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## Language Teachers' Perceptions of Barriers to New Language Acquisition for English Language Learners

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Maryse Lorie Austin-Archil

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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

Language Teachers' Perceptions of Barriers to New Language Acquisition for English  
Language Learners

by

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MA, CUNY Brooklyn College, 2006

BS, CUNY Brooklyn College, 2003

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2019

## Abstract

The research site was an urban public high school. The study problem was that language teachers reported to school administrators challenges they had when teaching English language learners (ELLs) because these teachers were not trained to teach language acquisition to ELLs. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school. The conceptual framework was the theory of second language acquisition, developed by Krashen, which posits that ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications. For this basic qualitative study, the sample consisted of 10 language teachers who taught ELLs and who were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected via semistructured interviews and analyzed using line-by-line thematic analysis for emergent themes. The themes were language teachers (a) applied the theory of second language acquisition, (b) used hands-on cognitive activities and intense projects to teach ELLs, and (c) needed professional development on how to teach ELLs. A 3-day professional training for language teachers and school administrators was developed to address the study findings. The training includes teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. Social change (helping ELLs graduate from high school) may occur with the proper training of language teachers.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

The research site was an urban public high school. Language teachers told school administrators they had challenges when teaching English language learners (ELLs) due to a lack of training in teaching language acquisition to ELLs. Over 50% of the students in the district were ELLs who resided in urban multicultural neighborhoods and spoke their mother language, according to a school administrator. Effective teaching strategies could help the school's students with language acquisition, yet language teachers were challenged by limited vocabulary and other barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs and reported to senior school administrators that they were not prepared to teach ELLs. The administrator noted that teachers had requested support from administration and ELL-specific teaching strategies to help ELLs with language acquisition. The teachers also requested support to create language acquisition lessons in order to meet the needs of ELLs to pass standardized state tests in literacy and graduate from high school.

### **Rationale**

#### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

The research site was an urban public high school. The school's ELLs were immigrant high school students who arrived at the study site with very low proficiency in literacy and faced difficulties graduating from high school because they could not pass state exams in literacy, according to the district administrator. Language teachers reported to school administrators challenges when teaching ELLs because these learners

had limited vocabulary and because the teachers were not properly trained to teach ELLs. The administrator said that teachers at the school needed teaching strategies to teach ELLs language acquisition. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine at the study site the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to language acquisition when teaching ELLs.

### **Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature**

In New York City public schools, ELLs are enrolled in more significant numbers than elsewhere in the United States (Kieffer & Parker, 2016), and finding language teachers trained to teach them is more arduous (Whitney, Olan, & Fredricksen, 2013). Nationally, language teachers are reporting challenges in teaching ELL students due to barriers to new language acquisition (McIntyre, 2010). ELL students have little to no formal education in their native language (Olsen, 2010). They also have limited vocabulary (Kieffer & Parker, 2016) and are at higher risk of failing academic subjects. Many also lack credits toward graduation because they cannot pass state exams or have problems with language acquisition and vocabulary memorization (Luster, 2012). On the New York state regent or proficiency exam, non-ELL students show a higher rate of achievement than ELLs. Non-ELL students can associate thoughts because of familiarity with the context. The exclusion of ELLs' social behavior, lived experiences, and culture in textbooks may create demotivation and negative attitude toward learning. Furthermore, language teachers have acknowledged not knowing how to teach ELLs (Lucas & Villegas, 2011) and have requested supports as well as teaching strategies to create lessons that can motivate students to meet their academic needs (Hutchinson, 2013).

### **Definition of Terms**

*English language learners (ELLs):* Any student whose primary language is not English (Ozfidan, 2014).

*Formal education:* A process in which learning occurs through a program of instruction in an educational setting that is organized and structured. Generally, formal educators are required to have a highly structured level of training and to qualify toward certification and licensure (CEDEFOP, 2016).

*Language teachers:* Literacy teachers who teach English to ELL students. These teachers need to understand the academic needs of ELLs and to focus on knowing their learning styles (Barry, 2010).

*Language acquisition:* The development of language through communication, social interaction, help of instructor, or supporting materials (Bozkurt, 2013).

*Native language:* A person's mother's tongue, which is learned from the crib and expressed through one's entire life (Ozfidan, 2014).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was significant because language teachers at the study site, an urban public high school, found it challenging to foster language acquisition among ELLs, who represented 50% of the student population. Teachers requested support with teaching strategies to create language acquisition lessons in order to meet the needs of ELLs, who were immigrant high school students with very low proficiency in literacy and had not passed state standardized tests in literacy, according to the school district administrator. I examined the perceptions of language teachers at the school regarding the barriers to new

language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school. The findings of this project study could help these teachers understand the barriers to new language acquisition. The findings could also help language teachers understand their role in educating ELLs to reach proficiency level in language acquisition. Language teachers could use the findings to design lessons to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. School and district administrators could use the findings to understand the needs of ELLs and help teachers who teach ELLs to develop effective class activities for these students. The findings could positively influence social change by helping more ELLs graduate from school and prepare for college and careers.

### **Research Question**

Language teachers at the project site have reported challenges when teaching ELLs due to their not being properly trained to teach ELLs language acquisition. To address the practice problem, I sought to answer the following research question: What were the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching English language learners (ELLs) in an urban public high school located in eastern United States?

### **Review of the Literature**

The literature review includes sources from databases such as SAGE and ERIC. Search terms to locate peer-reviewed articles and other material were as follows: *theories for learning, ELL, ESL, learning, teaching, strategies to teach ELL, ELL curriculum, Barriers to language learning, and academic achievement*. I selected peer-reviewed articles based on their relevance to this project study.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was the theory of second language acquisition (Krashen, 1981). According to Krashen (1981), second language acquisition is the process of language learning. ELL students may improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). According to the Krashen conceptual model, ELL students need to become active participants in their learning to develop lifelong literacy skills and can improve their proficiency in literacy in a student-centered teaching environment. Krashen's theory focuses on motivation to learn a second language and is used by literacy teachers to motivate ELL students to learn English.

## **English Language Learners (ELLs)**

ELLs are students who reside in the United States, speak in a dialect other than English at home, or come to the country as an immigrant (Avila, 2015). These students vary in educational backgrounds (Lesaux, 2012). Some ELLs may have little to no schooling in their native country while others may be literate in their native language with excellent content understanding.

Often ELLs have limited vocabulary to use academic language (Fink, 2015). Many teachers who teach ELL students feel that the students are unprepared for the demand of the literacy across the curriculum to meet state standards. Avila (2015) stated that nationally, an achievement gap exists between ELLs and non-ELLs. Lawmakers designed the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 to fill the gap of linguistic needs between ELL and non-ELL students (Salerno & Lovette, 2012).

**Characteristics of ELLs.** ELLs need literacy remediation to improve their proficiency in English and are not prepared for literacy classes. They have unique learning experiences, which necessitate knowledge on the part of teachers about how these students learn (Highsmith & Erickson, 2015). Because ELLs have their own characteristics, teachers need to understand their learning styles in order to accommodate their academic needs.

**Strategies to teach ELLs.** Teachers should use inclusive strategies to create opportunities for students to learn academic content (Adams, 2017). Effective teaching strategies help students with language acquisition (Vafai, 2015). Language teachers who teach ELLs need to (a) know how to teach these students (Ankrum, 2016), (b) understand the multicultural strengths of their students (Manley & Hawkins, 2012), and (c) know how to help them participate in classroom activities (Brodersen, Yanoski, Mason, Apthorp, & Piscatelli, 2016). Vafai (2015) stated that ELLs should be encouraged to participate in classroom activities. However, language teachers often do not have enough training to teach ELLs (Gonzalez, 2016).

**Writing skills and ELLs.** Only approximately 25% of ELL students reach proficiency level in their writing skills (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Educators should therefore help students improve their writing skills (Institute of Education Sciences, 2014). Curriculum for ELLs should help them with language acquisition. Fluency in a language is the ability to speak or write with ease in communication (Akhter, Amin, Saeed, Abdullah & Muhammad, 2015).



### **Preparedness of Language Teachers to Teach ELLs**

Teachers' preparedness programs are not preparing language teachers to instruct ELLs (Akhter et al., 2015; Brodersen et al., 2016; Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). Dabach (2015) stated that novice teachers are more likely to teach ELL students and that they report not feeling adequate to teach ELLs due to their lack of preparedness.

**Training of language teachers to teach ELLs.** In the United States, teachers who teach ELLs need training to merge literacy and content to teach ELLs how to reach proficiency levels (Barrett, Cowen, Toma, & Troske, 2015; Kennedy, 2015; Koellner & Jacobs, 2015; Vafai, 2015). They also need teaching tools to teach ELLs (Maganda, 2016). During professional training, language teachers should master teaching strategies to teach ELLs as facilitators (Akhter et al., 2015; Lekkai, 2014). Also, during professional training, language teachers who teach ELLs need to differentiate instruction and to integrate students' knowledge into the curriculum for the mastery of language proficiency of their students (Lekkai, 2014). One issue is that training programs are designed to promote teaching all students per each state's standards as specified by U.S. federal laws (Mazzotti, Rowe, Simonsen, Boaz, & VanAvery, 2018). Language teachers are underprepared to teach ELLs because most teacher preparation programs lack support in areas that provide language instruction within content instruction (Mazzotti et al., 2018).

### **Educational Technologies to Teach ELLs**

Language educational programs may help teachers with instituting instructional practices that help ELLs develop English proficiency (Fink, 2015). To meet the needs of

students, teachers could use language-based programs (Verdine, Irwin, Golinkoff, Michnick, & Hirsh-Oasek, 2014) with access to the Internet (Netcraft, 2016). Teachers can use educational technology for inquiry-based learning as computer educational programs can help learners with language acquisition (Highsmith & Erickson, 2015). Language teachers' use of educational technology is consistent with the investments made by many U.S. school district leaders in educational programs to promote learning in the classroom (Walker, 2015). Students need technological skills to access and analyze information (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2016).

### **Training for Language Teachers**

Teachers require training after completion of their formal educational program to effectively teach students (Giraldo, 2013). Training prepares teachers to increase their content knowledge (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2016). Training sessions should represent teachers' best teaching practices (Mazzotti et al., 2018). Educational leaders should identify the needs of teachers and align training activities to address teachers' needs (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016).

Language teachers who teach ELLs must be able to navigate the social and cultural needs and learning styles of students by creating lessons for ELLs. Teachers need to know what motivates ELLs (Al-Alwan, 2014). District administrators struggle to hire teachers to teach ELLs (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

### **Language Teachers and ELLs**

There is a gap in research regarding teachers' knowledge to teach ELLs (de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013). Language teachers need to know how to teach ELLs. Teachers

need to know the theories associated with the language acquisition to improve their teaching practices (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Teachers should apply the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky to help students put knowledge into practice.

**Teaching ELLs.** Teaching has become a complex task. Teachers need to understand ELLs. There is a limited confidence level in teachers teaching ELLs. Allison and Rehm (2011) reported that teachers struggle to teach ELLs because they do not know the strategies that enhance learning of ELLs. School districts have adopted reading and math programs to help ELLs improve reading comprehension (Yoon, 2013). Teachers use cooperative groupings and technology to help ELLs (Yoon, 2013). Teachers also use older instructional strategies for language acquisition; however, for ELLs the input received is beyond a person's current level of understanding because they do not have enough vocabularies (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). An optimal condition of learning a language is for students to receive input that is appropriate to the current level of language competence (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). ELLs have not developed words like their peers have (Anderson, 2015). Teachers focus on increasing students' vocabulary. Orosco and Klingner (2010) studied ELLs at an urban elementary school and reported that teachers need to be prepared to teach ELLs. Topor (2013), in line with the findings of Orosco and Klingner (2010), reported that specific teaching strategies such as grouping students together could be used to instruct ELLs. Brooks and Thurston (2010) investigated cooperative learning to teach ELLs and indicated that ELLs prefer smaller groups for instruction. Sockett and Toffoli (2012) studied ELLs who use the Internet to read and listen to English and reported that activity logs were very useful.

**Small group learning for ELL students.** Scholars have published studies on the effectiveness of small group learning. ELLs could benefit from participating in small group learning (Ernest, Johnson, & Kelly-Riley, 2011). Huang and Dietel (2011) reported that tutorial programs could be integrated into the curriculum for students to show improvement. Rothman and Henderson (2011) reported that students who are participating in small group learning perform better on state tests.

### **Literacy Instruction**

Literacy should be taught in a variety of ways including both child-led and teacher-led opportunities (Morrow & Dougherty, 2011). For example, word reading competence can be helpful to ELLs to increase their lower achieving skills (Ding, Richardson, & Schnell, 2013). Students who are behind their same age peers would stay behind in later schooling (Ding et al., 2013). Pollard-Durodola et al. (2011) noted that reading interventions are helping students extend knowledge of vocabulary to improve literacy. Literacy strategies that help students to apply new vocabulary increase literacy outcomes (Snell, Hindman, & Wasik, 2015). Literacy interventions along with other language and literacy skills help students. Zucker, Solari, Landry, and Swank (2013) stated that using early intervention with multiple literacy skills, specifically vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension, may prevent later reading difficulties. Literacy interventions must be sustained over time.

### **Students in the 21st Century**

Students need technological skills to meet the demands of the 21st Century. Students use technology to analyze information. Students' academic literacy skills are

important to their academic success. Students' expectations to pass state exams have an impact on their future (Richter, 2012). Ward and Parker (2013) suggested that teachers should give to students the opportunity to be consulted about their thinking, perceptions, and experiences in relation to any educational process.

### **Second Language Acquisition**

ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using practical applications to practice English vocabularies. These students are in need of developing literacy skills (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017). Teachers of ELLs should focus on motivating these students to learn a second language (Turkan & Buzick, 2016). ELLs learn a new language through acquisition by speaking to others (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017). Teachers of ELLs need to understand that language acquisition is a process of language learning.

### **Critical Literacy for Second Language Acquisition**

ELLs are behind their peers in literacy. ELLs need learning activities to understand English. ELLs also need writing activities to understand English. Lessons for ELLs should focus on activities that promote critical literacy (Tabar & Rezaei, 2015). ELLs need alternative literacy activities to improve their proficiency in English.

### **Implications**

At a local public high school, language teachers reported the challenge of language acquisition when teaching ELLs who have limited vocabulary. These language teachers were unprepared to teach ELL students without proper training, and the need to create comprehensive strategies for learning academic content and language acquisition

opportunity. The findings could help language teachers to design lessons to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs for an ongoing social change within the classroom and school. The findings could shed light on the professional development (PD) needs of teachers to teach ELLs. The findings of this study could result in social change by strengthening students' literacy support to help them succeed academically. Teachers of ELLs could use the findings to help students graduate from high school. The implications for this project study are significant to ELLs who need help to graduate from high school. The findings could help teachers to better plan instruction and interventions for the needs of ELLs in high school. Appendix A includes the training I developed for this project.

### **Summary**

In this section, a description of the research site, which was an urban public high school, and the research problem were presented. Language teachers reported to school administrators of the challenges they had when teaching ELLs. Teachers' challenges included the lack of professional training to teach ELLs language acquisition. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school. The conceptual framework was the theory of second language acquisition, which posits that ELLs could improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications. The sample was 10 ELL language teachers and were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected via semistructured interviews. Data analysis was line-by-line thematic analysis for emergent themes. The findings could help language teachers and school administrators with

recommendations for teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. Social change could occur with the proper training of language teachers to help ELLs graduate from high school.

In Section 2, a description of the methodology for this study including data collection and analysis is presented. In Section 3, a description of the project for this study including data findings is presented. In Section 4, my reflections as a learner during this project study as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the project as it addresses the problem and the implications for future research opportunities are presented.

