not distinguish different strategies for students in their class; they might subsequently not transpose the material met in the professional development into training in the classroom (Dixon et al., 2014).

Yoo (2016) conducted a mixed-method study of 148 teachers and school educators enrolled in an online program at a state university to investigate the effect of professional development on teacher efficacy and how teachers interpret their change in efficacy. Yoo's findings demonstrated that the professional development had a real impact on teacher efficacy. Also, a detailed summary of teacher efficacy in the study showed that new learning attained was related to teacher efficacy (Yoo, 2016). Moreover, a significant conclusion of the investigation was the changes to the reference in the professional development encounters. The participants expressed that it could either decidedly or adversely influence their instructor viability. For instance, in the wake of increasing learning about instruction and content, the participants saw themselves as either overvalued with extra confidence or undervalued with an emotion of indecision (Yoo, 2016). ELL teachers' self-efficacy directly affects their ability to meet the ELLs

diverse Educational needs adequately. If teachers need self-efficacy, they are less inclined to serve students' needs suitably (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016).

Implications

Professional educators and educational leaders who make judgments regarding the provision of adequate and appropriate services, including the use of instructional programs, resources, and funding for ELLs in their school, could use this study as a source of information. Baecher, Knoll, and Patti (2016) noted that leaders in schools across the country are concerned about how to help create specific guidelines for ELLs' advancement and learning.

From the above literature, a possible direction for a future project might be to form a professional learning community. This might have the potential to build a better understanding of instructional practices and strategies to aid in the learning of ELLs and might enable teachers who instruct ELLs to provide adequate and appropriate services in the local district schools. The data collected and analyzed through interviews helped me to understand the teachers' perceptions of the instructional strategies, practices, skills, and knowledge learned and used from the ELPLP professional development to address the instructional needs of ELLs.

Summary

The ELL population continues to increase; therefore, it is imperative that they receive appropriate instruction to address their needs in school so that they can reach their full potential. For ELLs to achieve academically, to demonstrate their knowledge, and to be successful in schools, they must be given opportunities to receive instructional support

that will address their academic needs. Teachers of ELLs need professional development and training to address the instructional needs of their students. ELPLP has been designed as professional development training and that the local school district office in northern Virginia delivered to support teachers of ELLs in understanding instructional approaches that they could use to address the instructional inadequacies of ELLs and the school district's current state of compliance with the USDOJ (2013, 2015) Settlement Agreement terms. Section 2 delineates the research design that was used to conduct this study. The design was a qualitative, bounded case study. I explained the rationale for choosing the case study design and the purpose of my research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The research design for this qualitative study was a bounded case study design. Merriam and Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle supported the use of a case study as a qualitative approach to discover meaning, investigate processes, and obtain more profound information and examinations of a bounded system. The context is mandated ELPLP that includes professional development for educators who instruct ELLs so that they can properly address the instructional demands of ELLs. The site of the study was a local public school district. The study was intended to yield information from interviews of teachers' perspectives regarding the efficacy of ELPLP professional development.

I selected the qualitative methodology for this study because it is a method by which one can obtain a deep understanding of participants' experiences, in contrast to quantitative research for which a trend or explanation is required. A qualitative research study can be conducted by gathering and examining information from interviews (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, qualitative investigations provide a chance to design and interpret models and principles inductively (Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). Quantitative research involves closed-ended questions and predetermined methods to provide an opportunity to test theories deductively (Creswell, 2012; Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). Quantitative data methods were not appropriate for this study, because I did not use any numerical method such as statistics and percentages in the data analysis.

Other qualitative research design methods such as ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology were all considered and rejected for this research study. An

ethnographic design is one in which the researcher seeks to understand and explore

members of a cultural group (Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). It was not an appropriate design

because seeking participants' cultural experiences was not the aim in this study. A

phenomenological design is used to study occasions and events from the focal point of an

individual (Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). This was also not suitable because I examined

perceptions of ELL teachers to gain their insight regarding the efficacy of required

ELPLP professional development to meet the instructional needs of ELLs. Grounded

theory, which aims to generate theories through the viewpoints of participants was not an

appropriate design because I explored a central phenomenon and developed a depiction

of the case and the topics that arose out of examining it.

The context within which the case was bounded is mandated ELPLP that includes

professional development for educators instructing ELLs so that they can properly

address the instructional demands of ELLs. The site of the study was a local public

school district. The case study design was appropriate to better understand teachers'

perceptions regarding mandated ELPLP professional development. Case studies center on

an issue with a case (individual, numerous people, program, or movement) and provide

knowledge about the issue. I conducted in-depth semistructured interviews.

Participants

Population and Sampling Procedures

Purposeful sampling is a qualitative sampling procedure in which researchers

intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or to understand the central phenomenon

(Creswell, 2012). The participants were selected according to specific criteria:

teachers had to be certified and responsible for instructing ELL students in their mainstream classroom, have participated in mandated ELPLP professional development and completed 45 hours of professional development and 15 hours of site-based follow-up training over 3 school years, and have at least 7 years of teaching experience at the school in the local district. Teachers who met the participant criteria allowed me to investigate their perceptions regarding possible shifts in instructional strategies to help address the instructional needs of ELLs.

Maximum variation is a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals who differ in terms of some characteristic (Creswell, 2012). In this study, I identified teachers who instruct ELLs in their mainstream classroom and then purposefully sampled those teachers instructing ELLs at different grade levels in elementary kindergarten through grade 5. This strategy was used to maximize representation of all teachers' perceptions at various grade levels.

According to the school directory located on the local district web site under study, 32 elementary teachers and 48 middle school teachers were identified as qualifying teachers. I sent by email an initial invitation to participate with a copy of the informed consent form to 80 qualifying teachers requesting their participation in the study. I waited 5 days before I sent a second followup email. Eleven teachers responded, nine from the elementary school and three from the middle school. Ten respondents were women, and one was a man. Of the nine from the elementary, five signed and return consent forms, two noted interest, but did not meet part of the criteria, and one did not sign and returned his or her consent form. Of the three from the middle school, two noted interest, but one

was not able to participate because of personal responsibilities and the other did not meet part of the criteria.

I used the school and staff directory for the purposeful selection of five participants from a pool of five teachers who were willing and ready to participate, returned signed consent forms, and met the participation criteria. These criteria were used to identify potential participants from among staff members who worked in the selected elementary and middle schools. Of the five participants, five were from the elementary school and none were from the middle school.

Creswell (2012) noted that the sample size of participants involved in a case study should range between four to five participants for a small pool of participants which enables more in-depth interviews. Moreover, using a large sample size of participants can be difficult and can result in superficial perspectives (Creswell, 2012). Interviewing these five participants was adequate to achieve saturation of experiences and perspectives regarding the study problem.

The research site was one elementary school. The elementary school site was selected because it is representative of Title I schools with large ELL populations.

Access to participants. I obtained necessary permissions from the local school district before the start of my study. Creswell (2014) said that researchers must get approval from individuals in authority to gain access to sites and study participants. I obtained consent to lead the examination from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the district supervisor of program evaluation, and two school building principals (elementary and middle) who worked in the research site district (see Appendices D and E). I then

carefully reviewed and analyzed information pertaining to the study from local school district accountability office and websites. The school directory located on the local district web site was used to access all participants. After I had received IRB and local school district approval, participants received by email a copy of the informed consent form with the initial invitation to participate describing the study. To guard participants' identities, each person was assigned a pseudonym that replaced their names in the data collection.

Researcher-participant relationship. Creswell (2014) identified that a characteristic of qualitative research is for researchers to be involved with participants. I am currently employed as a Title I reading and reading recovery teacher at the elementary school selected as a research site. I had already established trusting professional relationships with the participants in the elementary school where the study was conducted. I have attended curriculum planning, provided instructional resources, coached teachers, and facilitated vertical meetings (with all grade level teachers in the building present) on reading. I have no supervisory role over the possible participants and have no influence over participants for the study. Seidman (2013) noted that a researcher who conducts an interview must ensure that his or her interest in the topic or subject is identified and examined so as to ensure that his or her interest is not inspired by anger, bias, and prejudice. However, as an educator who has had experiences with professional colleagues, I was aware of the personal biases that existed in this research study.

To reduce bias and loss of confidentiality, I did not reflect my personal beliefs with the ELPLP professional development. Throughout the research study, I maintained

an open mind and kept a reflexive journal to record my views regarding the topic of this study. Creswell (2012) noted that reflexivity is the process by which the researcher reflects and writes his or her own biases, values, and assumptions in the research. The information regarding the study and participants will be stored in password-protected, encrypted files for 5 years. Protecting the files ensured confidentiality, for the data were recorded in a manner that was not accessible to anyone other than the researcher. The participants were given a chance to make any inquiries before and after the interview. Allowing the participants to review and comment on the initial findings before completing the data analysis results strengthened the researcher's relationship with the participants, and increased the quality of the study because the participants came to trust the researcher (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). After obtaining permission to begin the study, I emailed and arranged a convenient date and location to conduct the interview with the five participants who met the established criteria.

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Data Collection Methods

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Interviews

The research questions were addressed by conducting face-to-face interviews with the participants. A copy of the Interview Questions and Protocol can be found in Appendix B. In-depth semistructured interviews are one of the essential strategies used for information accumulation as a part of a qualitative study (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). The interviews were a mixture of organized and open-ended inquiries to obtain beliefs and opinions of the participants. An advantage of administering interviews is that they provide vital information when the participant cannot be observed. A

restriction of interviewees is that they gave roundabout data that were separated through the perspectives of the interviewees (Creswell, 2014).

Some interview questions were created from two authors' studies because the topic and ELL population were similar (Al-Sharafi, 2015; Simmons-Deveaux, 2012). The other questions came from the uniqueness of ELL population and the problem in the local school district. In this study, I conducted face-to-face, semistructured, 45–60-minute-long interviews with every one of the five participants. The interviews with participants were held at the school of employment with one in the classroom; one in the reading room, and three in the researcher's room after the workday school hours when it was quiet and private, which eliminated distractions. A "Do Not Disturb "sign was posted on the door and the glass on the door was blocked out with paper. I used simple words that encouraged participants to answer freely and in a way that they did not agree or disagree. In alignment with the research problem, these interviews are designed to generate rich descriptions from participants about their experiences as they verbalize their perceptions regarding how they perceive the quality, the development, and the influence of the mandated, ELPLP professional development of compliance (Yin, 2013). The following are the procedures to guide and support the interviews:

I began to interview the elementary school teachers, who are responsible for instructing ELL students, either in their classroom or after the workday school hours. The materials used included a participant folder, clipboard, pen, digital recorder, a copy of the interview protocol, and interview script. The 45–60-minute interviews took place at

participants' school of employment with one in the classroom, one in the reading room, and three in the researcher's room, after the workday school hours.

Local District Data

According to an accountability report from the local district under study, the ELL overall performance in reading has remained in the low 60th percentile for more than 4 years (2014–2015, 2015–2016, 2016–2017, and 2017–2018), as compared to non-ELLs. The percentile for ELLs in 2017 (62nd) was not significantly different from their past scores in 2016 (65th), 2015 (61st) and in 2014 (62nd). See Table 1.

Table 1

ELLs' Overall Performance in Reading

	School years			
Performance	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018
Reading percentile	62	61	65	62

The overall ELLs performance in writing remained in the high 40th percentile to low 50th percentile for more than 4 years (2014–2015, 2015–2016, 2016–2017, and 2017–2018, as compared to non-ELLs. The percentile for ELLs in 2017 (51st) was not significantly different from their scores in 2016 (49th), 2015 (48th) and in 2014 (51st). See Table 2.

Table 2

ELLs' Overall Performance in Writing

	School years			
Performance	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018
Writing percentile	51	49	48	51

Role of the Researcher

As a researcher for this investigation, I was responsible for collecting and analyzing data, examining documents, and administering interviews at the selected school where the study was conducted. Again, I have a professional relationship with participants in this study, for I have been employed for more than a decade in the local school district, attended many reading meetings and professional developments that further enabled me to interact professionally with potential participants. Ritchie et al. (2013) reiterated that a participant is at ease, and a climate of trust is created, when good working relationships are achieved. To keep trusting relationships with potential participants, I made sure that my communication was nonjudgmental and did not trusting in any circumstances. Taylor et al. (2016) discussed that a part of a research process is to reassure participants that their confidentiality will not be violated, and that the participants will not be exposed to harm, or interrupted in their work activities. To guard participants' identification, each person was assigned a pseudonym that replaced her name in the data collection.

I made a sincere effort to pay attention because the conversation was taped, and I did not have to document every word. Taylor et al. (2016) reiterated that when the

interviewer pays attention, the interviewer communicates a genuine interest in what the participant says and knows; the interviewer is also focused on probing to gather rich, descriptive data. Being sensitive and able to adjust in the ways I handled myself throughout the interviews, including my words and gestures, was another part of my role. The participants knew me; therefore, they might have said what they thought I want to hear; if this occurred, it would be a form of bias. Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle (2010) noted that researchers who conduct a study must identify and address assumptions and bias. I told the participants to be faithful to their beliefs and give me honest responses.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a qualitative study is a technical process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing that enables researchers to analyze and code their data (Taylor et al., 2016). Moreover, during data analysis, a qualitative researcher might continually refine his or her investigation to gain a deeper understanding of the data. Data collection and analysis go together.

Three well-defined activities that involve data analysis are ongoing discovery to identify themes and concepts, coding and refining to understand the subject matter, and to examine the emerging analysis (Taylor et al., 2016). An analysis of the semistructured interview consisted of the following six steps (Creswell, 2009, 2012, 2014).

Step 1: Organize and Prepare the Data for Analysis

A system of organization is vital in qualitative research because of the large amount of information and data gathered from a study (Creswell, 2012). I listened to recorded interviews of each participant and transcribed all of the words that the

interviewees and the interviewer used, including the interviewer comments to further contribute to the details of the interview. I recorded when the interviewee paused and every action during the interview. I hand-analyzed the data. Creswell (2012) noted that hand analysis might be preferred when analyzing a smaller database of less than 500 pages of transcripts. The analysis was organized and prepared into phrases and narrative text. Interview protocol notes, taken during interviews helped in the summarizing of responses that the participants gave. Each participant's interview summary was placed in a folder on my computer with an assigned letter and number. All hard copy interview protocols, transcriptions, and related documents for participants were stored in a secured file cabinet.

Step 2: Read Transcripts and Identify Themes

I read through all of the interview transcripts and identified themes in the margin of all of the transcripts to help understand the overall meaning of the information. I color-coded texts into sections and divided the text into parts by cutting and pasting sentences onto cards to help locate text passages and to track files efficiently. Creswell (2012) stated that qualitative researchers write notes in the margins of transcripts to record general thoughts about the data at this stage.

Step 3: Begin a Detailed Analysis With a Coding Process

The coding process is the segmenting and labeling of text to form broad themes and descriptions in the data (Creswell, 2012). For each interview transcriptions page, I wrote down codes on the right side and emerging themes on the left side and used two to three words for codes in participant's actual words; this process is called *in vivo coding*

(Creswell, 2014). Next, I located key words to use as codes, themes, or ideas, and drew brackets around sentences and paragraphs that described a single idea; this process is called *text segmenting* (Creswell, 2014). Then, I made a list of all code words, reduced them to a small number of broad themes by combining similar codes and repetitive codes. I then used the list of codes to jot down more possible themes discovered in the transcript, and highlighted quotes to use in my final research. I used the following two coding phases below:

Phase 1 was open coding, which is the process used to form initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2014). I assigned categories to all the data collected from interviews and looked for emerging patterns by comparing them to other bits of data. Next, I used color coding highlighters to label the themes that I found in words, sentences, and the interviews. I did a "second sweep" of the data to look for themes that I might have missed in the initial search (Farber, 2006). Then, I sorted the data into categories, using the themes and patterns to report findings. Using open coding allowed me to explore accurately the data and to provide an in-progress working list that allowed me to prepare new categories as more information arose from the participants.

