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Access to culturally responsive teaching for English language learners : mainstream teacher perceptions and practice on inclusion.

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ACCESS TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNERS: MAINSTREAM TEACHER PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICE ON INCLUSION

By

Tamela N. Compton
B.A., University of Louisville, 1997
M.S., University of Louisville, 2002

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Education and Human Development of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development

Department of Educational Leadership Evaluation and Organizational Development
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2018

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A Dissertation Approved on

March 26, 2018

by the following Dissertation Committee:

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Dr. Meera Alagaraja, Chair (ELEOD)

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Dr. Kyle Ingle (ELEOD)

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Dr. Ahmad Washington

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Dr. Georgia Hampton

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the silent learner in the classroom with a story to tell, a

voice to be heard, a culture to be embraced, and a gift to be nurtured.

I see you.

me and championed for my completion. Lastly, I would like to thank my daughters, Alex, Asari, and Aaliyah. I leave you a legacy of unconditional love, endless hope, and forever compassion. Always remember to let your intellectual beauty shine. And for others whom I cannot thank by name but I carry in my heart, thank you for believing in me and this work.

ABSTRACT

ACCESS TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNERS: MAINSTREAM TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES
ON INCLUSION

Tamela N. Compton

March 26, 2018

This dissertation was designed to inform educators, practitioners, and policy

makers on equity-based instruction for ELLs by examining secondary teachers'

perceptions and practice on inclusion. A dominant qualitative research design was used

for this study. A survey adapted from Reeves (2002) research on secondary teacher's

attitudes and perceptions on the inclusion of English as a Second Language (ESL) student

in mainstream classrooms was administered to 212 secondary teachers in three high

schools who have shown significant growth in their ESL student enrollment. The study

then interviewed six teachers who participated in the survey on their personal experiences

with instructing ELLs in their classroom. The Intrinsic Motivational Framework used for

Culturally Responsive Teaching by Wlodowski and Ginsberg (1995) framed the study

under the four motivational conditions: establishing inclusion, developing attitude,

enhancing meaning and engendering competence. The study examined literature on

policy, programming, and culturally responsive teaching and how these may influence

achievement in the mainstream classroom for ELLs. The cross-analysis of the survey and

interview data uncovered responses related to the themes: inclusion, instructional

practice, support, and access to culturally responsive teaching. The study concludes by

providing implications for schools, classrooms, and teachers on how to create an

inclusive learning environment through the effective mainstreaming of ELLs that

acknowledges the experiences and culture of each student.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Culture is dynamic, active, changing, always on the move (Arvizu, 1994).

Introduction

Arvizu (1994) stated that culture is dynamic, active, changing, always on the move. As an anthropologist, he felt it was the direct responsibility of all educational agencies to give attention to culture in their schools and programs. Based on the notion that people are the product of and producers of culture, and are creating continuous change, he called the gatekeepers of culture "bridge builders." Bridge builders within the educational system inevitably work to break down the hidden barriers that create a wedge between culture and content in public school classrooms and are in a position to address those students who may fall between the gaps in academic achievement.

English Language Learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing student population nationwide, with the highest growth occurring in grades 7–12 (Capps et al., 2005). Teachers must learn to teach in a society that is increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse to meet the needs of all students. Teachers often attempt to respond to cultural, linguistic, and social diversity in their classrooms, but must recognize their own beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, and experiences about teaching and learning in order to promote a healthy discourse and culturally responsive teaching (Cochran-Smith, 1995). Despite the growth in diversity, teachers remain ill-prepared to address the increasingly diverse student population in the mainstream academic classroom, where ELLs are often

treated like uninvited guests (Yoon, 2008) and labeled "gap" students. By definition, gap students significantly and persistently show disparity in academic performance or educational attainment compared with higher-performing groups of students. Since the inception of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the federal government has been actively involved in writing policies to support academic achievement for diverse student groups and address the persistent achievement gap that is present between white students and minority student groups (Puma & Drury, 2000).

In the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Board of Education and the Department of Education have identified policies for ELLs. According to Kentucky Administrative Regulation 703 KAR 5:070, ELL programs must ensure the following:

- English language proficiency must be assessed annually, regardless of time enrolled in the U.S. school.

- ELLs must participate in all state-required assessments after completing one full year of academic enrollment.

- ELLs in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school are not required to participate in the state-required reading, writing (language mechanics and on-demand writing), and social studies assessments.

- A mathematics test is required only for the first year of ESL services, with accommodations as outlined in the student Program Service Plan (PSP).

- A science test is required for first-year ESL services, with appropriate accommodations as outlined in the student PSP.

Equalizing educational opportunity through high academic standards for all students has been a nationwide focus, but identifying true classroom effects has been

neglected, leaving a void between policy and practice. ELLs are faced with barriers both culturally and academically (Freeman & Freeman, 2002), entering high school with high stakes testing and demanding college and career readiness standards. ELLs who spend a large portion of their instructional day in the mainstream classroom face cultural and linguistic barriers (Dejong & Harper, 2005). In addition to cultural and linguistic barriers, ELLs may be placed in academically lower tracks, and face additional challenges with learning academic content and reaching graduation, sometimes dropping out at higher rates as a result (Conger, 2008; Leckie, Kaplan, Rubinstein-Avila, 2013; Oakes, 1985). In order for ELLs to gain academic success in mainstream classrooms, they must have access to teaching that is culturally responsive. Teaching that fails to recognize varying norms of student behavior and communication provokes student resistance, while teaching that is responsive prompts student involvement (Olneck, 1995). In order to respond to the needs of ELLs, research must lend itself to understanding teacher beliefs and perceptions toward the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Educational opportunity for ELLs has been thought of in terms of educational outcomes vs. classroom effects. Classroom effects have been defined as creating access for students to receive equity-based instruction accessed through multiple pathways that require neither the dissolution of high academic expectations nor the devaluation of language and culture (Reeves, 2004). Culturally responsive teaching is the catalyst for student engagement and academic achievement (Gay, 2010). Traditional ways of teaching and engaging learners in the classroom will not meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students in urban school settings (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Teachers

serving in urban school systems need to consider their beliefs, perceptions, and practices when working with diverse student learners. Cochran-Smith (1995) states that teachers must be willing to confront issues of race, culture, and language. This kind of examination inevitably begins with an understanding of personal histories, beliefs, and experiences. Beliefs and assumptions shape practice.

Students should not lose their identity but gain knowledge from their culture (Nieto, 1999). Texts and other instructional materials often provide for students a poor, inaccurate, and absent representation of diverse cultural and linguistic groups (Gay, 2010). Incorporating instruction and curriculum reflective of students' cultural background is a strategy of culturally responsive teaching that can lead to better student outcomes in the mainstream classroom. Schoolwide efforts and reforms are needed in order to create settings where ELLs can excel. Culturally responsive teaching is teaching that is designed not only to fit the school culture to the students' culture but also use the student's culture as a basis for helping students understand themselves and others, structure social interactions, and help conceptualize knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

Teachers' beliefs and perceptions toward the development of more culturally responsive personal practice must be explored to help create classrooms that are conscious of student diversity and where students have access to culturally responsive teaching. Additional work that supports teacher growth, development, and resources with the aim of improving instructional practices for culturally and linguistically diverse students is critical for student engagement. Student engagement leads to student achievement (Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002). In order to close the achievement gap and build on the strengths of ELLs, education must provide teachers who have additional

skills and abilities to meet the challenges of culturally diverse classrooms (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). Thus, culturally responsive teaching will help build culturally competent schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of secondary teachers on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom and identify the instructional practices of ELL teachers. This research used a dominant qualitative research design and employed interviews and a survey during the data collection process. In order to explore teachers' perceptions on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, the study surveyed high school teachers in a large urban school district who have English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in their schools and who taught ELLs in the mainstream classroom environment. The interviews consisted of in-depth inquiry into the experiences and instructional practices of selected high school teachers of ELLs. The combination of survey and interview methods used helped to fully explore teachers' experiences and perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

Teacher beliefs and attitudes are often formed by the values they hold, and play an important role in student performance (Freeman & Freeman, 1994). The experiences of secondary teachers draw much attention as their perceptions shape teacher practice and levels of student engagement. Against the backdrop of current political landscapes and under the pressures of accountability, the research identified how teacher perceptions of inclusion shaped pedagogy and practice. Access to culturally responsive teaching has become a priority as growing evidence suggests that engagement of culturally diverse students requires a pedagogy that crosses disciplines and cultures. In order to improve

educational experiences and implement equity-based instruction, educators must understand the beliefs and perceptions that influence practice and student access to culturally responsive teaching.

The purpose of this study was to give voice to secondary teachers and understand barriers to fostering success for ELL students in mainstream classrooms by shedding light on teacher perceptions through a look at culturally responsive teaching in emerging multilingual school environments. The study has added to a growing body of research on secondary teachers' perceptions of ELLs' inclusion in mainstream classrooms.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study:

1. What are high school teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream (core content) classroom?

2. How do teacher perceptions of inclusion shape the instructional practice of ELLs in the mainstream (core content) classroom?

3. What culturally responsive teaching practices are used in the mainstream classroom to enhance instruction for the inclusion of ELLs?

Through the use of a dominant qualitative research design guided by a survey and interviews, the study explored teacher perceptions on inclusion, instructional practice, support, and access to culturally responsive teaching. Perceptions in the study were defined by what teachers believe and feel on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Yin (2009) categorizes qualitative stsought to gain knowledge from teachers who provide instruction to ELL students in mainstream classrooms.

Significance of the Study

The trend toward inclusion for ELLs raises the question of equal treatment and social justice for students, and whether this will be achieved through inclusion in mainstream classrooms. This study was designed to help inform how culturally competent schools are created by examining classroom practices of regular educational teachers who are tasked with helping all students meet federal and state accountability goals. Teachers in large urban school districts serving ELLs in the wake of high stakes testing and accountability are held responsible for ensuring student success (Lazarin, 2006). A political landscape that exposes xenophobic ideologies creates anxiety and fear in immigrant students; in this climate, immigrant students not surprisingly question their sense of belonging in schools. Mitigating barriers for ELLs in the mainstream classroom through an exploration of teacher perceptions and practices will give guidance to professional development aimed at building culturally responsive communities with teaching that infuses culture with content in the mainstream classroom. Intrinsic systems of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985) are used to accommodate and create access to cultural differences in the mainstream classroom. In allowing access to culturally responsive teaching in the mainstream classroom, general education teachers can meet the instructional, cultural, and linguistic needs of students (Nieto, 1999) and support the achievement of ELLs while building an inclusive community of learners.

Conceptual Framework

The framework used in this study was the Intrinsic Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). This conceptual framework has its origins in the field of psychology through intrinsic motivation and self-

determination theory, the result of research by Deci and Ryan (1985). The research was based on a human point of view that states that individuals have innate tendencies toward personal growth and vitality. The theory explains that there are three needs people seek to satisfy—competence, relatedness, and autonomy. The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching respects individual cultures and works at the same time to create a common culture in the learning environment that all teachers and students can accept (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

The critical elements of culturally responsive teaching recognize the key role of the teacher. The framework addresses motivation and culture, and analyzes the social and institutional resistance to teaching based on principles of intrinsic motivation. Theories of intrinsic motivation have been applied and researched in bilingual education (Cummins, 1986).

The framework includes four motivational conditions that teacher and learners collaboratively create to enhance learning. These conditions are essential to developing intrinsic motivation that is sensitive to cultural differences. The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching conditions are:

- *Establishing inclusion*: Creating a learning atmosphere in which learners and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another.

- *Developing attitude:* Creating a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice.

- *Enhancing meaning:* Creating challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that include learners' perspectives and values.

- *Engendering competence:* Creating an understanding that learners are effective in learning something they value.

This study concentrated on understanding teacher perceptions and practices of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This study explored through the motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching the areas of establishing inclusion, attitude, and meaning through a survey designed to explore teacher beliefs and perceptions of inclusion. The study further examined teacher practice and perceptions through in-depth interviews that addressed the teaching experience and instructional practices for ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations were recognized in the construction of this study. The study examined teacher perceptions through a survey as a lead-up to in-depth face-to-face interviews about teacher practice. The flexibility of the design allowed the use of both surveys and interviews to capitalize on the benefits of both sources of data.

The assumptions made regarding the study include: (a) no researcher bias to hamper participant response; (b) researcher will not interact with the respondents; (c) respondents will be guaranteed anonymity; and (d) participants' responses are honest and reflect their experiences in the workplace. Understanding that the researcher had no way of validating the honesty of each participant response, it assumed that the participants answered the survey truthfully. The results from the survey may not reflect the entire population or beliefs of every teacher in the district.

The study was limited in its ability to gain a full understanding of core content teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs due to the span of time of the study. The

researcher recognized that much of the information gained from the study was limited to a single self-administered survey and one interview per selected participant. A slight bias in favor of selecting teachers who range from little teaching experience to much teaching experience, training with ELLs, and school designs is present in the interview selection process. The study recognized that qualitative inquiry through multiple surveys and interviews over an extended period of time would provide more comprehensive data on teacher perceptions of inclusion.

A final limitation of the study was that all information gained was grounded within one school district. Therefore, results may not be generalizable to other school districts in the United States. The study had a narrow focus and was concentrated in secondary/high schools with ESL programs. The perspectives presented may represent bias on the part of the participants and not be attributed to the whole population, limiting the usefulness of the study beyond the scope of the district. In acknowledging that the researcher is a current employee of the district, the researcher recognized the positionality and potential for personal bias to influence the study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in the context of this study.