## Section 2: The Methodology

In this section, I present the qualitative methodology used for this doctoral project study. I discuss the participant sample and selection criteria. I also discuss the methods for data collection and analysis.

### **Research Design and Approach**

I used a qualitative design to understand the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school located in eastern United States. Using a basic qualitative study design, I collected data from language teachers who teach ELLs as the teachers were the central focus of the research question (see Creswell, 2014). Qualitative data were collected to understand the perceptions of language teachers (see Yin, 2009). I analyzed the data to understand the role of language teachers regarding ELLs level of proficiency in language acquisition and the barriers to new language acquisition. The research question was, What were the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching English language learners (ELLs) in an urban public high school located in eastern United States?

### **Basic Qualitative Project Study Design**

I collected data from language teachers who teach ELLs using a basic qualitative design. The collected data pertained to the perceptions of these teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition. Using a basic qualitative design allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the study phenomenon. I gained this understanding by



posing explanatory questions such as why, how, and what. The public high school language teachers in the study constituted a bounded system.

### **Justification for Research Design**

For the purpose of this doctoral project study, a basic qualitative design was appropriate. Qualitative methods help researchers explain the activities occurring in learning settings (Rule & John, 2015). Studying the perceptions of teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition required use a research method for collecting data about specific experiences from the viewpoint of teachers (see Rule & John, 2015). As Creswell (2014) noted, qualitative research is used to understand the thoughts and feelings of participants. For these reasons, I used a basic qualitative design to gather information from the teachers who were the central focus of this project study.

Numerical data were not collected, and there were no independent and dependent variables. A grounded theory was not selected for this study. A theory about the perceptions of public high school language teachers regarding language acquisition was not created. An ethnographic design was not selected because the focus was not on an entire cultural group (see Creswell, 2014). A relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable was not examined (see Creswell, 2014). The stories of the participants were not interpreted (see Creswell, 2014).

## **Participants**

### **Population and Sampling**

The setting for the project study was an urban public high school. This school was considered to be overcrowded with a student-to-teacher ratio of 20:1. The school had a

diverse population within ethnicity and special populations. At the study site, 15% of the students participated in advanced placement classes.

I selected the target school because according to the senior district and school administrators, the target teachers were underprepared to teach ELLs. The ELL population was 51%. The dropout rate was between 15% and 20% annually. The graduation rate was 30%. The school had 45 Grades 9-12 teachers of whom five were special education and 15 were language teachers teaching ELLs. The school enrollment for the academic year 2017-2018 was 2,452 students in Grades 9-12 of which 362 were ELLs.

I used purposeful sampling because the participants were intentionally selected to participate in the project study. According to Creswell (2014), there are no set guidelines as to the number of participants to be sampled. The sample size for a qualitative study varies from study to study (Creswell, 2014). Of the 15 language teachers teaching ELLs, the goal was to identify 10 participants who met the selection criteria, which were that they were high school teachers who were (a) teaching ELLs, (b) teaching at the high school for over 3 years, and (c) state certified.

I obtained access to the participants from the senior district administrator responsible for the Institutional Review Board at the study site. The senior school district administrator had the authority to approve the project study. I delivered a copy of the consent form in person to this administrator to request approval to conduct the project study at one public high school within the school district. I provided this administrator an overview of the project study, which included the purpose of the study and the method

for data collection. The administrator allowed me to talk to the teachers after their staff meeting to invite them to participate in the study. I distributed the consent form and asked them to return their signed consent form to me via e-mail if they wished to participate. Those teachers who returned the signed consent forms to me were contacted by e-mail and telephone to schedule a meeting at the school after school hours in a conference room in the library. The purpose of the study, the data collection process, and the importance of the research were explained. Each participant was provided with a copy of the consent form containing information about the background of the researcher as an educator, the purpose of the study, and the interview process. All notes and recordings will be kept and locked for 5 years; only I as the researcher will have access to the data.

### **Participants' Rights and Protections**

For this research to be ethical, I had to prioritize participants' rights, including their independence and ability to participate or withdraw at any time during the research. Participation of any individual teacher was voluntary. I also treated the data confidentially. The school's name and teachers' names are not included in the findings to prevent the identification of the site. The participants signed consent forms.

I strove to make each participant feel comfortable during the interviews. A consent form was given to each participant for their files. I informed participants that I would be taking notes during the interview. I explained to each participant that my role would be that of a researcher and that I would listen and serve as the primary instrument for gathering data during each interview. In addition, I told participants that I would be using an interview protocol (see Appendix B) during the interviews to promote

consistency. I established good rapport with each participant. I assured each participant that the information they shared with me was valuable to the project study. I addressed each participant professionally. I worked with each participant to develop a researcher-participant relationship. I conveyed respect to every participant and thanked them for their time, commitment, and participation in the study.

Before seeking Institutional Review Board approval, I completed the training *Protecting Human Research Participants* offered by the National Institutes of Health. I emphasized to each participant that participation was voluntary. Participant protection was a priority throughout the duration of this project study. A code was assigned to each participant in order to protect the participants' identities prior to, during, and after data collection. I used the letter *T* followed by a number to refer to each teacher participant. For example, T1 referred to the first teacher, T2 referred to the second teacher, and so forth. Thus, for each participant a corresponding number was assigned to code the data to the transcription. For example, T1 was used instead of the full name of the participant. I was the only person to assign an identity to each participant. The identity of the participants was not used in the findings or revealed at any time to school district or school administrators.

I protected the participants' right to privacy by informing each participant that the interview data I collected will be protected. The interview data were only used for the project study. I was the only one who had access to the interviews data. I did not include the identities of the participants in the findings.

Interview transcripts were stored electronically in my house in a password-protected file on my personal computer. All files containing the interview transcripts are encrypted. All nonelectric data are stored securely in a secure desk located in my home office. Data will be kept secure for 5 years, per the protocol of Walden University. After 5 years, I will destroy all data that I have collected.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection process for this study consisted of semistructured one-on-one interviews, using the open-ended interview protocol (see Appendix B), and the research journal where I kept notes during the interviews. The semistructured one-on-one interviews, researcher journal, and member checking added to the descriptive nature of this qualitative case study analysis (see Merriam, 2009). The interview protocol was used to inform the participants of the initial questions that were asked during the semistructured interviews. The interview questions were opinion -based or experience and behavior questions (see Merriam, 2009). I informed the participants that their names will be kept confidential in order to protect their anonymity and elicit open, meaningful, and honest responses. I also informed the participants that they could withdraw from the interview or refuse to answer questions that made them uncomfortable at any time without repercussions.

Interviews were the primary means of data collection for this qualitative case study. I developed the interview protocol (see Appendix B), which contains 10 open-ended questions. Content experts regarding teaching strategies to teach ELLs provided me with suggestions regarding my interview protocol to promote clarity. The questions

were revised per the content experts' feedback. This expert review panel helped me increased validity and reliability. The interview questions did not include personal or demographic information such as gender or age.

The interviews occurred at a place and time agreed upon to satisfy the participants' varying schedules. The interviews were held after school hours at the school library in a private conference room. Semistructured one-on-one interviews were used to ask open-ended questions. The participants had the opportunity to ask me questions during the interview session. The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes per participant. I audiotaped each interview with the permission of each participant. I transcribed all interviews. I kept written notes on a separate journal to record my thoughts during the interviews. Each participant was contacted after the interview to validate their responses.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role as a school teacher allowed me to establish a good working relationship with school teachers at the project study site. My role did not affect the data collection because I did not know the participants, and I was interested in their perceptions to answer the research questions. I was not teaching at the project study site and had no supervisory role over the potential participants.

### **Sufficiency of Data Collection**

Purposeful sampling was used to gain greater understanding from the participants to answer the research questions. According to Creswell (2014), collecting qualitative data from interviews involves strategies that result in gathering information about

perceptions and opinions. I did not know saturation was reached until I conducted the interviews. When participants shared with me the same responses over and over and no new information was gleaned from the interviews, then I knew I had reached saturation. I interviewed 10 participants. For this project study, the sample of 10 participants was sufficient to represent a rich description of their responses at the project study site.

I interviewed the participants in order to collect information that provided me with rich data. I used interviews as an instrument to collect deep perception data. Interviews consisted of a set of open-ended questions (see Appendix B) that helped to draw out personal views regarding specific topics or situations (see Kozleski, 2017). After transcribing and organizing interview data, I conducted data analysis to identify themes.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to answer the research questions, I transcribed the interviews. I organized the interview transcripts. I identified common quotes and highlighted commonalities in each response to each interview question using the interview protocol (see Appendix B). I used Atlas.ti 7 to organize the data and then conducted a line-by-line analysis. I used blue color to highlight main keywords to answer the research question. All keywords that were highlighted in blue were copied into a spreadsheet. I used a spreadsheet to group all information. I reviewed the content of the spreadsheet many times. I found common threads.

### **Evidence of Quality of Data**

Member checking was conducted for the trustworthiness of my study and contributed to the credibility of my findings. I conducted member checking at the school library in a private room after school hours. Each member checking meeting was about 45 minutes. I scheduled follow-up meetings with all participants to review the interview data. Member checking was a way to validate the study as well as to provide credibility to the findings of this study. By allowing the participants to review the transcribed interview notes and emergent themes in the study, I ensured my personal biases were not reflected in the data but rather the data were a true reflection of the perceptions of the interviewees. By employing these methods to ensure evidence quality, I was able to ensure reliability and validity in the findings. In summary, interviews were transcribed verbatim. Multiple sources of data were used such as interviews, researcher journal, and member checking.

### **Discrepant Cases**

Discrepant cases were considered. The discrepant cases could help the school and district administrators and teachers with decision-making processes regarding barriers to teaching ELLs. Discrepant cases could help policymakers to provide support for teachers who teach ELLs.

### **Assumptions**

For this project study, the study site was an urban local high school in a metropolitan city. There were several high schools in the district that have language teachers teaching ELLs. I assumed that teaching ELLs requires specific strategies as they



have own needs and specific characteristics. I also assumed that ELLs are different learners who bring unique experience to the learning process and who should be taught differently. Another assumption was that ELLs have limited vocabulary in most content subjects.

### **Data Analysis Results**

The research site was an urban public high school. The research problem was that language teachers reported to school administrators challenges they had when teaching ELLs because these teachers were not trained to teach ELLs language acquisition. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school. For this basic qualitative study, the sample was 10 language teachers who taught ELLs and were selected using purposive sampling. The following research question was used to guide this project study: What were the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching English language learners (ELLs) in an urban public high school located in eastern United States?

### **Method for Generating, Gathering, and Coding Data**

Upon obtaining Institutional Review Board approval from Walden University (05-21-19-0584497), I interviewed 10 language teachers for this project study. This sample was sufficient to represent a rich description of the participants' responses during the semistructured one-on-one interviews, using the open-ended interview questions (see Appendix B). I developed the 10 interview open-ended questions with the help of content experts regarding teaching strategies to help ELLs. The interviews were held after school

hours at the school library in a private conference room. The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes per participant. I interviewed the participants in order to collect information that provided me with rich data and the interviews consisted of a set of open-ended questions (see Appendix B). I kept written notes on a separate journal to record my thoughts during the interviews. I audiotaped each interview with the permission of each participant. The audio recordings allowed me to carefully transcribe and analyze the interview data to ensure quality of data.

I used Atlas.ti 7 to organize the interview data. The data from the interviews and my research journal were analyzed to identify emergent themes. I transcribed all interviews immediately after each interview. I hand transcribed the interviews verbatim and used a system of color coding to categorize patterns. I used the approach for qualitative research analysis, which included: (a) organizing the interview data and journal notes, (b) reading the interview data to ascertain what story the participants are telling or what meaning is being conveyed, (c) using a coding procedure with labels that describe patterns of terms used by the participants, (d) creating a description of the setting, participants, and themes for analysis using the coded words, (e ) writing a narrative that depicts what the themes represent, and (f) interpreting the findings (see Creswell, 2014).

### **Coding Procedure**

Interpreting the data accurately and without bias depended on my ability to separate my personal opinions from interfering with my analysis. I read through each interview transcript at least three times to ensure that I was focusing on the participants'

responses and not looking for ways to justify my views or personal experiences. After transcribing the interviews, I read each interview transcript in order to familiarize myself with the responses of each participant and to hear their *voice* clearly. My second reading was used to create a summary of individual participants' responses, carefully noting statements that contributed to the problem of dropping out in regard to the themes of belonging, engagement, and advocacy grounded in the conceptual framework. After summarizing each response, I was able to read through my transcripts a third time to identify patterns and to look for subtle messages that I might have overlooked in the first two readings. In this way, I could be certain that I had coded patterns accurately for interpretation.

After hand transcribing the interviews verbatim, I color coded data by reading carefully and identifying words or phrases that participants used frequently, or that appeared to be shared ideas. Reflecting on the meaning of repeated words or phrases assisted me in open coding my transcribed interviews. These identified patterns were highlighted using color code for each set and categorized by a label. In addition to coding emerging patterns, I paid close attention to words or phrases that were unclear to me and categorized them as items that may need to be explored further. All codes were assigned a number and entered into an Excel spreadsheet on Google sheets. Thus, my coding procedure consisted of assigning colors to common responses. I color categorized interview data and created a coding tree, which provided details under each of the themes. The details or sub-categories contained statements or responses that were similar in nature.

There were several steps in developing my coding system. First, I searched through my data for irregularities and patterns. Second, I used Atlas.ti 7 to run the word query for coding. I created coding categories to represent patterns. I examined the codes for overlap and redundancy. Then, I developed a list of coding categories. I used coding categories to sort out the interview transcripts. The situation codes were used to determine the participants' worldview and how they saw themselves about the topic or setting. Therefore, the situation codes were appropriate to use in answering the research questions. I developed four combined event and situational codes. The event codes described the particular experiences that had happened to the participants during the event. The common codes were appropriate to use in answering the research question.

### **Research Question**

Language teachers at the project site reported challenges when teaching ELLs. The teachers also reported that they are not properly trained to teach ELLs language acquisition. This practice problem was the basis for the research question I developed to guide this project study: What were the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching English language learners (ELLs) in an urban public high school located in eastern United States?

### **Themes and Descriptions**

The research problem was that language teachers reported challenges when teaching ELLs because these teachers were not trained to teach ELLs language acquisition. The research question was about the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban

public high school located in eastern United States. I examined the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition. Specifically, I examined the perceptions of language teachers who taught ELLs in an urban public high school located in eastern United States. I developed themes by eliminating redundancies. I chose the specific data to use and eliminate other data that did not provide enough evidence to support my themes. I used several types of themes during my data analysis. I was able to write the vivid narrative descriptions of my data analysis by layering the themes. I used the interview transcriptions as the first layer of my data analysis. Then, I used the description of the events as the second layer of my data analysis. The identified major themes were the third layer (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Themes*

#	Theme
1	Language teachers apply the theory of second language acquisition
2	Language teachers use hands-on cognitive activities and intense projects as teaching strategies to teach ELLs
3	Language teachers need professional development on how to teach ELLs

**Theme 1: Language Teachers Apply the Theory of Second Language**

**Acquisition.** All participants used the theory of second language acquisition to teach ELLs by using classroom cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications. The participants used such activities to help ELLs to improve their proficiency in

English. The participants used the theory of second language acquisition to teach ELLs how to: (a) retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) work in groups to complete literacy projects, and (c) practice new vocabularies and write complete sentences. The reason the participants used cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications was to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. The reasons for using this theory were provided by the participants during the interviews. The emphasis of the participants was on helping ELLs learn English. The participants use the theory of second language acquisition as a process of language learning. ELLs benefit from the use of this theory because according to the participants ELLs can improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications.