Phase 2 was *axial coding*, which is to select one open coding category, then to place it in the center (where it becomes the central category) of a process that is being explored and to relate other categories to it (Creswell, 2014). I drew a diagram, called a *coding paradigm*, to describe the interconnecting and interrelationships of (a) factors that influence the central category, (b) strategies I took in response to the central category, (c) specific and general situational factors that influenced the strategies, and (d) outcomes

from using the strategies. Axial coding helped interconnect categories to identify

concepts, cause-and-effect relationships, and sequences of events that improved ideas; to

locate data; and to make findings stronger (Creswell, 2014; Taylor et al., 2016).

Step 4: Use the Coding Process to Generate a Description of the Setting or People as Well as Categories or Themes for Analysis

Creswell (2012, 2014) explained that the description of qualitative research

involves a detailed rendering of information about people, places, or events in a setting. I

provided a summary of the setting to create a picture of the events by starting with the

local school district and narrowing the data to the school and then to the classroom, and

finally to the interview. This broad-to-narrow rich detail description made context

understandable and brought reality to the setting. I made factual, interpretation-verbatim

from all data sources and used parts of speech to bring action and liveliness in the setting.

When reducing codes to at least seven major themes (that were analyzed in Step 3), I

used the following four types of themes: (a) ordinary themes I expected to find,

(b) unexpected themes that are unusual and not expected, (c) hard-to-classify themes that

do not fit within one theme, and (d) major and minor that shows major and minor ideas in

the data.

Step 5: How the Description and Themes Will Be Represented in the Qualitative Narrative

Again, Step 3, Phase 2, I developed the coding paradigm, that represented the

interconnecting and interrelationships from broad-to-narrow themes. I reported findings

in a qualitative narrative discussion in which I summarized in detail the results from the

data analysis (Creswell, 2012, 2014). I incorporated the dialogue of the participants and

their quotes from the interviews that showed the emotions, and then I identified the

different perspectives of the participants and the interviews.

Step 6: Make an Interpretation or Meaning of the Data

I made an analysis of the findings and formed larger meaning about the

phenomenon from the personal reviews and past study comparison; this process is called

interpretation in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). I reviewed and summarized the

major findings by providing findings for each research question. I used my judgment and

insights to communicate the personal reviews and reflections on the larger meaning of all

of the data. I also showed how the findings might support or differ from previous studies

by comparing findings with views in the literature and personal views or ideas. I

presented the limitations of the research study and recommendations for future research. I

identified and discussed any problems, including data collection and sampling, and I

answered the participants' questions that arose during the study.

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Evidence of Trustworthiness

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The trustworthiness criteria in this qualitative research study were established by

ensuring that the findings have *credibility*, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln &

Guba, 1985; Lodico et al., 2010). An accurate representation of participants' perceptions

of the setting and events in the research report is referred to as credibility Lodico et al.

(2010). One strategy for ensuring the credibility for this study's findings is *member*

checks, which I used in this study for the reviewing of the data. Lodico et al. (2010)

defined member checks in which the summaries of the researcher's conclusions and

transcribed interviews are sent to participants for review. Participants in this study were given an opportunity to check the researcher's interpretation of preliminary analysis for the accuracy by email. Of the five participants who participated in the interview, four reviewed and returned their interview transcripts. Two of four participants did some grammatically changes, and one of them also wrote a response for a question that the researcher had missed asking. The remaining one participant indicated he or she trusted that the researcher accurately captured the information. Creswell and Miller (2000) stated that a universal consensus is that qualitative inquirers must prove that their studies are credible. The credibility strategy provided accurate representations of the interpretation of data and participants in the study. Moreover, Creswell and Miller (2000) indicated that credibility would add to qualitative research when participants have an opportunity to reply to discussions concerning data interpretations and the final narrative reports.

Confirmability in a research study means that the researcher's bias was excluded, and did not influence the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A technique that I used in this study for establishing confirmability is *reflexive journaling* to remove researcher bias. Creswell (2012) explained that reflexivity is the process by which the researcher reflects and writes his or her own biases, values, and assumptions in the research. Throughout the research study, I kept a reflexive journal to record actively my views regarding the topic of this study, which allowed me to separate myself from the study to assess biases and assumptions on the data collection and analysis process.

Transferability is the amount of similarity between the research site and other sites as the reader assessed (Lodico et al., 2010). A common strategy that enabled

transferability of this study's findings is rich, thick description; which used in this study for the process to give descriptions of setting, participants, finding with the evidence presented from interviews in the form of quotes, this process is called thick description (Merriam, 2009). During the coding of the interview transcripts, I highlighted quotes to use in my final research and used broad-to-narrow, rich detail description to make context understandable and to bring reality to the setting. In addition, I made factual interpretation-verbatim from all of the data sources, and used parts of speech to convey action and liveliness in the setting.

Discrepant Cases

Creswell (2012) stated that qualitative researchers present information that contradicts a general perspective of the theme. I maintained an unbiased perspective, should any contradictory perspectives arise, and worked diligently to find a solution to the difference in perspectives. Lodico et al. (2010) further confirmed that, when conflicting perspectives are found, researchers must reexamine other data sources to determine whether the differences can be resolved in some cases; if the difference cannot be resolved, the researcher might decide to present the different perspectives. This added to the credibility of the study, for I reported all conflicting perceptions accurately.

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Data Analysis Results

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In extension to the following process that Walden University's IRB approved (10-22-18-0416114), this research for the project study was approved through the approval process of the local school district supervisor of program evaluation, and two school building principals (elementary and middle) of the research site district. The data

for this study were collected over a 6-week period during which I interviewed five

teachers who were responsible for instructing ELL students in a mainstream classroom at

an elementary school in the local district. I used an interview protocol for all five

interviews and transcribed, analyzed, and coded for common themes. To maintain

privacy and confidentiality, I kept data secured by password-protected, encrypted file

storage. To protect the identification of all of the participants, I assigned to each of them

a pseudonym to replace their names in the data collection. Codes were used to replace

actual names, and contact information was stored and protected separately from the data.

The data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Responses from participants were divided into three areas during the coding

process. For the first area, I looked at Interview Question 1 that provided participants the

opportunity to share their points of view about the general information and academic

success of ELLs whom they now instruct, or had instructed.

For the second area, Interview Questions 2–5 obtained the responses about the

participants' views of their preparedness to meet the needs of ELLs before and after the

ELPLP professional development or training. The responses addressed the needs for the

teachers or educators, and informed the in-house professional development project. The

responses also addressed Research Question 1: What are teachers' views of the influence

of the mandated, ELPLP training on instructional services concerning ELLs in schools?

In the third area, I analyzed Interview Questions 6–12 that gathered the responses

to participants' experiences in applying the ELPLP development training received,

addressed the needs for the teachers or educators, and informed the in-house professional

development project. The third area also directed Research Question 2: What suggestions do teachers of ELL students have to improve professional development for the teaching of their students?

Participant Demographic and Academic Success of English Language Learners Instructed

The five participants consisted of K–5 elementary school teachers and specialists. All of the participants were women and they had taught or still teach a variety of subjects, including math, science, and social history. Two participants were in a different teaching role at the time of the mandated ELPLP professional development and this interview.

At the start of the interview, the participants were asked to share academic success examples about ELLs whom they now teach or had instructed. Most of the participants revealed the ability to read as academic successes for ELLs. Participant 1 stated, "I remember letting the student make phone calls home when they learn to read, and they would be so excited." Participant 2 mentioned, "I have noticed that it seems like around fourth grade when the students seem to all of a sudden, make sense of reading." Regarding the students, another participant commented about "their ability to read on grade level."

Additionally, Participant 3, reflected that an academic success example was "that my students are able to walk away with a much larger vocabulary than they came to me with, they are able to take larger words and incorporate them not only into their speaking, but they can apply them to their other learning." Another participant noted, "I think their language development that shows in their writing and their reading progression on the

WIDA test that they do in the spring." Participant 3 cited another success example for ELLs as "the quality of conversation and the questions that they ask now . . . much more inquisitive . . . more engaged they are in conversation . . . using academic language . . . just talking." Another also noted, "I have taught them to be advocates for themselves to seek out what information they need and always to know that questioning is good."

The participant group was composed of the K–5 elementary school teachers and characterized a variety of disciplines. As mentioned previously, most of the participants said that reading achievement was an academic success example for their ELLs, followed by higher vocabulary, language development, quality of conversation, and advocating for self. All of the participants shared their one or several academic successes about ELLs in the elementary school. Moreover, each participant, when thinking of a success for how far ELLs have come to progress, noted the awareness of ELLs entering school not able to speak English and having to rely on their teachers. "So many of our kiddos come in and not speaking any English, and they rely on us for so much, and I'm just thinking about how far they've come."

RQ1

RQ1: What are teachers' views of the influence of mandated ELPLP training on instructional services concerning ELLs in schools?

Participants answered questions about their perceptions of mandated ELPLP training on instructional services concerning ELLs in their school. Each participant was able to describe the influences, participation, and effectiveness that distinguished the ELPLP professional development and training in support to instruct ELLs.

They recognized their self-efficacy in the participation before and after the ELPLP professional development and training as preparedness. One participant noted that she felt prepared to meet the instructional needs of ELLs before the mandated ELPLP professional development in part because of many years teaching ELLs and having educational certification and endorsements, she said, "I am certified for that full range, so before the program went into effect with these courses, ... So, I feel that I was well prepared . . . . I've been teaching for ten years in." Also, another participant mentioned, being better prepared than other colleagues because of experience working with lower-level students.

Another participant did not feel prepared to have an ELL student, who did not speak English in the classroom, but felt better prepared than other colleagues: "I felt that I was probably better prepared than some of my colleagues . . . because of working with the lower-level student. . . . but having a child . . . in your class that doesn't speak any English, no. I was not prepared." Another participant explained that she did not feel prepared to meet the instructional needs of ELLs before the mandated ELPLP professional development: "I wasn't, . . . just kind of word of mouth working in Teams in the school . . . but . . . no, . . . formal or . . . professional development or training."

The participants described effectiveness of the ELPLP professional development to support them in teaching ELLs. The participants said that they received and learned information regarding ELLs and strategies to use when instructing ELL students: "I got, gained . . . a better understanding of their development . . . so many years to access academic language." Another participant said noted "strategies to use . . . best practice of

things to look for and do in the classroom." Another participant noted "accommodations and kind of learning how the ELLs think compared to the English speakers."

Another participant in the study felt that, although she had not increased her level of knowledge after the ELPLP professional development, it served as a refresher. They were enabled to support teachers before the course came out. "I don't feel that overall, I walked away . . . with an increased level of knowledge . . . the positive thing . . . it helped me to be able to help other teachers who had a lot of questions that were unanswered." Another participant felt that he or she had learned more after completing another professional development versus the ELPLP to bring to ELLs in the classroom. "I had no idea . . . what I learned from that to be able to take that back to my ESOL kids . . . doing the 'Can Do' . . . I learned more about how to help students with another . . . training." Additionally, a participant voiced her frustration regarding the amount of emphasis that is placed on ELLs:

> I don't know why we are technically, segregating the ELLs? Why are we treating them differently? Are we putting them and clumping them in a group? Why are we saying you have to do this for these kids? We have already gone down that road in the 60s/80s; it doesn't work. Why are we putting them and clumping them in a group? Why are we saying you have to do this for these kids? Little Johnny next door might benefit from it too because maybe his dad is in jail, . . . We are supposed to close the gap, but we are putting all our focus on the ESOL kids; well, there are other children in our classrooms. It is very frustrating.

Moreover, one participant felt comfortable commenting about competing theories of instructing ELLs such as using an English versus a Spanish learning environment:

In talking to people like an ESOL teacher, it is very interesting hearing other how other states handle it. In Texas, the children are immersed in a Spanish environment letting them speak Spanish and learning in Spanish while they are teaching them English. Doesn't that make so much more sense? We are taking these kids now, even current day and plopping them in a classroom where all they're hearing is womp, womp, womp and unless they are lucky enough to have a teacher that speaks Spanish. But not even all of our ESOL teachers speak Spanish and it's almost like you're not supposed to teach them in Spanish, you know, having their peers translate. So that type of thinking makes more sense to me and then the children are comfortable, and they can speak with their peers but, then, they are doing parallel teaching.

Although the participants were able to describe their views and influences, self-efficacy, effectiveness, and participation of the ELPLP professional development training that showed preparedness to meet the instructional needs of ELLs, one participant stated that the different strategies learned to teach ELLs were effective, but they were sometimes redundant and repetitive and didn't expand thinking time,

I think some of it was effective as far as just learning different strategies to try with them. I do think sometimes it gets redundant because kind of be kind of beating a dead horse, like the same thing over and over and over. It doesn't really expand your thinking when it's that repetitive.

Another participant commented on the uncertainty of acknowledgment of learned strategies either after completing the professional development training or the excited conversations with peers about the strategies, followed by independent book work on the same:

> I don't necessarily know if I left those PDs thinking to myself, okay, I have all these brand-new strategies. I don't know if that's a credit for it or if it's just, again, the conversations that we have with each other and then the books that we've read in the skills of each on our own. And not saying that those PDs were ineffective. I just don't know if those were any of the ones that I particularly was like, oh my gosh, that was it. And I left with that light bulb moment.

Participants recognized their views and influences, participation, and the effectiveness of ELPLP professional development and training in support to instruct ELLs in the themes of preparedness, instruction, and professional development and training.

These findings of the perceptions of teachers are compatible with some of the literature on English learner professional development and training to support teachers and educators who instruct of ELLs provide more than instructional strategies and content knowledge. Factors such as teachers' views and beliefs of the effectiveness of English learner professional development contribute to their awareness regarding the preparedness to meet the instructional needs of their ELLs (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). In this study, some participants likewise reported not feeling adequately prepared to meet the instructional needs of English learners before an ELPLP professional development. Vansant-Webb and Polychronis (2016) noted colleague and team support had an impact

on instructional decisions. The participants in this study similarly identified colleague and team support, and productive conversations with colleagues, as providing the support needed for instructing ELLs.

The authors in the literature suggested that the discussion by education policymakers on teaching ELLs in English versus teaching them in a bilingual setting provides no useful guidance for educators (Umansky, Valentino, & Reardon, 2016). It is worth noting that the participants whom I interviewed for this study also had debatable thoughts regarding the learning environment that is most effective for instructing ELLs.

One author suggested that professional development offerings increase teachers' knowledge and skills so that they can learn many instructional strategies to meet their students' educational needs (López, 2018). The literature was constant with the perceptions of the teachers in this research on the English learner professional development regarding its influence on self-efficacy, and its effectiveness for preparedness and instruction to meet the instructional needs of ELLs.

RQ2

All responses of the elementary school participants to interview questions 6–12 were analyzed to address and to inform the in-house professional development project, and RQ2. The themes of the responses of what suggestions on improving professional development for teachers instructing ELLs were the same as mentioned previously: preparedness and instruction with the addition of professional development and training.