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT): Culturally responsive teaching is teaching that is designed not only to fit the school culture to the students' culture but also to use student culture as the basis for helping students understand themselves and others, structure social interactions, and help students conceptualize knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

English language learners (ELLs): An English Language Learner, by definition, is a student whose primary language is one other than English and does not meet the criteria for state or district English proficiency (Garcia, 2009).

English as a Second Language (ESL): English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to programs that are specialized for English language learners. Students in ESL programs have not met language proficiency.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the education of students in general educational environments with supports and accommodations.

Limited English proficiency (LEP): The term "limited English proficiency" is used to describe a student who is age 3 through 21 and is enrolled in an elementary and/or secondary school in the United States, but who demonstrates difficulty with speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language.

Mainstream classroom: A classroom where core content is taught by a general education teacher.

Secondary or high school: A school that serves students who are in 9th through 12th grades.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of literature presented in three major parts that demonstrate the significance of the research problem through 1) the evaluation of empirical and past studies focused on the brief history of ELLs, 2) teacher beliefs and perceptions about the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, and 3) culturally responsive teaching. Chapter 3 highlights the methodology used in the study and how the

study was carried out. Chapter 4 describes findings from the survey and in-depth

interviews. Chapter 5 is a summary and integration of both the survey and interview data.

Chapter 6 presents implications for school districts, policy and programming,

instructional practice, and teacher preparation programs. It concludes with

recommendations future research in the area of inclusion for English Language Learners

in the mainstream classroom.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Culture is the vehicle between teacher practice and student learning (Nieto, 1999).

Introduction

This chapter will review the relevant literature on ELLs and their inclusion in the mainstream classroom. This chapter seeks to explore teacher beliefs and perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom and educators' ability to provide access to culturally responsive teaching. The literature review takes a historical look at ELLs in public school systems since the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as well as the challenges of providing culturally responsive teaching to ELLs in urban settings. This chapter examines teacher beliefs, their implications for shaping teacher practice, and access to culturally responsive teaching in connection with the motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching. The motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching seeks to unify teaching practices that elicit the intrinsic motivation of all learners, so that teachers can consistently design learning experiences that matter to and support the success of all students (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000). In understanding the impact of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom through the awareness of teacher perceptions and practice, the motivational framework can consider how the cultures represented in a classroom can and should be considered in instructional decisions.

The chapter consists of three major parts that present the significance of the research problem through the evaluation of empirical and past studies focused on a brief history of ELLs in public education, teacher beliefs towards the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, and culturally responsive teaching. The first section will examine ELLs from a historical public educational lens and their experiences in the mainstream classroom. The second section will uncover teacher beliefs and perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom and will examine the impact of those beliefs and perceptions on teacher practice. The last section will explore culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and its importance for teacher practice and student learning in the mainstream classroom. The review of literature will provide context for teacher implementation of culturally responsive teaching for ELLs in the mainstream classroom by acknowledging teacher perceptions of inclusion and its effect on instructional practice.

Brief History of English Language Learners in Public Education

In the mid 1960s, when the civil rights movement for all African Americans was in full rise, a movement was silently emerging in the Hispanic and Latino communities. Hispanic and Latino activists began to join arms in the civil rights movement to protest the high proportions of school dropouts among Spanish-speaking students. Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas filed a bill, the Bilingual Education Act, aimed at removing language barriers for second-language students in 1968. Created to help poor Mexican-American children learn English, the purpose of the act was not to "create pockets of different languages through the country," according to its author, but to "make those children fully literate in English" (Bischoff, 2002, p. 174).

The emergence of ELLs changed the landscape in public school systems. During the 1950s, English immersion policies were a dominant means of educational instruction to help non-English speakers learn the English language. State laws dating back to 1918 that mandated English-only teaching requirements placed significant restraints on Mexican-American students in Texas schools. On June 3, 1973, Governor Dolph Briscoe signed the Bilingual Education and Training Act into law, five years after the federal recognition of bilingual education.

The first dual immersion programs began in the early 1960s in response to the first influx of Spanish-speaking children into U.S. school systems. The immersion programs gained support as English-speaking parents recognized the benefits of enrolling their children in dual-language programs. The immersion philosophy adopted the ideology that the best means of obtaining the language was to be completely immersed into English, forcing minority speakers to adopt English as a primary language. From the 1920s until the early 1960s, few or no remedial services were available. Students were often retained at the same grade level until mastery of English skills and mechanics were proven (Hernandez-Chavez, 1984).

The progressive school of thought shifted to standards-based education, designed to ensure an equitable education for all students. Labaree (2012) explained that the progressive movement was a social, economic, and political crisis that confronted the American education system and resulted in two kinds of pressures: administrative progressivism and educational consumers. Progressive reform insisted that government, at the national, state, and local levels, is responsive to the welfare of its citizens rather than the welfare of corporations (Sadovnik, Cookson, & Semel, 2013). This guided the

initial passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, which

placed emphasis on the education of disadvantaged students. In 1968, the Bilingual

Education Act, also known as Title VII of the ESEA, was made into law. This act set the

stage for further legislation regarding the equality of educational opportunity for

language minorities. It was later amended and replaced by Title III of the No Child Left

behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, under President George W. Bush.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)'s impact on ELLs. Title III (a part of of NCLB

known as known as the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and

Academic Achievement Act) holds its early roots in the progressive era of education.

Historians Lawrence Cremin and Richard Hofstadter spoke in 2013 of a broader program

of social and political reform called the Progressive Movement (Sadovnik, Cookson, and

Semel, 2013, p. 70). Progressive reformers focused on educational values that supported

government regulation and conservation of the nation's natural resources.

Title III of NCLB sought to merge the existing thirteen bilingual and immigrant

education programs into one piece of legislation. This was thought to increase states'

flexibility in the allocation of funds for these programs by housing them under one

legislative act. States, in turn, were able to maintain a focus on assisting school districts

in teaching limited English proficiency students in an effort to help them meet state

standards of proficiency. This measurable accountability came in two threads: states

establishing annual achievement targets for limited English proficiency students with

relation to gains in English proficiency, and states complying with federal Title I

spending requirements with regard to limited English proficiency students. Funding

allocations were based upon census data on limited English proficiency students and

immigrant students. After funds were allocated to states, the same formula would be used to allocate funds to individual school districts, except that states were given the authority to "reserve up to 15% for school districts who had experienced significant increases in the percentage or number of immigrant students or that have limited or no experience in serving immigrant students" (NCLB, 2001). Title III provisions of ESEA provided federal money to support the instructional services for ELLs.

The result of collaboration between major education partners such as the federal Department of Education (DOE), the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), members of Congress, and the president of the United States, NCLB was created with the requirement that all students score at the "proficient" level by school year 2013–2014. Included in this accountability model was the mandate that schools meet "adequate yearly progress" targets set by each state. Additionally, ELLs must be tested every year until they are considered proficient by state standards in English (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). The challenges for ELLs to reach proficiency targets were both educational and technical challenges that included historically low ELL performance on state testing, measurement accuracy of ELL performance, and the instability of ELL students as a subgroup to meet language proficiency (Abedi & Dietel, 2004). The intention of NCLB was to increase expectations for all students and close achievement gaps between subgroups of students. However, NCLB unintentionally created challenges and barriers for ELLs (Abedi & Dietel, 2004). Snow and Biancarosa (2003) demonstrated that since the passage of NCLB in 2001, fewer ELLs received high school diplomas and far fewer had gone on to obtain post-secondary education.

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized the ESEA Act of 1965. This bipartisan act prioritized the progress of ELLs and contained significant implications for ELLs. In response to ESSA, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) supports the proponents of ESSA by acknowledging that English language proficiency for English learners is integrated into the system by which all schools and districts are held accountable. The academic achievement of English learners is fully integrated into the accountability system. ESSA shifted authority from the federal government to states and school districts. The act increased funding targeted at ELLs and took major steps beyond NCLB toward the inclusion of ELLs in state proficiency measures. ESSA authorized more money for programming—allocating a 20% increase from $737 million to $885 million by 2020 for training, resources, teacher support, and programming. This shift presented the need for states and school districts to place emphasis on the inclusion of ELLs in content areas to help students reach academic and language proficiency.

ELL students. ELLs are a heterogeneous and complex group of students, with diverse gifts, educational needs, backgrounds, languages, and goals (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2005). Recent research showed that 57% of adolescent ELLs were born in the U.S., while 43% were born elsewhere. ELLs have varied levels of language proficiency, socioeconomic standing, expectations of schooling, content knowledge, and immigration status (Hoffman & Sable, 2006). ELLs are a diverse group of learners with various histories, backgrounds, native language literacy, socioeconomic status, and cultural traditions. If ELLs' diverse needs are ignored, they will struggle in mainstream classrooms and fail to achieve academic success (Hoffman & Sable, 2006).

ELLs have distinct learning needs that require understanding and specialized instructional strategies. An increased number of students born in other nations, who speak different languages, and bring diverse cultural differences, have entered U.S. classrooms in the last few decades. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that about one in five students who enter the public school system live in homes where English is not the primary language. The Census Bureau predicts that by the year 2030, nearly 40% of students who enter public education will speak a language other than English at home (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Often, ELLs must avoid their native language at school, diminishing its usage to only at home (Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner & Meza, 2003). In the home, English is limited and only used to translate. Schools eventually become the only place the English language is widely used.

Currently, there are over 5 million ELLs in public schooling in the U.S. (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2014). A big part of the problem is not just getting ELLs to learn and understand English but breaking down the barriers in the mainstream classroom that hinder their process of learning core content . Teachers must understand that not only are their ELLs learning a new language, they are learning a new culture. The relationship between culture and content for academic performance becomes a factor to consider when planning instruction for ELLs. Having to learn culture impacts the process and content of instruction (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). The pressures of school, home life, and friends, can sometimes interfere with this learning. To simply expose ELLs to the English language and classroom content is not enough for them to obtain academic success, as the whole child must be nurtured as a part of learning.

Equity and social justice for ELLs. The equalization of educational opportunity

requires an approach that neither assimilates nor structurally separates culturally and

linguistically diverse students. Educational opportunity can be described as a collection

of opportunities extended throughout a student's enrollment in public school (Reeves,

2004). The demand for equality in educational opportunities has been a central feature of

U.S. history (Sadovnik, Cookson, & Semel, 2013, p. 76). The Equal Educational

Opportunity Act of 1974 and the Supreme Court ruling in Lau vs. Nichols (1974)

impacted the education of language-minority students in the U.S. This suit, filed by

Chinese parents in San Francisco, altered the national politics of education for future

federal policy by establishing that identical education does not constitute equal education

under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The ruling required that school districts

take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by non-English speakers.

This Supreme Court case highlighted the fact that equal did not mean equitable and that

the current legislation limited access for students to meet state achievement standards.

Backlash politics have been the root of backlash pedagogies. These pedagogies

have produced new forms of exclusion that threaten the possibility of educational

achievement, intellectual, and social equity for ELL students. According to Gutierrez et.

al (2002), these backlash pedagogies do not accept diversity and differences as a resource

for learning but regard them as a problem to be eliminated or remediated. These

pedagogies limit students' complete linguistic, sociocultural, and academic service in

learning, dictating who gets conducive educational practices and in what form. A

movement began in California in the late 1990s to legislate against bilingual programs.

Proposition 227, or the "English for the Children" initiative claimed that the poor

academic performance of Spanish speakers was due to their placement in bilingual programs. The argument was that, for students to have superior academic outcomes, they must be placed in English-only programs. The initiative sought to make English-only instruction the default program throughout the state, and in 1998 legislation to this effect passed.

California's Proposition 227 fueled the debate on language, as politics aimed to redefine the idea of English language as a birthright. Sekhon (1999) stated that Proposition 227 positions English as "our" language by constructing it as an unlearned capacity, a birthright. He stated that the proposition created in California centered English as a "they must learn it," making language a divide. Later supporters of Proposition 227 in California went on to pass a similar initiative in Arizona in 2000, then in Massachusetts in 2002 (Ullman, 2014).

Equal educational opportunity for all students has been the long-term goal of the public school system. Students and families served in public education reflect the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of our nation. The polarization and racism of the prevailing political landscape has created barriers in communities and schools. Understanding that equality of education for ELLs is often met with an opportunity and access gap, universalism has been identified as an approach that would ensure the equal treatment of students. Critics point out that differentiated schooling has had a history of failing to achieve parity for linguistically and culturally diverse students, encouraging them to take on an "underdog" mentality (Reeves, 2004). Universalism was thought to be an approach that could ensure equal treatment of all students, but it garnered criticism for failing to equalize educational opportunities for ELLs. Critics of universalism have stated

that it did little to recognize the differences in students and the communities in which they live. Cooney and Akintunde (1999) stated that universalism did much to equalize education but failed to recognize the differences in students, their communities, and the diverse ways in which they learn, perpetuating inequities for ELLs. Platt, Harper, and Mendoza (2003) stated, "If the school ignores the linguistic and cultural diversity that ELLs bring, then the goals of inclusive education are subverted" (p. 125). The inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom questions equal educational opportunity.