The participants revealed that they are language teachers who speak a second or third language. These teachers speak in the native language of ELLs. For example, T1 stated, “ELLs can always use their mother tongue to compare and contrast cultures, make connections, and learn new vocabulary.” According to T1, “I need to show them that their native language is important in constructing and building new knowledge.” T2 provided an explanation to how ELLs feel when teachers “value their language.” Specifically, T2 stated, “ELLs listen to the teacher more” referring to ELLs paying attention to the teacher in the classroom. T2 stated, “ELLs bring life to the class with their own experiences” and the teachers enjoy teaching ELLs and value their “personal backgrounds.” T3 shared a similar comment that “ELLs enjoy the literacy classroom.”

The participants apply the theory of second language acquisition to teaching ELLs during classroom cognitive activities. The participants believed that cognitive activities

are very helpful when teaching ELLs. All participants said that they teach ELLs by using cognitive activities in the literacy classroom. T3 said, “Cognitive activities are very helpful” to ELLs to learn English. T3 used cognitive activities to “help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy.” T3 explained that ELLs understand the lessons and therefore increase their proficiency in literacy. One example T3 used was “the five 5 Cs (communication, culture, comparisons, connections, and communities)” to help ELLs master the English language. Specifically, T3 explained, “By using hands-on cognitive activities, ELLs acquire the communication skills to learn English.” For T3, communication with ELLs was important. As T3 mentioned communication skills are needed to practice learning English. Another valuable comment made by T3 was that teachers should make connections with the culture of ELLs. For example, T3 emphasized, “ELLs make connections to their own culture and communities as well as comparing and contrasting to their own culture.” This comment illustrates how ELLs use their culture to learn English in the United States.

The participants based their teaching on the theory of second language acquisition to teach ELLs literacy. Hands-on cognitive activities were used by all participants. These language teachers provided the same responses regarding hands on cognitive activities. For example, T4 said, “I enjoy working on hands-on cognitive activities with my ELLs in the classroom.” This teacher explained that “hands-on cognitive activities” help ELLs to learn English.

ELLs need to work on cognitive activities to practice English. T1, T2, T3, and T4 explained that cognitive activities were used in literacy classrooms to help ELLs to

increase proficiency in literacy. Participant T4 stated, “I use cognitive activities and the theory of second language acquisition to teach ELLs literacy.” This was important to T4 because T4 focused on challenging ELLs to master the English language. Same as T1, T2, and T3, T4 used “visuals aids” in the classroom. According to T4, visual aids help ELLs understand the meaning of vocabularies because ELLs have limited vocabularies in English. T4 used “a variety of question to motivate ELLs.” T4 was referring to Socratic teaching methods where the teacher asks a variety of questions to motivate ELLs to listen to the teacher during the lesson. T4 did not specifically say what types of questions were asked during the lesson; however, T4 stated, “ELLs like roleplaying” referring to ELLs who actively participate in classroom activities. Possibly, with roleplaying, ELLs are motivated and pay attention to the teacher because T4 said, “I noticed that by using role playing when working on hands-on cognitive activities, ELLs develop higher order thinking skills.” Such comment made by T4 meant a plethora of goals this teacher has to help ELLs learn English. By using role playing and cognitive activities, T4 helped students think during the classroom activities because the teaching goal was for ELLs to develop thinking skills in addition to communication skills. T5 provided helpful explanation of why the theory of second language acquisition is the process of language learning. ELLs improve their proficiency in English by using hands-on cognitive activities. Hands-on classroom activities are important when teaching ELLs. T5 stated, “Because language exposure is challenging for ELLs, I help ELLs work on hands-on cognitive activities.” T5’s explanation is meaningful because this teacher knew the barriers to language learning. T5 used “hands-on cognitive activities” to help ELLs



“acquire new language skills.” T5 believed that ELLs can learn English if they work on classroom activities. T5 further explained, “Because English is not their native language, my ELLs have difficulty to practice English outside the classroom.” This comment means that ELLs rely on classroom activities to learn English. These classroom activities are “cognitive” because the teachers use them to “help ELLs learn English in the classroom” (T5).

Second language acquisition is the process of language learning. ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by becoming active participants in their learning. Using this theory, ELLs can develop lifelong literacy skills. T6 characterized ELLs as being “unique learners.” T6 did not explain “unique” during the interview. T6 said, “They are well behaved in the classroom,” meaning there are no classroom behavioral issues. ELLs behave in the classroom because their goal is to learn English. T6 explained that “ELLs’ academic needs are so big” that they behave in the classroom to learn English to pass state tests and graduate from high school. T6 felt responsible for the academic goals of ELLs and said, “My job as a teacher is a huge responsibility.” ELLs need to pass state tests in literacy in order to graduate from high school. “I work with ELLs on hands-on cognitive activities.” ELLs to be prepared to pass state tests in literacy (T6). Participant T6 stated, “I use cognitive activities for them to learn English and pass state tests.” T7 stated, “I enjoy teaching ELLs.” This comment was the same as the comments made by T1 and T6. These literacy teachers enjoyed teaching ELLs. The theory of second language acquisition was used by the participants for ELLs to improve their proficiency in English by using hands-on cognitive activities in the classroom.

The participants used the theory of second language acquisition to help ELLs become active participants in their learning. Using this theory and cognitive activities, ELLs develop literacy skills. Classroom activities help ELLs learn English. T7 used cognitive activities in order to “help ELLs acquire new language skills.” T7 stated, “English is ELLs’ second or third spoken language.” T7 explained that ELLs need support from the literacy teacher. Specifically, T7 said, “I am trying to support them with cognitive activities.” T7 provided an explanation why ELL need teachers’ support. T7 stated, “I provide them with the support they need to help them succeed. I use the theory of second language acquisition.” T7 reported, “ELLs can reach their full potential with cognitive activities.” This comment is a good explanation that T7 used what ELLs already knew and used classroom activities for ELLs to reach their “full potential” (T7). T7 responded, “We need to see them just as the regular education students,” meaning ELLs are treated the same way as other students in the education system. Thus, the theory of second language acquisition was applied by the participants because second language acquisition is a process of language learning. The participants reported that they used in the classroom cognitive activities for ELLs students to improve their proficiency in English.

ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using hands-on cognitive activities in the classroom. Such activities help ELLs to become active participants in their learning to develop literacy skills. This theory was used by literacy teachers to help ELLs learn English. T1 stated, “Cognitive activities were used to ensure students understand the lesson because English is their second language,” while T2 focused on

“cognitive activities in order for all students to fully understand each lesson because English is their second language.” T3 used cognitive activities “daily in order for ELLs to be able to understand a lesson,” and T4 used cognitive activities to “motivate ELLs to pay attention during each lesson and to understand the content of each lesson because English is their second language.” T5 emphasized that cognitive activities helped her “meet the needs of ELLs to understand the lessons,” and T6 agreed that cognitive activities helped her meet the “academic needs of ELLs because English is their second language.” T7 used cognitive activities as “hands-on practical activities to meet the academic needs of ELLs because English is their second language.” T8 applied hands-on cognitive activities to “support ELLs in learning a new language with the focus being on increasing their proficiency in literacy.” T9 reported that “hands-on cognitive activities helped ELLs in increasing their proficiency in literacy,” and T5 agreed that “hands-on cognitive activities helped ELLs in better understanding literacy.” T6 reported similar comments and focused on cognitive activities to “help ELLs to increase their proficiency in literacy.” T10 also used hands-on cognitive activities in the classroom to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Thus, participants T1, T2, T4, T5, T8, and T9 used cognitive activities in the classroom to help ELLs learn English as a second language. Participants T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, and T10 used hands-on cognitive activities in the classroom in order to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Participants T1, T2, T4, T5, T8, and T9 used cognitive activities in the classroom to help ELLs learn English as a second language. Participants T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, and T10 also used hands-on cognitive activities in the classroom to help ELLs increase their proficiency in

literacy. Thus, hands-on cognitive activities in literacy were used by language teachers to ensure that ELLs understand the teaching units.

ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using intense projects. These students need to become active participants in their learning and could improve their proficiency in literacy in a teaching environment based on the theory of second language acquisition. This theory focuses on motivation to learn a second language. All participants used intense projects to teach literacy. T2 stated that intense projects in literacy were “helping ELLs retain knowledge from each lesson because English is their second language.” T4 used intense projects in literacy to “assist ELLs in applying knowledge from each lesson because English is their second language.” T7 believed that when ELLs work on intense projects, they “apply knowledge from each lesson given that English is their second language.” T8 reported that when ELLs work on intense projects, they “remember each lesson.” T9 focused on how ELLs enjoyed working on intense projects because English is their second language. T10 stated that “ELLs benefit by working on intense projects in order to apply knowledge from each lesson.” Clearly, the language teachers used intense project to support ELLs. All participants favor intense projects in literacy because they strived to ensure that ELLs retain knowledge from each lesson. Specifically, T2 stated that intense projects in literacy were helpful when “ELLs worked in groups of 2 or 3 because English is their second language.” ELLs work on intense projects in small groups. T4 believed that intense projects in literacy were giving ELLs opportunities to “work in small groups to understand literacy.” Also, T7 used intense projects in literacy because such “projects were very helpful to ELLs when

working in small groups.” T8 said that intense projects in literacy were “helping ELLs understand group work and the lesson content.” T9 reported that intense projects in literacy were helpful to “ELLs to master the curriculum by working in small groups of two or three.” T10 used intense projects in literacy that were easy to use in the classroom to “help ELLs work in small groups.” Thus, T2, T4, T7, T8, T9, and T10 used intense projects for ELLs to work in groups of two or three to help their classmates and complete the literacy projects. T1 explained that intense projects in literacy helped “ELLs to work in small groups to master new vocabularies and improve their writing skills.” T2 agreed with T1 that intense projects in literacy “helped ELLs learn new vocabularies and improve their writing by writing meaningful sentences.” T5 said that intense projects in literacy helped ELLs in “learning new vocabularies and in writing complete sentences” while T7 used intense projects in literacy to “support the learning of ELLs by learning new vocabularies in small groups.” T8 stated that “ELLs learned better by working on intense projects in literacy.” T10 said that intense projects in literacy helped ELLs improve their writing.” Thus, T1, T2, T5, T7, T8, and T10 used intense projects for ELLs to learn new vocabularies and to write complete sentences.

All participants used practical literacy applications to ensure that ELLs have hands-on practice to increase their proficiency in literacy. T3 stated that “literacy applications helped ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy.” T2 also used practical literacy applications to “ensure that ELLs increase proficiency in literacy.” T7 reported that in order to increase proficiency in literacy, “ELLs should work on practical literacy applications.” T9 focused on practical literacy applications because “the aim was to

support ELLs to increase proficiency in literacy with practical literacy applications.” T10 reported that “ELLs should work on practical literacy applications.” Thus, T1, T3, T4, T7, T9, and T10 used practical literacy applications for ELLs to increase proficiency in literacy.

In conclusion, language teachers used cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications in the classroom. T1 stated, “Classroom cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications help ELLs increase proficiency in literacy.” T2 said that hands-on cognitive activities were very helpful to “ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy. T3, T4, T5, and T7 agreed that cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications in literacy help ELLs retain knowledge from each lesson. T1, T3, T4, T6, T8, and T9 reported that ELLs benefit by working on cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications to learn new vocabularies and to write complete sentences. All participants enjoyed teaching ELLs literacy. T1, T3, T5, T6, T8, and T9 stated that ELLs have limited vocabulary. Participants T2, T4, T5, T7, T9, and T10 said that ELLs have limited linguistic skills. Krashen’s conceptual model was used by the participants when teaching ELLs. The participants motivated ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy by creating a student-centered teaching environment based on the Krashen conceptual model. Because ELLs have limited vocabulary, the participants used the Krashen conceptual model to prepare these students to meet state literacy standards. ELLs also have limited linguistic skills and the participants focus on cognitive activities for these students to improve their literacy proficiency. T1 stated that “ELLs are motivated” when the teachers use a student-centered teaching environment. T2, T3, T6,

T8, and T10 agreed that Krashen's conceptual model helps ELLs increase proficiency in literacy. T1, T4, T6, T9, and T10 agreed that Krashen's conceptual model motivates ELLs to increase proficiency in literacy. T1, T3, T4, T6 and T9 agreed that the Krashen conceptual model is very helpful to prepare ELLs to meet state literacy standards. Thus, the participants focused on classroom activities for ELLs to improve their literacy proficiency. Thus, the theory of second language acquisition is the process of language learning and ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications. By using such activities in the classroom, ELLs become active participants in their learning because literacy teachers use the theory to motivate ELLs to learn a second language.

### **Theme 2: Language Teachers Use Various Strategies to Teach ELLs.**

Language teachers use several teaching strategies to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Teachers are aware of the academic needs of ELLs. The participants teach second language acquisition by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications as teaching strategies. The reason that participants used these teaching strategies was to help ELLs develop literacy skills. ELL students could improve their proficiency in literacy when teachers focus on motivating ELLs to learn a second language. T5 stated, "In my opinion, we must not ignore the basics of language. ELLs do not have the basics. ELLs need to develop linguistic skills." Given that ELLs need to develop linguistic skills, teachers need to know what strategies help ELLs learn English. ELLs need to graduate from high school. As T5 stated, "ELLs are under pressure to master English in a short period of time to graduate from high school." One teaching

strategy was the “use of cognitive activities to make sure ELLs understand the lesson” (T5). One motivational strategy was to use “classroom activities” because such activities “are motivating ELLs to pay attention during each lesson” (T5). Using motivation, “I believe I meet the academic needs of ELLs by helping them increase their proficiency in literacy” (T5). Teaching strategies should include activities to help ELLs develop language skills. Regarding ELLs, language strategies should encourage these students to learn by focusing on language acquisition.

Teachers of literacy use several teaching strategies that include classroom activities to help ELLs develop language skills. A language teaching strategy is group work for ELLs to complete in class academic work. Group work is a teaching strategy that literacy teachers can use ELLs to help each other. For example, “As a literacy teacher, I need to understand the teaching strategies that help ELLs” (T6). According to T6, the school district has implemented language policies that include teaching strategies. According to T6, “The district has set forth teaching strategies; however, I do not understand district policies regarding the true understanding of language pedagogy. I am not trained to know how to teach ELLs.” Teaching strategies to teach ELLs may depend on the learning styles of ELLs. T6 said, “These students have different learning styles that I am unfamiliar with.” Language teachers use traditional teaching strategies to teach ELLs. T6 reported, “I believe my teaching methods are good; however, I need to know what other strategies to use.” T6 had been teaching English as a second language in regular classrooms. T6 said, “My teaching as a second language learner myself is based on concept building and vocabulary building.” T6 indicated that when teaching ELLs,



specific teaching strategies are needed. T6 stated, “I need to know how to teach phonetic, phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.” T7 has been teaching for many years ELLs. T7 stated, “I have been teaching ELLs for about 24 years.” This experienced teacher taught foreign languages. Participant T7 said, “The first 7 years I taught EFL (English as a foreign language) where the ELLs had restricted access to a classroom within a foreign country.” T7 is experienced in teaching English at various levels. For example, T7 offered, “The last 17 years, however, I taught English as a second language (ESL); it changed into ENL (English as a new language) the last couple of years in an urban city.” As a teaching strategy after so many years of teaching English to nonnative Americans, T7 used “intense projects as a teaching strategy to teach literacy.” By using projects in the classroom, T7 helped ELLs learn English. The participant said, “I help ELLs retain knowledge from each lesson.” T8 applied state academic standards in teaching English, saying, “My state curriculum emphasizes the bilingual progression that spells out the different common core standards as well as their performance indicators.” The reason T8 used state standards was to teach ELLs language skills. “Those standards spread throughout all the grades and develop progressively the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)” (T8). T8 has been a literacy teacher for many years and used strategies to teach ELLs to “develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.” Although T8 was an experienced educator, T8 was “not trained to know how to teach listening, speaking, reading and writing to ELLs.” One of the teaching strategies T8 used is classroom projects for ELLs, offering, “I use intense projects as a teaching strategy to teach literacy.” T8 focused on helping “ELLs retain knowledge from

each lesson.” The reason T8 used this strategy is for “ELLs to apply knowledge from each lesson.” T9 used specific teaching strategies to teach ELLs, saying, “The key teaching strategy I use to teach ELLs is scaffolding.” T9 explained that this strategy “helps me provide basic support to ELLs.” Scaffolding as a teaching strategy helps ELLs who have limited linguistic skills. “These learners have limited linguistic skills” (T9). T9 believed the reason for using scaffolding as a teaching strategy was to help the teacher who are teaching ELLs “move to the literacy proficient levels.” T9 stated that it is important to help learners retain knowledge. The participant stated, “My goal is to help ELLs to remember each lesson. I use intense projects in literacy as a teaching strategy to motivate them.”