The participants shared different perspective, for some felt that the ELPLP professional development was vital in helping them to provide adequate and appropriate

ELL services in the school. Most of the participants appreciated being prepared with the knowledge to be able to talk about ways to meet the needs of ELLs, for the school was primarily populated with ELL students. One participant commented,

> I would say that the training was vital, it was absolutely timely, our county had been needing it because there was just so much information that was missing for general ed teachers and for special ed teachers. It wasn't for lack of interest, but it was very timely, so I think when we learned that the ELPLP professional development was going to take place and start off, I was celebrating. It was a celebration for me a personal celebration because it was so needed. So, I think it was absolutely a positive thing.

> Another participant stated, "So, I think that type of professional development I think would be very vital for our students or for our teachers to work with our students here." Another participant reiterated, "Do think it was extremely vital, especially in a school like ours." However, one participant felt that the ELPLP professional development was not adequate and timely:

> I don't think it was really that adequate. Just by the time we did that, we'd been teaching ELL students for years. So, you know, by the time you've done that, you've got the experience and trial and error, you know, what works for others and trying it out.

> And the other participant didn't feel that the training was essential because, despite the valuable time spent in the training, he or she hadn't learned any hands-on things to take back to the classroom: "The ELPLP trainings were not that vital . . . all the

valuable time spent in trainings for time that I wasn't able to learn anything new and hands-on that I could take right back to my classroom." Although some participants were appreciative of having the ELPLP professional development, they also mentioned some challenging factors that limited their participation during the professional development, including time constraints, cramming of the professional development courses, professional development availability and offerings scheduling, locations, and communication barrier that existed among parents and teachers. One participant commented, "I think challenges have been because of sometimes just be the time and the course offerings and availability and scheduling are huge." Another participant remarked,

> I think the challenges that I have come across is communication. Communication is so important from home to school. When you have to run around and find someone who speaks Spanish or get things translated; and you can't just pick up the phone and call a parent good or bad, I think the fact that the communication is difficulty with the parents is what is the biggest challenge of today.

> However, notwithstanding the challenges, some participants expressed a desire to

participate in future English learner professional development training only if they would be mandated to do it, if it were of interest to them, if it were done in-house at the school, if they had more course choices, if it were to have a positive impact on the current position or need and level of knowledge. As one participant stated, "I definitely think so. Again, I would love it if they can be some in-house ones."

Another participant remarked,

I think . . . our County knows that we need to continue if we're going to offer our

absolute best to our students in regard to their learning, as well as offering

ourselves as teachers the best to grow in our professions.

Although it was apparent that participants obtained instructional strategies and

best practices from the ELPLP professional development, there is still much work ahead,

to build teachers knowledge on Instruction: coteaching and co-planning with ESOL

teachers that would be beneficial in creating meaningful instructional lesson planning and

decisions essential for the academic success of students.

The participants described how the effectiveness of the required ELPLP

professional development helped them to address the needs of teachers who instruct

ELLs and to improve the structure regularly to meet new teachers and seasoned teachers,

and to have in-depth evaluations,

The ELPLP professional development needs to be examined and structured

continuously to make certain that it is meeting the needs of new teachers, as well

as seasoned veteran teachers. There also needs to be more in-depth follow through

an evaluation done with teachers (in addition to the standard online quick

evaluations) to see how these classes are benefitting them as well as their

students. These deeper evaluations would provide more accurate feedback that

could guide smarter decisions of what to provide going forward.

Another participant suggested that the professional development (a) should be hands-on,

(b) should use authentic training videos that relate to real life offer necessary training,

(c) should be online courses that one can complete on at one's own pace, and (d) should

have a plan and guidance document for teachers. "So, putting them on a plan, a guidance document or being a little bit more specific rather than just be like, hey, take these classes and make sure I get them done."

Some authors suggested time constraints, challenges, competency, and preparedness as factors that play a significant role in teacher preparedness to teach ELLs (Santibañez & Gándara, 2018). Similarly, in this study, the participants commented on the time constraints in getting everything done and having to schedule professional development classes, and work and personal schedules while working. Teachers' perceptive on effective professional development in the literature demonstrated that they should have a say in the process regarding relevance to their day-to-day needs and choice of topics (Rizzuto, 2017). The participants who I interviewed for the study stated that they would only participate in future professional development if it were of interest to them or would have a positive impact on the current position and need, and if it were to have a level of knowledge and variety in course choices.

It was noteworthy that all of the participants commented on participating in more English learner professional development training, even the participants who felt that the mandated ELPLP professional development was not very helpful to them and prepared before the professional development in proving adequate and appropriate ELL services in the school. This statement is contradictory to the authors' statements in the literature that teachers who feel their professional development prepared them better for the challenges of educating ELLs are less likely than those who think it prepared them less well, to

report needing more English-learner-focused professional development (Santibañez & Gándara, 2018).

Effectiveness of professional development cited in the literature is related to real-world contexts (Guskey, 2003). In this study, the participant suggested improvement of the English learner professional development must be authentic and relevant to real-life scenarios. Some studies on professional development in the literature have demonstrated a substantial effect on teacher learning, and hence, student achievement (Rizzuto, 2017). Likewise, in this study, the ELPLP professional development was intended to help participants address the instructional needs of ELLs. Some participants reportedly gained knowledge, skills, best practices, and strategies from the professional development and shared academic success examples about their ELL students. The inability to communicate effectively with parents was cited a factor in the literature as a major communication challenge for elementary school teachers of ELLs (Santibañez & Gándara, 2018). A participant in this study stated that the biggest challenge was the communication barrier that existed among parents and teachers

Professional development and training were the other themes identified from the interviews of this study. After conducting the face-to-face interviews, the data was examined following a thorough process of analyzing and coding the responses. There were three themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview about the EL PLP professional development from teachers instructing ELLs. The themes were preparedness, instruction, and professional development and training.

Theme 1: Preparedness. The participants responded to the following questions: "What academic success examples can you share about your ELL students?" "How many times have you participated in ELPLP professional development training?" "How were you prepared to meet the Instructional needs of your ELLs before the ELPLP professional development training?" "How prepared are you to meet the Instructional needs of your ELLs after the ELPLP professional development training?"

All of the participants spoke of their preparedness before and after the mandatory ELPLP professional development training in support to instruct ELLs. Some words and phrases affiliated with the theme of preparedness were (a) teacher, colleague, or team support; (b) self-efficacy; (c) confident; (d) cultural. The theme of preparedness can be linked to the conceptual framework theory of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) indicated that self-efficacy is a mostly cognitive process in which somebody produces beliefs about how their persistence, response to potential failure, and coping strategies affect their performance on a specific tasks. In this study, participants who did not feel prepared before the ELPLP professional development or training, and even those who felt prepared, were comfortable in their ability to reach the academic needs of ELLs.

Three of the five participants felt they were not adequately prepared before the mandatory ELPLP professional development training to meet the instructional needs of their ELLs. However, they received support from their colleagues that helped them to instruct ELLs. One participant stated,

I didn't feel prepared when I had my ELL students in my classroom, because I was, I did have them prior to the training, mandated training. However, I had

really great ESOL teachers in my building. And so, they supported me a lot with

understanding.

One of the five participants prepared self to meet the instructional need of ELLs by doing

background research of ELL students. This participant stated,

Get any information about your students before you had them. And . . . seeing,

looking at what you're working with here, like how many of your kiddos are

coming in as an ESOL level 1? How many are newcomers? How many don't have

any English at all? Knowing what language is spoken in the home. So, I think

some of that you kind of prepare yourself, you do your background research on

that one before you have any official training to know how to instruct them just so

you kind of know where they are.

The participant also noted that the support from colleagues and school culture regarding

the consistent conversations about instructing ELLs added to her self-preparedness to

teach ELLs. Moreover, this participant mentioned resource books as a mean on how they

gain information on how to meet the needs of ELLs.

Although one participant felt well prepared and confident to instruct ELLs before

and after the mandatory ELPLP professional development training because of her

certification and experience with ELL students and viewed the professional development

as introductory and a refresher and not suitable for some teachers, she was enabled to

help other colleagues in need of support to teach ELLs. The participant reiterated,

Again, I think it served more as a refresher, and I think the positive thing about

taking part in the courses was that it helped me to be able to help other teachers

who had a lot of questions that were unanswered before the course rolled out.

Another participant discussed self-efficacy in her ability to instruct ELLs by preparing

herself:

So, . . . you kind of prepare yourself, . . . do your background research." Another

participant shared that some colleagues would find it difficult to apply strategies

and knowledge learned after taking the ELPLP professional development if they

weren't positive and enthused about all the changes, and working with colleagues

that had the same enthusiasm, for she "heard from other colleagues, . . . some

teachers after taking the courses, were more proactive than others . . . many

teachers were very positive . . . but if they weren't matched up with teams or

individual teachers . . . who had the same enthusiasm . . . it would be difficulty . . .

to put some of their strategies and knowledge forward in the classroom.

In addition, colleagues, team support, and conversations were essential aspects of the

implementation of ELPLP professional development training for participants who

instruct ELLs. The notion of having colleagues collaborating and sharing ideas and

queries was shown to be helpful as participants implemented new strategies, for a

participant who did not feel prepared to meet the instructional needs of ELLs before the

ELPLP professional development noted that she got support from colleagues to include

ESOL teachers in their schools. One participant stated, "I had great ESOL teachers . . .

they supported me a lot with understanding."

Preparedness prior to teaching ELLs was found to be an essential aspect of the perception of participants as all of them reported. Preparedness necessitates ongoing English learner professional development and collaborative discussions with colleagues about instructional decisions, having support from ESOL teachers, self-efficacy, and confidence in own ability to teach ELLs.

Theme 2: Instruction. A second theme that appeared from the data analysis was instruction with the following ideas linked to the theme: (a) language/taking, (b) communication, (c) strategies and best practices, (c) cultural experiences and mindsets, (d) coteaching, and (e) learning ability and achievement. The theme of instruction can be explicitly connected to Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) P–12 professional teaching standards, one of five overarching domains which are English-learner-focused data planning and implementation of instruction while using research-based English learner strategies (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). It was a positive aspect of the ELPLP professional development, for it started the dialogue on coteaching. One participant commented,

It created questioning of instruction, and what it should look like and how it should be done, and I think one of the most positive things is that it was the impetus for coteaching. So, our county has always talked about coteaching and collaboration and moving in that direction. But I think, I won't say I think, I know that when this professional development came to us and was activated, that's what made the difference to have true coteaching start because there was no way to

satisfy the requirements of what the Ell students were supposed to receive, as far

as instruction without that information.

Another participant mentioned, "I have had some very good successes . . . coteaching

with ESOL teachers. Being able to plan with and teach with ESOL teachers helped me."

However, regarding participants' instructional practices and knowledge of

coteaching after participating in the professional development, as another participant

stated,

And maybe some professional development on not only the strategies for what to

do but in how to most effectively coteach and coplan because I think there's a lot

on strategies to do in the classroom, but no one talks about that behind the scenes

stuff that's so important for when you're actually in the classroom. And I feel like

that would be interesting to me to just talk about the different models and the way

that could look like in the classroom and the way to set that up with your

co[teacher and a way to organize that because there's so much that goes into it.

You don't talk about that much, and that's a big piece of it.

Instruction could also be linked to the conceptual framework theory of self-

efficacy. The participants received instructional skills and best practices and strategies

from the ELPLP professional development to help them support instructional needs of

ELLs; therefore, the participants in this study showed a sense of conviction in their belief

that the strategies and best practices are useful for all students and not only for ELLs.

"Whenever an ESOL teacher speaks up . . . that a certain strategy would be good for our

ELL student . . . I'm actually thinking . . . it would be good for ANY student. Another

participant commented, "There are no specific strategies that are ELL-specific, that is, that will make things happen." Another participant remarked,

> I think it was very important that everyone is knowledgeable about these students that you're working with and that there are strategies that are proven to be effective. And because of that, you should use them. And just the fact that we had these opportunities and these strategies were presented to us, and again, the books were given to us, and we've had the opportunity to meet and talk with our ESOL teachers.

Communication barriers posed a challenge between parents and teachers. This challenge, if not addressed now, will have lasting consequences to the ELL population that will decrease instead of increase achievement of ELLs and expand instead of closing the achievement gap with ELLs and non-ELLs. A participant stated concerns about whether parents are making an effort to learn English to be able to communicate with school and teacher and to understand. As a participant stated,

> Today, it's so different that the parents only speak Spanish; the majority of them do not speak English at all. The parents that I interact with, they don't speak English and they don't seem to have any intention to speak English and they will flat out say I don't know how to work with my child, or I can't work with my child. . . . I specifically asked, 'Is there anyone at home that can help your child?' and they said 'No.' So, to me, it's just something that I've noticed personally. They just flat out say 'No, I can't help,' and that should be a concern. Especially

since we have PEP classes and we offer that to them for free. . . . Parents are

openly admitting that they can't help their children at home.

Instruction is one of the five TESOL P–12 Professional Teaching Standards in the

domains that participants identified with language and taking, communication, strategies

and best practices, cultural experiences and mindsets, coteaching, and learning ability and

achievement as necessary for teacher instructional practices and meaningful for the

student achievement.

Theme 3: Professional Development and Training. The third and final theme

was professional development and training. Words and phrases connected with the theme

of English learner professional development were (a) authentic and real-world

(b) structure, (c) in-depth/deeper evaluation, (d) online own pace, (e) coteaching and co-

planning in-house professional development. Professional development and training

could be linked to the conceptual framework theory which noted that effective

professional development goal to improve student learning outcomes (Guskey, 2003).

Rizzuto (2017) further stated that development should demonstrate a substantial effect on

teacher learning, and hence, student achievement. According to most of the participants,

the English learner professional development, and training was necessary to help the

teachers instruct ELLs. All of the participants expressed that they wanted to engage in

continuous professional development to increase their teaching practice. One participant

stated,

I definitely think that I will because, like I said, we had the pleasure of working

with so many students who come from so many different backgrounds and just

being able to know the most current and up to date best practice, the most

effective methods, the most effective strategies. You kind of can only do that

from continuing to be a learner yourself. And if that means taking more

professional development, training them, I think that everybody, to try.

Moreover, another participant felt comfortable to reflect and evaluate on an aspect of

English learner professional development that required continuous growth, and that

would improve teaching,

I think there are things that are hard. For example, you know, co-planning

coteaching, that's hard sometimes . . . Because they are new, there are so many

different models that you're trying to figure out, and then you're trying to . . .

coteaching on itself as a thing and then co-planning, I mean all of that. I don't;

again, . . . I think those are just; those are bigger hurdles to get through, . . . To try

to figure it out.

It is imperative that this professional development be differentiated and

significant in meeting the professional needs of all of the teachers. Another participant

reported,

But what I found now is that I've taken several courses that were of specific

interest to me and the remaining courses that are being offered now, like I

mentioned, the number, of course, has declined. The courses that are being

offered now are all very basic very introductory and, honestly, they just don't

match my level of knowledge. It would be kind of a waste of time to go and sit

through it, so I'm hoping that some others . . . will come out. And I noticed

something, I don't know if it's new, but with the courses, I've noticed now that
they are listing them as introductory or you know advanced, and that I think that's
a helpful thing. Because sometimes going by just the titles of the courses
themselves, it's not possible to know what matches your level of knowledge, or
expertise. I do hope that the choices might grow.