ELL program models. According to the Kentucky Department of Education, English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to programs that are specialized for ELLs. When students require more specific programming and services, even the terminology involved can be complicated; therefore, it is important to clarify in an effort to create a culturally inclusive environment in schools. As stated in NCLB, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a term that describes students, programming, and services for ELLs; however, it is also used to describe students who are instructed by general education teachers without specialized training for students in an ESL program. Under ESSA, LEP programs have maintained their current description as other models are still being proposed. While Title III outlines specific guidelines for LEP students to be challenged, receive high quality instruction, and promote parental and community participation in language instruction, research shows that students need more assistance and programming to be academically successful (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Theoharis and O'Toole found that ELLs are overrepresented in low academic tracks, which contributes to lower test scores and higher dropout rates (2011). However, current research supports

that ELLs can learn as-rigorous material as their peers if "content is presented in linguistically appropriate ways" (Reeves, 2006, p. 138).

A variety of programs have been designed for ELLs but many of these programs are not inclusive of the general education environments where content is received, forging a gap between ESL programming and mainstream teacher instruction. ELLs need a form of schooling where learning can relate to cultural backgrounds and the histories of students (Nieto, 1999). The growing population of ELLs entering urban school districts has shifted the demographic landscape, leading educators, practitioners, and policymakers to respond to this increase by looking at instructional supports for ELLs.

Policymakers and educators have debated how to best serve ELLs in the school system so that they may thrive academically, linguistically, and socially in schools. Many have asked whether ELLs should be instructed in bilingual classrooms to promote language fluency in their native or home language, or whether they should be instructed in an English-immersion classroom to increase their exposure to English and academic content. Those for English immersion support ELLs' exposure to English language instruction (Rossell, 2005); others argue that bilingual programs isolate ELLs and segregate them from native English-speaking peers (Schlossman, 1983). Other scholars like Auerbach (1993) have contributed to a growing body of literature that advocates that bilingual options are not only necessary but effective.

Guerro (2004) conducted a study on structured English immersion (SEI) and its effectiveness in ensuring English proficiency within one year. The SEI model is used in several states, including Kentucky. ELLs are immersed in the English language to master academic English skills before they are mainstreamed into a traditional education setting

with native English speakers. The SEI model has benefits for all stakeholders involved, especially for students who want to be accepted by their English-speaking peers. In a rigorous study of high- and low-performing districts, Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000) found that in high-performing districts, ELLs needed between three and five years to develop oral proficiency and four to seven years to develop academic English proficiency. ELLs also have a period of sociocultural adjustment that lasts one to two years. Guerrero (2004) concluded that the SEI model was grounded in politics rather than research, stating specifically that policy passed to utilize SEI was grounded in voter preference rather than student needs. DeBray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009) argued that the politics of federal education policy is complicated, specifically with policies shaped and designed in the post-NCLB era. DeBray-Pelot and McGuinn (2009) noted that educational interest groups have had less influence in shaping reform policy than often supposed.

Umansky and Reardon (2014) explored the provisions of education to ELLs in a large California school district over a 12-year period. Umansky and Reardon (2014) compared how ELLs fared in English immersion, bilingual, maintenance bilingual, and dual immersion programs in a school district that used all four instructional models. The students' progress was tracked from kindergarten through middle school and measured by their English proficiency development, their academic growth, and the rates in which the students gained reclassification of proficiency status. More than 90% were proficient by the seventh grade but reached proficiency at different rates. In bilingual and dual language immersion programs, ELLs took more time to become proficient on average than did ELLs in English immersion programs. However, by the fifth grade, students

involved in the four different two-language instructional models reached the same proficiency rate. The findings suggest that two-language programs render overall higher levels of proficiency for ELLs than do English-immersion programs across academic, English proficiency, and reclassification outcomes by middle school. Umansky and Reardon (2014) recommended that school districts use their resources to develop and support high-quality two-language programs to help meet and address the needs of ELLs. Historical literature on the acquisition of academic English indicates ELLs need four to seven years to become proficient in English which directly impacts the student's ability to understand and learn academic content (Guerrero, 2004). This programmatic discrepancy has led to an achievement gap with regard to the academic performance of ELLs, especially those in mainstream core content classrooms.

ELL academic achievement. Many large urban school districts have felt a shift as student achievement gaps continue to widen among student groups. The academic achievement of ELLs in the U.S. reflects the long history of educational inequity and deficit mindsets toward underrepresented student groups. This change in America's policies under the backdrop of NCLB has created concern as research demonstrates that a student's race, ethnicity, cultural background, and other variables such as poverty, assessment practices, systemic issues, lack of professional development opportunities for teachers, and racism influence student achievement (Skiba et. al, 2011).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) demonstrated in 2005 that 4% of ELL eighth graders achieved proficiency on the reading exam versus 31% of all eighth graders who were found to be proficient. Non-native English speakers 14–18 years old were 21% less likely to have completed high school than native English

speakers (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Supporting research on academic barriers to success, Theoharis and O'Toole (2011) found that ELLs were not performing well on state accountability measures and had higher dropout rates. ELLs beginning school at a disadvantage linguistically have not had adequate exposure to English and as a result, assessments may not validly assess students' knowledge of content. DaSilva Iddings, Combs, and Moll (2012) found that standardized tests lacked validity for ELLs because the test were normed for monolingual speakers, resulting in an underestimation of ELLs' true academic abilities.

A longitudinal mixed methods study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement examined five school districts nationwide using a Prism Model of Language Acquisition for School survey. The Prism Model is designed to improve programs for ELLs by emphasizing four developmental processes that students experience in K–12 education; sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic. Thomas and Collier (2002) demonstrated the importance of a socioculturally supportive school environment for language minority students that allows natural language, academic, and cognitive development to take place in both the native and second language. This study found that ESL or bilingual services, as required by Lau v. Nichols, raised students' achievement levels by significant amounts, but ELLs in segregated or remedial programs did not close the achievement gap after they were reclassified and placed in mainstream learning environments. Thomas and Collier (2002) discovered that the gap was maintained or widened in later years, but that the more grade-level schooling a student receives, the higher the student's achievement.

Student achievement in U.S. schools will continue to depend on the academic success of ELLs (Lazarin, 2006), who will make up 40% of the student population as projected by the U.S. census by 2030. ELL student populations will continue to present challenges for public schools, especially those in urban settings, challenging them to meet accountability and achievement requirements that mandate that all students, including ELLs, meet state proficiency standards (Fry, 2008). In urban school districts, ELLs make up the vast majority of student enrollment in low-performing, high socioeconomic status schools (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). Fry (2008) estimated that students from high-poverty schools were a year behind in English acquisition compared to students attending schools with a high socioeconomic status.

The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching

The research on culturally responsive teaching indicates that the linking of content to the cultural backgrounds of students as a way to enhance student engagement and maintain the student's sense of cultural integrity is a critical component of effective, culturally responsive teaching (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Studies dedicated to understanding the practices of culturally responsive teaching have gleaned insight by integrating the components of the motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching (Phuntsog, 1999; Brown, 2003; Frye, Button, L., & Button, G., 2010). The framework has been used in inquiries to identify issues, norms, procedures, practice, and structures considered critical for culturally responsive teaching.

The motivational framework is a set of integrated norms for teaching practices that support equitable learning for diverse learners. Motivation is inseparable from culture (Wlodowski & Ginsberg, 1995). The framework for culturally responsive

teaching works to accommodate the race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to each student's cultural identity. This model embraces different cultures that students bring into the classroom and is capable of creating a common culture in the classroom that all students can accept. The framework relies on the pedagogical alignment of teaching. The foundation of the framework rests on theories of intrinsic motivation that accommodate cultural differences.
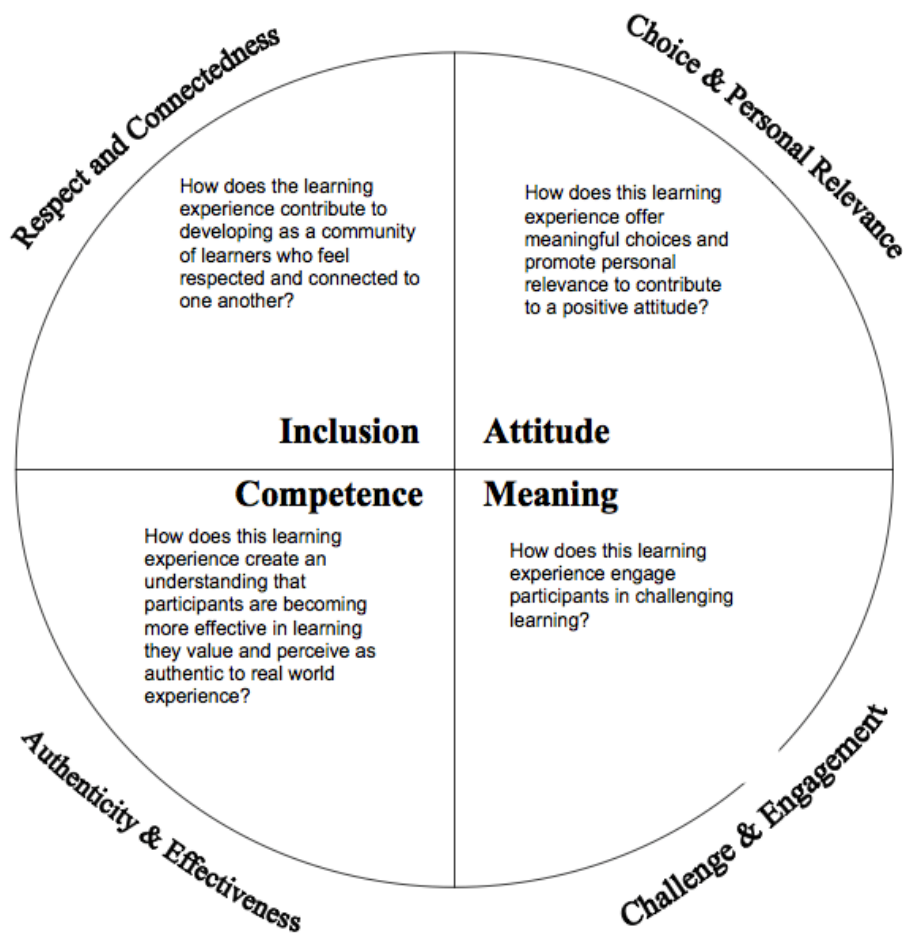
Figure 1. Ginsberg and Wlodkowski's Intrinsic Motivation Framework (2000).

This study will use the intrinsic motivation framework for culturally responsive teaching to guide the research inquiry; the researcher will use the four framework

conditions—inclusion, attitude, competence, and meaning—to frame the research

questions and draw meaning from teachers' perceptions of inclusion of ELLs in the

mainstream classroom. This study will explore the impact of inclusion on attitude by

examining the learning atmosphere and each teacher's disposition toward the learning

experience. The study will examine how perceptions of inclusion shape instructional

practice for ELLs in mainstream classrooms, identifying how teachers take into

consideration the student's cultural background in constructing an inclusive learning

experience that include the learner's (student) perspectives and values. Lastly, the study

will examine culturally responsive teaching practices.

Inclusion of ELLs in the Mainstream Classroom.

Inclusion is the process of integrating ELLs into regular school classes.

Mainstreaming is the gentle weaving of ESL program services in with general education

instruction. Mainstreaming is a position that many ELLs will encounter while in school.

For ELLs, mainstreaming is identified as a way to increase content knowledge and skills,

and provide students with learning that is aligned with their same-age peers. For

educators and parents, the transition into comprehensive or regular classes is desirable for

maximum social and educational gain for ELLs.

Hollins and Spencer (1990) emphasized the importance of cultural inclusion in

schools, and the importance of change to make them culturally consistent, relevant, and

meaningful to diverse populations of learners, recommending that schools respond to the

student's home culture and accept what children bring from home. Cultural inclusion in

classrooms means that children who speak English as a second language or who speak

standard English as a second dialect are not given negative labels, since the labels

become barriers for further exclusion from classroom learning and move students farther from inclusion.

ESL programs were called into question by Cummins (1981), who stated that they are subtractive, separate students both academically and socially, and do nothing to support academic achievement. Recent literature identifies uneven commitment and inconsistencies in services provided to ELLs in the mainstream environment (Faltis & Arias, 1993). Faltis and Arias (1993) called for an examination of school practices in order to provide effective inclusion for ELLs. The literature describes principles, instructional strategies and practices, and social and emotional supports that must be in place in order to ensure that students gain the most out of their time in a mainstream classroom.

Principles of effective mainstreaming. ELLs must have academic, social, and cultural experiences that are culturally appropriate in order to increase learner outcomes. It is argued that culturally responsive teaching and learning for multicultural environments is a critical pedagogy that links learning to empowerment. Nieto (1999) suggested that improving connections between students' home lives and teachers can create a positive learning community that positively impacts learner outcomes in the school environment.

Roxas (2011) conducted a study in a secondary school setting in the U.S., with Somali refugee students who had limited or interrupted access to education before entering the country. The focus was on analyzing student experiences in mainstream classrooms to determine teacher practice alternatives that would better support learning. Roxas (2011) found that teachers were often frustrated, disappointed, and regretful in

their efforts to help refugee students learn in the mainstream classroom. Often, the teachers lacked effective skills to successfully integrate the academic and cultural needs of students. Suggestions for teacher practices included intentional scaffolding and modified assignments (lesser amounts of homework to allow for additional time required for ELLs to complete the work), consideration of cultural background when assigning projects (avoid using American focused concepts or unmodified materials from textbooks), connecting school work to prior knowledge and student experiences, and building on student strengths. The study concluded that effective mainstreaming involves a conscious effort to increase ELL student outcomes in the mainstream classroom.