The focus of language teachers was on how to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Second language acquisition was applied to classroom cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications as teaching strategies. The reason that participants used these teaching strategies was to help ELLs develop linguistic skills in order for these students to graduate from high school. These strategies were used as motivational strategies to meet the academic needs of ELLs. Group work was used as a teaching strategy. T10 said, “The key teaching strategy is to have ELLs work in groups of 2-3 on intense projects.” T10 used group work because “English is ELLs’ second language.” The reason T10 used this strategy was “to help ELLs to apply knowledge from each lesson.” For example, T10 used “intense projects in literacy as a teaching strategy to ensure that ELLs retain knowledge.” T10 stated that teaching ELLs has been

“the most rewarding experience.” Empathy and sympathy were obvious in T10’s comments:

Most of my ELLs are facing the hardest life style imaginable such as living far away from their parents, having to work to support themselves while they are still in school, at school age and yet a lot of them manage to succeed in their endeavors. My ELLs are nothing short of being heroes among us. (T10)

Specific teaching strategies were used by all participants, as language teachers, to help ELLs learn English. Cognitive activities were used as a teaching strategy to motivate ELLs to learn a literacy lesson. The participants reported that cognitive activities were used to help ELLs pay attention during each lesson because in order to improve their literacy. These teaching strategies were used for literacy teachers to meet the academic needs of ELLs. T1 used cognitive activities as a teaching strategy to “ensure students understand the lesson.” T2 also used cognitive activities as a teaching strategy to help ELLs because “English is their second language.” T3 focused on cognitive activities for ELLs to “understand each literacy lesson.” T4 stated that cognitive activities were used “daily as a teaching strategy in order for ELLs to be able to understand a literacy lesson.” T5 reported that cognitive activities were used “a motivation strategy to help ELLs pay attention during each lesson because English is their second language.” T8 used cognitive activities as a teaching strategy to “help ELLs improve their literacy.” T9 said, “Cognitive activities must be used when teaching ELLs.” T10 believed that in order to meet the academic needs of ELLs, “Cognitive activities must be used as a teaching strategy because English is their second language.” Thus, cognitive activities were used

as a teaching strategy to meet the academic needs of ELLs. By using cognitive activities as a teaching strategy, teachers supported ELLs in learning a new language. Cognitive activities helped ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. The participants also agreed that cognitive activities in literacy, as a teaching strategy, helped ELLs understand the teaching units and to increase their proficiency in literacy.

ELLs need specific teaching strategies to learn English. All participants who were language teachers used intense projects. The reason these projects were used in the classroom was to meet the specific needs of ELLs. Intense projects as another teaching strategy were used to focus on helping ELLs improve their literacy proficiency. All participants used intense projects to teach literacy. T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T9, and T10 stated that a good teaching strategy is to use intense projects in literacy to help ELLs retain knowledge from each lesson. T4 used “intense projects in literacy as a teaching strategy to assist ELLs in applying knowledge from each lesson.” T7 also used intense projects in literacy as “a teaching strategy for ELLs to apply knowledge from each lesson.” T8 believed that intense projects in literacy were a teaching strategy for ELLs to “remember each lesson.” T9 used intense projects in literacy as a teaching strategy to “motivate ELLs to work in groups of two to three on intense projects because English is their second language.” T10 used intense projects as a teaching strategy for “ELLs to apply knowledge from each lesson.” Thus, the participants used intense projects in literacy as a teaching strategy to ensure that ELLs retain knowledge from each lesson. Thereby language teachers used intense projects to meet the specific needs of ELLs for these

students to improve their literacy proficiency. The focus of the language teachers was on intense projects in literacy to help ELLs retain knowledge from each lesson.

Small group instruction was also used as a teaching strategy to teach literacy. T2 assigned “group work” to ELLs to work on an activity in small groups of two or three because English was their second language. T4 used “small group instruction” as a teaching strategy to give ELLs opportunities to understand literacy. T7 used small group instruction as a teaching strategy for ELLs to work on intense projects in literacy because such “activities were very helpful to ELLs.” T8 used small group instruction as a teaching strategy for ELLs to work on intense projects in literacy in order “to understand the lesson content.” T9 used small group instruction as a teaching strategy for ELLs to “master the curriculum by working in small groups of two or three.” T10 used small group instruction as a teaching strategy in order to “make each lessor easier for ELLs by working in small groups.” Thus, the participants used small group instruction as a teaching strategy for ELLs to work on intense projects. The reason the participants used small group instruction as a teaching strategy was to help ELLs master new vocabularies and improve their writing skills. T2 used “small group instruction as a teaching strategy” for ELLs to work on intense projects in literacy in order to “learn new vocabularies and to write sentences.” T5 used small group instruction for ELLs to “write complete sentences.” T7 also used small group instruction as “a teaching strategy for ELLs to increase their vocabularies.” T8 used small group instruction as “a teaching strategy for ELLs” to learn better when working on intense projects in literacy.” T10 stated that intense projects in literacy as “a teaching strategy” helped ELLs to improve their writing.

Practical literacy applications were used as a teaching strategy to ensure that ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. All participants used practical literacy applications. T3 used “practical literacy applications as a teaching strategy” to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Participants T1, T2, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, and T10 used practical literacy applications as a teaching strategy to “ensure that ELLs work together in small groups.” Thus, the participants used practical literacy applications as a teaching strategy for ELLs to practice new vocabularies and to write complete sentences and paragraphs.

The participants created a student-centered teaching environment as a teaching strategy to ensure that ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. The participants motivate ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy by creating a student-centered teaching environment. T1 created “a student-centered teaching environment as a teaching strategy” to ensure that ELLs were motivated to learn new vocabulary. T2, T3, T6, T8, and T10 agreed that “a student-centered teaching environment as a teaching strategy” helped ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. T1, T4, T6, T9, and T10 agreed that “a student-centered teaching environment as a teaching strategy” motivated ELLs to increase proficiency in literacy. T1, T4, T5, and T7 agreed that “a student-centered teaching environment as a teaching strategy” helped ELLs meet state literacy standards. T1, T3, T4, T6 and T9 agreed that “a student-centered teaching environment as a teaching strategy” was very helpful to prepare ELLs to meet state literacy standards. Because ELLs have limited vocabulary and linguistic skills, the participants used a

student-centered teaching environment as a teaching strategy for ELLs to improve their literacy proficiency.

All participants, as language teachers, used specific teaching strategies to help ELLs learn English. The teaching content was taught using different strategies because each ELL is unique. The participants tried to improve ELLs education by creating connections to prior learning. T1, T2, T4, T5, T7, and T10 used cognitive activities in the classroom to help ELLs learn English as a second language. T3, T4, T6, T7, T9, and T10 used Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) guidelines when using cognitive activities in the classroom to better understand the needs of ELLs in learning English as a second language. T1, T3, T4, T6, T7, T9, and T10 used guidelines when using intense projects in the classroom to better understand the needs of ELLs in learning English as a second language. T1, T2, T5, T6, T7, T8, and T9 used guidelines when using assignments as practical applications for ELLs students to improve their proficiency in English. Thus, guidelines were used in the classroom to motivate ELLs to successfully complete cognitive activities and intense projects by providing hands-on practical applications for ELLs students to improve their proficiency in English. T1 used “cognitive activities and intense projects” as a teaching strategy for ELLs to work on practical applications to learn English. T2 shared some “cognitive activities and intense projects” with other participants for ELLs to work on literacy practical applications. T3 and T4 shared all “cognitive activities and intense projects” for their ELLs to work on literacy practical applications. T5, T6, and T7 “modified cognitive activities and intense projects” based on the learning abilities of ELLs. T6-T10 modified their lessons based on

the learning abilities of ELLs by “creating connections to the prior learning of ELLs”. Language teachers, at the study site, used specific cognitive activities and intense projects by providing opportunities to ELLs to have hands-on practical applications to learning English. Language teachers’ teaching strategies were similar at the research site because the teachers shared teaching contents. The teaching content depended on the abilities of the ELLs. The teaching lessons were modified by creating connections to prior learning of ELLs. For example, both ESEA and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in classroom activities were used by the language teachers to better understand the needs of ELLs in learning English as a second language. The participants had positive attitudes toward teaching ELLs. All participants, as language teachers, used hands-on cognitive activities and intense projects in the classroom because their focus was on helping ELLs to reach their highest potential. All participants stated that ELLs had a problematic linguistic gap. Teaching strategies were modified based on the abilities of ELLs in order to fill the gap of linguistic needs of ELLs. The participants used inclusive strategies for language acquisition.

In conclusion, these findings were about teaching strategies. Language teachers should use teaching strategies to differentiate instruction to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Teaching strategies should include writing activities to help ELLs develop language skills. Regarding ELLs, language strategies should encourage these students to learn by focusing on language acquisition.

**Theme 3: Language Teachers Need Professional Development on How to Teach ELLs.** Language teachers need PD on how to teach ELLs. All participants were



literacy state certified teachers who enjoyed teaching ELLs. T1 stated, “I do not understand how to apply language pedagogy in a classroom with ELLs. I do not have proper training to teach ELLs.” Although T1 had no proper training, T1 enjoyed teaching ELLs. T1 had been using successfully teaching strategies to motivate ELLs; however, he pointed out, “I need to know what teaching strategies help ELLs.” T1 went on to say:

I need to know how to teach ELLs. These are some of my barriers in teaching a new language to ELLs. Teaching ELLs requires training on how to use visual and hands on activities. ELLs may be at or above grade-level, but it can be difficult to know their knowledge without my proper training.

T2 stated, “My lessons are structured to meet all learners’ needs. I simply modify my lessons to fit the needs of my ELLs. My ELLs have unique academic needs.” The goal of T2 is to meet the academic needs of ELLs and recognized that these students have unique academic needs. T2 said, “I do not know how to use visuals for ELLs to understand my lessons.” T2 was asking for PD to “know how to help ELLs to better communicate with me.” Not only how to communicate with ELLs is important to T2 but also “how to teach ELLs.” A problematic area for T2 was how to use classroom activities. The participant said, “I have difficulty in using activities in the classroom because I do not know if the students understand the concept. It is difficult to know their literacy skills without my proper training.”

T3 taught ELLs for many years. T3 used her teaching experience in regular classrooms to teach ELLs. She said, “I am using my experiences to teach a second language. I am able to assist ELLs. ELLs have some schooling.” T3 used ELLs’

experiences to teach them new concepts. T3 stated, “Those ELLs who had a chance to attend school before entering to the United States have a better change of learning.” T3 added:

Many ELLs may know the material being taught in their native language, just not in English. Later on, they can transfer those skills to the new language. I have difficulty in the classroom with ELLs. I need professional development to know if ELLs understand the lesson.

T4 also suggested that PD is needed, saying, “My teaching experiences vary every year.” Although T4 had teaching experience in the regular classroom, T4 believed that “every ELL student is unique and brings into the classroom their learning difficulties.”

T4 added:

ELLs learn differently because of their limited English vocabularies. I teach 22 ELLs and their academic needs are very challenging. I feel that I need proper training to be able to assist ELLs more effectively. I am using my knowledge of teaching a second language to be able to assist these students.

T5 referred to the need for literacy curriculum, stating, “We don’t have a special curriculum for ELLs.” T5 used the literacy curriculum when she taught literacy in a regular classroom, saying, “We use the same curriculum we teach English language arts.”

T5 said:

ELLs are unique students. ELLs come to the classroom with many learning difficulties. ELLs have limited English vocabularies. I teach 19 ELLs. I strive to

meet their academic needs. I need proper professional development to be able to assist ELLs more.

T6 suggested professional training to teach ELLs. T6 is a literacy teacher and taught large classes with ELLs, stating, “I am a literacy teacher. I teach 21 ELLs.” T6 reported having “difficulty in applying language pedagogy in the classroom.” T6 said:

I need training to teach ELLs. I need to know the teaching strategies that help ELLs learn English. I still do not know how to teach ELLs. It is difficult for me to know how to teach them without my proper training. (T6)

Like T6, T7 taught large classes. “I teach 23 ELLs as a literacy teacher” (T7). T7 developed “lessons that are structured.” T7 reported, “I do not know how to meet ELLs’ academic needs.” The participant added:

I do not know how to teach ELLs to better understand my lessons. I need to know how to help them to increase proficiency in literacy. I need to know how to use teaching activities in the classroom.

T8 also taught large classes, stating, “I teach literacy to 19 ELLs.” T8 also suggested PD, offering, “I do not know how to teach a second language.” T8 added:

I have difficulty in the classroom teaching ELLs. I need support from other literacy teachers who have taught ELLs. I need professional development to know how ELLs can better understand my lessons. (T8)

T9 expressed the need to know how to teach ELLs. Specifically, T9 said, “I need to know how to support ELLs to improve their literacy skills.” T9 focused on supporting ELLs:

I do have high expectations of ELLs. I feel badly to say that I do not know how to teach ELLs. I am not sure how to help them develop literacy skills. I do not understand the strengths of ELLs. (T9)

T10 seemed to know about educational programs used in the classroom. T10 reported, “Perhaps, I need to know how educational programs help ELLs with language acquisition.” T10 did not mention names of educational programs:

I need help with teaching strategies to help ELLs because English is their second language. I also need professional development to better understand ELLs. I do not know how to motivate ELLs to pay attention during my lessons. In order to meet the academic needs of ELLs, I need proper training. (T10)

Perhaps the participants can use computer educational programs to help ELLs with language acquisition; however, they did not mention specific programs or having access to such language computer programs. The participants perhaps were familiar with educational technologies to teach ELLs inquiry-based learning with language-based programs via the Internet. The participants could need language educational program to teach literacy activities to ELLs. Participants could use language programs to help ELLs improve reading comprehension.

T1 stated that computer “educational programs” are needed to help ELLs with “language acquisition.” T2 reported that “educational programs” in literacy for cognitive activities could “help ELLs” because English is their second language. T3 said that in order for cognitive activities to be understood by ELLs, “Educational literacy programs could be helpful.” T4 stated that cognitive activities were easier to teach with

“educational literacy programs” in order for ELLs to better understand a literacy lesson. T5 said that “educational literacy programs” could motivate ELLs pay attention during each lesson because English is their second language. T8 reported that “educational literacy programs” could motivate ELLs by using cognitive activities to help ELLs improve their literacy. T9 said that cognitive activities must be used when teaching ELLs via “educational literacy programs.” T10 stated in order to meet the academic needs of ELLs, educational literacy programs could motivate ELLs to learn English.