I inferred that a more English-learner-focused professional development would be
beneficial because it would build upon and strengthen teaching practices because, when
teachers acknowledge a lack of knowledge and skills, administrators and or school
leaders must provide the specified professional development for them to obtain the
required instructional strategies that will in-turn support the academic needs of their
students.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative bounded case study was to explore and investigate
teachers' perceptions of the mandated ELPLP professional development to help address
the instructional needs of ELLs. I conducted face-to-face interviews with elementary
school teachers to gather data to answer research questions. I obtained a deep
understanding of teachers' perceptions of the mandated ELPLP professional development
to address the instructional needs of ELLs. The elementary school with a large number of
ELL students was the site for this research study. There were five participants in this
doctoral project study who were responsible for instructing ELL students in mainstream
classrooms.

After analyzing the data, the results of the doctoral project study guided me to develop a 3-day, in-house, professional development workshop that was focused-on coteaching and co-planning for all educators responsible for working with ELLs. In the informational data that I collected through interviews, some of the teachers stated a desire to participate in future English learner professional development to keep abreast of the current effective practices and research-based methods that are best-suited to inform instructional decisions regarding the ELLs they service, In addition, one participant appeared to be consistent in her descriptions of the sort of professional development that would help to strengthen effectiveness and skill practice in working with ELLs: focused professional development on coteaching and co-planning.

Additionally, some of the participants had not received any English learner professional development before the district mandate, even though it influenced the way that they perceived their preparedness to meet the instructional needs of ELL students in the classroom. Furthermore, one participant viewed ELPLP professional development as inadequate in providing new learning and hands-on practices that she could take back to her classroom. Another participant noted the need to improve the ELPLP professional development by examining it regularly to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all of the teachers and to have more in-depth training on the evaluation to see what its impact is on the teacher and their students' learning. Moreover, the participants expressed a need to have future professional development conducted conveniently in-house at the school location where they work and for it to be a topic of interest to their professional

knowledge and skills. One participant also noted that poor communication among teachers and parents was a challenge in working with ELLs

The doctoral project study can affect positive social change because teachers will not only be adequately prepared to work with ELLs, they will also be equipped with instructional strategies, including coteaching and co-planning models that are best-suited to guide instruction concerning ELLs, thus, increasing achievement among ELL students.

In Section 3, I have provided the purpose and benefits of the Professional Development Workshop Project, the details for which are presented in Appendix A. Section 4 includes my reflections and conclusions as the researcher and creator of the project.

Section 3: Professional Development Workshop Project

Introduction

The purpose of the doctoral study was to explore and investigate teachers' perceptions of mandated ELPLP professional development to help address the instructional needs of ELLs. In this qualitative case study, I collected data from one-on-one interviews. Five participants who were responsible for instructing ELL students participated in the study.

Some of the findings suggest that an in-house professional development program on coteaching and co-planning could make a difference for teachers who teach ELLs so that they could increase their knowledge and skills practice in instruction. Therefore, I developed a 3-day in-house professional development workshop for all educators responsible for working with ELLs to meet the needs that participants expressed in their interviews.

According to Guskey (2003), professional development should be based on the best possible research data. In this study, I found that participants indicated factors such as structure, time, in-depth and deeper evaluation, online by ones' own pace, workshop courses availability and offerings, scheduling, locations, and communication are necessary for effective ongoing professional development.

Rationale

Given that the number of emerging bilingual children has risen to roughly 12 million in 2016, an increase of 1.2 million over 10 years (Mitchell, 2018), in diverse school districts across the United States, educators require professional development that

will facilitate the academic achievement of all students. Some results of my research support evidence in the literature that some teachers are not prepared to meet the instructional needs of ELLs. In addition, focused professional development to further strengthen teachers' professional knowledge and skill practice is necessary. A critical reported issue for teachers is that they need to participate in focused professional development because they do not feel prepared to meet the academic needs of the ELs placed in their classrooms (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). Some of the participants in my study indicated that they were not prepared to meet the instructional needs of ELLs before the ELPLP professional development occurred, colleague discussions would be beneficial to them in terms of professional development, they desired future professional development that would be aligned with their professional interests and conducted in-house, and they desired professional development that would be focused on coteaching and co-planning. I concluded from participants' answers and literature that teachers would benefit from a focused in-house professional development event on coteaching and co-planning. The 3-day professional development program provides teachers with opportunities to dialogue with colleagues and practice instructional skills to prepare them to address better the academic needs of ELLs.

For ELLs to be taught effectively, time must be given for EL professional development that allows teachers the possibility to collaborate and share ideas with colleagues regarding instructional decisions. From this professional development, teachers develop a sense of shared responsibility and are given support to address the needs of their ELLs. Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for

teachers who instruct ELLs is of great importance for both teachers and student learners because teachers require skill practice, research-based information, and strategies to master their professional skills and teach ELLs.

Review of the Literature

For this literature review, search terms and phrases used were: *coteaching*, *co-planning*, *English learner-focused professional development*, *English learner professional development*, *improving English learner-focused professional development*, *English learner teacher preparedness*, *ELLs achievement gap*, *non-ELL peers*, *adult learning theory*, and *TESOL P–12 professional teaching standards*. The search was completed using educational databases from the Walden University Library as well as local web sites. This search provided scholarly information that promoted the appropriateness of English learner-focused professional development for this study's project, professional development workshop sessions, and professional development to increase teachers' knowledge and skills.

Conceptual Framework

After examining teachers' perceptions of ELPLP professional development, I began searching literature for learning theories to increase the effectiveness of adult learners and educators. Some participants in this study expressed a desire to participate in future EL professional development training only if it would have a positive impact. Participants were aware of and understood their professional growth areas; therefore, the andragogy-adult conceptual framework was appropriate to apply in this project.

Furthermore, adult readiness to learn and cope effectively with real life situations is a core principle of the adult learning theory (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). The current real-life situation here is that the ELL population continues to be rising in schools. Teachers must be willing and ready to attend professional development programs that would give them the knowledge and skills to meet the academic needs of ELLs. Knowles et al. (2005) said that adult learners want to have control over their learning process, which increases their learning in adult education. Some participants in this study did not feel ELPLP professional development was timely and taught them anything that they could have taken back to the classroom. Gaining input and understanding the professional needs of teachers will help professional development developers, schools, and districts plan effective professional development that will increases the knowledge and skills of teachers who instruct ELLs.

Some of the data that I collected for this doctoral study revealed that teachers wanted to participate in future professional development that would be aligned with their professional needs and conducted conveniently in the school location where they work. Therefore, I created a professional development event that would provide them with coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies that they need to support the academic needs of ELLs. The project was developed from the findings in Section 2. The adult learning theory was appropriate in guiding the development of the project. An effective professional development can benefit both teachers and students. As teachers increase their professional knowledge and skills, they can apply learned instructional strategies to

their teaching of ELLs. Thus, they can become a master of the craft of education as they strive to meet the academic needs of their students.

Providing professional development to support teachers of ELLs promotes the integration of instructional strategies such as coteaching and co-planning that enhance teachers' knowledge and skill practice, thereby, enabling them to meet the academic needs of ELLs that will also help close the academic achievement gap between ELLs and their non-ELL peers.

Professional Development

The themes named as essential are the result of interviews conducted in this study in which preparedness, instruction, professional development, and a desire to attend professional development were aligned to professional need. Moreover, the participants indicated a need for more information about instructional strategies on coteaching and co-planning. These aspects and instructional strategies are demonstrated in the professional development to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers who instruct ELLs, which is the design for this project. With the rise of English learners in our schools, the support or lack of support that teachers of English learners receive will play a role in the outcomes for their learning, for the push is for teachers to teach high-level content to all students, including all levels of English learners, which creates a challenging instructional environment for all teachers (Russell, 2015).

Professional development opportunities for teachers and educators of ELLs is of utmost importance, for they are required to instruct the Nation's most rapidly growing population; however, that instruction is currently lagging academically behind their non-

ELL school peers. The educators' and teachers' willingness for continued professional

growth demonstrates their readiness to learn what is needed to know and to carry out

their professional duty, instructing ELLs effectively. Therefore, practical professional

development training on teachers' specific needs and with current research-based

instructional strategies will increase their knowledge and skill practice, equipping them to

fulfill the academic needs of ELLs in public schools.

   For many decades, teachers' professional growth of knowledge and skills has

been the topic of policy, research, and even philosophy. Thus, the measuring and

comparing of teachers, and the designing of techniques to improve the teaching

profession through professional development, contribute evidence that shows that good

teachers can be made and can significantly improve their instruction (Téllez &

Mosqueda, 2015). Babinski, Amendum, Knotek, Sánchez, and Malone (2018) examined

the impact of a teacher professional development program on teaching practices and the

language and literacy skills of young English learners. They found a positive effect of the

professional development program on teachers' use of specific instructional strategies for

English learners. In addition, teachers' professional development was found to have a

positive impact on students' learning outcomes. This information provides support for the

development of this project than was conducted over 6 months on coteaching and co-

planning instructional strategies to increase the knowledge and skills of the teachers of

ELLs. The project was predicted to have a positive impact on the learning of both

teachers and students (Babinski et al., 2018).

Mohan, Lingam, and Chand (2017) found that professional development sessions increase teachers' knowledge and skills, which contributes towards better student learning. One deciding factor of an effective professional development is its positive impact on student learning. Mohan et al. (2017) concluded that, from the teachers' perceptions, essential factors to consider when planning a professional development for schools is to include relevance to teachers' needs and the context. This informs the duration of the professional development project over the 6 months and the application of instructional strategies and coteaching and co-planning models in alignment with the teachers' professional needs and interest that were built into the project (Mohan et al., 2017).

Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardiner (2017) identified distinct practices in professional development models that were associated with gains in student learning. These types of professional development frequently provide; built-in time for teachers to think about, receive input on, and make changes to their practice by giving intentional time for feedback and reflection (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). They describe feedback and reflection as the practices that are learned, seen, and modeled during professional development and that help teachers move mindfully toward becoming experts in their professional practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This description is compatible with the plan of the professional development project created. The distinct practices indicated for this type of professional development have a positive impact on teachers and on student learning experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This description is important for the project because the instructional strategies, coteaching,

and co-planning that increase teachers' knowledge and skills were practiced in the workshop (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Avidov-Ungar (2016) studied teachers' thoughts on their professional development, and found that teachers vary from one another in their motivation for professional development, which can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. Moreover, the growth that teachers strive for can be lateral (i.e., inside the domain of education) or vertical (i.e., to obtain leadership positions). The two proportions produce a typology of four models of development. The typology increases teachers' knowledge of their professional development and motivational aspects, which makes them grow sharply. Avidov-Ungar (2016) suggested that school leaders could benefit from this typology to more readily comprehend the inspirations and aspirations of staff by using meetings or questionnaires. That suggestion coordinates the professional development procedure to the pattern that portrays staff at the school. In addition, facilitators and developers of professional development could benefit from the typology model that implements a collection of methodologies in their training, considering the learners' motivations and aspirations.

Teachers can benefit from professional development for teaching ELLs effectively, for it plays a crucial role in teachers' knowledge. Therefore, professional developments must be aligned with teachers' professional interest. Franco-Fuenmayor et al. (2015) examined teachers' knowledge of instructional practices for ELL bilingual programs. They explored research-based instructional strategies and knowledge that was related to second-language development among bilingual and ESL teachers. In one of

their findings, Franco-Fuenmayor et al. reported that bilingual and ESL teachers are not being provided with information about research on bilingual education. In addition, regarding best practices for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, Franco-Fuenmayor et al. recommended professional development planner gain input from teachers about their professional learning needs. Learning more about teachers' knowledge might help school districts plan professional development that will provide teachers with the resources that they need to deliver more effective instruction for ELLs. When general professional development tasks are infused with knowledge and skills that are linked to the instruction of ELLs, then all of the teachers can best meet the academic ELLs (Franco-Fuenmayor et al., 2015).

Franco-Fuenmayor et al.'s (2015) was essential because it underscored the work of modern researchers who indicated that professional development for teachers transpires during their profession across a lengthy time. In addition, it demands situations that match their world views. This concept is consistent with the intent of this professional development project because it is aligned with a core principle of the adult learning theory conceptual framework that is appropriate for the project. Finally, Franco-Fuenmayor et al. (2015) concluded that educators could distinguish, within a thoughtful process, their decisions and examples in the standing of the typology. Then, they decide whether their current occupation is relevant or whether they should seek an alternate professional development design to satisfy their profession objectives (Avidov-Ungar, 2016).

Brown and Aydeniz (2017) reported on a professional development program that was created to increase teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching with informational texts for ELLs that were aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The year-long reflections from teachers demonstrated the value of creating their pedagogical knowledge by thinking and making judgement about classroom learning applications In addition, teachers' discussions were vital in learning to acquire a second language to understand the ELLs' struggles as learners and the effect of English proficiency on informational text comprehension in science. The results showed that teachers increased their understanding of their role as teachers in helping ELLs to access informational texts. A year later, follow-up interviews disclosed that teachers developed and sustained current instructional practices and supported their colleagues to adopt the recently acquired instructional strategies (Brown & Aydeniz, 2017). This information is pivotal and supports the need for reflection and collegial discussions among the teachers in this professional development project over the 6 months of the school year. Thus, it enabled them to reflect on the successes gained from the application of the coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies that they learned.

David (2018) developed a project to investigate effective teaching pedagogies that can be used to guide mainstream classroom teachers in creating an optimal learning environment for ELLs. The design of the professional development workshop was a four-session series to be offered over 2 days so that their knowledge and skill practices could build over time (David, 2018). David (2018) noted that the workshop should be administered by people who would not be specialists so that accessibility could be

enhanced. The summary of the project design displayed a review of related literature that demonstrated the value of using research-based strategies in the context of teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms (David, 2018). This project design was relevant, for it informed the project in the use of professional development as a medium for integrating coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies into the context of the subject over 3 days in 6 months.

Coteaching and Co-planning Initiative to Support Teachers of ELLs

The number of ELLs in American schools continues to rise. Therefore, improving instruction for ELLs and closing the academic gap between these learners and their native-English-speaking peers is an endeavor (Chandler-Olcott & Nieroda, 2016). As documented in the literature, teachers are underprepared with the support and knowledge about how to best instruct ELLs. The need for effective instructional strategies embedded in professional development is vital to increase teachers' knowledge and skills to meet the academic needs of ELLs. The impact of coteaching and co-planning model to support ELLs has been a topic of research. Beninghof and Leensvaart (2016) examined changing teachers' instructional practices to improve the outcomes for ELLs in an elementary school. They found that the student growth percentile moved from a rating of *Approaching* to that of *Exceeds* the highest score possible in the state after just 1 year of implementing this model. They agreed with prior researchers that coteaching brings two educators with differing areas of expertise collectively to help students for part or all of their school day. However, during the co-planning phase, each teacher typically has a unique role. Beninghof and Leensvaart noted that the coteaching was ineffective, in the

sense that all students are "our students" permeates every aspect of the instructional

cycle. They suggested that, for the coteaching initiative to continue, the teacher needs

more guidance in defining his or her roles. In addition, repeated coaching and practice

were required to ensure that lesson planning was truly scaffolded and differentiated for

ELLs. Finally, they concluded that coteaching revealed itself as the most effective,

efficient way to maximize teacher and student growth (Beninghof & Leensvaart, 2016)

   Chandler-Olcott and Nieroda (2016) noted an initiative to collaborate and to

initiate coteaching for ELL instruction, which brought about an awareness that would

fully prepare and equip teachers at all levels to best meet the needs of English learners.