Instructional strategies and practices. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) explored the kinds of knowledge, skills, and commitment that enabled teachers to be effective with ELL in the mainstream classroom. They found that teacher knowledge of how ELL students learn and develop within a social and cultural context is key to instructional effectiveness and preparing learners for the 21st century. Instructional strategies can encourage all students to engage in learning activities that will lead to improved academic achievement across school settings. Despite the growth in racial and ethnic diversity in our society and in our current school systems, educators remain ill-prepared for such diversity (Dejong & Harper, 2005). Teachers fail to acknowledge culture and begin to teach academic content without knowing students' backgrounds (Collins, 1991; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto 1999). Culturally relevant curriculum and instruction for students in P–12 classrooms can mitigate barriers for ELL academic success and improve access to culturally responsive teaching.

Leavitt (2013) examined elementary school teachers in a western state who were identified as instructing ELLs. The teachers were to teach language and content to ELLs with the goal of having all students pass end-of-year testing at a proficient level. The teachers were selected based on school data that demonstrated consistently met state test score requirements in all content areas despite the school's limited resources and support for ELLs. However, their ELL students consistently met state test score requirements in all content areas. Each of the participants interviewed had a different perception of the challenges English learners carried to their classrooms and how these challenges influenced the participant's individual teaching style with ELLs. Interviews and observations from the qualitative study uncovered four major themes: teaching style, language acquisition awareness and development, structured immersion, and various instructional methods such as music, art, poetry, storytelling, games, drama, and rhymes. The study had limitations as it was conducted at one elementary school. Although several participants participated in the interview section of the study the general results were based upon the observations of one teacher. The study did not investigate teacher beliefs nor how culture influenced learning. The findings could not be generalized to other teachers in mainstream classrooms or at higher-grade levels. The researcher did note that there is a lack of training among mainstream classroom teachers, stating that participants generally lacked research-based methods for instructing ELLs. The study concluded that teachers generally modeled teaching methods that are thought of as "just good teaching."

An important consideration when examining teaching practices aimed at serving ELLs is that ELL students come to school with a wide range of native language and English language literacy habits and skills, uneven content-area backgrounds, and vastly

different family and schooling experiences (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). Elfers and Stritikus (2014) concluded that the issues that arise from studying instruction for ELLs include the challenge of advanced academic achievement and attention to the sociocultural dimensions of the schooling experience. In-depth studies by Collier (1987) and August and Hakuta (1997) focused on students who were literate or had deep content knowledge in their native language and concluded that those students are more likely to succeed in academic performance when compared to those who do not have these skills. Thus, language learning is seen as a long-term process involving both learning language and academic content. Bridging the access gap between native language skills and the inception of content rests in building a culturally responsive learning environment embedded with rich instructional practices that enhance students' cultural capital.

Transcaring. Transcaring is an overarching culture of care that allows for the creation of third spaces within school, bridging school and home. Transcaring is a successful instructional strategy used to support the achievement of ELLs in a study by Garcia, Woodley, Flores and Chu (2012). Their research focused on native Spanish speakers and the conflict between school and home, based upon language and culture. They found that a culture of care, use of Spanish, and the inclusion of Latino cultures and histories contributed to student success. Strategies identified were bilingual education, transformative cultural pedagogy (use of culturally relevant text in literacy), collaboration among communities of learning, and transaction through dynamic assessments (linguistic, cultural and socio-cognitive). Instructional practices were designed to be responsive to the cultural and social needs of students and embraced the diversity in the classroom.

Social and emotional learning. Covington (2000) stated that, "Like academic goals, the pursuit of social goals can help organize, direct, and empower individuals to achieve more fully" (p. 178). Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2014).

As ELLs enter classrooms with fewer language skills, these students struggle socially and emotionally. They often experience higher anxiety levels, and the anxiety affects the learning process. Pappahmihiel (2002) conducted a case study that uncovered and addressed the issue of the anxiety that ELLs feel when they enter mainstream classrooms. The study included 178 Mexican-born middle school students (grades 6–8) enrolled in ESL programs; the students had been in the U.S. for one year. The students were mainstreamed for a portion of their school day. Findings demonstrated that English language anxiety was multidimensional, affecting ELLs differently depending on the context. Students demonstrated difficulty not only with academic attainment but social and emotional stability.

Kramsch (1995) demonstrated the importance of understanding the "third space" as a social component. The "third space" is the new space that emerges when two cultures meet and the interface between them grows. This "third space" exists in many urban classrooms between culturally literate students and teachers. Culture is incorporated into the classroom only to the extent that it reinforces and enriches, rather than puts in question, traditional boundaries of self and others (Kramsch, 1995). A

learning environment emerges where a student does not lose their cultural identity but gains knowledge from their culture in the classroom. Damen (1987) explained that "culture learning is a natural process in which human beings internalize the knowledge needed to function in a societal group. It may take place in the native context as *enculturation* or in a non-native or secondary context as *acculturation*" (p. 140). The significance in understanding third space and acculturation sets the scene to fully integrate curriculum and instructional practices that are both culturally responsive and address each student's social and emotional needs.

Placing ELLs in mainstream classrooms may also increase the capacity for culture shock. Oberg (1960) defined culture shock as an anxiety resulting from the loss of familiar signs and symbols when a person enters a new culture (p. 177). Culture shock is experienced by ELLs as a result of their social and emotional experiences in relation to culture differences between home and school. In educational settings, researchers and practitioners recognize four stages of culture shock: euphoria, rejection, integration, and assimilation (the adaptation stage). ELLs thrive in mainstream classrooms that accept and assimilate the student's home culture into instructional practices. Students given access to culturally responsive teaching soon adapt to the new culture and negotiate the culture of school *and* home (Nieto, 1999).

Since the 2017 presidential election, public schools have reported issues with racist, xenophobic, and misogynistic comments that jeopardize the sense of belonging among students. A middle school teacher in Washington reported that a student blurted out in class, "I hate Muslims." Another teacher from Michigan reported a student stating, "Bet those Mexicans are really scared now." Anxiety about deportation of family

members under President Donald Trump's immigration policy has negatively impactred families' sense of security and, thus, negatively impacted students' sense of belonging. The tenants presented in the law coupled by discussions of "building a wall" has silently pushed students out of the classroom. In "My Students Are Terrified," Bryant Sculos (2016) spoke out on the difficulty of politically-engaged teaching and how it has taken on a new importance in public classrooms. Sculos, teaching a freshman writing class, acknowledged that his students are black *and* white and largely come from first- or second-generation immigrants. When asked to address the political climate, a student wrote:

> . . . I'm worried about all the minority groups being affected because of Trump's win. [With] Many of the things he claimed to [do]: building the wall, deporting illegal residents, imprisoning LGBT couples, as said by Vice President [-elect] Mike Pence . . . people will have their lives changed by Trump's presidency.

Sculos (2016) stated that after seeing the fear in his students' faces, he understood that his teaching must evolve; he decided to encourage students to organize with one another and exercise their rights, and to help them make sense of the political landscape in which they live.

In a survey by the Southern Poverty Law Center, two thirds of educators teaching grades K–12 reported that school children, most of immigrants, Muslims, African Americans and other students of color, are scared and stressed about their future with Donald Trump as president (Southern Law Poverty Center, 2016). Close to one third of students in American classrooms are children of foreign-born parents (Southern Law Poverty Center, 2016). Stressed students have a harder time learning validating reports

that anxiety has an impact on grades and a student's ability to concentrate. Sculos (2016) stated it is now more important than ever for teachers to strive to create a safe and inclusive environment for students.

Teacher beliefs and perceptions of inclusion. Nieto (1999) provided relevant insight on teacher practices, attitudes, and values, as well as on policies and practices of schools that promote the learning of all students—especially those who have not been successful in school. Nieto reported that learning is "actively constructed," connected to experience, influenced by cultural differences, developed within a social context, and created within a community (1999, p. 3).

The need to alleviate barriers and improve access to culturally responsive teaching has intensified as the need to provide an equitable education for all students has increased. The urban school system is subject to social, cultural, and political influences that have shaped teacher practices. Teacher beliefs (and practices) have been influenced by affluent or dominant social classes, leading to abandoning the needs of silent student populations (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). Under the heavy mandates of federal and state accountability measures, teachers' practices turn to somber routines deserting the complex interactional classroom undercurrents that impact teaching and learning for students. Researchers have begun to explore the positioning of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, saying that ELLs have not received the level of support needed to be successful (Mohr & Mohr, 2007). Much of the lack of support has been associated with teacher beliefs and perceptions of ELLs in the mainstream classroom compounded by personal experiences, epistimologies, and federal accountability mandates.

Yoon (2008) explored teacher perceptions of their roles in mainstreaming ELLs during one semester at a suburban school in the state of New York. The school's racial/ethnic makeup was 83% White, 11.5% Black, 4% Asian, and 1.5% Hispanic. The entire district had only 110 ELLs, the school had just 23. This qualitative case study of three English language arts teachers was conducted through classroom observations and in-depth interviews with teachers. The study found that the teachers' pedagogical approaches and their direct interactions with ELLs were based on the positioning of themselves as teachers for all students.

Teacher attitudes and beliefs are known to shape classroom actions and practice. Teachers can unintentionally view and treat students in a positive or negative way through their teaching approaches, which may reflect personal perceptions and beliefs, particularly a belief about a culture or community of students. These perceptions may be drawn from lived experiences as seen through the teacher's own cultural lenses, which shape their understanding of the world. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015) 81.9 % of teachers in public education in the U.S. identify as white. The state of Kentucky reported in 2015 that 95% of their teachers identify as white and only 5% identify as a member of a the minority group. Of the over 42,000 teachers in this state, 78% are female, exceeding the national average of 76.3%.

White fragility is a state in which racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions that range from fear and guilt to silence (DiAngelo, 2011). Many teachers grow up in segregated environments having few interactions with other cultures and race. Collins (1991) stated that this limited exposure renders an inability on the part of members of the

majority culture to consider the significance of the perspectives of people of color. Whites have not had to build a tolerance for racial discomfort or competence, and this creates a cultural divide that is seen in many urban classrooms.

Richardson (1996) stated that a teacher's beliefs are an important element in teacher education because beliefs drive teacher action and practice in the classroom. Reuda and Garcia (1996) researched teacher beliefs and found that teachers' beliefs about ELLs shaped their perceptions and judgments, and impacted teaching and student learning in the mainstream classroom. Garcia (1996) found that "good" teachers of ELLs have a sense of self-confidence and positive belief regarding their ability to be effective with this specialized population of students. A teacher's belief that he or she can meet student needs is critical for successful teaching.

Teacher beliefs and perceptions are an integral piece in making sure ELLs are effectively mainstreamed into the regular or comprehensive learning environment. To be effective, teachers must relate learning to the cultural background and histories of students (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (2004), only 12.5% of U.S teachers are prepared for this task with many only receiving eight or more hours of training on teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Section 205 of Title II of the Higher Education Opportunity Act required that all teacher preparation programs certify that teachers receive training on supporting students whose first language is not English. Section 205 guidelines are not in the form of required courses; rather, the training is to be embedded into coursework, for the program to be able to have assertions according to Title II mandates.

Preparation of teachers to teach to a diverse student population in public schools has become a national concern. Lopez, Scanlan, and Gundrum (2003) looked at state teacher certification requirements to investigate where these teacher requirements included knowledge of identified areas key to the instruction of ELLs. The study found that 14 states offered a special certification for ELL instruction, 15 states required all teachers be exposed to curriculum and instruction relevant to educating ELLs, and 12 states had a certification process that did not mention any skills for teaching ELLs. Of those states, Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Tennessee, were all states with growth in their ELLs population, but none of them required specialist certification in the instruction of ELLs.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

> **Cultural competence.** Cultural competence has been defined as the acceptance of the significance of sociopolitical, economic, and historical experiences of different racial, ethnic, and gender subgroups as legitimate experiences that have a profound influence on how people learn and achieve inside and outside of formal and informal education settings (Jones & Nichols, 2013). Culturally relevant teachers utilize students' cultures as a vehicle for learning (Gay, 2010). The idea is that teachers create learning environments where students develop voice and perspective and are allowed to participate in multiple dialogues. Extending this thought, teachers must be willing to critically interpret the materials of instruction in terms of examining one's own bias and cultural understanding so that subject matter and pedagogical knowledge represent the blending of content and pedagogy (Shulman, 1987). Teacher biases are often rooted in stereotypes and prejudices. Unconscious or implicit biases are instinctive decisions about other people that are not

based on facts, but are instead influenced by hidden thoughts and feelings. Understanding our own biases is a first step toward improving the interactions that we have with all people and is essential if we hope to build deep community within schools (Moule, 2009).

Culturally relevant pedagogy. Bartolomé (1994) approaches culturally relevant pedagogy from a critical difference theory. In this theory, academic difficulties of students from marginalized groups are attributed to cultural incongruence, or the gaps between learning, language use, and behavior in the home and culture of students and that of the school. This focus of culturally relevant pedagogy shifts to finding teaching methods that improve student outcomes in marginalized groups that have historically been oppressed.