ELLs needed help to improve their literacy skills. All participants had high expectations of ELLs because they strived to help ELLs to reach their highest potential. Participants reported that they do know how to teach these students to improve their literacy skills because they do not understand the multicultural strengths of ELLs. Participants said that they teach language curriculum to ELLs with the focus on language acquisition; however, fluency in the English language of ELLs is problematic. T1 had “high expectations” of ELLs. T2 reported that “high expectations” were needed to help ELLs reach their highest potential. T3 stated that in order for classroom activities to be understood by ELLs, literacy teachers must have “high expectations” of ELLs. T4 stated that helping ELLs reach their highest potential was “a primary goal.” T5 stated that she did not know “how to teach ELLs.” T6 said that he did not know how to support ELLs to “improve their literacy skills.” T7 did not understand the multicultural “strengths of ELLs.” T8 stated that she did not know “how to teach literacy to ELLs.” T9 said that motivating ELLs was “a difficult task.” T10 did not know how to use cognitive activities to “help ELLs improve their literacy.”

All participants reported that they were inadequate to teach ELLs due to their lack of teaching preparedness. Participants revealed that they have not received proper teacher training to know how to teach students who had language barriers. All participants said that teachers' preparedness programs had not prepared them to teach ELLs. Although the participants were state-certified literacy teachers, they were unprepared to teach ELLs. At the study site, the participants were hired without having any prior teaching experience. As novice language teachers, they were hired to teach ELLs. T1 was "not prepared to teach ELLs." T2 lacked "teaching preparedness." T3 had not received proper "teacher training" to know how to teach ELLS. T4 have not received proper teacher training to know how to teach students who have language barriers. T5 as a certified literacy teacher was unprepared to teach ELLs. T6 was "unprepared to teach ELLs." T7 had never taught ELLs previously. T8 was hired without having any prior teaching ELL experience. T9 was hired only to teach ELLs. T10 did not know how to teach ELLs improve their literacy.

All participants reported that they need training to know how to teach ELLs to reach literacy proficiency levels. During their teacher training, participants were not taught teaching strategies to teach ELLs. At the study site, participants reported that they need PD sessions during the academic year to improve their teaching strategies to teach ELLs. Most of the participants reported that they need language teachers who are experienced in teaching ELLs to mentor them. Mentoring should focus on how to differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English. They also need mentoring on how to integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition for ELLs to improve their

language proficiency. All participants said they need mentoring with instructional practices when teaching ELLs. Mentoring may better prepare teachers to teach ELLs. Mentoring may also better prepare teachers to improve their best teaching practices. Mentors who will train teachers of ELLs may identify the needs of these teachers and prepare mentoring teaching activities to address the needs of these teachers. The participants need to know how to help ELLs participate in classroom activities. Although these participants try to encourage ELLs to participate in classroom activities, ELLs have a linguistic gap and hesitate to participate in teaching activities. Lesson plans are designed based on state and school district guidelines; however, participants do not know how to design lessons to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs.

In summary, language teachers apply the theory of second language acquisition. Cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications are used to teach ELLs to improve their proficiency in English. These activities and projects are used to help ELLs to: (a) retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) work in groups to complete literacy projects, and (c) practice new vocabularies to write complete sentences. Teachers who teach ELLs use teaching strategies to motivate ELLs to successfully complete cognitive activities and intense projects by providing hands-on practical applications for ELLs students to improve their proficiency in English. These teachers need PD on how to teach ELLs and teaching strategies to teach ELLs. Thus, teaching ELLs is challenging for teachers and teachers need PD to know how to empower ELLS to learn English and to develop learning skills to improve their proficiency in English. PD content for language

teachers should be on how to use different types of learning materials and should include strategies on how to use visual displays to meet the specific needs of ELLs.

### **Discrepant Cases**

I considered all discrepant cases. Some of the participants' responses to the interview questions were not answering the research question. The discrepant cases were used in the final project study. These discrepant cases could help stakeholders such as the school and district administrators and teachers with decision-making processes regarding barriers to teaching ELLs.

### **Evidence of Quality**

Member checking is a qualitative process during which the researcher solicits one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account (see Creswell, 2014). In order to ensure the quality and validity of the collected data, my findings were provided to two of the participants for member checking. The participants did not identify or correct any errors. The participants were satisfied with the transcribed data and agreed that the transcription of their responses was accurate.

### **Discussion of the Findings in Relation to Literature Review**

The research problem was that language teachers were challenged when teaching ELLs because these teachers were not trained to teach ELLs language acquisition. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school. The research question was about the perceptions of language teachers regarding the



barriers to new language acquisition when ELLs in an urban public high school located in eastern United States.

The conceptual framework was the theory of second language acquisition by Krashen (1981). Krashen's theory focuses on motivation to learn a second language. Krashen's theory is used by literacy teachers to help ELL students learn English. Krashen's theory is also used by literacy teachers to motivate ELL students. According to Krashen (1981), second language acquisition is the process of language learning.

This theory was the foundation for my study because ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications (see Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Based on this theory, teachers can help ELLs to become active participants in their learning to develop lifelong literacy skills. By applying this theory, ELLs could improve their proficiency in literacy in a student-centered teaching environment, which is based on the Krashen conceptual model.

Language teachers apply the theory of second language acquisition. Cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications are used to teach ELLs to improve their proficiency in English. These activities and projects are used to help ELLs to: (a) retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) work in groups to complete literacy projects, and (c) practice new vocabularies to write complete sentences. Teachers who teach ELLs use teaching strategies to motivate ELLs to successfully complete cognitive activities and intense projects by providing hands-on practical applications for ELLs students to improve their proficiency in English. These teachers need PD on how to teach ELLs and teaching strategies to teach ELLs.

Based on the findings (see Table 1), theories should be applied in the classroom to teach ELLs. Teachers should know how to differentiate instruction (Lekkai, 2014) for ELLs to increase their proficiency in literacy (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2016). The theory of second language acquisition can be used to teach literacy (Mazzotti et al., 2018). Literacy teachers should apply the theory of second language acquisition (Mazzotti et al., 2018) to meet the academic needs of these learners (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). Using the theory of second language acquisition, ELLs could improve their proficiency in English (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017). ELLs learn a new language through acquisition by speaking to others (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017) and by working on writing activities (Tabar & Rezaei, 2015). ELLs benefit from teaching strategies based on the theory of second language acquisition (Irshad & Anwar, 2018). Using learning theories, teachers could create a learning environment (Lemonidis & Kaiafa, 2019). Language teachers should use learning theories to meet the needs of ELLs (Besterman, Ernst, & Williams, 2018). Learning theories apply to specific language motivations and acquisition (Maganda, 2016).

Language teachers should use learning strategies to differentiate instruction (Lekkai, 2014) to each ELLs (Giraldo, 2013) to increase their proficiency in literacy (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2016). Teaching strategies on best teaching practices should be used by teachers (Mazzotti et al., 2018). Teaching strategies should include writing activities (Shideler, 2016) because ELLs have reading difficulties (Turkan & Buzick, 2016). ELLs benefit when teachers use strategies to establish interactions with these students (Balagova & Halakova, 2018). One strategy is to use visual aids to help ELLs

gain confidence in literacy (Amos & Rehorst, 2018) by working on reasonable language exercises and assignments (Altiner, 2018). Another strategy is to know how to teach vocabulary (Mesta & Reber, 2019). Diverse strategies should be used to help ELLs develop language skills (Brunow, 2016) such as motivation (Zhyrun, 2016). Teaching strategies should match the learning styles of ELLs (Aslaksen & Lorås, 2019). Language strategies should encourage students to learn (Nachowitz, 2018). Inclusive teaching strategies could be used to create opportunities for ELLs to learn academic content (Adams, 2017). Teaching strategies should focus on language acquisition (Ankrum, 2016). English language acquisition teaching strategies should encourage ELLs to participate in classroom activities (Brodersen et al., 2016).

ELLs have difficulty in participating in the classroom due to lack of understanding English (Medina, Hathaway, & Ilonieta, 2015). Teaching ELLs is challenging for teachers (Lemonidis & Kaiafa, 2019). Teachers need PD to know how to empower ELLs to learn English (Estrella, Au, Jaeggi, & Collins, 2018). ELLs need to develop learning skills to improve their proficiency in English (Turkan & Buzick, 2016). PD content for language teachers should be on how to use different types of learning materials (Besterman et al., 2018). PD should include strategies on how to use visual displays in the classroom (Murphy, 2014). PD sessions should include strategies for language teachers to establish interactions with ELLs (Balagova & Halakova, 2018) in order to understand ELLs (Altiner, 2018). Teachers need PD to know how to teach vocabulary (Mesta & Reber, 2019) to meet the specific needs of ELLs (Irshad & Anwar, 2018). Language teachers need to know how to teach ELLs to write for communication

(Patton, Hirano, & Garret, 2017) in culturally diverse classroom (Nachowitz, 2018).

Language teachers are not prepared to teach ELLs and need teaching tools to teach these students (Maganda, 2016).

### **Project Deliverable**

The project outcome is a 3-day PD for literacy teachers based on the themes that emerged (see Table 1).. This 3-day PD was developed to meet the needs of language teachers who teach ELLs. Language teachers who will attend the PD will learn how to: (a) differentiate instruction, (b) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition, (c) improve instructional practices, (d) help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson, (e) help ELLs to work in groups to complete literacy projects, (f) to create better student-centered teaching, and (g) improve language teachers' instructional practices when teaching ELLs. School and district administrators may support language teachers who teach ELLs by encouraging them to attend the PD sessions. Language teachers who teach ELLs will learn how to successfully prepare these students to graduate from school resulting in positive social change.

Literacy teachers should use learning theories to meet the academic needs of students (Besterman et al., 2018; Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2016; Mandinach & Gummer, 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2018). Teaching strategies to differentiate instruction should be used by literacy teachers. ELLs could improve their proficiency in English through acquisition (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017) and writing activities (Tabar & Rezaei, 2015). ELLs benefit from language teaching strategies (Irshad & Anwar, 2018) and from a positive learning environment (Lemonidis & Kaiafa, 2019). Teaching

strategies should include writing activities because ELLs have reading difficulties (Shideler, 2016; Turkan & Buzick, 2016). One effective strategy to use to teach ELLs is to establish interactions with these students (Balagova & Halakova, 2018). Another strategy is to use visual aids to help ELLs gain confidence in literacy by working on reasonable language exercises and assignments (Altner, 2018; Amos & Rehorst, 2018). Diverse strategies should be used to help ELLs develop language skills (Brunow, 2016) to teach vocabulary (Mesta & Reber, 2019) through motivation (Zhyrun, 2016). Language strategies should encourage ELLs to focus on language acquisition (Ankrum, 2016; Aslaksen & Lorås, 2019; Nachowitz, 2018).

Because teaching ELLs is challenging for teachers (Lemonidis & Kaiafa, 2019), literacy teachers need PD to know how to empower ELLs (Estrella et al., 2018) to improve their proficiency in English (Turkan & Buzick, 2016). PD content for language teachers should focus on different types of learning materials including visual displays in the classroom (Besterman et al., 2018). ELLs have specific learning needs and literacy teachers need PD to know how to teach ELLs to read and write (Irshad & Anwar, 2018; Mesta & Reber, 2019; Patton et al., 2017).

### **Summary**

The research problem was that language teachers had challenges when teaching ELLs language acquisition. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school. The conceptual framework was the theory of second

language acquisition. ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications

The research question was about the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs related to proficiency in language acquisition in an urban public high school located in eastern United States. The sample was 10 language teachers. Purposive sampling was used. Upon obtaining Institutional Review Board approval, 10 language teachers were interviewed. Line-by-line thematic analysis was conducted for emergent themes. Three themes emerged.

The themes were language teachers: (a) applied the theory of second language acquisition, (b) used hands-on cognitive activities and intense projects to teach ELLs, and (c) needed PD on how to teach ELLs. The project is a 3-day professional training for language teachers and school administrators and includes teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. In Section 3, a project based on the study findings is presented. Section 4 is an outline of reflections and conclusions of this doctoral project study.

### Section 3: The Project

#### **3-day Professional Development for Language Teachers and School Administrators**

I described the study problem and purpose of this project study in Section 1. The research site was an urban public high school where language teachers taught ELLs. These teachers were not trained to teach ELLs language acquisition, according to a school administrator. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of language teachers regarding the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school.

In Section 2, I reported on the qualitative research design I used to answer the research question. The conceptual framework was the theory of second language acquisition, developed by Krashen (1981). The theory of second language acquisition posits that ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications (Krashen, 1981). For this basic qualitative study, the sample was 10 language teachers who taught ELLs and were selected using purposive sampling. I collected data via semistructured interviews. Data were analyzed using line-by-line thematic analysis for emergent themes. Three themes emerged.

The first theme was that language teachers applied the theory of second language acquisition. In the classroom, the participants used cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications for ELLs to improve their proficiency in English. Hands-on cognitive activities in literacy were used to help ELLs learn English as a second language and to increase their proficiency in literacy. Intense projects in literacy were used to ensure that ELLs retain knowledge from each lesson by practicing new vocabularies and

by writing sentences and paragraphs. Participants used practical literacy applications to ensure that ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy by working in small groups. All participants used classroom cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical language applications for ELLs to (a) retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) work in groups to complete literacy projects, and (c) practice new vocabularies and write complete sentences in a student-centered teaching environment based on the Krashen (1981) conceptual model.

The second theme was that language teachers used hands-on cognitive activities and intense projects to teach ELLs. The participants used guidelines to motivate ELLs to successfully complete cognitive activities and intense projects by providing hands-on practical applications for ELLs students to improve their proficiency in English. The participants used in classroom activities to better understand the needs of ELLs in learning English as a second language.

The third theme was that language teachers needed PD on how to teach ELLs. All participants reported that they felt inadequate to teach ELLs due to their lack of teaching preparedness. These responses support participants' need for PD sessions during the academic year to improve their teaching strategies to teach ELLs. Participants need mentoring with the focus on how to (a) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (b) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition for ELLs to improve their language proficiency, and (c) improve instructional practices when teaching ELLs.



In Section 3, I describe the project goals and rationale. Section 3 also includes the identification of resources, supports, and anticipated barriers to solutions as well as the implementation timeline. The literature review is also presented in Section 3.

### **Project Purpose**

The project is designed for language teachers who teach ELLs as an intensified support at the project site within a public school district. The 3-day PD for language teachers and school administrators is based on the three themes that emerged from interviews with language teachers. I created the PD project as a supplemental support for language teachers who teach ELLs to be offered during the school year to teachers (see Appendix A). The goal of the PD project is to provide an intensified support for language teachers who face challenges in their classrooms in teaching ELLs.

Based on the findings of this study, language teachers apply the theory of second language acquisition (Krashen, 1981) by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications and need to know how to teach ELLs. The PD project for language teachers who teach ELLs is designed for teachers to improve their teaching strategies to teach ELLs. PD sessions focus on how to (a) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (b) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition for ELLs to improve their language proficiency, and (c) improve instructional practices when teaching ELLs. The PD project focuses on ways for language teachers to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Specifically, PD session topics include strategies on how to (a) better use cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications to teach ELLs; (b) help ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy; (c) help ELLs to

retain knowledge from each lesson; (d) help ELLs to work in groups to complete literacy projects; (e) create better student-centered teaching environments for ELLs based on the Krashen conceptual model; (f) better use ESEA and CCSS guidelines; (g) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English; (h) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition; and (i) improve language teachers' instructional practices when teaching ELLs.

I anticipate that the PD project will be used by district leaders at the project site who are in charge of the implementation, monitoring, and accountability of PD programs. The PD will consist of three sessions scheduled over 3 school days. The PD sessions are based on the research findings from this project study (see Table 1). The intended target audience for the PD will be language teachers who teach ELLs.

Day 1 will focus on ways to successfully use cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications to teach ELLs to help ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy. Day 2 will focus on ways to (a) successfully help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) help ELLs to work in groups to complete literacy projects, and (c) create better student-centered teaching environments for ELLs based on the Krashen conceptual model. Day 3 will focus on ways to (a) better use ESEA and CCSS guidelines, (b) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (c) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition, and (d) improve language teachers' instructional practices when teaching ELLs.