Chandler-Olcott and Nieroda (2016) conducted a heuristic phenomenological study to

explore the lived experiences and relational dynamics of co-teachers within the English

learner instructional setting. Their finding showed that teachers, including mainstream

and ESL teachers, valued the coteaching model for ESL that was support by describing

their positive feelings toward their co-teachers (Chandler-Olcott & Nieroda, 2016).

   Ford-DeWaters (2017) explored the co-teachers' perceptions of the

implementation of coteaching strategies with English learners. Ford-DeWaters found four

themes: two involved clarity in the roles and responsibilities of co-teachers within their

teams for effective time management of the co-planning period. The other two themes

were professional development opportunities and learning from each other. Ford-

DeWaters reported that professional development needs to be designed specifically to

help teachers implement coteaching and co-planning strategies more efficiently. Ford-

DeWaters also noted that establishing these would enhance the effectiveness of

coteaching implementation strategies. Moreover, Ford-DeWaters identified a need for more uninterrupted planning time to foster a collegial relationship and reflective conversation on coteaching experiences. Ford-DeWaters mentioned that teachers understood and supported the rationale and purpose of the instructional strategies of coteaching and co-planning. In addition, Ford-DeWaters experienced authentic and relevant learning, which the teachers could apply immediately in their classrooms.

Furthermore, teachers transferred their knowledge to other parts of their instructional day, even when they were not coteaching. Finally, Ford-DeWaters noted that teachers described the work in co-planning as beneficial for all their students. The relevance of this study was that it underscored the need for coteaching and co-planning professional development explicitly created for teachers to increase their knowledge and skills practice to instruct ELLs. Thus, increasing learning for both the ELL teacher and student. Therefore; effective instruction plays a key role in the academic success of ELLs in school. It is the obligation of school districts and teachers to educate ELLs effectively, thereby, affecting their learning experience positively (Ford-DeWaters, 2017).

Wicks (2016) focused on coteaching relationships and models in two elementary schools. Wicks investigated mainstream and English learner teachers' perceptions of coteaching to help educators in the district plan for implementing coteaching, plan for professional development, and develop coteaching models, and relationships to best meet the needs of the ELL students. Wicks found that coteaching is a useful ESL program model for teachers who had experience coteaching. These teachers believed in the benefits of coteaching when exposed to coteaching. In addition, teachers' willingness to

try coteaching means that more teachers would see first-hand the effectiveness of coteaching (Wicks, 2016). Wicks (2016) noted that such factors as adequate planning time, having a compatible coteaching partner, shared responsibility in planning, and support from the administration are needed for coteaching to be successful. This research was essential because these types of factors were embedded in the project over the 6-month period, which led to an increase in knowledge and skills for the ELL teacher. This was especially true for teachers who had a readiness to learn what was needed because it was tied to project sessions. Success with the project sessions had a positive impact on the teachers and the ELLs' learning (Wicks, 2016).

Kwon (2018) reviewed the challenges in coteaching and the sources of challenges. Kwon found that the collaborative planning stage, in which co-teachers jointly discuss their plans for the construction of their lessons before teaching, is when challenges emerge. These challenges include lack of co-planning time, insufficient training, and the need for professional development programs. Additionally, teachers' unfamiliarity with the coteaching approach was a common issue because of a lack of guidelines. This review was vital because it brought awareness to the real challenges that could arise. Hence, it gave insights for this project and informed future professional development designs in implementing coteaching strategies to help instruct ELLs (Kwon, 2018).

Coteaching and co-planning are considered an instructional strategy that enhances teachers' professional skills, equipping them to address the growing ELL population in American school systems. Rytivaara, Pulkkinen, and de Bruin (2019) studied coteaching

concerning co-teachers' professional knowledge. They found teachers develop successful coteaching over time in two phases: (a) commitment to building a partnership with a colleague, and (b) sharing of practical experience. In the first phase, teachers discuss expectations and known challenges of coteaching and co-planning before committing to becoming a team member. In the second phase, the committed team members discussed their professional learning skills, took part in the planning of teaching lessons and goals, and shared understanding of coteaching and co-planning through extensive discussions. Rytivaara et al. agreed with previous researchers that the lack of planning time had been identified as a significant barrier to coteaching. Therefore, it was taken into account in the design of the study when the teachers committed to coteaching together. Rytivaara et al. suggested that coteaching be approached in two ways. The first approach was the context of learning, in which teachers learn each other's expertise to work as partners coteaching. The next approach is the focus of knowledge when teachers explore their roles and develop their coteaching practices together. Finally, they concluded that the extensive discussions that take place during the second phase have significant consequences for the coteaching practices, and thus constitute its foundation (Rytivaara et al., 2019).

Meadows and Caniglia (2018) focused on the topic of co-teachers, noticing implications for professional development. They presented a research-based professional development model that they had created for teachers to improve and enhance their coteaching practices. Their in-depth examination of a coteaching team included reflective discussions of their classroom interactions by engaging videos of their instruction and coteaching team discussions, noticing logs, and reflective journals (Meadows & Caniglia,

2018). They found that (a) teachers' convictions on educating had become more aligned, (b) teachers' beliefs on collaboration were contradictory, (c) instructors tended to center on their instructing, not on student learning; and (d) teachers were not cognizant of their views toward educating and coteaching (Meadows & Caniglia, 2018). Meadows and Caniglia (2018) recommended other literature that supported their concepts of coteaching and that would be beneficial to make co-teachers' steadier. Some of their concepts were that professional development (a) should be created and implemented to practice intentional noticing of co-teachers' classroom instruction, (b) should support reflection, (c) should center on co-teacher commitment, and (d) should give co-teachers time and space to develop, communicate, collaborate, and construct their relationship. Meadows and Caniglia's (2018) study was vital because the noticing activities could increase teachers' knowledge and skill practice through professional development, which might lead to improving ELLs' learning. This is notably true for helping to close the achievement gap between ELLs and their non-ELL, school peers (Meadows & Caniglia, 2018).

Government laws require schools to incorporate coteaching in the schools' learning environment. Coteaching is an instructional strategy that teachers can achieve in many different ways. Pancsofar and Petroff (2016) considered how frequently - implement different approaches to coteaching and what factors connected with the implementation of these approaches. In a few of their findings, they recommended that teachers change their coteaching strategies. Whether instructors change their strategies might be reflective of how much they know about coteaching through their professional

development opportunities. Moreover, their instructing encounters might incorporate how much time an instructor spends with their co-teacher each day. The length of time within the coteaching relationship and the number of co-teachers they work with at a given time might also be included (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2016). Coteaching and co-planning enhance the teacher experience that increases professional growth in their knowledge and skill that will have a positive influence on ELL academic success in our schools (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2016).

Porter (2018) described the discursive practices of an ELL teacher and a general education teacher in a coteaching professional learning community setting. The data that Porter gathered were from using both semistructured interviews and observations of co-teachers in the PLC meetings. Porter showed that teachers' perceptions control the discursive practices of a coteaching team in a coteaching PLC setting. Additionally, by their convictions about their school's meaning of coteaching and PLCs, and their positions as co-teachers in their framework of instructional support for ELLs. The overall pattern in the study demonstrated that the general education teachers accepted accountability for making the decision. In addition, they frequently reacted to collaborative remarks in manners that situated the general education teacher in the decision-making role. However, the ELL teacher reinforced this perception of roles by exhibiting patterns of submissive conversation style, and actions that positioned herself as the helper in the classroom rather than a co-teacher (Porter, 2018). This study is vital for teachers, school and district administrators, and any future professional development on this topic because it brings into awareness the responsibility, challenges, and belief that

coteaching and co-planning employs. Following Porter's (2018) recommendations will ensure that coteaching and co-planning are done with fidelity and consistency in the school system.

Many of the school districts continue to see an increase in the ELL population; therefore, the academic achievement of ELLs has been a growing concern. Dove and Honigsfeld (2014) documented the implementation and outcomes of an innovative program. The program was founded on the premise of improving instruction for English learners through an ESL coteaching model. The coteaching model was twofold: (a) to enhance an ongoing school initiative for ELLs and (b) to solve the lack of classroom space for a stand-alone ESL program (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014). Dove and Honigsfeld (2014) revealed that the design model seemed to be effective, for its implementation was through formal professional development workshops, instructional coaching, and coteaching members' individual and group reflections. That plan allowed the different aspects of the model to be introduced over time.

Additionally, building leadership support played a crucial role in the implementation process. Dove and Honigsfeld (2014) noted that the primary findings varied to some degree with the initiative after new leadership showed less support. They concluded that success in the model's implementation was mainly the first half of the school year when the second period of instruction was reserved for coteaching English learners in a shared general-education classroom. In addition, positive outcomes of the model included an increase in the collaboration between ESL and classroom teachers and a greater sense of shared responsibility and accountability for all students. Importantly,

the data revealed challenges to the coteaching model later in the school year. Furthermore, the instructional period changed and a reading program was added, but the overall implementation of the model in the school was inconsistent (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2014). The relevance of this study was that it highlighted the need for both teachers and administrators to understand better how whole-school approaches to educating ELLs and the way school initiatives are implemented can enhance or impede student progress and program success. In addition, the design was chosen because Dove and Honigsfeld (2014) suggested that professional development should engage the participants and be continued over a long period.

Co-planning is regarded as a fundamental piece of a thriving coteaching relationship where both teachers have equality and use their expertise to benefit all students (Pratt, Imbody, Wolf, & Patterson, 2016). The aforementioned is essential for all educators, administrators, and district leaders to know. Support for time to co-plan is critical to assure the success of the coteaching relationship and the learners inside their cotaught classroom. Pratt et al. (2016) shared a framework for co-teachers to use co-plan unit course goals, biweekly, and daily. They recommended that, in the co-planning framework, the unit planning is the initial planning stage in preparing long-term and end-of-course goals. At the biweekly planning stage, the co-teachers' conversations were framed to identify essential learning experiences. These learning experiences are everything that students require and the formative assessments to be used to monitor their progress. In addition, the objectives, standards of learning to be covered, resources, and delivery of instruction are all captured onto a shared calendar for everyone to see. Co-

teachers can also divide the delivery of lessons responsibilities by comfort level, career expertise, and access. The daily planning stage allows co-teachers to continually update instruction throughout everyday preparation and communication (Pratt et al., 2016). The co-planning framework informs the co-planning aspect of the professional development project as a guide to provide opportunities to share ideas and to develop the hands-on activities that are built into the project (Pratt et al., 2016).

Sears et al. (2018) described preservice teachers' and collaborating teachers' perspectives on professional development. They concentrated on co-planning and coteaching in secondary mathematics. Sears et al. (2018) found professional development to be helpful because it improved teachers' understanding of several co-planning and coteaching strategies. They further confirmed that the teachers considered professional development to be adequate in aiding their learning of the strategy, and that co-planning and coteaching could support student learning. Sears et al. (2018) also found that student learning possibilities could transpire when teachers co-plan and coteach. In addition, they attend to student thinking and equitable matters, facilitate structured conversations, and are aware of contextual factors that can affect their instructional practices.

Moreover, Sears et al. (2018) highlighted that teachers valued the collaboration and the modeling of the coteaching strategies pairs. In summary, the professional development provided an opportunity for professional learning and a chance to reflect on the means of supporting student learning while increasing equitable learning opportunities. The relevance of this study was that it emphasized the need for the professional development of co-planning and coteaching for a teacher's professional

learning and student learning. This project has been embedded with opportunities for teachers to reflect and collaborate in each professional development session in addition to sharing coteaching and co-planning experiences (Sears et al., 2018).

Weilbacher and Tilford (2015) examined the interviews of teacher candidates and veterans cooperating teachers to determine how coteaching influenced their professional development and instructional practices. Weilbacher and Tilford found that both the teacher candidates and cooperating teachers noted that coteaching provided them with increased opportunities to support one another's professional growth. Even the teacher candidates recognized that coteaching arrangements were effective in providing them with appropriate and engaging teacher preparation experiences. Furthermore, they noted that coteaching helped them to meet the needs of their students. Moreover, coteaching was perceived as a reliable method of both teacher preparation and professional development for cooperating teachers and student candidates equally. Weilbacher and Tilford (2015) advised that teacher preparedness for coteaching should be implanted into teacher education coursework leading up to and supporting their student teaching experience. The relevance of this study was the importance of providing this professional development on coteaching to build-up the teachers' knowledge and to hone their skill practice through their experiences as co-teachers. Teachers who practice coteaching foster and promote professional growth because they learn from each other during collaboration, co-planning for instructing students, and reflecting on lessons.

The impact of coteaching professional development has been a topic of research. Barnes (2017) determined the effect coteaching professional development had on teacher

attitudes and classroom practices in a school setting. Barnes found that professional

development had a positive impact on educator beliefs and coteaching practices.

Moreover, professional development helped to remove the common barriers that

researchers and the participants of this study recognized. Barnes agreed with previous

research on coteaching amid his findings that included components for effective

coteaching relationships, standard planning time, administrative support, and similar

teacher education. Barnes recommended that later research should include Barnes'

research design to examine the impact of professional development on district or school

initiatives. This professional development project also has the same topic and an effort to

support all educators, teachers, administrators, district personnel, and professional

development developers. The feedback received from participants informed the

stakeholders of the professional development impact.

For teachers to share collectively the responsibility for student learning,

opportunities for coteaching must be provided. Gallo-Fox and Scantlebury (2016) studied

the topic of coteaching as professional development for cooperating teachers who

cotaught classes with student teachers. They found that the coteaching experiences

increased the teachers' instructional practice and developed in them unique insights about

their teaching. Furthermore, the experience provided them with (a) restored strength

toward practice, (b) opportunities to develop and execute curriculum, (c) reflection as an

impetus for changing practice, and (d) an increase of professional roles into new fields

(Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2016). This report supports the need to provide coteaching

opportunities as a professional development project to increase teachers' knowledge and instructional skill practice, in turn, to improve student learning.

The professional development project that I developed as a coteaching and co-planning initiative included strategies and critical information to support all educators, teachers administrators, district personnel, and professional development developers in increasing the learning success of teachers and ELLs. These supports included (a) guidance in defining coteaching and co-planning roles, (b) repeated coaching and practice to ensure that lesson planning is scaffolded and differentiated for ELLs, (c) implementing a coteaching plan for professional development, and (d) developing coteaching models and relationships to best meet the needs of the ELL students.

Project Description

The professional development project proposed will be hands-on 3-day workshop at the start of the school year that will be open to all teachers who serve ELLs. The teachers will spend time reviewing coteaching and co-planning models to increase their knowledge and skills practice with their colleagues during grade-level collaborative leadership team meetings for application in classroom instruction of ELLs. The sessions will be on teacher and district workdays over 6 months. The sessions will provide teachers with practice time to review the effect with colleagues, to allow instructional delivery and student learning, and to give time to reflect and share. Again, a detailed description of the Professional Development Workshop Project learning objectives and materials are in Appendix A.