Paulo Freire emphasized raising consciousness in the newly literate in his pedagogy of the oppressed (Noddings, 1995). In an attempt to teach peasants how to read and write, he spent time with communities, learning the words that are meaningful to the people, understanding that they have power over their words. Freire spoke on the culture of silence and placed the oppressed in a consciously critical confrontation with their problems through "conscientization," a process that invites learners to engage the world and others critically (Noddings, 1995). Freire moves from the "banking" concept of education to one where the teacher is no longer just the one who teaches. The teacher teaches in dialogue with students, and students, while being taught, also teach. This dialogue between the participants in culturally responsive teaching empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using culture to impact knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Gloria Ladson-Billings is the researcher responsible for conceptualizing culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings (1995a) defined culturally relevant pedagogy as a pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment. She said that culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three propositions: (a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. Culturally relevant pedagogy, as described by Ladson-Billings (1995b), has been labeled as "culturally appropriate" (Au & Jordan, 1981), "culturally congruent" (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), "culturally responsive" (Cazden & Legett, 1981; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982), "culturally compatible" (Jordan, 1985; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987), and "cultural synchronization" (Irvine, 1990, p. 159).

Culturally responsive teaching. Milner (2011) stated that "culturally relevant pedagogy" is used to discuss or describe the theory of culturally responsive teaching while the term "culturally responsive teaching" is used to describe the practice of the theory. Culturally responsive teaching is teaching that is designed not only to fit the school culture to the students' culture but also to use student culture as the basis for helping students understand themselves and others, structure social interactions, and help students conceptualize knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Culturally responsive teaching would center student learning on what students need to know and what it is they are able to do.

Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make

learning more appropriate and effective. Much of the work on culturally responsive teaching has been applied to African American students and how they learn in the classroom setting. Research on the content of texts and other instructional materials shows that many materials provide poor, inaccurate, and absent representation of diverse cultural and linguistic groups (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive teaching is a strategy that educators implement to create high levels of engagement that impact student outcomes and connect learning to culture (Gay, 2000).

Access to culturally responsive teaching for ELLs. The intersection of culture and student achievement is critical when addressing student access to culturally responsive teaching. The rapid growth of the ELL population in mainstream classrooms has not been met with an increase in mainstream teachers' understanding of how to provide culturally responsive and effective instruction for ELLs. Olneck (1995) stated that teaching that ignores student norms of behavior and communication provokes student resistance, while teaching that is responsive prompts student engagement.

The implementation of culturally responsive teaching as a solution to student achievement gaps has received political backlash, and researchers have noted that cultural backgrounds of students are not always recognized in a mainstream classroom (Habib, Densmore-James & Macfarlane, 2013). Gutiérrez and colleagues (2002) noted that using culturally responsive teaching practices is sometimes "professionally and, in some cases legally, risky" when it appears to conflict with "sameness" masquerading as equality (p. 345).

Further, attempts to practice culturally responsive teaching often becomes difficult for teachers who have less time to develop instructional curriculum that students

can relate to under the demands of accountability measures and test scores (Achinstein &

Ogawa, 2006; Sleeter & Stillman, 2007). These researchers noted that these competing

demands create a wedge between best practices and accountability pressures. Providing

access to culturally responsive teaching is a strategy practitioners use to connect ELLs to

learning, creating high levels of engagement that impact student outcomes and connects

learners to culture (Collins, 1991; Gay, 2000, Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto 1999). School

districts will have to find a balance between federal and state demands that hang the

cloud of accountability over classrooms and create space for teaching that is culturally

responsive.

Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) studied 17 new teachers of color to examine how

and to what extent schools respond to accountability policies and how these responses

influence the ability of new teachers of color to draw on their own cultural resources and

that of their students in order to engage in culturally responsive teaching. Through a five-

year cross-case analysis based on interviews and observations, the study found three

principal tensions between culturally responsive teaching and the demands of

accountability: (a) cultural and linguistic relevance versus standardization, (b) community

of learners versus teacher transmission, and (c) social justice versus enhanced test scores.

These factors were identified as barriers to creating access to culturally responsive

teaching for diverse learners in the classroom.

Summary of Literature

The urban classroom is experiencing a linguistic and cultural shift. Education

research examining the inclusion of ELLs has become a high priority as the enrollment of

ELL students has increased in public schools. Although studies into ELL inclusion

provide valuable insight, more information on teachers of ELLs is needed in order to understand teacher perceptions and their effect on inclusion and instructional practices. Current literature calls for more exploratory research on teacher perceptions of inclusion and instructional practices. In order to build culturally competent schools, student needs must be met both culturally and academically with great commitment. Further studies that examine teacher perceptions of inclusion and practice must be undertaken if education is to improve on the experiences of ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of secondary mainstream classroom teachers on the inclusion of ELLs in a large urban public school district. In addition to exploring teacher perceptions, this study will examine teacher practices and the use of culturally responsive teaching for the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This chapter will establish the context of the study, data sources, data collection methods, and how the data from this study will be analyzed. This chapter will discuss the researcher's process for data verification with an in-depth look at ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. (Findings will be reported in Chapter 4.) Ethical consideration for this study and steps by which the rights and anonymity of participants at the selected schools will be discussed in this chapter. In the scope of qualitative studies, the researcher is an instrument of data collection. This requires discussion on the role of the researcher in this study to understand positionality and how it will be examined in order to ensure the lessening of researcher bias. Lastly, this chapter will close with a brief summary.

Teacher perceptions will be the central focus in this study. Perceptions are defined by what teachers believe and think about the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. These perceptions will be explored to understand how they shape teacher practice in building culturally responsive learning environments for ELLs that enhance

student academic achievement. Understanding the perceptions of teachers about the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom is key in developing culturally responsive practices focused on knowledge of students. Through her work on culturally responsive teaching, Ladson-Billings (1995) stated that teachers must "develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (p. 162). Culturally responsive teaching involves a clear understanding of students' cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 1999). The practice of culturally responsive teaching must be supported and not conducted in isolation but situated within the instructional learning environment.

Teacher perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom is critical for understanding the landscape of urban high schools. In Kentucky, ELLs spend 80% of their school day in the mainstream classroom. In high schools, where teachers are more specialized in their own content areas, with little to no training on ELL instruction, teachers may not feel competent or equipped to provide culturally responsive teaching practices (Coulter and Smith, 2006). Examining teacher perceptions of inclusion can provide a broader understanding of the implications of practice for teachers of ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Research Design

Creswell (1995) introduced a two-phase research design: dominant–less dominant. A dominant–less dominant research design is a multimethod design that uses a small quantitative component within a predominately qualitative study. Morse (2003) explains that dominant qualitative research leads or directs inquiry at any particular point;

thus, within qualitatively driven research, a qualitative method is the dominant method at any given stage in the research. This design integrates, through a multiple case study lens, both quantitative descriptive data and qualitative data. Each are analyzed separately. The integration of both sources of data occurs at the end of research for cross-case comparisons.

This dominant qualitative research design will use a survey and in-depth face-to-face interviews to explore high school teachers' personal experiences with the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This design will allow for a specific focus to be on teacher perceptions and their instructional practices. This design will provide a rich landscape of information that explores the stated research questions by exploring the commonalities of experiences as well as the differences in the experiences of secondary mainstream teachers with ELLs mainstreamed in their classrooms. In understanding how perceptions shape teacher practice, the study will look at teacher practice under the scope of culturally responsive teaching and how these instructional practices create inclusion for ELLs in the classroom.

Research centered on exploring secondary school teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom have been examined through both quantitative and qualitative study. A host of studies examining the schooling experience of ELLs (Reeves, 2006; Reuda & Garcia, 1996; Yoon, 2008) have been conducted with small sample sizes of teachers that could not be generalized to larger populations. Other studies did not fully use mainstream teachers as the primary focus of the study, more often examining programming (Guerrero, 2004; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Yet other studies explored the lack of resources and school supported programs

(Leavitt, 2013; Mohr & Mohr, 2007) as variables that impacted teacher beliefs and perceptions about the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. According to Reeves (2006), more research that explores attitudes toward the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom and its implications for instruction is needed. This study responds to Reeves' call by conducting a study that focuses on capturing the teachers' voices and experiences, as well as looking at the instructional practices of teachers.

Context of the Study

The academic achievement of ELLs in the United States reflects the long history of educational inequity and deficit mindsets toward underrepresented student groups. The school district from which the sample was drawn rests in a large urban public school district situated in the Southeastern region of the United States. The study took place against the backdrop of the 2016 Presidential election. During this time many xenophobic ideas were expressed about immigrant families. The fear of Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) and possible removal from school was currently impacting the climate of the district. The district of study had taken a physical stance and declared themselves a safe haven to create a sense of security and safety for the over 5,000 immigrant students served. Many of the responses to the survey and the interviews may have been influenced by the current national and statewide political climate. As the largest school district in its state, it serves approximately 100,000 students in over 150 schools. In this school district, 48% of the students are White and 36% of the students are Black. Approximately 9% of students in this school district are Hispanic and approximately 4% are Asian. As a state, minority teachers account for less than 17% of the overall teaching force. More than 65% of the district's students qualify for free or

reduced lunches; this rate is higher than the current state average. The school district studied serves approximately 5,000 ELLs, with 3,000 of those students identified as receiving services in ESL programs. On recent state accountability exams, many students who were identified as ELLs failed to meet state proficiency goals as compared to their non-ELL peers.

In most recent data presented in 2015, 83% of the more than 6,000 teachers in this district hold a master's degree or higher and have, on average, eight to ten years of experience. Under the current accountability system, school and district progress has been monitored based on Annual Measurable Objectives (formerly Adequate Yearly Progress), defined as significant progress toward the state designated definition of proficiency. Schools receive quality points in five areas; achievement, growth, college/career readiness, graduation rates, and "gap." The gap category subsumed the diversity-based subgroups of NCLB. The gap score is calculated based on the number of proficient scores for students from a racial or ethnic minority (Black, Hispanic, Native American), students who live in poverty, students who receive special education services, and students who have limited English proficiency. The rapid growth in the number of ELLs in mainstream classrooms has not been met by an increase in mainstream teachers' understanding of how to best provide effective instruction for ELLs. The change in accountability measures, coupled with an increase in immigrant and ELL enrollment and the diverse nature of this district, make this district ideal for exploring teacher perceptions on the inclusion of ELLs and their impact on instructional practices in the mainstream classroom.

Data Sources

This study used survey data to generalize findings concerning teacher perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classroom, and person-to-person interviews to explore teacher practices with varying levels of depth. The exploratory nature of this research allowed for the usage of both data sources. Surveys are used to describe trends and discover beliefs and attitudes of individuals (Creswell, 2012). The study used a pre-existing survey created by Reeves (2002) from her research on secondary teachers' attitudes and perceptions of the inclusion of ESL students in mainstream classes. Survey research is a specific type of field study that involves the collection of data from a well-defined population. The survey (Appendix A) for this study gathered self-reported responses from high school core content teachers. Self-reporting can only provide information about likely actions. Using a closed-response self-administered survey, responses may not describe how people actually act or respond in a given situation. The design of the survey was to gather a representative sample of teacher perceptions of ELL inclusion. Conducting an attitudinal assessment that addresses teacher perceptions and beliefs of ELL students' inclusion in mainstream learning environments can shed light on the critical role of teacher perceptions and beliefs in educational outcomes for students (Valdes, 2001). The survey was designed to probe into four areas: teacher perceptions on the inclusion of ELLs, school level support, professional development and responsibilities of teachers of ELLs, and instructional practice in the classroom with ELLs. The four areas were based on research by Reeves (2006) that explored teacher perceptions. Reeves (2006) study was piloted to test the readability and content validity of the survey items. The data from th pilot study indicatd strong content validity. In this

study, the same areas were explored and used the framework for culturally responsive teaching to frame the participants outcomes.

Interviews are a strong source of evidence that allow the researcher to explore individual perspectives (Yin, 2014). Teacher interviews were the primary source of information for this exploratory study. Interviews were conducted by using an interview protocol designed by the researcher addressing culturally responsive teaching and instructional practices. Creswell (2013) suggests the use of an interview protocol with guiding questions and space for notes, in addition to a recording device, when conducting interviews. The interview (Appendix B) was designed to explore with varying levels of depth the practice of inclusion through an examination of core content teachers who currently teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The questions on the interview guide were designed from literature to gather detailed individual responses regarding teacher practice (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier, 1987; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Roxas, 2011) and access to culturally responsive teaching (Collins, 1991; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Description of Sample

This study collected data from secondary high school teachers who currently teach in schools with an identified ESL program with ELLs who receive core content instruction in a mainstream classroom. Through an examination of district data, information on schools were collected in order to identify high schools meeting the following criteria: the high school has an ESL program, the high school has an ELL enrollment ($n > 50$), and ELL students in the high school are receiving content instruction in mainstream classrooms. Special attention to the process of selecting schools for the

study was based on accessibility and access to the school. The goal was to select a minimum of three schools with different school designs and populations as defined by enrollment status and school designation. The study through a holistic look, gained an understanding of teacher perceptions based on personal demographic information, personal and professional development, school support, and instructional practice.

Using purposive sampling, two teachers were selected from each school based on survey data, accessibility, school design, years of teacher experience, experience teaching ELLs, and personal and professional development. Choosing participants to interview from each school allowed the researcher to fully examine teacher perceptions of inclusion within various schools situated in one school district. The experiences of secondary teachers, particularly those in schools with high ELL populations, draw much attention as the study sought to explore these perceptions and their influence on teacher practices and student learning.

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, the researcher submitted a proposal for consent from the university's institutional review board (IRB). Once permission was obtained through the IRB, the researcher gained approval for the study from the selected school district. Upon permission by the school district to conduct the study, the researcher identified high schools for the study that met the established criteria for research. Once the schools were identified, permission was gained from the principals at each school as well as area superintendents to conduct the study by way of email.