## **Project Goals**

The project is a 3-day professional training for language teachers who teach ELLs at the project site and school administrators and includes teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. The goals of the professional training are to help language teachers and school administrators to better meet the needs of ELL students. The project provides intensified support for language teachers who teach ELLs.

Language teachers should be the attendees of the PD project. The attendees will learn how to apply the theory of second language acquisition (Krashen, 1981) by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications to teach ELLs. The focus of the PD project is on helping literacy teachers with ways to assist ELLs improve their proficiency in literacy. PD project attendees will learn how ELLs (a) retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) work in groups to complete literacy projects, and (c) practice new vocabularies and to write complete sentences in a student-centered teaching environment based on the Krashen conceptual model. The PD project attendees will also learn how to create student-centered teaching environments based on the Krashen conceptual model. PD project attendees will use guidelines to motivate ELLs to improve their proficiency in English. ESEA and CCSS guidelines will be used to help attendees motivate ELLs to successfully complete cognitive activities and intense projects by providing hands-on practical applications for ELLs to improve their proficiency in English.

The main goal of the project is PD for language teachers who teach ELLs. The PD project attendees will learn how to improve their teaching strategies to teach ELLs to focus on how to (a) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (b) integrate

ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition for ELLs to improve their language proficiency, and (c) improve instructional practices when teaching ELLs. Thus, the goals of PD sessions will be to learn ways to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Specifically, language teachers will learn: (a) how to better use cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications to teach ELLs, (b) how to help ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy, (c) how to help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson, (d) how to help ELLs to work in groups to complete literacy projects, (e) how to create better student-centered teaching environments for ELLs based on the Krashen conceptual model, (f) how to better use ESEA and CCSS guidelines, (g) how to differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (h) how to integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition, and (i) how to improve their instructional practices when teaching ELLs.

### **Project Outcomes**

The project outcomes of the 3-day professional training are the following. Literacy teachers will receive hands-on training to teach ELLs language acquisition. The first outcome is that literacy teachers will learn how to reduce the barriers to new language acquisition when teaching ELLs in an urban public high school. When literacy teachers learn how to apply the theory of second language acquisition to teach ELLs, a potential outcome could be to help ELLs improve proficiency in literacy. The second outcome is that the school administrators and literacy teachers who will attend the PD sessions will learn how to use classroom cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications in the classroom to help ELLs to improve their proficiency in

English. The third outcome is that these attendees will learn teaching strategies to differentiate instruction for ELLs to improve their proficiency in English through writing activities, a positive learning environment, visual aids, language exercises, and assignments to develop language skills through motivation and empowerment.

### **Project Outline**

The PD plan will consist of three sessions scheduled over 3 school days. The intended target audience for the PD will be language teachers who teach ELLs. The sessions will occur in the following sequence:

Session 1: Ways to successfully use cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications to teach ELLs to help ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy.

Session 2: Ways to: (a) successfully help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) help ELLs to work in groups to complete literacy projects, (c) to create better student-centered teaching environments for ELLs based on the Krashen conceptual model.

Session 3: Ways to: (a) better use ESEA and CCSS guidelines, (b) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (c) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition, and (d) improve language teachers' instructional practices when teaching ELLs.

### **Project Implementation**

A 3-day professional training for language teachers and school administrators has been developed and includes teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. The PD project is designed for language teachers who teach ELLs as an intensified

support based on the three themes that emerged from interviews with participants. PD will be offered during the school year to language teachers (see Appendix A). The project resources will be language teachers and administrators with expertise in teaching ELLs who will commit to PD sessions.

Funding is needed to support the PD sessions. I will conduct senior administrators for human and capital support to secure the PD sessions. I will request PD materials for the PowerPoint Presentations to include chart paper, markers, and handouts. I will also request permission to use classrooms for the PD sessions. PD implementation will occur in the schools with meetings with language teachers in order to engage teachers in continued training, coaching, and support.

### **Rationale**

The PD will consist of 3 days of discussions based on the aforementioned three themes. PD will also consist of review of evidence-based best teaching practices. The PD plan will be used by policymakers, school principals, and language teachers. District leaders responsible for PD will implement, monitor, and evaluate the PD sessions. Developing, implementing, and evaluating the intensified PD sessions will help language teachers who teach ELLs with teaching, human, and capital resources for improving proficiency in literacy at the study site. School administrators should promote the 3-day professional training for language teachers and school administrators that includes teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs in other schools within the school district. Senior district administrators should promote in other school districts the 3-day professional training for language teachers and school administrators to

accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. After the 3-day professional training for language teachers and school administrators is offered for 3 academic years, a program evaluation will assist school principals and senior school administrators in making decisions regarding the support for this kind of extra intensified PD for all language teachers who teach ELLs.

ELLs have difficulty in participating in the classroom due to lack of understanding English and they need help with understanding cognitive information. ELLs may benefit from a cooperative learning environment that enhances the understanding of cognitive information growth. Lack of understanding of cognitive information makes ELLs feel like an uninspired outsider (Medina et al., 2015) and need help to adjust to new learning environments. Learning for ELLs should be pleasant (Lemonidis & Kaiafa, 2019) and literacy teachers should empower them to learn English (Estrella et al., 2018). ELLs need empowerment by literacy teachers (Turkan & Buzick, 2016) in order to develop learning skills to improve their proficiency in English.

Language teachers need PD to know to help ELLs to increase their confidence in English by using different types of learning materials (Besterman et al., 2018) including visual displays in the classroom to help ELLs understand and remember content. Language teachers need PD to enrich classroom participation, make connections with language acquisition, and increase learning (Murphy, 2014). PD sessions include strategies for language teachers to use different teaching tools to help ELLs in the literacy classrooms. PD sessions include teaching strategies for teachers to establish effective interactions with ELLs (Balagova & Halakova, 2018). PD sessions also include strategies

to use visual aids to help ELLs gain confidence by creating a positive teaching environment.

Teachers need PD sessions to learn how to understand ELLs and how to encourage them to work in small groups by inspiring them. Language teachers need PD sessions to learn methods to use positive literacy exercises and assignments (Altner, 2018). These teachers will benefit by knowing how to teach vocabulary (Mesta & Reber, 2019) by using diverse teaching strategies (Brunow, 2016). The focus of the PD teaching strategies should be on the learning styles of ELLs (Aslaksen & Lorås, 2019).

Cultural differences need to be understood and the specific needs of ELLs need to be met (Irshad & Anwar, 2018). Language teachers need to know how to teach ELLs to write for communication (Patton et al., 2017) and to reflect in the language in which they are most comfortable such as allowing ELLs to be speaking other languages in order to explain teaching materials. Language teachers need to scaffold learning to encourage students in culturally diverse classroom (Nachowitz, 2018).

Another rationale for the PD is that language teachers need PD sessions to be prepared to teach ELLs (Kennedy, 2015; Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). Also, language teachers need teaching tools to teach ELLs (Maganda, 2016) by knowing how to differentiate instruction (Lekkai, 2014). PD sessions should state standards to be used by language teachers who teach ELLs regarding content instruction and best teaching practices (Mazzotti et al., 2018). PD sessions should prepare language teachers to use writing activities for ELLs to: (a) understand English, (b) promote critical literacy (Tabar & Rezaei, 2015), and (c) improve their proficiency in English.



## **Review of the Literature**

This literature review corresponds to the findings (see Table 1). With the three themes, evidence-based teaching practices, PD programs, and teacher preparation were researched. Walden University library was used to search for literature review. The search key terms were: *cognitive activities, intense projects, practical applications to teach ELLs, proficiency in literacy, retain knowledge, lesson plans, group work, literacy projects, student-centered teaching environments for ELLs, Krashen conceptual model, ESEA and CCSS guidelines, differentiation of instruction for ELLs, language acquisition, and instructional practices when teaching ELLs*. Peer-reviewed educational articles published within the last 5 years were searched. EBSCO, ERIC and other online databases were searched.

### **Professional Development for Language Teachers who Teach ELLs**

PD could help language teachers who teach ELLs. PD should include strategies for teachers to know how to differentiate instruction (Lekkai, 2014). PD should include specific strategies for teachers to use to each ELLs (Giraldo, 2013) in order to help these students to increase their content knowledge (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2016). State standards on how to teach literacy content should be taught during a PD (Mazzotti et al., 2018).

Strategies on best teaching practices should be included in a PD training (Mazzotti et al., 2018). Training of teachers should be aligned to the needs of learners (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). For example, ELLs may improve their proficiency in English by using practical applications to develop literacy skills (Augustine-Shaw &

Hachiya, 2017). Another example is that ELLs learn a new language through acquisition by speaking to others (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017). Teacher training should prepare language teachers to use writing activities (Tabar & Rezaei, 2015) for ELLs to: (a) understand English, (b) promote critical literacy, and (c) improve their proficiency in English.

Language teachers could benefit from training that includes strategies for language teachers to know how to be better prepared with the growing complexity that redefines school purposes (Irshad & Anwar, 2018). PD should train language teachers to know how to put into perspective the priorities for standards of schooling in equity, and cultural relevance (Institute of Education Sciences, 2014). For example, ELLs have difficulty in participating in the classroom due to lack of understanding English and need help with understanding cognitive information because these students have interest in particular topics. The lack of cognitive ability to understand complex ideas positions ELLs at a distinct disadvantage (Almaguer, & Esquierdo, 2013). ELLs converge toward isolation in the classroom and benefit from a cooperative learning environment that enhances cognitive growth (Cantrell & Wheeler, 2011)

Training could benefit language teachers on how to understand the needs of ELLs (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). The rationale is that When ELLs do not have enough English vocabulary to understand teacher's prompts, then they are frustrated and confused with specific activities in the classroom (Medina et al., 2015). Lack of understanding of the English language makes ELLs feel like an uninspired outsider (Medina et al., 2015).

ELLs face challenges adjusting to new learning environments and experience disengagement in the English classes (Duncan, n.d.). The lack of connection in the English language content limits the relationship between ELLs and teachers resulting in a challenge of their school adjustment (Institute of Education Sciences, 2014).

PD should include strategies for teachers to know how to be creating a learning environment that is pleasant (Lemonidis & Kaiafa, 2019). The rationale is that students should be empowered to learn (Estrella et al., 2018). For example, ELLs need help with reading and vocabulary to be successful in written work (Lekkai, 2014; Shideler, 2016). ELLs prior learning contains information from diverse sources (Silva & Kucer, 2016) and need empowerment to make connections on their own that naturally exist (Cantrell & Wheeler, 2011). ELLs with reading difficulties are often placed in special education classes (Turkan & Buzick, 2016) and Language teachers need to help them (CalleDíaz, 2017) because when ELLs are presented with a task in which they can make connection, then they put effort, persistence, and perseverance in learning English. Language teachers also need to help ELLs to develop learning skills to improve their proficiency in English.

Language teachers should focus on helping students to increase their confidence in English. Language teachers should know how to meet the needs of ELLs (Besterman et al., 2018). Language teachers need to incorporate visual displays in the classroom to help ELLs understand and remember content. Language teachers need to know how to better understand the learning styles of ELLs to accommodate their academic needs.

PD sessions should include strategies for language teachers to know how to help ELLs. PD could help teachers to know how to teach ELLs (Maganda, 2016). Language

teachers should be consistent in helping ELLs to improve their proficiency by enriching classroom participation, making connections with language acquisition, and increasing learning.

ELLs could benefit when teachers attend PD that includes specific strategies for language teachers to know how use different teaching tools to support these students in classroom activities to increase their confidence. The rationale is that Teachers need to have high expectations regarding academic rigor because ELLs need to gain awareness of their position in the world and should be encouraged to participate more actively in their learning process.

ELLs could also benefit when teachers attend PD that includes strategies for language teachers to know how to establish effective interactions with these students (Balagova & Halakova, 2018). The focus of the PD should be on how to understand ELLs. Language teachers need to use visual aids to help ELLs gain confidence and participate equally in the classroom (Amos & Rehorst, 2018). Language teacher need to create an environment free of preferential treatment of students based on their differences. The rationale is that language teachers must create a fair and equal opportunity in the classroom for ELLs to learn academic content.

School administrators should support Language teachers with training for teachers to know how to understand that ELLs express emotion (Randolph, 2016). ELLs need the support of language teachers (Brodersen et al., 2016) and should be encouraged not to be working in isolation. ELLs strive for academic achievement as well as the mastery of language proficiency in order to increase their knowledge of content. In addition,

language teachers need to know how to inspire ELL (Samson & Collins, 2012).

Therefore, language teachers need to add important credible learning context via intuitive methods for reasonable language exercises and assignments (Altiner, 2018).

School administrators should also support language teachers with training to know how to teach vocabulary explicitly to help ELLs develop social and academic language in English (Mesta & Reber, 2019). Diverse strategies should be used to help ELLs develop language skills (Brunow, 2016). Lesson plans should be specific to the needs of ELLs (New York City Department of Education, 2017). Language teachers must motivate ELLs with the essential assumption of making the learning meaningful and spreading authenticity and originality (Zhyrun, 2016). Teaching strategies should match the learning styles of ELLs (Aslaksen & Lorås, 2019). Language teachers need skills for a multicultural and linguistically diversify world (Poon-McBrayer, 2016). Likewise, language teachers need to be familiar with the different learning stages and help them communicate with English speakers (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015).

PD sessions should include strategies for language teachers to know how to put into consideration cultural differences. The rationale is that Language teachers need sufficient time to be accustomed to the specific needs of ELLs (Irshad & Anwar, 2018) and to create a level of awareness regarding obstacles in the everyday classroom.

Language teachers need firstly to allow ELLs to write for communication (Patton et al., 2017). Secondly, language teachers must allow students to evaluate other students' reflective journals and develop the capacity for feedback (Klingbeil, Moeyaert, Archer, Chimboza, & Zwolski, 2017). Third, language teachers must permit ELL

students to reflect in the language in which they were most comfortable. Language teachers need to permit ELLs to speak other languages and to engage them in active conversations. Language teachers need to correct and provide effective feedback to the written work of ELLs. ELLs benefit from working in groups through exposure to other students' ideas. PD could help Language teachers to know how to create a collaborative group situation for ELLs and to explain teaching materials. Therefore, language teachers must require to teach strategies that match the learning styles of ELLs so that application of an adequate form of work that maintains language skills be prioritized.

Language teachers need to know that ELLs have limited vocabulary (Fink, 2015). The rationale is that ELL's linguistic skills are limited (Avila, 2015). Fluency in a language is the ability to speak or write with ease in communication (Akhter et al., 2015). The focus of language teachers should be on how to help ELLs to improve their writing skills (Institute of Education Sciences, 2014). Language acquisition curriculum for ELLs should be easy for students to understand.

Language teachers also need to know how to use literacy remediation to help ELLs improve their proficiency in English because ELLs are not prepared for literacy classes. Literacy interventions should focus on how ELLs can use new vocabulary. Although ELLs have unique learning experiences, language teachers need to know how these students learn. Language teachers have reported that ELLs have their own characteristics. As a result, language teachers need to know how to better understand the learning styles of ELLs to accommodate their academic needs.

Language teachers not only need to know how to use ELLs' prior learning throughout the content but also must know how to teach literacy curriculum to ELLs. Language teachers need to scaffold learning to encourage students in culturally diverse classroom (Nachowitz, 2018). Language teachers misunderstanding of the language acquisition process may inappropriately identify ELL students and denying their needs (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2016). Language teachers may consider ELLs low academic performance as a student with language deficiency (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). Language teachers struggle with parental involvement and school's barriers to find help for ELLs student to succeed (Fenner, 2013).