One session will be held each of the 6 months. The school year calendar for the site will be August to June. Day 1 will be in the fourth week of August. Day 2 will be in the third week of October, and Day 3 will be in the fifth week of January. Each session will comprise of specific information about coteaching and co-planning and TESOL P–12 Professional Teaching Standards of instruction. Additionally, time will be allow for the teachers (a) to have opportunities to engage in the sharing of their ideas and learned lessons, (b) to present reflective stories on successes, challenges, experience, and (c) to implement practices throughout the quarter and onward.

The target teachers will be those who are teaching ELL students, including seasoned, newly hired, and ESOL certified teachers. Strategies will be included on how to improve teacher-preparedness, instruction, and ELL overall academic achievement. The three goals of this professional development project will be to first, increase teacher knowledge and skills practice of coteaching and co-planning models. Second, to increase teacher knowledge of instructional strategies to improve coteaching and co-planning in and out of the classroom. Third, to increase teacher knowledge of integrating coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies and models.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

The resources required for the professional development will be available at the school site for the implementation of this professional development. The results of my study indicated that the teachers desired coteaching and co-planning information, and that

they wanted to participate in future professional development that would be provided conveniently in-house the school site.

Potential resources will be the administrative team, district curriculum, and pacing guides. Posting and advertising of the professional development will by the school email, mailbox, and announcement intercom system. All workshop sessions will be accommodated in the library or one of the classrooms at the school furnished with a computer, Elmo, and smartboard system. With assistance from school administrators, I will make arrangement and supply lunch and light refreshments. As the primary facilitator of the professional development, I will provide all of the electronic copy of the handout, material from the presentation for the current and future use by all attendees and monitor and respond to online discourse as necessary. The only financial cost will be for lunch and snacks to be purchase for the 3-Day workshop sessions.

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers persist in every initiative. The potential barrier to the implementation of the professional development will be the time involved from the teacher participants. To address this barrier, the sessions will be planned on teacher- and district-required workdays over 6 months, during which the teachers will not be out of their classrooms for 3 days, requiring them to create lesson plans for substitute coverage. It will also help to accommodate teachers by compressing the schedules, which will yield opportunities to apply information promptly in their teaching.

Furthermore, the teachers' time was regarded as meals, and refreshments were provided, preventing them from having to buy or prepare food on professional

development days. In addition, participation in the professional development was voluntary, not mandated.

Another potential barrier was administrator turnover and the administrator's role in supporting the professional development. This barrier was mitigated by communicating expectations with the new and seasoned administrator to both attend the professional development with teachers and to support teachers' decision to partake in the professional development. In that way, both the administrator and the teacher will listen to the same message, increasing their knowledge and practice skill to serve ELLs.

Implementation Timetable

One session will be held each of the 6 months. The school year calendar for the site will be August to June. The sessions will be on teacher and district required workdays over 6 months. Day 1 will be in the 4th week of August. Day 2 will be in the 3rd week of October, and Day 3 will be in the 5th week of January. Each session be comprised specific information about coteaching and co-planning. Additionally, time will be allowed to teachers to have opportunities to engage in the sharing of their ideas and learned lessons, reflective stories on successes, challenges, and implemented practices throughout the quarter. Feedback from teachers will be applied to enhance this professional development for future presentation.

Roles and Responsibilities

I will be the workshop facilitator who will be responsible for the planning, creation, communication, and implementation of the professional development to integrate coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies into the classroom with

ELLs. The participating staff members will be expected and encouraged actively to

engage in the sessions by reacting through ongoing collegial conversations, reflection,

and task prompts. I led the discussions at each workshop session and provide the tools

and materials for the workshop sessions, including handouts and electronic resources to

conserve time and money. I served as a coach for the first group of participating teachers

and had them turn-key for other interested staff members.

Project Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of an implementation and the effectiveness of a new project are

essential to examine its durability and to improve future projects. The evaluation plan

will be a formative evaluation during the professional development that I will evaluate

regarding its short-term impact. In addition, the Day 1 Evaluation, the Day 2 Evaluation,

and the Day 3 Evaluation (see Appendix A) will be given at the end of the professional

development as a summative evaluation to gather feedback to know how the teachers

perceived the professional development.

Formative Evaluation

The formative evaluation will be conducted during the professional development

workshop session implementation to help make necessary adjustments in real time that

would guide future professional development. After each session, attendees will complete

an elevation to provide feedback on the specific session's effectiveness and to make

revisions, according to how well the attendees learned to increase knowledge, practice

skills, and ensure comprehension of the instructional strategies, coteaching, and co-

planning.

Summative Evaluation

The summative evaluation will go to all of the attendees via school email. After the professional development workshop sessions will end at the end of the school year, I will send an anonymous survey to measure the attendees' overall learning experience. All of the attendees will have a chance to reflect on the impact of their learning. They will give feedback to five, open-ended questions that will indicate the significant components of the professional development and its effectiveness. In addition, I will suggest that, if the attendees implement the instructional strategy of coteaching and co-planning that will be presented, it will have an impact on their teaching of students and the performance of their students, their challenges and solutions, and their ideas for future topic and concepts. The information collected from this evaluation will direct future professional development projects, assuring that they will effectively promoting essential knowledge and skills to strengthen teachers' professional practice in teaching ELLs.

Goal-Based Evaluation

The goals-based evaluation approach will enable an evaluator to create evaluation goals that will describe the overarching purpose of professional development (Lodico et al., 2010). A goals-based evaluation approach will be appropriate because I created and designed the project to address the participants' needs that had been stated in the findings of this study. Additionally, these evaluation goals will enable me to monitor the project's effectiveness in addressing the findings of the project study. The project's evaluation goals will be to increase teacher knowledge and skills practice of coteaching and co-planning models, to increase teacher knowledge of instructional strategies to improve

coteaching and co-planning in and out of the classroom, and to increase teacher knowledge of integrating coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies and models.

Key Stakeholders

The key stakeholders will be staff, site and district administrators, students, and community. As the facilitator, I will be responsible for the evaluation process by making changes to the professional development according to the data that will be collected by formative assessment. I will supply the data collecting measure, organize, summarize, and present it to the stakeholders. The staff will be an essential stakeholder because the success and advancement of the professional development depended on their honest feedback on all evaluations. This professional development will provide instructional strategies on coteaching and co-planning for staff to use. The staff will give their feedback on the effectiveness of the professional development, the implemented the strategies presented, and whether they had an impact on their teaching of their students and the performance of students. The site and district administrators will need to support the implementation of the professional development past the initial application to staff and to uphold the decision of the time that the staff needed to for the professional development. Accordingly, the impact on ELL academic success and the closing the achievement gap between ELLs' needs and non-ELLs' needs will show improvement. In addition, the effectiveness of the professional development will demonstrate that the teachers received the increased knowledge and professional skills required to assist them in instructing ELLs.

Furthermore, the district administrators will make vital decisions using the results from the evaluation regulating policies and professional development opportunities for teachers who serve and teach ELLs. The students will be considered stakeholders because they will benefit from the instructional strategies from their teachers' teaching, producing higher academic success. Lastly, the community will be a stakeholder and will gain when the students will be appropriately prepared for middle school and high school to become on graduation successful and productive individuals in their community.

<div align="center">**Project Implications**</div>

The professional development project will influence positive social change because the teachers will not only feel adequately prepared to work with ELLs, but they will also be equipped with instructional strategies (coteaching and co-planning models) during the 3-day workshop sessions. They will also see the effects of the co-planning lessons that they created and taught in their classrooms or small group instruction. The teachers' self-efficacy will increase by knowing that they were nurturing a learning environment that embraced all learners, including the ELLs with their ways of receiving an education. The attendees of the professional development session will explore co-planning for coteaching resources that apply to their content areas and school curriculum and pacing guides, which promoted the collegial and collaborative practice. The attendees will increase their knowledge and skill training in instructing ELLs, which in-turn will increase the assessments, and decreased the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in all academic areas.

Another social change will transpire because the administrators supported the teachers' decision to attend the professional development and turn-key by sharing the knowledge and experience they obtained with other colleagues in the local school district. The implications of the results of this project will go beyond the teachers, for the findings of this study and the results of the project evaluation will have interest for local district, county, and state administrators and policymakers. The ELL population is a large subgroup in this local school district and the state, and it will continue to increase each school year. The policymakers who will advise this study will recognize the seriousness of preparing teachers and educators who instruct ELLs. The schools and districts will work together to provide professional development; therefore, that collaboration will increased teachers' knowledge and skill practice, build up their efficacy, and increase the student outcomes.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

I conducted this research and created a project that was both important to academia and me. Being an educator at a Title I elementary school and working with one of the fasting growing ELL population in American schools inspired me to look at mandated ELPLP professional development and study the differences in terms of perceptions of teachers. I examined teachers' perceptions of ELPLP professional development to be able to develop a project that could be applied within 6 months of a school year. This work helped me to understand the value of and need for ongoing EL professional development to prepare teachers adequately for effectively instructing ELLs in the schools. In addition, the importance of seeking teachers' perceptions and evaluation feedback regarding professional development guided the effectiveness of future professional development.

In Section 4, I discuss the research and project development process, and learning along the way. This section includes project strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, project development, social impact, and leadership. I also demonstrated what I learned about myself and my doctoral work on a systemic level that might offer directions for future research and consideration of EL professional development.

Project Strengths and Limitations

This in-house professional development project is intended to help teachers and school administrators increase their knowledge and skills practice regarding coteaching

and co-planning to close the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. By addressing the professional needs of teachers who work with ELLs, these students' achievement will increase. With this professional development project, teachers will learn to plan and teach appropriate lesson plans and learning tasks to meet the needs of ELLs. The data collected during this doctoral study revealed that the participants did not feel prepared to instruct ELLs before ELPLP professional development and one wanted more information on coteaching and co-planning.

In addition, participants wanted professional development that would be conveniently held in-house and of interest to their professional practice. Therefore, strength of this project will be that teachers will increase their knowledge and skills to work with ELLs by attending this professional development that will be held conveniently in their work setting. Teachers' knowledge and skills will undoubtedly affect the way that they assess students' learning, plan instruction, and content delivery.

The second strength of this project was that it was developed from the findings of Section 2 of this study. As teachers' increase their knowledge and skill practice, they will challenge the ELLs academically. In addition, teachers will be more mindful of their ability to produce relevant learning assignments that will result in their ELL students' academic growth. According to Kennedy (2016), professional development changes teachers' knowledge, which in turn improves their practices, which in turn promotes student learning. If teachers who work with ELLs have the knowledge and skill practice needed to address the academic needs of ELLs, achievement will be increased. A strength

of this project will be that it will provide teachers with the appropriate knowledge and skills to support the academic needs of ELLs.

Although this professional development project will benefit the teachers, the site and district administrators, the students, and the school community, the project will have some limitations. The first project limitation may be time constraints and participant availability. Time constraints may be a limitation of this project, for it will be implemented at the start of the school year and teachers might see this as an extra duty attached to the beginning of the year's agenda. Some of the teachers may not be willing to buyin to professional development because they may feel that it will be additional work that they will have to do. In addition, this professional development project will not be efficient if teachers did not participate and provide feedback on their learning.

The second limitation of this project is that it may be limited to a target audience of teachers who instruct ELLs and site administrators. However, the project can have a far-reaching impact, if contents and suggestions are shared at the district level.

The third limitation of this project is that only five participants were interviewed. The five participants do not represent an extensive body of teachers who instruct ELLs. This professional development project will be for a specific group of teachers; therefore, the results of this project on a larger scale might be different.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**</div>

Alternative Approaches to the Project

An alternative approach to address limitations involving time constraints and participant availability in the project will be to develop an online format of the

professional development program available via webinar. A webinar will provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate and support each other's instructional decisions to meet the needs of ELLs and to increase their knowledge about coteaching/co-planning models. Therefore, a webinar will provide instructional strategies that will work for ELLs.

More importantly, for teachers to participate in the professional development project, they must have a willingness to grow professionally. In addition to perfecting their craft, ongoing attendance could increase their knowledge and skills, which will promote their students' education as well. Accordingly, I recommend that school administrators encourage and support teachers' decisions to attend professional development programs workshops that affect both teachers and their students' learning.

Alternative Definitions of the Problem

Improvement of ongoing professional development to build teachers' instructional skills enhances student results. The project was developed to provide teachers with instructional strategies that will focus on co-planning and coteaching models to increase their knowledge and skills so that they can meet the academic needs of ELLs and increase their academic growth on assessments to close the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL school peers. I have identified two alternative definitions of the problem. The first is a system problem that could be as districts' lack of providing timely ongoing professional development for all seasoned and new teachers who instruct ELLs.

Another, is an adult professional problem was teachers' lack of time to increase

knowledge and skills to teach effectively.

Both possible definitions lead to a need for preparedness, explicit instructional

strategies, and professional development that benefits both teachers and ELLs' learning.

Preparedness, instruction, and professional development are the three themes that came

out of my research and are vital to meet the academic needs of ELLs.

Alternative Solutions to the Local Problem

The problem that I sought to investigate in this doctoral project study was the

mandated ELPLP professional development that the teachers implemented to support the

academic needs of ELLs and to seek what they perceived in their abilities and approaches

to instruct ELLs. A first alternative solution to the problem was that I could have

consulted the literature on adult learners, on the school teacher teams, the ELPLP

professional development developers, the facilitators and presenters, and the English

learner department in the district because they are in charge of ELPLP professional

development implementation.

A second alternative solution was that I could have interviewed the administrators

from elementary, middle, and high schools to investigate the English-learner instruction

in each of their buildings. A third alternative solutions was that I could have utilized other

instruments that would have provided a variety of information, increased the credibility

of the study, and provided a variety of perspectives to the problem. A fourth alternate

solution was that I could have revamped the evaluation of the ELPLP professional

development to get in-depth and accurate feedback on its impact on both the teachers and students. These solutions might have proven to be a difficult task because the ELPLP professional development might be unique from school to school, and from teacher to teacher, within the same district. Finally, a fifth alternative solution to investigating the problem was that I could have changed the sample to include high school teachers to obtained a variety of perspectives of the problem by including a grade-level range.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship. I reflected on my doctoral journey to discuss my scholarship experience that included the completion of major assignments, coursework, and the dissertation stages with a project. Interest in this topic came from (a) my work as an educator over a decade with ELLs, (b) the quest to close the academic achievement gap between ELLs and their non-ELL, school peers, (c) my educational philosophy, and (d) the local district compliance settlement agreement with the USDOJ.

I realized that overall performance in reading has remained in the low 60th percentile more than 4 consecutive years, as compared to non-ELLs. In addition, the overall ELL performance in writing remained in the high 40th percentile to low 50th percentile for more than 4 years, as compared to non-ELLs. Although the local district was affirmed in not providing appropriate service to ELLs, I recognized that teachers were ordered to participate in a mandated ELPLP professional development. Furthermore, I did a significant amount of reading on the work of Guskey (2002, 2003) and Bandura (1989) that led to my research questions about the teachers' perceptions of ELPLP professional development. I reviewed the literature multiple times with many

search terms, resulting in a significant amount of writing on the topic of professional

development and its relationship to teacher preparation and ELLs.

Being a doctoral candidate at Walden University has increased my scholarly

abilities to continue to make a significant difference in my professional and personal

growth. My skills in being a critical thinker, examiner, critic, and synthesizer of research

literature increased exceedingly because of the vast of journals, peer-reviewed articles,

and books that I studied and cited in this research study. This project has kept me

yearning for continued knowledge in academic achievement among ELLs, validating my

purpose of being a scholar. Moreover, I continue my cooperation in professional

development at the local and national levels, and bestow research-based knowledge by

publishing it.