The survey and in-depth face-to-face interviews took place during April and May. Based on information gathered, participants were identified and invited to participate in

the voluntary study by email. Once the participants agreed to the study, an informed

consent form was provided to the participants with full disclosure of how survey data will

be gathered and interviews conducted.

The survey was given to participating teachers in April at high schools selected

for the study. The survey constructed by Reeves (2002) used literature on teachers'

attitudes and beliefs to explore perceptions of inclusion, teacher support,

personal/professional development, and instructional practice to inform the design of the

survey. The survey was designed to provide insight into the general attitudes and

perceptions of teachers and to examine inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes.

The survey drew upon qualitative themes from research literature that explored the

experiences of subject area teachers of ELL students. Based upon the six themes

discovered through the research, the survey was designed to explore time, modification,

language, educational environment, training and support, and general attitudes on ELL

inclusion in mainstream classes.

The original survey consisting of 38 items was split into four sections. For this

study, permission was given to the researcher to adapt the survey to compliment the

research questions. Section A of the original survey had a four-point Likert scale with 16

answerable questions. This section was be adapted to a five-point Likert scale to include

the option of *No Opinion* for survey participants. Section A was designed to probe the

attitudes and perceptions of all subject area teachers, including those with little or no

experience with ELL inclusion.

Section B of the original survey contained 11 answerable questions; respondents

are asked to check responses that represent their classroom. This section is designed to

examine attitudes and perceptions of teacher experiences with ELL inclusion. This section also examines teacher strategies used in the classroom, the impact of inclusion in their classroom, and levels of support received for ESL inclusion. This section was adapted from a four-point Likert scale to a five-point Likert scale to include the option of *No Opinion*.

Section C of the original survey consisted of two open-ended items. These items allowed participants to expand or clarify their responses in the other sections and identify further attitudes and perceptions not addressed. This section was included in the current study with no changes or adaptations.

The final section of the survey, Section D, included demographic information. Respondents in the original survey were asked to identify subject area, gender, years of teaching experience, native language, second language proficiency, and types of language minority training. For this study, additional demographic information was added to the survey to capture race/ethnicity, age, highest level of education, and school location. Demographic information was gathered to provide a clear description of the sample. The survey section order wasl be changed, so that demographic information was gathered first and all other sections followed.

The survey period ran for three weeks and was administered to core content teachers in selected schools. The survey only allowed those teachers who currently teach ELLs to continue with the survey past the demographic information. In order to help with the administering of the survey, the researcher requested permission from each school principal to speak at a faculty meeting about the survey and purpose for the study. Additional follow-up was sent by weekly emails reminding respondents to complete the

survey. During this process, responses were monitored and tracked. Survey data was collected using Survey Monkey, an electronic instrument to access and collect respondent data.

Research by Youngs and Youngs (2001) demonstrated that teachers with years of teaching experience, teacher training, and exposure to foreign/second languages, had positive attitudes toward teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom. These variables created positive indicators for inclusive multicultural learning experiences for ELLs. Using selected demographic information from the survey, the researcher selected participants who are currently teaching ELLs in core content classes to interview with varying levels of teaching experience and training.

The interviews were conducted in May using an open-ended semi-structured interview protocol. Peer debriefing was used in order to check clarity and understanding of interview questions. Purposive sampling was used when selecting teachers to interview. Participants for the interviews were identified from their initial participation in the survey as well as principal recommendations. Purposive sampling can be used with a number of techniques in data gathering. A study may be started with a survey, then purposive sampling done based on the survey (Creswell, 2008).

The interviews consisted of six questions that assessed teacher practice. Participants selected for interviews had one interview session timed at 30 to 45 minutes in length. Using literature on instructional practices, the questions were designed to examine individual teacher experiences, practice in the classroom, and culturally responsive teaching. Using the Intrinsic Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching to look at student learning, the interview examined learning

experiences. These experiences included; learners culture, perspectives, and values in the mainstream classroom.

Interviews were recorded using a private recording device and an application called Dictaphone. This application records and transcribes material. This provided the study with the safety of confidentiality as well as a back-up source in the event that there were problems with the recording device selected. All devices were stored in a secure area with limited access to anyone outside of the researcher. Following the completion of the interviews, the audiotapes were sent for transcription through an application called Rev transcription. This services provided quality transcription that was password protected. The transcribed materials was then analyzed and placed into codes. Analysis during the interview phase of the study was open-ended and on-going until all participants were interviewed.

Analysis of Data

Analyzing, coding, and integrating unstructured data with structured data is a complex and time-consuming process. Data analysis is the process of examining data collected and organizing information into themes. Qualitative codes are multidimensional and provide insights into many themes. Codes can be reexamined during analysis in an iterative analytic process. Data analysis "consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence to produce empirical findings" (Yin, 2014, p. 132).

Data analysis took place during the survey phase using descriptive statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 1993; Peatman, 1947). Descriptive statistics provide

simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Descriptive techniques describe

what is or what the data shows from the respondents. The analysis of survey data will

look at frequency distributions, percentages, and graphs. Descriptive statistics helped to

simplify large amounts of data in a sensible way, pulling out emerging themes in data.

Data analysis during the interview phase was on-going and open-ended.

Participants received a copy of the transcribed interview. All interviews were transcribed

using Rev transcription service and Nvivo software for coding. The first cycle coding was

used to capture perceptions of participants using their own words (Miles, Huberman,

Saldana, 2013). After the first cycle coding, identified patterns and themes were

documented and reviewed during second cycle coding. The themes were the categorized

based on relationships between codes, code frequency, and underlying meaning across

codes using the conceptual framework. The transcripts were reviewed for accuracy of

audio-to-typed word translation. Post-coding transitions included a reanalysis of survey

data and interviews, constructing and refining categories from classification codes and

organizing the data to extract themes based on the intrinsic motivational framework for

culturally responsive teaching.

The exploratory study used eclectic coding in order to analyze the variety of data

forms in the study (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). The data was ordered using

composite sequence analysis. This integrates multiple participant beliefs and perceptions

into a single diagram, extracting survey data, stories, and scenarios from interviews. The

data thematically connected illuminating the experiences of teachers on the inclusion of

ELLs in the mainstream classroom (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). Each interview

participant was given the opportunity to provide follow-up information after reviewing

and approving the transcripts. This method of member-checking was done in order to ensure accuracy of data.

Role of the Researcher

Understanding that early education was built on white male ideologies and principle belief systems has long create barriers to culturally responsive teaching, materials, and curriculum (Collins, 1991). Public education was not designed for African-Americans or people of color. Milner (2011) states that people in power are often, in discourse, supportive of research, policies, and practices that do not oppress and discriminate against others as long as they-those in power-do not have to alter their own systems of privilege; they may not want to give up their own interests to fight against racism, confront injustice, or shed light on hegemony. White fragility is a state in which racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. Whites have not had to build a tolerance for racial discomfort or competence, which creates a cultural divide as seen in many urban classrooms. Student-learning opportunities are then hindered when teachers fail to consider their own and their student's racial and cultural backgrounds in their P-12 work and instead adopt colorblind beliefs, ideologies, and practices (Milner, 2011).

From a constructivism epistemology, I believe that people acquire knowledge and meaning from their experiences. My experiences as an African-American female in education has allowed me to look closely at inequities that children of color face in classrooms. As an African-American female, I understand that I bring my own rich culture, experiences, and traditions into the classroom. I understand how this affects how I teach and engage with students.

Unforeseen dangers in teacher education research may surface when teachers misinterpret the needs and patterns of culturally and racially diverse students and conclude that the student are incapable of learning or that the students' parents do not care about their children (Milner, 2011). This natural curiosity and yearning to better teaching instructional practices for all students balanced with a framework that supports CRT in classrooms helps to contextualize the research into healthy discourse with implications to strengthen not only how we teach but who we teach. CRT shifts the center of focus from notions of White, middle class culture to the cultures of Communities of Color (Yosso, 2005). One of the most important skills to develop in Pre-K–12 teachers is their ability to build on the knowledge that students bring into classrooms, particularly that knowledge which is shaped by their family, community, and cultural histories.

With looming immigration policies, that threatens the sanctity of education for minority and immigrant populations it is important to understand how these challenges can influence participant responses. As the researcher, it is important to recognize potential biases that may present themselves as well as understand my own political stance on issues. Developing a sense of my own political awareness as situated in the research was vital. Dealing with a topic on the cuffs of Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) and Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) makes understanding the social and emotional factors that students bring into schools critical for teachers. Delving into research that explores teacher beliefs and perceptions towards minority students becomes critical in understanding equitable practices in the classroom.

Qualitative research is a reflexive process and, hence, contains auto-ethnographic elements (Holloway & Biley, 2011). Researchers conducting qualitative research must bracket prior knowledge and enter into research to exclude themselves from data collection, analysis, and reporting of the research. The researcher, as a tool, must bracket his/her own knowledge using reflectivity. Reflectivity is about understanding the researcher's own reactions to the study, their position as located in the study, and the relationships encountered, which are reciprocal (Holloway & Biley, 2011). The researcher must exclude themselves from data collection, analysis, and reporting of the research data.

Ethical Considerations

The rights of the participants were protected. It was disclosed to the teacher participant that any information obtained will not be used in the evaluation of the teacher. All information gathered was used only for the purpose of this study. The survey and interviews were not used for any measurement other than for the triangulation of data for this study. All participants completed an informed consent process with the researcher and were given notification of university approval for the study. All participants in the study were notified of the purpose of the study, any risks associated with participation, and information about procedures, duration, and benefits to the researcher, through the informed consent process. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. During data collection, notes and electronic data were kept secure. Once the survey information was collected and interview information transcribed, identifying information about locations and individuals was password protected. During the analysis of data, pseudonyms were

used in order to protect the anonymity of the participants and schools selected in for this study.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methods for the study on teacher perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. It included the purpose of the study, research design, context of the study, data sources, description of sample, data collection, analysis of data, role of the researcher, and ethical considerations. The following chapters will discuss the results of the study and themes that emerged through data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Culturally relevant teachers engage in the world and others critically (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The purpose of this study was to give voice to secondary teachers and understand the barriers to fostering student success for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The study was designed to illuminate existing teacher perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs against the backdrop of school culture, leadership, political climates, as well as state and district accountability standards. The study sought to shed light on teacher perceptions and examine teacher practice through a look at culturally responsive teaching in emerging multilingual school environments using a survey followed by teacher interviews. Three high schools in a large urban school district that have shown growth in their ELL enrollment were selected to participate in this study. The school district in which the study was situated has seen an increase in immigrant and ESL program enrollment.

A survey was sent electronically to 212 general education teachers who teach in the three high schools that were selected. Of those, 125 teachers participated in the survey, which was administered electronically. Descriptive analyses of the data were undertaken to drive the first research question (What are high school teachers' perceptions of inclusion in the mainstream classroom?) Descriptive statistics summarize the data in a meaningful way by exposing existing patterns and themes. The use of descriptive statistics does not allow a researcher to make conclusions but allows the researcher to draw upon data, using it to describe a population of examination. The 125

survey participants were all secondary teachers who varied by gender, race/ethnicity, years of teaching experience, education, and subject area content taught. The survey had a 90% completion rate. Participants taking the survey had the option to skip over any questions they did not feel comfortable answering or that they felt unable to answer. Six teachers followed up their survey participation with a semi-structured one-time interview.

The Survey

    Question. During the survey portion of the study, the researcher sought answers to the following research question:

1. What are high school teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream (core content) classroom?

    Participant demographics. The most common racial/ethnic background for the teachers were White/Caucasian (78.23%) and Black/African American (8.06%). There were 10 participants, or 8.06%, who self-identified as Black/African American, while 97 (78.23%) self-identified as White/Caucasian. The remaining 18 participants identified with other racial/ethnic backgrounds including Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic (Latino), and Other.

    The participants in this study held various academic degrees, with 54 (43.90%) holding a master's degree and 39 (31.71%) holding a Rank I (15+ hours over a master's degree in a specialty area). Of those teachers surveyed, 24 held a bachelor's degree, and a small number of participants had earned an EdD (4) or PhD (2). The largest distribution of years of teaching experience fell within the 1–5 year category with 43 (34.68%) participants in that group. The smallest distribution was among those who had both 16–20 years of experience (12.90%) and 21+ years of experience (12.90%) respectively. Of

those who participated in the survey, 19 had the median number of years of teaching experience—11–15 years (15.32%) of participants. Teacher quality has been identified as influencing student achievement in the classroom. Teacher quality as defined by Darling-Hammond (2006) is a teacher's cognitive ability followed by their years of experience and knowldedge of content. The survey considered years of experience as a way to determine teacher quality and experience in the classroom. Participants selected for this survey taught a variety of core content classes: English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Vocational, and Arts and Humanities. These core subjects provide content curriculum to ELLs in secondary settings. Under district and state accountability guidelines, each of these content areas are assessed annually for student growth, mastery, and proficiency. Table 1 describes the teachers who participated in the overall survey. In the study, a majority of participants (55.65%) indicated that they did not have special training to teach ELLs. Special training is defined as additional course work, certifications, or endorsements. Many states as identified in the literature have no mandates to require ESL certifications or endorsements. Most preservice programs only have "assertions" that address ELLs. Of the survey participants, 69 (55.65%) indicated that they had not received any special training while 55 (44.35%) had received special training to work with ELLs.

Table 1. Participant Demographics.