PD sessions should include strategies for language teachers to know how to use Inclusive teaching strategies to create opportunities for ELLs to learn academic content (Adams, 2017). Teaching strategies should focus on language acquisition (Vafai, 2015). Language acquisition teaching strategies should focus on the needs of ELLs (Ankrum, 2016). English language acquisition teaching strategies should be inclusive of the multicultural strengths of ELLs (Vafai, 2015). English language acquisition teaching strategies should encourage ELLs to participate in classroom activities (Brodersen et al., 2016). Language teaching lessons should accommodate the academic needs of ELLs (Gonzalez, 2016). When language teachers prepare lesson plans for ELLs, the lesson plan should include strategies help ELLs enhance their conceptual knowledge (Al-Alwan, 2014).

PD sessions should include strategies for language teachers to know about Language educational programs to help them with instructional practices. language

educational programs can help ELLs with skills to learn English (Highsmith & Erickson, 2015). Language educational acquisition programs should be inquiry-based designed (Highsmith & Erickson, 2015). Language educational acquisition programs should be used to teach ELLs (Netcraft, 2016). School districts should invest in language acquisition educational programs to promote learning in the classroom (Walker, 2015). (2016), ELLs need to develop technological skills. Language teachers are unprepared to teach ELLs (Brodersen et al., 2016). Novice language teachers are more likely to teach ELLs (Dabach, 2015).

PD sessions should prepare language teachers to teach ELLs (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). Language teachers need training to teach ELLs (Kennedy, 2015). Language teachers need to be comfortable and fearless when working with ELL students (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010). In general, literacy teachers need teaching tools to teach ELLs (Maganda, 2016).

### **Project Description**

The project is a PD for teachers who teach ELLs. The PD will consist of 3 days where I will present the findings and have discussions with the teachers of ELLs based on the themes (see Table 1). The PD content will consist of review of evidence-based best teaching practices for the attendees. Each PD session can be used by school principals and language teachers to understand the findings and to help ELLs. This project will help language teachers who teach ELLs with teaching strategies to improve proficiency in literacy at the study site. The 3-day training for language teachers and school administrators will focus on teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of



ELLs. For example, language teachers will learn why ELLs have difficulty in participating in the classroom and how teachers can help these students with understanding cognitive information (see Appendix A). ELLs will benefit from a teaching strategy such as cooperative learning to help them enhance their understanding of cognitive information. Teachers will learn how to empower ELL to learn English.

### **Needed Resources, Existing Supports, Barriers, and Solutions**

The project resources will be human and capital resources. Language teachers and administrators with expertise in teaching ELLs will be the human resources. Language teachers who teach ELLs will have to commit to 3 days of PD. Funding for the 3-day PD sessions will be the capital resources. Funding is needed to support the PD sessions. With limited budgets in the school district, senior administrators will be contacted for support to secure the PD sessions. PD materials will be needed during the PD. Materials will be equipment for display of PowerPoint Presentations, chart paper, markers, and handouts.

### **Project Implementation and Timetable**

I developed the project, which is a PD for teachers who teach ELLs. The PD content is based on the themes (see Table 1). I will ask senior district administrators for permission to present the project at a school within the district. I will also ask for project resources such as human and capital resources. I will specifically ask for language teachers and administrators to be the attendees. The language teachers will be selected for their expertise in teaching ELLs. Those teachers who wish to participate, I will ask them to commit to 3 days of PD. I need to ask senior district administrators for funding to offer the 3-day PD sessions. I will request for me to borrow PowerPoint Presentation

equipment to present Appendix A. I will ask for chart paper, markers, and handouts for me to use during the PD sessions. At the end of the 3-day sessions, I will ask the attendees to fallout the evaluation forms and return to me. I will return to the district all the equipment I will borrow.

The attendees will be language teachers and administrators with expertise in teaching ELLs who will commit to PD sessions. The project timetable (see Table 2) includes teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. The project will be a 3-day professional training for teachers and school administrators. The PD will be implemented as an intensified support based on the themes that emerged from interviews with participants. The content will be delivered during the school year to literacy teachers and school administrators. For the project to be implemented, funding is needed. I will conduct senior district administrators for human and capital resources needed to deliver the PD sessions. PD implementation will occur in the schools with meetings with language teachers in order to engage teachers in continued training, coaching, and support.

Table 2

*3-Day Schedule for Professional Development for Teachers and School Administrators*

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
8:30-9:00 a.m.	Activity 1: How to teach ELLs	Activity 1: Teaching hands-on examples	Activity 1: Classroom activities
9:00-10:00 a.m.	Activity 2: Explanation and discussion of teaching strategies for ELLs	Activity 2: Table talk—What makes an effective school administrator and literacy teacher?	Activity 2: Intense projects
10:20-12:00 p.m.	Activity 3: Explanation and discussion of the instructional leadership mode for literacy teachers and principals	Activity 3: Explanation and discussion of the instructional leadership mode for literacy teachers and principals	Activity 3: Table talk—teaching and learning theories
12:00 -1:00 p.m.	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00-2:30 p.m.	Activity 4: Explanation and discussion of transformational leadership.	Activity 4: Table Talk—What makes literacy teachers effective?	Activity 4: Discussion—School administrators' policy recommendations to policymakers
2:30-3:30 p.m.	Activity 5: Reflection on the teaching strategies for ELLs	Activity 5: Group reflection and recommendations to the policymakers to support school leaders, literacy teachers, and ELLs	Activity 5: Group reflection and recommendations to the policymakers to support school leaders, literacy teachers, and ELLs
3:30-4:00 p.m.	Activity 6: Literacy theories	Activity 6: Evaluation	Activity 6: Evaluation

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Language teachers will be encouraged to attend all PD sessions. I will also encourage the attendees to have ongoing discussions regarding the content of the PD. The roles and responsibilities of school principals will be to support language teachers to attend the PD sessions. The roles and responsibilities of senior district administrators will be to support school principals and language teachers with PD resources that will include PowerPoint Presentations, chart paper, markers, and handouts. My responsibility as a researcher will be to meet with senior district administrators to present the findings of this study and to ask for permission to schedule and facilitate the PD training. Also, my responsibility as a researcher will be to organize the PD sessions. I will prepare all materials for the PD sessions. I will present the 3-day sessions.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

I will implement the project over a course of 3 days. Based on action plans that will be created, project evaluation will be done by me. I will invite the core team of senior administrators, principals, and lead language teachers to participate in the 3-day project. The attendees will be school principals and senior district administrators who will provide feedback to me after I deliver the 3-day project. Outcome-based evaluation will be used to measure the impact of PD project implementation. Short and long-term PD goals will be evaluated by me. I will present the PD content. The attendees will complete an evaluation form (see Appendix C). Feedback from the PD evaluations will be shared with school principals and senior district administrators.

### **Project Implications**

Language teachers who teach ELLs will benefit from the 3-day PD sessions. These teachers will learn ways to successfully teach ELLs to improve proficiency in literacy. PD hands-on activities will help language teachers to help ELLs learn English and pass state tests in literacy. Language teachers will benefit from the hands-on activities during the 3-day PD sessions because they will learn about best teaching practices to address the needs of ELLs. Language teachers will benefit from the findings by knowing how to align the literacy curriculum with teaching strategies to help ELLs understand literacy curricula.

The project was developed to meet the needs of language teachers who teach ELLs. The project should be used by school and district administrators for decision-making processes to support language teachers who teach ELLs. The project should also encourage school and district administrators to offer more PD opportunities for language teachers who teach ELLs to prepare these students to pass state tests in literacy. The project has implications for positive social change because language teachers who teach ELLs will learn how to successfully prepare these students to graduate from school. The long-term gains from this project include raising students' proficiency in literacy.

### **Direction for Future Research**

Language teachers must know how to teach ELLs to help them reach their highest level of potentiality and ability. Future qualitative research using instrumentation like Likert-scale and pre-and post-intervention questionnaires may reveal detailed and accurate effects on how language teachers should teach ELLs. These teachers may use

diverse teaching strategies to create a lesson plan specific to the needs of ELLs.

Additionally, cultural differences when teaching content must be put into consideration and adjusted to minimize the counter effect. Furthermore, sufficient time is needed for the teacher to be accustomed to the specific needs of ELLs and to create a level of awareness regarding obstacles in everyday classroom.

ELLs academic improvement may benefit from other members of their social environment, a setting prone to cooperative learning, a caring relationship that enhances psychological health to create skills that learner may use in a social environment conducive to both academic and non-academic efficiently. Change, which results from cooperative learning behavior may be beneficial to ELLs. When learning is agreeable, it adds to minding connections and mental wellbeing, and these empower ELLs to gain information through a coordinated effort with different individuals in their social lives.

### **Summary**

The participants reported that they need PD to learn how to teach ELLs. The project is a designed for language teachers who teach ELLs and is based on the three themes that emerged from interviews with language teachers. Based on the findings of this study, language teachers apply the theory of second language acquisition by using cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications and need to know how to teach ELLs. PD sessions will focus on how to: (a) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (b) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition for ELLs to improve their language proficiency, (c) improve instructional practices when teaching ELLs. PD session topics include strategies on how to: (a) better use cognitive activities,

intense projects, and practical applications to teach ELLs, (b) help ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy, (c) help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson, (d) help ELLs to work in groups to complete literacy projects, (e) create better student-centered teaching environments for ELLs based on the Krashen conceptual model, (f) better use ESEA and CCSS guidelines, (g) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (h) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition, and (i) improve language teachers' instructional practices when teaching ELLs.

The PD plan will be used by district leaders in charge of the implementation, monitoring, and accountability of PD programs. The PD plan will consist of three sessions scheduled over 3 school days. Day 1 will focus on ways to successfully use cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications to teach ELLs to help ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy. Day 2 will focus on ways to: (a) successfully help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) help ELLs to work in groups to complete literacy projects, (c) to create better student-centered teaching environments for ELLs based on the Krashen conceptual model. Day 3 will focus on ways to: (a) better use ESEA and CCSS guidelines, (b) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (c) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition, and (d) improve language teachers' instructional practices when teaching ELLs.

A 3-day PD was developed based on findings of this project study. A description of the project and its goals, rationale, and evaluation plans were presented in this section. The project was developed to meet the needs of language teachers who teach ELLs to. The project should be used by school and district administrators for decision-making

processes to support language teachers who teach ELLs. Project has implications for positive social change because language teachers who teach ELLs will learn how to successfully prepare these students to graduate from school. In Section 4, the project's strengths and limitation, as well as alternative considerations, are presented. Section 4 will close with reflections on scholarship, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change.



#### Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, I offer my reflections and conclusions. The participants were ELLs teachers who reported the need for PD on how to teach ELLs. PD sessions will focus on how to (a) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (b) integrate ELLs' knowledge into language acquisition for ELLs to improve their language proficiency, and (c) improve instructional practices when teaching ELLs. The PD plan will consist of three sessions scheduled over 3 school days. Day 1 will focus on ways to successfully use cognitive activities, intense projects, and practical applications to teach ELLs to help ELLs to improve their proficiency in literacy. Day 2 will focus on ways to (a) help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson, (b) help ELLs to work in groups to complete literacy projects, and (c) create better student-centered teaching environments for ELLs based on the Krashen conceptual model. Day 3 will focus on ways to (a) better use ESEA and CCSS guidelines, (b) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (c) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition, and (d) improve language teachers' instructional practices when teaching ELLs.

In this section, I also discuss the project's strengths and limitations and present recommendations for further research. Based on the findings, a 3-day PD could be implemented as a solution to the research problem. The findings may help language teachers to learn how to successfully prepare ELLs to pass state tests and graduate from school.

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

The project deliverable is a 3-day PD, which builds on the school district's vision and mission to support ELLs to graduate from school. I developed the 3-day PD to meet the needs of language teachers who teach ELLs. School and district administrators may support language teachers who teach ELLs by encouraging them to attend the PD sessions. Language teachers who teach ELLs will learn how to successfully prepare these students to graduate from school resulting in positive social change. The PD sessions may help language teachers to apply knowledge and to learn how to teach ELLs and align the literacy curricula to meet the needs of these learners. This project has been developed to meet the needs of language teachers to enhance academic success at the study site. This project is a PD program designed to improve the overall quality of learning and teaching at the study site. The intensified support for language teachers is limited to a small sample of public school teachers.

The PD project study has several strengths and limitations. One of the strengths of this project study is that it involves school administrators and teachers who teach ELLs. School administrators will be collaborating with teachers who teach ELLs by applying their instructional leadership skills to support these teachers. That the content of the PD project study will be presented to both school administrators and teachers who teach ELLs during the PD sessions is another strength of this project study. School administrators and teachers who teach ELLs will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of supporting teachers who teach ELLs to improve their teaching practices.

The third strength of this project study is the sharing of the findings with school administrators and teachers who teach ELLs. The sharing of the participants' responses during the PD sessions will help both school administrators and teachers who teach ELLs to work together to support ELLs.

The 3-day timeframe for the PD could be a limitation of this project study. I hope that the PD is meaningful and timely. The time frame for this PD may limit the access of the school administrators and teachers who teach ELLs to more meaningful discussion and collaboration for the support of ELLs. The PD time frame may limit school administrators' and teachers' ability to engage in meaningful discussions.

Another strength of the PD is that it includes examples of cognitive information. This is important because ELLs have difficulty in participating in the classroom due to lack of understanding of cognitive information. ELLs benefit when they understand cognitive information (Medina et al., 2015). PD content includes examples of how to empower ELLs because ELLs need empowerment by literacy teachers (Turkan & Buzick, 2016). ELLs also need visual displays in the classroom (Besterman et al., 2018). Teaching strategies should focus on effective interactions with ELLs (Balagova & Halakova, 2018). During my PD sessions, I will present to teachers how to understand ELLs and encourage teachers to work in small groups by using some of the exercises and assignments by Altner (2018) and vocabulary by Mesta and Reber (2019).

I will also include examples from Patton et al. (2017) for the attendees to teach ELLs to write for communication. I will also present how to scaffold learning to encourage ELLs to learn based on Nachowitz's (2018) examples. Attendees will have

hands-on examples on how to differentiate instruction based on Lekkaï's (2014) findings. Other hands-on examples will focus on best teaching practices (Mazzotti et al., 2018) and writing activities for ELLs by Tabar and Rezaei (2015).

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

The project deliverable is a 3-day PD for language teachers who teach ELLs. While PD is the project, alternative ways to address the research problem could include policy recommendations for language teachers and school administrators that include teaching strategies to accommodate the academic needs of ELLs. For example, school administrators could support language teachers by providing training on how to teach ELLs. PD policy should include ways to support language teachers and ELLs. District leaders should allocate human and capital resources to target language teachers who teach ELLs. School and district administrators may examine how language teachers are trained to teach ELLs.

An alternative approach would be for language teachers to learn ways to teach ELLs by having meetings with other language teachers who are having experience in teaching ELLs to share ideas, examples, teaching materials, and so forth. The goal of these meetings could be to identify teaching practices that help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. Another alternative would be for language teachers to mentor one another.

### **Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change**

I conducted this qualitative study and learned about basic qualitative research. My goal was to answer the research question and to identify themes that will help language

teachers to know how to teach ELLs. I learned how to collect and analyze interview data. This project study helped me gain valuable insight on how to conduct research. I gained good research experience that I will use in my professional role as a research practitioner.

I developed the 3-day PD sessions. I will deliver the PD content to language teachers. Feedback from the PD evaluations will be shared with language teachers, school and district administrators, and curriculum developers. The feedback from the language teachers may help me in making necessary adjustments to the PD content. School and district administrators and literacy curriculum developers may assist me in successfully delivering the PD content.

I am a state-certified educator. I have been teaching ELLs for more than 10 years. My passion is the academic success of ELLs. Using the findings of this project study, I plan to have monthly meetings with colleagues and administrators to discuss teaching practices and theories to help ELLs increase their proficiency in literacy. I will mentor colleagues to share my teaching strategies to successfully teach ELLs. I aim to use the findings of this project to make change to school districts. As a novice researcher but experienced educator, I have a clear vision of how to apply the 3-day PD to local educational settings.