Project development and evaluation. Before launching my doctoral journey, I

had no real experience on such a vast scale to develop a professional development project

on my own, for I had only facilitated pieces of training and presentations to school staff,

one at the district level and another at a school site with my principal. However, none of

those presentations and articles of training necessitated the voluminous and in-depth

planning that this project has required. What I learned is that teacher underpreparedness

to meet the academic needs of ELL is evident in this study findings and the literature

nationally. Therefore, opportunities for teachers to participate in professional

development will increase their skill and abilities preparing them to meet the academic

needs of ELLs.

I am aware that self-efficacy is believing in one's ability, and I have realized that teachers are aware of their professional areas of growth that might need strengthening to carry their professional role. One of the findings in this study came from a participant who noted the need for more professional development information on co-planning and coteaching. Therefore, I developed from the findings of my doctoral study a professional development project that was useful and practical for educators and teachers who work with ELLs, increasing the teachers' knowledge and skills so that they could build self-efficacy in their profession to meet the academic needs of ELLs. The professional development entailed research-based instructional strategies on co-planning and coteaching that increased the teachers' knowledge and skills.

Leadership and change. Being a change agent in academia through my educational philosophy goal that I set at the start of my doctoral journey was an attribute of a leader. Change is expected for ELLs to show significant and constant growth on state assessment, closing the achievement gap between ELLs and their non-ELL, school peers. Change is also required regarding the underpreparedness of educators and teachers who are responsible for serving the large and growing ELL population in America's schools. I was able to fulfill the many duties of a leader to bring about change—leading, guiding, coaching, and facilitating others in personal and professional development—because I have been an educator in the school system for more than a decade.

As I conducted interviews with the five participants, I was inspired by the participants' demonstrated resilience and self-efficacy to engage in training, support their colleagues and team, and collaborate on instructional decisions regarding ELLs, although

some had not received formal preparation and felt unprepared to meet the needs of ELLs

before actually receiving the mandated ELPLP professional development. The

participants were comfortable and open about their academic successes with ELLs, and

their preparedness, positives, challenges, plans for professional development

opportunities. I have increased my leadership knowledge and skills from my doctoral

study coursework and dissertation stages. I have developed a high caliber project study

for school educators, which has been possible because of my belief that I could be a

change agent leader.

Self as a Scholar

As I reflect on my doctoral journey at Walden University, I feel grateful for the

wealth of knowledge I have acquired along this journey. When I look back on my

educational philosophy statement, it is still valid today: "Every student, including ELLs,

should be nurtured and sustained in a school culture where best research practices are

used to support their multiple intelligences, their development of critical thinking,

problem-solving, and performance and their social and personal development." I have

learned a plethora of details about myself, my personal growth, strengths, and my

challenges as a scholar. For many reasons, the doctoral process has taken longer than I

had initially intended or thought it would.

My research study has taught me the importance of perseverance. Throughout my

doctoral journey, I tried to maintain a balance of my time with my daughter, spouse,

extended family in three different states, church and volunteering obligations, and my

research study project. The most challenging stage of my doctoral study was the

prospectus, not only because it established the framework for my proposal and final project, but also because, while moving through this study stage, I had the rug pulled out from under my feet when my mom died. She was my graduate "buddy," one-third of my cheerleading squad, and my most prominent supporter in my doctoral journey. I felt paralyzed and frozen, for I could not believe her death was real. I became grief-stricken because of this unexpected, unwanted reality. I then found the energy and passion for my study once again after reexamining the life lessons she taught me through the years and with the continued support from my husband and daughter. I preserve and push every day, and now, I am in the final stage of my study. The steadfast support and wealth of knowledge and experience of my committee chairperson, member, and university research reviewer guided me through every study stage draft.

I learned that communication was of great importance as, throughout the doctoral phrases, the lines of communication were always open with my chair and committee members. My committee members and I maintained active contact through conference calls, zoom meetings, checking-in phone chats, class posts, and emails. I found these modes of communication to be worthwhile, fulfilling, and honest. Hence, it kept me grounded to my goals, producing drafts that would then affect my degree completion. I also had to open lines of communication with participants, school staff, school district administrators, and the IRB. I had schedule and conduct interviews, promptly follow-up on conversations, and request documents during all phases of my doctoral journey; therefore, I needed to communicate with competence and confidence through challenging times.

I realized that the process of getting to the end product at every stage in the dissertation was essential, too. The loss of my graduate "buddy," my mom, prompted the remaining members of my cheerleading squad—my husband and daughter—not only to motivate me, but also to take on the supporting tasks of critiquing my work, and discussing insights, ideas, and problems as I plowed through the dissertation stages. Lastly, I have realized the colossal growth overtime of planning as I have practice self-discipline, beginning with the end in mind, and setting and carrying out my goals and deadlines. I learned ways to organize my ideas to create a concise notation. Establishing a work time to do my assignment added to the smooth transition of findings, for it was practical and useful. My detailed plans brought ideas into focus with coursework. In addition, my plans were an achievement of the time and effort in doing this project study so that it could be of benefit to all, including the ELL population, the school and district educators, and the administrators in our American schools.

Self as a Project Developer

From the introduction of this research project, I intended to produce a product that was both important to academia and important to me. I had no prior experience on this broad a scale, other than major assignment coursework as a project developer. As a project developer, I remained impartial with my interpretation and summarization of the data from reflection and feedback from the participants, which resulted in the project that will benefit teachers by increasing their skills and improving their students' learning. Through this experience, I have obtained an understanding of what is entailed in a professional development that can increase teachers' knowledge and skills, and

consequently improve all students learning, including that of ELLs. For example, from my findings, I established learning goals, and determined barriers, supports, evaluations, recommendations for the professional development project.

Self as a Practitioner

As a practitioner, I was animated by the depth of research and critical thinking that this research study included, which affected my learning remarkably. I experienced a feeling of fulfillment that I was doing a research study that demanded in-depth knowledge and the connecting of a great deal of research to support my topic of study. It was an excess of work, but I quickly realized that this was a doctoral-level degree. It was a fulfillment inside because I was also obtaining the scholarly skill practice to enable me to complete all stages in the dissertation process and my day-to-day profession. I found that my experience to align my academic writings to rubrics served as a useful guide when I felt overwhelmed and lost in the literature.

I realized that I had to widen my knowledge of scholarly topics and peer-reviewed literature to do current research work to develop this project so that it would be best-suited for the students, educators, school, district, and my country. Widening my knowledge also help me to select a qualitative design method. I found that using a qualitative design led me to the findings in the study because of the participant perceptions, which in turn, allowed me to create a professional development project with the potential to promote social change. But I could not have gone this far into the research study had I not, along the way, build the stamina and the wealth of knowledge that this doctoral study afforded me. In addition, I learned to be a keen listener, not

inserting my perception while conducting interviews in the study. This was self-discipline; therefore, I was able to analyze interviews effectively so that I could develop a practical project. Now, in full circle, I was honored to produce a project to increase the knowledge and skill of teachers addressing the academic needs of all students, including ELLs. Thus, being a change agent through my educational philosophical goal set at the start of my doctoral journey.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

I began exploring teachers' perceptions of an ELPLP professional development with the assumption that it might inform the process of implementing effective instructional strategies, inform goals of the professional development, and assist in defining the evaluation measures of the professional development. I interviewed elementary school teachers because they are responsible for instructing ELLs and have participated in the mandated ELPLP professional development. I believed that the alignment of professional development comes from the teacher's desire to increase their knowledge and skills to students' achievement growth.

This alignment might inform school and district teachers and administrators, and even developers of professional development. Through professional development, teachers who work with ELLs gain the knowledge and skill practice needed to address the academic needs of ELLs; thus, they increase the ELLs achievement growth, shrinking the achievement between ELLs and non-ELL, school peers. What I learned is that teacher underpreparedness to meet the academic needs of ELL is evident in this study findings and the literature nationally. Therefore, opportunities for teachers to participate in

professional development will increase their skill and abilities; preparing them to meet the academic needs of all students, including ELLs.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

ELLs are a growing population in American schools with their numbers expanding in volumes (Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2017). It is worth noting that professional development for teachers who serve ELLs in their classrooms has been minimal (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). It is essential to provide teachers who instruct ELLs with relevant English learner professional development opportunities since most of their school day is spent in content-area classrooms (Smith, 2014). Research is ongoing regarding the academic achievement between ELLs and their non-ELL, school peers, and instructional strategies to educate ELLs to address the needs of this rapidly growing population in American schools. I continue to be constant in that an effective professional development requires input and active engagement from all educators, especially those instructing ELLs daily.

The purpose of the study was to explore and investigate teachers' perceptions of the mandated ELPLP professional development to address the instructional needs of ELLs. The perceptions of the teachers who instruct ELLs, regarding the relevance of content and task in professional development, are significant for training developers, educators, and school administrators' plans in providing appropriate professional development experiences (Collins & Liang, 2014). I did not see as much as expected in differences in the perceptions of the participants. They identified some of the same essential aspects in their preparedness to meet the needs of ELLs and the implementation

of ELPLP professional development training. I found that, although some participants did not feel adequately prepared to meet the instructional needs of ELLs before the ELPLP professional development, they expressed a desire to engage in continuous professional development to increase their professional practice, specifically to their professional growth and for it to be held conveniently in-house. Teachers have historically reported not feeling prepared to meet the academic needs of English learners, which is a critical indicator for them to participate in professional development (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). Information gathered from this study's findings informed the creation of an in-house, professional development on coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies that could make a difference for teachers who teach ELLs.

The implications of this project and study are that teachers exhibit the time and the will to continue professional learning and to increase their knowledge and skills practice to meet the academic needs of ELLs, consequently, shrinking the achievement gap between ELLs and their non-ELL, school peers. A change in teachers' self-efficacy and the impact on instructional decisions can be achieved by participating in professional development. Hence, teachers will have opportunities to have collaborative, productive conversations regarding the support needed for ELLs. Vansant-Webb and Polychronis (2016) noted that colleague and team support had an impact on instructional decisions. Professional development that fosters such collaborative discussions among professional attendees is imperative in our schools to help meet the academic needs of the fast-growing ELL population.

This research study also has implications for teacher preparation and credentialing professional development. Evident in some findings of this study, and documented in the literature, one participant viewed her ELPLP professional development as inadequate in providing new learning and hands-on experience that could be taken back to her classroom. She also found it to be in need of improvement to provide structure and more in-depth evaluation to meet the needs of all teachers for accurate feedback to guide smarter decisions for future professional development. Schools should employ this research study and other studies to probe the reasons that teachers feel that their professional development has not been adequate and is in need of improvement, for effectiveness of professional development was discussed in the literature as possessing real-world contexts (Guskey, 2003). Improving teacher preparation and credentialing professional development must be authentic and relevant to a real-life scenario. Therefore, the potential for further research into teachers' perceptions and in-depth evaluation would be beneficial if researcher were to conduct face-to-face interviews to investigate participant responses regarding their learned experiences, for this research would provide insight into the development and improvement of the professional development and include current research-based ELL strategies. This project evaluation was not intended to generalize the findings to other similar school districts.

Conclusion

I conducted this research and created a project that was important both to academia and to me. I examined the perceptions of ELPLP professional development from the perspective of the teachers to develop a project that could be applied in 6

months of the school year. This work helped me to understand the value of and need for ongoing English learner professional development to prepare teachers for to instruct ELLs effectively in the schools adequately. In addition, to understand the essentials in seeking teachers' perceptions and feedback about the professional development that they have attended, for doing so could guide the effectiveness of future English learner professional development.

Section 4 provided an analysis of the research and project development process, as well as the experiences learned along the way. The research study work demonstrated the project strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, project development, social impact, and leadership. I have also shown what I learned about myself and my doctoral work that might provide direction for future research and consideration of English learner professional development. This research study and project creation are progress toward increasing teachers' knowledge and skills practice in coteaching and co-planning given the constant rise of ELLs in American schools and the need to close the achievement gap between ELLs and their non-ELL peers. Therefore, continued work in this area is urgent for future students, schools, teachers, and administrators at all levels.

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Appendix A: Professional Development Project

Purpose

Some results of this research confirm the evidence in the literature that some

teachers are not prepared to meet the instructional needs of ELLs. A critical reported

issue for teachers needing to participate in focused PDs is because of them not prepared

to meet the academic needs of ELs placed in their classrooms (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018).

Some of the participants in my study indicated not being prepared to meet the

instructional needs of ELLs before the ELPLP professional development, a desire for

future professional development to be aligned with their professional interest be done in-

house, and for more information on coteaching and co-planning. I concluded from the

participants' answers in the study and the literature that teachers would benefit from an

in-house professional development on coteaching and co-planning. The 3-day

professional development will provide teachers with opportunities to dialogue with

colleagues, practice instructional skills to prepare them better to address the academic

needs of ELLs. The purpose of this professional development is to provide of coteaching

and co-planning instructional strategies for teachers to increase their knowledge and

skills to hone profession and instruct ELLs in the school.

Goals

The goals of this professional development project are as follows:

1. To increase teacher knowledge and skills practice of coteaching and co-

   planning models

2. To increase teacher knowledge of instructional strategies to improve coteaching and co-planning in and out of the classroom.

3. To increase teacher knowledge integrating coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies and models

Learning Outcomes

Over the three-day professional development in a 6-month period, the attendees will be able to meet the following learning outcomes:

Day 1: Learning Outcome

1. Increase knowledge of the coteaching models and co-planning framework

2. Develop a deeper understanding of first two coteaching models (One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist).

3. Develop a co-planning lesson to integrate one of the coteaching models learned today into their classroom

Day 2: Leaning Outcomes

1. Develop a deeper understanding of coteaching models (Parallel Teaching; Station Teaching)

2. Develop a co-planning lesson to integrate one of coteaching models learned today into their classroom

Day 3: Leaning Outcomes

1. Develop a deeper understanding of coteaching models (Alternative Teaching; Team Teaching)

2. Develop a co-planning lesson to integrate one of coteaching models learned today into their classroom.

Target Audience

The target audience will be teacher who service ELL students. These teachers can be seasoned in their teaching profession. Teachers can also be a newly hire at the school. Also, ESOL certified teachers are included as part of target audience.

Components

This professional development project is designed into three days with materials explicit to each day, over six months to help the attendees meet the learning outcomes of each of the workshop sessions.

Day 1: One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist and co-planning framework

Day 2: Parallel Teaching; Station Teaching

Day 3: Alternative Teaching and Team Teaching

The plan for this professional development was created on the responses of the participants during the interviews. The design was chosen based on the research suggesting that professional development workshop sessions in a series build knowledge and skill practices over time (David, 2018). The program will be a three-day hands-on series of workshops over six months in the school year. The session will be spent reviewing coteaching/co-planning models, creating a co-planning lesson to take back to the classroom for coteaching ELLs. The sessions will be spaced out over the 6 months of the school year to allow teachers to practice and implement coteaching/co-planning

strategies, review the effect in the class on student and time to reflect and share. The learning outcomes, procedures, and resources for the professional development will be outlined in each session. The sessions will be on teacher/district required workdays over 6 months. Day one will be in the fourth week of August. Day two will be in the third week of October, and day three will be in the fifth week of January. Each session will contain two specific coteaching models information and workshop time to develop co-planning lesson relevant to the context of the class upcoming learning SOL unit document. Next, each session will have a discussion, reflection, lessons learned, formative evaluation, and successful coteaching implementation stories. Attendee will have access to all presentation materials and links to evaluation and resources posted in a 3-day professional development group folder. The professional development folder will be labeled by workshop day and will be updated and monitored regularly. The hour-by-hour agenda for each of the 3 days, the reflection and discussion instructions and prompts, and the evaluation for the workshop are detailed below.