Gender	N	Percent
Female	73	59.84
Male	49	40.16
Total	122	100
Race/Ethnicity	N	Percent
African American	10	8.06
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	1.61
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.81
Hispanic (Latino)	5	4.03
White	97	78.23
Other	9	7.26
Total	124	100
Years of Experience	N	Percent
1–5 years	43	34.86
6–10 years	30	24.19
11–15 years	19	15.32
16–20 years	16	12.90
Total	124	100
Content Area	N	Percent
English	27	21.95
Math	18	14.63
Science	12	9.76
Social Studies	14	11.38
Vocational	12	9.76
Arts and Humanities	8	6.50
Other	32	26.02
Total	123	100

Note: Of the 125 surveyed, the table reflect those who chose to self-disclose gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience, and content area.

Survey participants were asked the number of hours devoted to professional

development on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Professional

development is in-service learning opportunities provided through the district that are

essential to developing and broadening the knowledge, processes, and skills of teachers.

Professional development is intended to support teachers in their quest for lifelong

learning and growth. The survey indicated that 47 (38.21%) teachers received 1–5 hours

of professional development training toward the instruction of ELLs. The 47 teachers

represented 16 males and 3 females in the age range of 21–30. The demographic

breakdown of these 47 teachers was 4 African American, 2 Asian, 1 Hispanic, and 39

White. Of the 47, all taught English as a core content area. As displayed in Table 2, of the

125 teachers who participated in the overall survey, 123 reported their professional

development hours toward teaching ELLs.

Table 2. Professional Development (PD) Hours Toward Teaching ELLs.

PD toward instruction of ELLs	N	Percent
Less than 1 hour	40	32.52
1–5 hours	47	38.21
6–10 hours	13	10.57
11–15 hours	7	5.69
More than 15 hours	16	13.01
Total	**123**	**100**

Note: Two participants did not disclose professional development hours toward teaching
ELLs.

When queried about professional development hours toward culturally responsive

teaching, many teachers indicated they had received less than 1 hour of training. More

specifically 19.20% indicated having less than 1 hour of training while only 6.40%

indicated having received more than 15 hours of professional development focused

specifically on culturally responsive teaching. As displayed in Table 3, of the 125

teachers who participated in the overall survey, 125 chose to report professional

development hours toward culturally responsive teaching. Table 3 represents professional

development hours toward culturally responsive teaching (CRT).

Table 3. Professional Development (PD) Hours Toward Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT).

PD toward CRT	N	Percent
Less than 1 hour	24	19.20
1–5 hours	51	40.80
6–10 hours	23	18.40
11–15 hours	8	6.40
More than 15 hours	19	15.20
Total	125	100

Teacher attitudes and perceptions. *Inclusion*. Teacher attitudes and perceptions

toward the inclusion of ELLs was a theme explored in the survey. The items in this

section were designed to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of secondary teachers

through a combination of questions that examined inclusion, language, and instruction.

Respondents were instructed to read a statement and check the box that most clearly and

closely represented their attitude and perceptions on inclusion, from *strongly agree*,

agree, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*, and *no opinion*. Perceptions in this study are defined

as what teachers believe and feel about the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream

classroom. Perceptions are rooted in a person's experiences, values, morals, ethics, and

influences.

The questions about teacher attitudes and perceptions toward inclusion created

varied responses. When asked whether the inclusion of ELLs in subject area classes

created a positive educational atmosphere, 42 (45.32%) teachers strongly agreed with this statement while only 3 (3.26%) disagreed with this statement. Regarding whether ELLs in subject area classes benefit all students 42 (45.65%) respondents strongly agreed and 5 (5.43%) disagreed. Teachers were asked whether they would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in their classroom; 55 (59.78%) strongly agreed, while three (3.26%) disagreed.

Questions about English language proficiency explored whether teachers engage use of native language in class and examined their opinion on language acquisition. Teachers were asked whether ELL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency. English proficiency is defined by a student's ability to demonstrate mastery of English measured through testing. Forty-one (45.05%) teachers agreed that ELLs should not be in mainstream classrooms until they reach a minimum level of English proficiency while 17 (18.68%) strongly disagreed. In contrast, 29 (31.52%) teachers disagreed that ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools while 29 (31.52%) agreed. However, 24 (26.37%) teachers strongly agreed that they would support legislation making English the official language of the U.S., followed by another 27 who agreed (29.67%), amounting to over half of all teachers surveyed who agreed with policy pushing for English to be the official language of the U.S. Although teachers overwhelmingly would support legislation to make English the official language of the U.S., 36 (39.13%) teachers disagreed that ELL students should avoid using their native language while at school.

Teacher attitudes and perceptions on instruction looked at the modification and simplification of coursework, grading practices, and training. Teachers were asked whether ELL students should receive simplified coursework. By definition, simplified coursework is the lessening of an assignment. In comparison, the modification of content material requires structural and cognitive changes in the level of the material. Forty-two (46.47 %) teachers disagreed that work for ELLs should be simplified and 39 (42.39%) disagreed with the statement that teachers should not modify assignments for ELL students enrolled in subject area classes. Thirty-two (35.16%) teachers working with ELLs agreed to the statement that subject area teachers do not have enough time to address the needs of ELLs while 31 (34.07%) disagreed. Overall, 44 (or 47.83%) of the teachers disagreed with the statement that they have had adequate training to work with ELL students and 50 (54.35%) agreed that they would be interested in receiving more training in working with ELL students.

Instruction. Teaching strategies and classroom practices are another theme explored in this study. Teachers were asked to respond to a series of questions that examined coursework, use of language in class, and student achievements' impact on teacher attitudes and perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The survey asked participants to respond to each statement. Respondents were instructed to read a statement and check the box that most clearly and closely represented the statement's frequency in their classroom. Teacher responses ranged from *all of the time*, *most of the time*, *some of the time*, *never*, and *no opinion*. The items in this section were designed to identify how perceptions of inclusion shape instructional practices provided by the teacher for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Thirty-five (38.04%) teachers,

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when examining their own personal practice, reported that most of the time they allow ELL students more time to complete coursework, while 27 (29.35%) reported doing this strategy all of the time. Only two (2.17%) stated that this is a classroom practice that is never used. The responses across the board for this statement were evenly distributed with 26 (28.26%) teachers reporting the frequency of this practice as some of the time. When asked whether teachers give ELL students less coursework than other students, 67 (72.83%) of the teachers stated that they never give ELL students less coursework than other students and 20 (21.74%) of the teachers stated that this classroom practice took place some of the time. In contrast, two (2.17%) teachers reported that they did this all of the time while two (2.17%) teachers had no opinion.

The use of native language in a classroom is the practice of allowing students to speak and provide materials in the language learned first, which best exhibits student competency, knowledge, and proficiency (Cook, 1999). Teachers were asked the frequency in which they allow students to use her/his native language in class. Forty (43.48%) teachers stated that they allow students to use their native language in class some of the time while 26 (28.26%) teachers reported allowing the use of native language all of the time. Twenty (21.74%) teachers stated that the use of native language in class occurred most of the time while only four (4.35%) teachers reported that they never allow students to use their native language in class.

In examining materials provided for students in their native language, 59 (64.13%) teachers stated that they never provide materials for ELL students in their native language. One (1.09%) teacher responded that this classroom practice happens all of the time, 3 (3.26%) stated most of the time, and 26 (28.26%) stated this classroom

practice happens some of the time for ELL students in the mainstream classroom. Overall, teachers valued student effort; 45 (48.91%) of the teachers felt that most of the time, effort for ELLs was more important than achievement, while 19 (20.65%) teachers stated that effort is never more important than achievement when grading ELL students.

  Culturally responsive teaching. Inclusion is defined as the integration of ELLs into mainstream classroom courses. This study investigates the attitudes and perceptions of core content area teachers toward mainstreaming ELLS. In addition, it examines their direct experience with ELLs in the classroom through a culturally responsive lens. In this section of the survey, teachers were asked to address the role inclusion played in their personal teaching practice, specifically addressing issues of teacher workload, time required to effectively service ELLs in the mainstream classroom, and academic progress of the entire class. Teachers were asked to respond to each statement by stating whether the frequency was all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, or never. They could also answer with "no opinion." This section explored the theme of inclusion through a look at teacher attitudes and perceptions of the potential impact of ELL inclusion in their classroom.

  This section of the survey produced 91 responses; 34 skipped this question. Forty-eight teachers (52.75%) stated that the inclusion of ELL students in the core content classroom increased their workload some of the time; 20 (21.98%) responded that ELL students in their class increased their workload most of the time. Six teachers (6.59%) stated that ELLs increased their workload all of the time, and 11 (12.09%) stated that the inclusion of ELL students in classes never increased their workload. When asked whether ELL students require more of their time than other students, 51 (56.04%) teachers stated

that only some of the time do ELL students require more instructional time than non-ELL students. When asked whether the inclusion of ELL students in class slowed the progress of the entire class, 43 teachers (47.25%) stated never, 35 teachers (38.46%) stated that they do some of the time, 7 (7.69%) responded that they do most of the time, 3 teachers (3.30%) said they do all of the time and 3 (3.30%) had no opinion.

Collaboration and support. Teacher support was a theme in the survey. Questions were designed to investigate the attitudes and perceptions teachers have of the level of support they receive to service ELL students in the mainstream classroom. Teachers were first asked to rate the frequency with which teachers receive support from administrators (principal, assistant principals, counselors), then asked to rate the frequency with which they receive support from ESL staff, and the frequency of collaboration with ESL staff on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Teachers were asked to respond with all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, never, or no opinion. Regarding support from administrators, 28 teachers (31.46%) said they receive support some of the time; 23 teachers (25.84%) said they receive support most of the time. Sixteen teachers (17.98%) reported that they never receive adequate support from administrators when ELL students are enrolled in their classes and 10 (11.24%) reported that they receive support all of the time.

Regarding support received from ESL staff, 26 teachers (29.21%) reported that they receive adequate support some of the time. Twenty-four teachers (26.97%) reported receiving this support most of the time and 14 teachers (15.73%) reported never receiving support from ESL staff when ELL students are enrolled in their classes. Although a large number of respondents reported minimal support from ESL staff, 16 teachers (17.98%)

reported that they receive support from the ESL staff all of the time. Thirty-seven teachers (41.57%) said they collaborate or conference with ESL teachers some of the time, while 24 (26.97%) said that this never takes place.

Challenges and benefits. The survey explored the challenges and benefits of ELL students in mainstream classes through the perceptions of mainstream classroom teachers. This theme was explored in this survey through two open-ended questions: what do teacher participants in the survey consider to be the greatest challenges of including ELL students in subject area classes and what do they consider to be the greatest benefits of includingELL students in subject area classes. The survey asked participants to evaluate the positivity of the classroom environment with the presence of ELL students in class and challenges when creating an inclusive learning space for ELL students. The responses to these questions were coded using text analysis based on common and uncommon themes that emerged from participant responses. Teachers responding to these open-ended survey questions were asked to provide any additional comments concerning the inclusion of ELL students in subject area classes. The analysis of responses revealed that teachers in this survey overall enjoy having ELLs in their classes, but ELLs' presence in class presents an extended time commitment. One participant responded:

> I greatly enjoy working with ELL students. It does require extra work to make
> sure assignments facilitate the learning of English, but I have been in their
> situation before, so I understand what they are going through.

In general, teachers said more understanding and support is needed by school and district administrators in order for teachers to be provided opportunities for professional

development. Professional development opportunities can lead to deeper learning.

Another survey participant stated:

> Allow teachers time for deep training on how to engage these students. If teachers understand the pedagogy of teaching ESL, everyone is more successful. Can't be a quick one-hour training when school starts in August. Provide extra week of pay and engage teachers in deep professional learning for an entire week during the summer, allowing the necessary time to learn best practices and tweak curriculum. Continue the training virtually (once a month) utilizing the District Voice cohort. Share results at the annual District Deeper Learning Cohort so that English, math, etc. teachers can share what is working with one another.

Another participant responded to the survey question by stating:

> There is not nearly enough District support for this student population, despite the ever-growing numbers of ELLs enrolled.

> Finally, the survey asked teachers to list what they considered the greatest

challenges and benefits of including ELL students in subject area classes. According to the analysis of teacher responses, support for teachers in meeting the challenges of mainstreaming ELLs was a common theme. Other responses about challenges mentioned language barriers to instruction and student-centered barriers that range from feelings of inclusion and exclusion and concerns about student-to-student relationships to challenges with students grasping content knowledge. Many of the themes coalesced with the overall concept of language. One participant said:

> Some students have such a low understanding of English that it is very difficult to communicate with them. (Many students may understand *minus*, but not *subtract*

or *take away*.) Probability is a very difficult concept to teach because of the

amount of vocabulary required. It also assumes certain knowledge, such as what

cards are included in a standard deck [of cards]. Most ELL students have no clue.

Another participant responded to the question about challenges by addressing ELLs'

challenges related to social and emotional learning and feelings of exclusion; this

participant attributed those challenges to language barriers. The participant said:

Other students make negative comments such as "I don't want to sit next to him.

He doesn't even speak English." This can be challenging especially now, but it

also provides an opportunity to discuss the importance of being kind and

inclusive. Allowing ELL students to speak languages other than English has been

a challenge in some cases because it is difficult to tell if students are discussing

the content and using appropriate language.

Another participant responded to the open-ended survey question regarding challenges by

sharing:

I had one ELL a few years ago who was barely proficient in English and he had a

very difficult time in class. I conferenced with his ESL teacher often and

sometimes in lieu of class assignments, I would continue to work on basic English

proficiency, even giving him word seek-and-finds to help him spot English words.