### **Reflection on the Importance of the Work**

I enjoyed conducting this qualitative project study. I am very pleased that I learned about basic qualitative research regarding language teachers who teach ELLs. I gained valuable insight how to conduct basic qualitative study. Thus, this doctoral journey has been very rewarding and has had a positive effect on my career as a language

teacher teaching ELLs. I applied knowledge to collect, code, and analyze interview data. I developed the 3-day PD project, which took a substantial amount of planning and time. With investing time into conducting research, lots of patience, reviewing peer-reviewed articles, too much hard work, and scholarship, my dream of earning an EdD degree is within reach.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

I conducted a basic qualitative case study. The population consisted of language teachers who teach ELLs. The sample was a small sample of 10 language teachers who had taught ELLs for at least 2 years and were state-certified in literacy. I recommend to researchers to replicate this project study and to use a sample of ELLs to identify ways to help them pass state tests in literacy. A sample of school and district administrators could be interviewed to identify ways to support language teachers. I also recommend to researchers to expand on this project study by using a quantitative study to examine the effect of the 3-day PD by comparing state scores in literacy of ELLs before and after the implementation of the PD. Recommendations for future research could include the comparison of other PD programs for language teachers who teach ELLs.

### **Conclusion**

In this section, a description of the reflections and conclusions was presented. The strength of my study is that it involves school administrators and teachers who teach ELLs. Through this study, I was able to understand the importance of scholarly writing. I learned to become resilient and goal oriented. My 8 years at Walden University have been very rewarding. One of the most fulfilling success stories that I can share with

everyone is the story of how I became a scholar of change. I have found joy in sharing the wealth of information I gained from this study.

The result of this study is the development of a 3-day PD training. The presentation of my 3-day project will provide positive social change by allowing new and aspiring teacher leaders to become successful in their roles. The presentation of the PD will also create positive social change by helping teachers who teach ELLs. I believe that the 3-day PD content will help language teachers who teach ELLs to learn how to successfully prepare these students to graduate from school resulting in positive social change. Language teachers who will participate in the 3-day PD will complete evaluation forms for the feedback to be shared with language teachers, school and district administrators, and curriculum developers. The project has a potential impact on local social change because language teachers may use the findings to help ELLs improve their proficiency in literacy and graduate from school.

School and district administrators may support language teachers who teach ELLs by encouraging them to review the findings of this study and to attend the PD sessions. Based on the themes from interviews with language teachers, PD sessions will focus on how to: (a) differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English, (b) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition for ELLs to improve their language proficiency, (c) improve instructional practices when teaching ELLs. Language teachers who will attend the PD will learn how to: (a) differentiate instruction, (b) integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition, (c) improve instructional practices, (d) help ELLs to retain knowledge from each lesson, (e) help ELLs to work in groups to complete

literacy projects, (f) to create better student-centered teaching, and (g) improve language teachers' instructional practices when teaching ELLs.



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Appendix A: The Project

**A 3-day Professional Development for Language Teachers  
Who Teach English Language Learners**

by

Maryse Austin



# Professional Development

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## Day 1:

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### **Cognitive activity to improve proficiency**

- a) Activity to Retain knowledge
- b) Group work to complete literacy projects.
- c) Practice of new vocabularies.
- d) Write complete sentences in a student-centered teaching environment based on the Krashen conceptual model.

### a) **Activity to retain knowledge**

Increase lecture integrated in active learning to allow thinking skills to continuously retain and develop.

Use any kinds of instructional activities that allow the ELL students to actively participate during the instructional process.

Use activity that makes connection among ELL students or interaction between ELL students and educators during any instructional exercises.

Design classroom assessment that envision to detect cognitive abilities.

Choose Self and peer-assessments to encourage students to be more responsible for their performance improvement and learning.

Design classroom assessment that envision to detect cognitive abilities.

Encourage ELL students to be more responsible for their improve accomplishment and learning.

Use selective teaching strategies to Help ELL Students to comprehend the essence of the lesson and skillfully manage the concept.

Prioritize Peer-assessment that drive ELL students to evaluate their working performance in comparison to their friends' working performance.

Allow ELL students evaluate other students' performance so they could do a reflection and make it their learning experience.

Help ELL student debate the excellent way of thinking so that they be able to think critically as well as to analyze what they have learn.

### **b) Group work to complete literacy projects**

Create a learning environment where ELL students Connect to collaborate.

Create an opportunity for ELL students to make an Initial and critical connection in and outside the learning environment.

Provide a safe space for ELL students to get to know each other on a personal basis before beginning classwork.

- Encourage communication of ELL student to ELL student and non ELL student by providing ongoing discussions.
  - Help ELL students exercise and practice effective communication with their classmates.
  - Plan future group setting to collaborate on a project successfully.
- 

Recommend Group work largely dependent on providing opportunities for connecting and forming a community.

Provide shared task that is clear, with roles, rules, and comprehensible responsibilities to be complied with.

Promote initial relationship, monitor and support ongoing interaction and participation.

Provide multiple means of communication for nurturing group cooperation.

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- Select Instruction situated within meaningful, interactive activities that measure the language and cultural backgrounds of ELL students to help them to learn.
  - Encourage Students to construct knowledge by posing questions about the natural world.
  - Allow ELL students to test theories through carefully planned investigations, and draw conclusions based on empirical results.
- 

Facilitate Teachers meaningful dialogue, experimentation, and engagement to improve ELL students' attitudes toward learning.

Reduce the demands of scientific language through engaging Inquiry instruction, multisensory activities assumed to increase ELL students' access to scientific content.

Design inquiry instructions aim to encourage ELL students to communicate their understanding of concepts and procedures .

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### c) Practice of new vocabularies

- Suggest language logs to develop learner autonomy.
  - Record language activities such as written texts, drawings, and ELL student reflections to audio or video recordings.
  - Print the list of challenging vocabulary words on the board. Limit the list to three to five words at a time.
  - Identify and list the words in the selection that are likely to be unknown or too difficult for students.
- 
- Incorporate digital vocabulary literacy that activates learning interest.
  - Work out how many really useful words ELL students need to know when setting vocabulary learning goals.
  - Identify vocabulary for personal involvement with the content and with connection to deep learning.
  - Provide more hands-on, active learning opportunities to sufficiently address the linguistic challenges faced by ELL students.
-

- Decide how ELL students will possess the knowledge about their vocabulary abilities.
- Recommend hands-on, self-guided exploration characteristic of inquiry to provide adequate instructional guidance for ELL students.
- Formulate plan with ability to get a grip of the state of ELL students' vocabulary knowledge.
- Categorize the importance of Academic Word List as learning focus for academic study.

**d) Write complete sentences in a student-centered teaching environment based on the Krashen conceptual model.**

Provide the ELL students with a brief reading, a narrated presentation in PowerPoint, slide share or a brief audio , video lecture recording.

Encourage ELL students to use a discussion forum or chat room. Give ELL students access to digital material when it's more convenient.

Allows ELL students to learn at their own rhythm while proposing academically-orientated subjects in the technology program that inspired ELL students.

Assists ELL student to develop valuable lifelong learning skills.

Use of self-assessment to support ELL students to be more responsible for their improved learning performance.

Encourage ELL students to make an investment of their time, outside of the classroom for independent self-learning.

Empower ELL students to be in control of their learning through the preparatory work that they complete.

## Day 2:

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### **Cognitive Hands-on activity and intense projects to improve proficiency**

- a) Cognitive activity and intense project.
- b) Hands-on practical application for ELL.
- c) Understand the needs of ELL in learning English as a second language.



## a) Cognitive activity and intense project.

Creating challenging activities that foster critical thinking and promote lifelong learning.

Projects must be relevant to ELL students in order to make the connection between learning a foreign language and their own daily life.

Choose activity that give an opportunity for ELL students to write stories that reflect common people personal or city life in less words.

Promote creativity and writing skills of ELL students while reflecting on their city, but it is also a very positive approach to make the voices of the people heard all through the country.

- Provide ELL students topic with the opportunity to express themselves facilitating greater comprehension. Activities must be challenging with end result that promises to be unforgettable and rewarding.
- Adapt project ideas to make them meaningful for ELL students. All work must be planned and structured in order to address various issues.
- Address ELL students own learning style by the method of instruction or evaluation. Allow ELL students enough time to work on the story and present the project.

- Ask ELL students to submit draft of the project and provide formative feedback.
- Students must use feedback as an opportunity to explore new possibilities and solve mistakes.
- Teach mind-mapping exercises in order to facilitate the writing process.
- Create an exhibit to display ELL students completion of individual success.

#### **b) Hands-on practical application for ELLs.**

- Understanding that culture goes beyond the knowledge of ethnic attire, music, food, and language.
- Include frequent opportunity for interaction and differentiating instruction.
- Allow students to choose how to display their own learning or how they want to address the tasks based on ability.

- Provide hands-on task materials that are easily to be constructed and adapted to fit any group.
- Use Blended Learning to merge online technology and face-to-face strategies.
- Following are some of the best sites found to help as resources for educators to enhance ELL students learning ability.

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### **Resources for educators:**

<https://www.weirdunsocializedhomeschoolers.com>

<https://www.neefusa.org/ee-week/resources/educators>

<https://www.pinterest.com/growhandsonkids/hands-on-activities-for-kids/>

<https://www.weareteachers.com/9-awesome-classroom-activities-that-teach-job-readiness-skills/>

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## Day 3

### **Teach ELLs to improve language proficiency**

- a) Differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English.**
- b) Integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition**
- c) Improve instructional practices when teaching ELLs.**

#### **a) Differentiate instruction for ELLs to learn English**

Improve literacy instruction by assisting in creating supportive environments for diverse language learners.

Extend and refine their understanding of reading, writing, listening, and speaking processes and development.

Implement effective instructional strategies and curriculum materials.

Understand the problems of struggling readers, including general education ELLs and gifted ELLs.

Provide students with differentiated instructional practices that respond to language and culture in a variety of ways.

Assess whether a student has a true reading problem or whether the difficulty is related to English language proficiency.

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Plan differentiated instruction and activities for ELLs to assume greater responsibility and ownership for their own learning.

Identify specific pedagogical characteristics to effectively teach ELL students. Improve students' academic learning by teaching content-specific reading strategies.

Use feasible and evidence-based practices for building vocabulary and academic language during content instruction.

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**b) Integrate ELLs' knowledge into the language acquisition.**

- Encourage free-reading choices for support of ELL students.
- Purchase ELL materials, and foreign language books for classroom.
- Plan trips to visit the library and show ELL students the foreign language section.
- Suggest that school care enough about them to make sure they have reading materials in their language.

- Use pictures to help give context and meaning when a reader comes across unfamiliar words.
- Suggest graphic novels that allow ELL students the opportunity to engage in critical literacy.
- Help ELL students to read books in fifty different languages using the International Children's Library site: [www.childrenslibrary.org](http://www.childrenslibrary.org)

### c) Improve instructional practices

Observation systems can provide teachers with information about how to improve their instructional practice .

Teacher evaluation system must measure and provide targeted corrective feedback on instructional practice.

Teacher's preparation must influence candidates' abilities to shape the instructional culture to improve student learning.

- Administrator must offer authentic field-based opportunities that are scaffolded on a developmental continuum for ELL students.
- School districts must offer support for candidates to practice essential competencies. Allow aspiring school leaders to apply their knowledge/skills and help them deal with linking theory and practice.
- Handbooks or guidance material, as well as regular interactions among stakeholders, help set expectations and develop processes ensuring a high quality experience.

- Use instructional coaching as a primary form of job-embedded support to improve instructional practices
- Allow teachers to use reciprocal teaching effectively for diverse groups of learners.
- Results highlighted the notion that analytic reflection can support teachers as they work toward intentionally improving their pedagogical practices

## Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) guidelines

To foster equity, the New York State ESSA plan.

Addresses disparities in training for teachers to help them be effective in the classroom;

Provides students more access to rigorous high school coursework;

Makes schools equally welcoming environments for all students;

Increases fiscal transparency in school building spending; and

Uses multiple measures to allow students to demonstrate proficiency in state learning standards.



**Every** student includes English language learners, students with disabilities, low-income students, neglected and delinquent youth, migrant students, homeless students, and students in rural districts where sparse population density creates its own challenges.

ESSA includes a wide array of programs that are designed to help to ensure success for students and schools. These programs provide schools and districts with resources focused on meeting the needs of students, parents and families, teachers, and school leaders.



**Below, please find information, resources, technical assistance, data, and reports on the New York State Education Department (NYSED) ESSA programs**

Title I, Part A provides supplemental financial assistance to school districts/schools with a high percentage of children from low-income families, to provide all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, high-quality education and to close educational achievement gaps.

The New York State Migrant Education Program establishes or improves programs of education, including support services, for migratory children and their families.



Title I, Part D provides supplemental educational/transitional services to students in residential facilities across New York State.

Title I, Part A is designed to advance excellence in teaching and learning and to promote equity in educational opportunity throughout the State.

Title III is designed to enable English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners and Immigrant Students to develop English language proficiency, as well as access the State's challenging academic standards, through the provision of high-quality instruction and support.

Title IV, Part A provides supplemental funding to help provide students with a well-rounded education, improve school conditions and improve the use of technology.

Title V, Part B provides additional resources to assist rural districts in meeting state definitions for the New York State Accountability System.

Title X, Part A (the McKinney-Vento Act) provides support to ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate, public education, including public preschool education, with the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and student performance standards.

NYSED's guidance on equitable services for nonpublic schools is intended to assist LEAs and other entities receiving federal financial assistance to fulfill their consultation obligations under ESSA to provide equitable services to eligible private school students, teachers, and other educational personnel, and, under some programs, to parents.

A positive school climate promotes school safety, student self-esteem, emotional well-being, mental health, and lower incidences of substance abuse, student absenteeism, and suspensions. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) continues to promote initiatives to foster student engagement and thereby increase student achievement, safety, and wellness. Efforts will be expanded to provide capacity-building guidance; strategies; best-practice resources; and professional development for school administrators, instructional staff, and non-instructional staff in the following areas to advance these initiatives.

- Dignity for All Students Act
- Social Emotional Learning
- Mental Health Education
- Trauma Sensitive Schools
- Restorative Practices and Reducing Exclusionary Discipline
- School Climate Survey Pilot

•NYSED is committed to making data available and easy to use. Our [public data website](#) provides data on high school graduation rates, grades 3-8 test scores, and school report cards.

## **Common Core State Standards. (CCSS) Guidelines**

The **Common Core** is informed by the highest, most effective standards from states across the United States and countries around the world. The standards define the knowledge and skills students should gain throughout their K-12 education in order to graduate high school prepared to succeed in entry-level careers, introductory academic college courses, and workforce training programs.

## The standards are:

Research- and evidence-based.

Clear, understandable, and consistent.

Aligned with college and career expectations.

Based on rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills.

Built upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards.

Informed by other top performing countries in order to prepare all students for success in our global economy and society.

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## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

I asked the following questions during the semistructured interviews:

1. Tell me about the barriers to teaching a new language.
2. Tell me how you teach ELL students.
3. Tell me about your experiences teaching ELL students.
4. Tell me about the curriculum you use to teach ELL students.
5. What specific instructional strategies do you use to teach ELL students?
6. What do you feel is your greatest challenge to teach ELL students?
7. What is your perception on teaching ELL students?
8. What is your perception of the barriers when teaching ELL students?

## Appendix C: Professional Development Evaluation

## Professional Development Evaluation

Participant's Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_

A. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statement by placing a checkmark (✓) on the appropriate box:

B. Please write your statement to answer the following questions:

How do you feel about the overall quality of this professional development?

What impact will the content of this professional development have on your work?