Day 1: Coteaching models One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist, and the co-planning framework

Time	Topic:
8:30–9:30	**Sign-in and Breakfast** • Pick lunch choice **Welcome** Professional development presented by Natasha Ridley Thank you for attending this professional development **Housekeeper** • Turn phones on vibrate • Be respectful to all participant's difference of opinion • Actively participate in today's session
9:30–10:00	**Overview: Why Was This Professional Development Designed?** • To increase educators' knowledge and skills on instructional strategies, coteaching and co-planning to hone professional craft. **Why at This School Site?** • To train/meet conveniently in-house **Overall Professional Development Purpose**: • The purpose of this professional development will be to provide coteaching and co-planning instructional strategies for teachers to increase their knowledge and skills to hone profession and instruct ELLs. **Overall Professional Development Goals** • To increase teacher knowledge and skills practice of coteaching and co-planning models

- To increase teacher knowledge of instructional strategies to improve coteaching and co-planning in and out of the classroom.

3-Day Agenda Sessions on Teacher and District Required Workdays Over 6 Months

- Day one will be in the fourth week of August

- One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist and co-planning framework

- Day two will be in the third week of October

- Parallel Teaching; Station Teaching

- Day three will be in the fifth week of January.

- Alternative Teaching and Team Teaching

Problem That Prompted the Study and the Professional Development

- For 4 years, the local district was mandated to do an intensive staff training to properly serve its ELL population (USDOJ, 2013).

- The overall ELLs performance in Reading has remained in the low to mid 60 percentile over four years of 2014‑2015, 2015‑2016, 2016‑2017, and 2017‑2018 as compared to ELLs.

- The overall ELLs performance in Writing remained in the high 40 percentile to low 50 percentile over four years of 2014‑2015, 2015‑2016, 2016‑2017, and 2017‑2018 as compared to non-ELLs.

- Ongoing professional development to build teachers instructional skills to help enhance student results remains a work in progress.

Some Findings:

Some of the participants in this study indicated

- not being prepared to meet the instructional needs of ELLs before the ELPLP professional development

	• a desire to attend future PDs if it aligned with their professional interest be done in-house
	• a need for more information on coteaching and co-planning
	Three main themes identified
	• Preparedness
	• Instruction
	• Professional Development
10:00–10:30	**Today's Learning Outcomes**
	• Increase knowledge of the coteaching models and co-planning framework
	• Develop a deeper understanding of first two coteaching models (One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist).
	• Develop a co-planning lesson to integrate one of the coteaching models learned today into their classroom
	Table Talk Discussion
	How do educators instruct ELLs using the six coteaching models and co-planning?
	• Educators will have an opportunity to talk with their colleagues to discuss what they know about One Teach, One observe/ One Teach, One Assist cotaught models. Why is important to learn about these models?
	• Educators will create anchor charts as to how they believe ELLs learn in schools and how it benefits educators to know about One Teach, One observe and One Teach, One Assist cotaught models co-planning.
	• What are the benefits of knowing co-planning framework and how it can improve lesson planning/activities?
10:30–10:45	**Break**

10:45‑12:00	**Procedure: In This Session, the Presenter Will**
	Explain the six models of coteaching and co-planning framework
	• Explain the benefits of knowing the coteaching models. The co-planning framework and how it increases their professional skill practice and ELLs academic learning
	• Ask attendees to develop a concept map to show what they know about One Teach, One observe, and One Teach, One Assist coteaching models and how it can help them plan appropriate activities for their ELLs.
	• Ask attendees to develop a lesson (using guided questions below) to show what they know about co-planning and how it can help them plan appropriate learning activities for their ELLs. The coplanned lesson could be taken back to their classroom to be cotaught.
12:00‑1:00	**Lunch**
1:00‑3:00	**Why One Teach, One Observe, and One Teach, One Assist and Co-planning Matters?**
	• Attendees will learn the importance One Teach, One Observe, One Teach, One Assist cotaught model. Learn how the two models can help them prepare meaningful and effective lessons and activities for ELLs they teach
	Guided Questions:
	1. How will the co-planning framework/format we use be effective and time efficient?
	2. How will we use unit unpacking to include standards of learning (SOL) to establish explicit focus for each lesson?
	3. How can we have a plan for small groups and for transitions that will meet all students' academic needs?
	4. How can we know where they will be position and what they will do during instruction?

	5. How will we demonstrate that we are instructing all ELLs in their learning environment appropriately? 6. How will we differentiate academic content to address ELLs' needs and while meeting grade level expectations and standards of learning? 7. With ELLs academic learning needs at the focus, what will we do change the way we deliver learning to engage ELLs while to meeting each student need? Educators will present what learned based on today's sessions as evidence of several anchor charts, and coplanned lesson(s)
3:00‑3:30	Reflection/formative evaluation

Resources Needed:

Schools unit unpacking documents, SOL curriculum framework, One Teach, One observe/One Teach, One Assist cotaught and co-planning framework hand-outs, laptops, chart paper for anchor charts, guided questions chart, markers, pens, post-it, pens, pencils, smartboard, Elmo, formative evaluation sheets lunch menu check sheet, and sign-in sheets.

Day 1 Evaluation: Coteaching Models One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One

Assist and Co-planning Framework

Presenter: _____ Date:_____

Please give a response to each question below. Your feedback is valuable to me and will be confidential.

Based on the professional development session today, please define One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist, and the co-planning framework in your own words:

1. Why is it necessary to know and learn about One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist and the co-planning framework?

2. Following this professional development session, I understand the One Teach, One Observe process.

3. Following this professional development session, I understand the One Teach, One Assist process.

4. Please show how this professional development session has helped you planning instruction for your ELL students?

5. Would you recommend this professional development? Please describe your answer.

On a scale 1 to 4, how will you rate this professional development session?

Not helpful 1 2 3 4 Extremely helpful

Day 2: Parallel Teaching; Station Teaching

Time	Topic
8:00‑8:30	**Sign-in and Breakfast** • Pick lunch choice • Welcome and Introduction of presenter **Housekeeping** • Turn phones on vibrate • Be respectful to all participant᾽s difference of opinion • Actively participate in today᾽s session **Whole Group Engagement: Share Aloud** Coteaching success classroom stories and challenges • Kahoot Game review about Parallel Teaching and Station Teaching
9:30‑10:00	**Today's Learning Outcomes** • Develop a deeper understanding of coteaching models (Parallel Teaching; Station Teaching) • Develop a co-planning lesson to integrate one of the coteaching models learned today into their classroom□ **Table Talk Discussion** How do educators instruct ELLs using parallel teaching and station teaching? • Educators will have an opportunity to talk with their colleagues to discuss what they know about Parallel Teaching; Station Teaching models. Why is it important to learn about these models?

	• Educators will create anchor charts as to how they believe ELLs learn in schools and how it benefits educators to know about Parallel Teaching; Station Teaching models.
10:00‑10:15	**Break**
10:15‑12:00	**Procedure: In This Session, The Presenter Will** Explain parallel teaching and Station teaching • Explain the benefits of knowing the coteaching models and how it increases their professional skill practice and ELLs academic learning • Ask attendees to develop a concept map to show what they know about parallel teaching and station teaching and how it can help them plan appropriate activities for their ELLs • Ask attendees to develop a lesson (using guided questions) to show what they know about parallel teaching and Station teaching and how it can help them plan appropriate learning activities for their ELLs. The coplanned lesson can be taken back to their classroom to be cotaught
12:00‑1:00	**Lunch**
1:00‑3:00	**Why Parallel Teaching and Station Teaching Matters?** • Attendees will learn the importance parallel teaching and Station teaching. How the models will help them prepare meaningful and effective lessons and activities for ELLs they teach **Guided Questions:** 1. How will the co-planning framework/format we use be effective and time efficient? 2. How will we use unit unpacking to include standards of learning (SOL) to establish explicit focus for each lesson? 3. How can we have a plan for small groups and for transitions that will meet all students' academic needs?

	4. How can we know where they will be position and what they will do during instruction? 5. How will we demonstrate that we are instructing all ELLs in their learning environment appropriately? 6. How will we differentiate academic content to address ELLs' needs and while meeting grade level expectations and standards of learning? 7. With ELLs academic learning needs at the focus, what will we do change the way we deliver learning to engage ELLs while to meeting each student need? Educators will present what learned based on today's sessions as evidence of several anchor charts, and coplanned lesson(s)
3:00‑3:30	Reflection/formative evaluation

Resources Needed:

Schools unit unpacking documents, SOL curriculum framework, parallel teaching and station teaching hand-outs, laptops, chart paper for anchor charts, guided questions chart, markers, pens, post-it, pens, pencils, smartboard, Elmo, formative evaluation sheets lunch menu check sheet, and sign-in sheets.

Day 2 Evaluation: Parallel Teaching and Station Teaching

Presenter: _____ Date:_____

Please give a response to each question below. Your feedback is valuable to me and will be confidential.

Based on the professional development session today, please define parallel teaching and Station in your own words:

1. Why is it necessary to know and learn about parallel teaching and Station teaching?

2. Following this professional development session, I understand the parallel teaching process.

3. Following this professional development session, I understand the Station process.

4. Please show how this professional development session has helped you planning instruction for your ELL students?

5. Would you recommend this professional development? Please describe your answer.

On a scale 1 to 4, how will you rate this professional development session?

Not helpful 1 2 3 4 Extremely helpful

Day 3: Alternative Teaching and Team Teaching

Time	Topic
8:00‑8:30	**Sign-in and Breakfast** • Pick lunch choice • Welcome and Introduction of presenter **Housekeeping** • Turn phones on vibrate • Be respectful to all participant's difference of opinion • Actively participate in today's session **Whole Group Engagement: Share Aloud** • Coteaching success classroom stories and challenges • Kahoot Game review about alternative teaching/team teaching
9:30‑10:00	**Today's Learning Outcomes** • Develop a deeper understanding of cot\aught models (Alternative Teaching and Team Teaching) • Develop a co-planning lesson to integrate one of the cotaught models learned today into their classroom **Table Talk Discussion** How do educators instruct ELLs using Alternative teaching; Team-Teaching models? • Educators will have an opportunity to talk with their colleagues to discuss what they know about Alternative teaching and Team-teaching models. Why is important to learn these models?

	• Educators will create anchor charts as to how they know ELLs learn in schools. How it benefits educators to learn about Alternative teaching; Team-teaching models.
10:00‑10:15	**Break**
10:15‑12:00	**Procedure: In This Session, the Presenter Will** • Explain Alternative teaching and Team teaching • Explain the benefits of knowing the coteaching models and how it increases their professional skill practice and ELLs academic learning • Ask attendees to develop a concept map to show what they know about Alternative teaching and Team-teaching models and how it can help them plan developmentally and appropriate activities for their ELLs • Ask attendees to develop a lesson to show what they know about Alternative Teaching and Team Teaching and how it can help them plan appropriate learning activities for their ELLs. The coplanned lesson can be taken back to their classroom to be cotaught.
12:00-1:00	**Lunch**
1:00‑3:00	**Why Alternative Teaching and Team-Teaching Matters?** Attendees will learn the importance parallel teaching and Station teaching coteaching. How can models help educator prepare meaningful and effective lessons and activities for ELLs they teach **Guided Questions:** 1. How will the co-planning framework/format we use be effective and time efficient? 2. How will we use unit unpacking to include standards of learning (SOL) to establish explicit focus for each lesson? 3. How can we have a plan for small groups and for transitions that will meet all students' academic needs?

	4. How can we know where they will be position and what they will do during instruction? 5. How will we demonstrate that we are instructing all ELLs in their learning environment appropriately? 6. How will we differentiate academic content to address ELLs' needs and while meeting grade level expectations and standards of learning? 7. With ELLs academic learning needs at the focus, what will we do change the way we deliver learning to engage ELLs while to meeting each student need? Educators will present what learned based on today's sessions as evidence of several anchor charts, and coplanned lesson(s)
3:00‑3:30	Reflection/formative evaluation

Resources Needed:

Schools unit unpacking documents, SOL curriculum framework, Alternative teaching and Team-Teaching hand-outs, laptops, chart paper for anchor charts, guided questions chart, markers, pens, post-it, pens, pencils, smartboard, Elmo, formative evaluation sheets lunch menu check sheet, and sign-in sheets.

Day 3 Evaluation: Alternative Teaching and Team Teaching

Presenter: _____ Date:_____

Please give a response to each question below. Your feedback is valuable to me and will be confidential.

Based on the professional development session today, please define parallel teaching and Station in your own words:

1. Why is it necessary to know and learn about Alternative teaching and Team teaching?

2. Following this professional development session, I understand the alternative teaching process.

3. Following this professional development session, I understand the Team process.

4. Please show how this professional development session has helped you planning instruction for your ELL students?

5. Would you recommend this professional development? Please describe your answer.

On a scale 1 to 4, how will you rate this professional development session?

Not helpful 1 2 3 4 Extremely helpful

Appendix B: Interview Questions and Protocol

Project: Teachers' Perceptions of English Learner Professional Learning Plan

Professional Development

Date _____

Time _____

Location _____

Interviewer _____

Interviewee _____

Release form signed. ____

Opening to interviewee:

I would like to thank you for participating sincerely. I think your input will be valuable to this research and in helping grow all our professional practice. Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed. The purpose of this qualitative, bounded case study is to explore and investigate teachers' perceptions of the mandated English Learner Professional Learning Plan (ELPLP) professional development to help address the instructional needs of ELLs. I will seek to gather comments from teachers regarding the training that they experienced in the area of instructional approaches for ELLs. The approximate length of the interview will be approximately 45–60 minutes long for questions.

Research Question 1: What are teachers' views of the influence of the mandated, ELPLP training on instructional services concerning ELLs in schools?

Interview Questions:

- What academic success examples can you share about your ELL students?

- How many times have you participated in the ELPLP professional development training?

- How were you prepared to meet the Instructional needs of your ELLs before the ELPLP professional development training?

- How prepared are you to meet the Instructional needs of your ELLs after the ELPLP professional development training?

- Can you describe the effectiveness of the ELPLP professional development training in supporting you to teach ELLs?

Research Question 2: What suggestions do teachers of ELL students have to improve professional development for the teaching of their students?

Interview Questions:

- What were some specific skills and or strategies that you received from the ELPLP professional development training that has helped you support your ELLs?

- What were some successes and or failings you experienced during implementation of the strategies taught in the required ELPLP professional development?

- How can the effectiveness of the required ELPLP professional development, in addressing the needs of teachers instructing ELLs be improved?

- How vital was the ELPLP professional development training in helping you to

provide adequate and appropriate ELL services in your school?

- What are some positive and negative aspects of the ELPLP professional

  development training you have received?

- What challenges limited you and colleagues instructing ELLs that you know

  from participating in ELPLP professional development?

- In conclusion, will you plan to participate in any future English learner

  professional development training if it becomes available? Why or why not?

Probes

Please tell me more…

Thank you can you give me an example …

Closure

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. All responses to the interview question in this

study will be confidential. Before the final report, I will follow-up with you as needed to

clarify and review your answers