Of course, this was not standards-based in my content, but I wanted to help him

make progress.

Another participant responded to the open-ended survey question regarding challenges by

stating:

It is incredibly difficult to help students when they have a minimal understanding of English. It is frustrating for teachers to try and stop everything to explain simple instructions. And it's definitely embarrassing or hard for the ELL student to ask for help.

Regarding the benefits to including ELL students in the mainstream classroom, responses centered on the diverse perspectives ELL students bring to a classroom, the increased sense of cultural awareness that results from the shared experiences of students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds. One participants stated:

They bring a wealth of experience (life and otherwise) that can challenge and broaden the experiences and understandings of non-ELL students. Many of us think we have "problems," but when you hear about what it's like to live in and flee a war-torn country, it changes how you view things. Non-ELL students can learn from ELL students and vice versa.

Another participant concluded the survey by stating:

ELLs need to be seen for what they are: a valuable resource with incredible life experiences that can be shared with students in subject area classes. Imagine a World History class with the voices of students who have lived through war, famine and refugee camps. In a Language Arts class, the reading materials should include works by diverse authors that reflect some of the experiences and viewpoints of our ELLs. In those conditions, we will see the confidence that comes of being the expert in the room rather than the silent kid in the back row that the teacher feels is a source of onerous additional work.

The Interview

Questions. During the interview portion of the study, the researcher sought answers to the following research questions:

2. How do teacher perceptions of inclusion shape the instructional practice of ELLs in the mainstream (core content) classroom?

3. What culturally responsive teaching practices are used in the mainstream classroom to enhance instruction for the inclusion of ELLs?

The interview portion of this study was designed to examine the inclusion of ELL students in mainstream learning environments by eliciting responses from teachers on classroom practices and the use of culturally responsive teaching in emerging multilingual school environments. This phase of research was driven by the following research questions: How do teacher perceptions of inclusion shape the instructional practice of ELLs in the mainstream classroom? What culturally responsive teaching practices are used in the mainstream classroom to enhance instruction (learning) for the inclusion of ELLs?

The objective was to examine how teacher beliefs and perceptions shape instructional practices in the mainstream classroom. All teachers who participated in this one-time semi-structured interview had participated in the initial survey. A cross-analysis was conducted on the responses of the six teachers from the three high schools selected in this study. The responses uncovered the general attitudes and perceptions of teachers on inclusion, instructional practices, and access to culturally responsive teaching by asking teachers to respond to a six-question interview protocol.

Interview questions and themes. The questions were designed to prompt participants to share their perceptions and attitudes on the inclusion of ELLs in their classroom, instructional practice, and personal experiences. The data gathered from the interview questions further revealed the perceptions of teachers of ELLs on inclusion, instruction, support, and culturally responsive teaching.

Demographics and experience. The gender, subject area, years of teaching experience, and school location were identified for each participant, as summarized in Table 4. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant; each school was identified using an alpha system. All participants were secondary teachers who currently work with and instruct ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The teachers who participated in the interview were all native English speakers. One teacher who participated in the interview had additional training, with an ESL endorsement to instruct ELLs. This participant was in the process of transitioning from a mainstream classroom to an ESL program teacher.

Table 4. Interview Participants' Demographics.

Name[a]	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Subject	Years of Teaching Experience	School
Jason	Male	White	History	8 years	School A
James	*Male*	*White*	*Math*	9 years	School A
Mary	Female	White	English	11 years	School B
Curtis	Male	Black	Math	6 years	School C
Rebecca	Female	White	English	11 years	School C
Susan	Female	Black	History	11 years	School B

[a]All names are pseudonyms.

Interview participants described instruction and engaging in the learning of ELLs using their own words and drawing upon their personal experiences. The participants voiced their beliefs about students and inclusion in the mainstream learning environment.

Participants described experiences related to the instructional practices, resources, and support of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, as well as their frustrations, challenges, and concerns with collaboration with ESL program specialists. Teachers were able to respond with personal understandings of culture, language, and practices that create culturally responsive teaching. The interviews focused on the implementation of inclusion, instruction, collaboration and support, and culturally responsive teaching.

Teacher perceptions and practice. *Sense of belonging*. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) explained that, in the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching, inclusion has a level of respect and connectedness. In this framework, inclusion is created when learners and teachers feel respected and connected to one another. Inclusion creates an environment for diverse learners that is inclusive of learners' special needs and makes accommodations for thos needs. In simple terms, inclusion results in a "sense of belonging."

Teachers during the interview expressed this "sense of belonging" in their class in terms of how they support student learning and address learner needs in the classroom. Teachers spoke of obstacles and challenges faced when providing an inclusive environment for students. The teachers who were interviewed said they address concerns by communicating with families, informing them about the classroom and the learning taking place at school. Many felt that, even with these efforts, there was a strong disconnect between families' and students' understanding of what it is to be a student or a learner in U.S. classrooms. Teachers often described having to rely on students, siblings, or translators who did not speak the common language as a means of communicating

student outcomes with families. Often, teachers admitted that most communication was about student behavior as opposed to student performance. Susan said:

The only communication we have is when we are having discipline problems. Other than that, or if we're sending a newsletter. But other than that, we do not have any consistent communication going on. Even positive stuff, we cannot communicate.

Teachers expressed frustration with depending on district-provided services to help articulate the space between school and homes, saying that the services are not always available during teacher planning periods. Teachers struggled with creating inclusive learning spaces for both families and students. Rebecca said:

I do not send letters home because I know the students are not going to take them home. Jason said:

As far as struggling students, I would usually send an email or seek out our ESL coordinator to call home, but he speaks Spanish and most of my students are from Nepal.

The gap in communication creates a level of support needed to help foster an inclusive learning environment for ELL students in the mainstream classroom. Teachers addressed the communication of school leaders understanding of culture, language, and behaviors in order to create inclusive learning environments. Several interviewed talked about their struggles with ELL behavior in the classroom as well as their ability to understand what it means to be a U.S. learner. Teachers describe scenarios in which students who have had interrupted education are now being asked to sit still in a classroom, facing forward for 90 minutes. Most teachers interviewed expressed

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understanding the U.S. classroom norms but struggled to articulate the space between learning, behavior, and culture in the mainstream classroom. Rebecca stated:

> My biggest issue is classroom management and [student] self-control. In order for them to learn the academic content, they need to be able to sit still, pay attention, and engage in instruction. I am constantly moving seats, seating them in the back of the room facing the opposite direction.

One teacher stated that her concern was not student behavior but the administrators' lack of knowledge on ELLs culture and behavior. The teachers spoke of a student's understanding of what it means to be a U.S. learner and provided examples of behavior concerns from both a classroom management and administrative viewpoint. Susan described a situation in which an administrator reprimanded a student for not looking at him in the eye and smirking as he disciplined him. She stated that she had to quickly intervene and explain to the administrator that the student was not being disrespectful but that in that student's culture, a child is never to look an adult in the eyes. She went on to tearfully describe how ELL behavior is often mishandled, which creates a challenge in inclusive learning environments. She said many ELL students are quick to be labeled as having a learning disability, which creates exclusion versus inclusion. Susan described a situation with another former student:

> We had a student last year whom they (administrators) were trying to refer to ECE because his behavior was so bad. But obviously, he should have been at a New Learner Academy. The problem was that he had been in the United States for so long, but he hadn't been in school. He couldn't read. He couldn't do anything. Nobody wanted to be patient with him, and he was a behavior … he

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acted like a preschooler. He acted like a little kid. So, instead of addressing the ESL portion of it and making sure he is getting the support he needed, he was just suspended all the time. Administrators wanted us to refer him to ECE even though we kept saying, he's not ECE. Eventually, he was put in an alternative school for behavior.

Miller and Katz (2002) defined inclusion as "a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best." Teachers in this study addressed ELL students' social and emotional connections as well as the culture of the school and how this influences students' sense of belonging and inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Teachers agreed that school culture played a key role in a sense of inclusion and a student's sense of belonging. Several teachers interviewed explained that ELLs come with baggage from home countries and even from home. A teacher said, "If I see that their demeanor is different, I will ask them questions" in an effort to build relationships with students. Teachers expressed that inclusion relies heavily on a strong school climate and culture. Several in this portion of the study described school efforts to provide a sense of belonging to both students and families through open house nights that have translators, ESL staff, and local religious charities available to help assist students and families. Others described strategic programming consisting of family fun nights, notices going out in multiple languages through multiple media, including text messaging, one-call dial-up systems, flyers, and school bulletin boards. Mary spoke specifically to her school's efforts to increase a sense of belonging through a work group that was created. This group is composed of parents, students, teachers, and administrators. The group

meets monthly to dialogue about the culture and climate of the building and organize events—safe places inclusive of all students, teachers, faculty, and staff. She stated that the goal of this group is to "create a culture shift" in the building among the new generation of ELL students.

Teaching strategies. The participants said they commonly use various teaching strategies in the classroom to support the instruction of ELLs. Many of those interviewed use strategies described by Ladson-Billings (1994) as "good teaching for all students." Many of the teachers perceived their instructional practices as good for all learners, not just ELL learners.

One commonly mentioned strategy to support the instruction of ELL students was pairing. Many teachers said they use pairing in different ways, often pairing students with like-languages, ability level, and knowledge. Collectively, teachers expressed that pairing or groups work when utilized and, if supervised, create a good learning environment for ELLs students. They lacked research to support their perception of this instructional practice as a way to enhance instruction for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Teachers also said the pairings must be monitored so that ELL students are not able to "hide their abilities or deficiencies" behind the work of other students.

Another commonly used strategy is the use of visual supports and pictures. Teachers often described using visual supports to help remove language barriers and to support the learning of ELL students. Teachers perceived this practice as a way of connecting students to content and language, but they lacked a general understanding of how to make standards-based connections to grade level lessons. Teachers who were interviewed stated that ELLs come to the mainstream classroom with limited English

skills and vocabulary. They said that using pictures, gestures, or common words in place of extensive vocabulary helps to guide and maintain understanding in class but does little to progress mastery of content. Curtis stated:

> You know, certain things are just assumed that they are going to understand, like a dozen. We could have this conversation and it could take a lot of different turns, but I try to give problems that are, especially word problems, I try to give them scenarios and words that they're probably familiar with.

Teachers said they use resources such as auxiliary text or alternative reading to help bridge the gap between language and learning among students. Teachers said they model good reading strategies through assisted reading, audio books, and as one teacher described, lower level reading materials. Jason said:

> We give alternate readings. It's the best we can do. We have textbooks that we use very, very rarely in class but, when we do, we're going to give a reading, we got an auxiliary textbook that kind of, I'm gonna use the phrase "dumbs it down." That sounds wrong. I mean, it's obviously written in language or a reading difficulty level, I guess, much lower than the other textbooks are. Outside of that, we don't do much else, I'll be honest.

Teachers often admitted that most resources used for ELLs fell far below grade level standards and did very little to help students meet and reach state accountability. Teachers interviewed often believed that the use of lower level reading materials were helping to bridge the language gap but admitted it did little for learning content.

In addition to classroom resources, teachers said they utilize scholastic reading inventory (SRI) scores to help with the placement of students in groups or classes. SRI is

a reading comprehension assessment that uses the Lexile framework to help monitor the reading growth of students and guide instruction for kindergarten through 12th grade.

Teachers also reported gauging student reading comprehension and language understanding through the World-class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA). The WIDA, known as ACCESS for ELLs, is an English language proficiency assessment administered to kindergarten through 12th grade students who have been identified as ELLs. The assessment is given to ELL students annually and assesses each of the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers stated that using the results from these assessments allows them to do in-class intervention to support the learning of ELL students, or utilize the schoolwide Response to Intervention system (RTI). Students in RTI are provided differentiated core instruction, extension, and/or intervention supports based on their academic and/or behavioral needs. Schools work together to choose interventions and extension activities that are appropriate for individual students based on assessment data. Teachers interviewed stated that SRI, WIDA scores, and school-level RTI are strategies and resources used daily to help support the learning of ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Teachers said that the biggest strategy they use in an effort to create the best instructional learning environment for ELL students beyond school level provided resources is creating instructional material for students. Many teachers expanded on this idea of creating lessons and supports for students independently with limited training, research based methods, and support. They said they spend a large amount of time outside their given planning periods creating resources for ELL students to use in class. Susan responded:

I find my own resources. We have an ESL person who is the assistant that comes

in, but honestly he just helps with pulling them out, reading a test. It's really no

assistance.

Curtis said:

I have not found many things ready-made that I feel connects to the kids, so I find

myself creating many of the things that I wish you could just find.

Teachers said that finding suitable resources and materials that drive instruction

for ELL students is often hard. Teachers with limited training and professional

development are left to create instructional materials that support ELL students in

mainstream classrooms. Teachers in this study perceived that using good teaching

strategies coupled with resources that were appropriate for ELL students would help to

increase student understanding and learning, but lacked evidence based research and

training to support their perceptions and belief. Again, these perceptions of good teaching

strategies shaped instructional practices used in class. Teachers often felt the need for

more instructional support, resources, and training in order to help ELL students in

mainstream classrooms reach mastery of content level materials.

Resources and support. Effective collaboration and support are critical for a

culturally responsive framework that uses collaboration among ELL and general

education teachers (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010). Teachers must have a structure in place

so that sustained collaboration on teaching ELLs occurs regularly and teachers can share

their expertise with each other. Teachers stated that the level of collaboration among ESL

program specialists and teachers is often uneven or nonexistent. As described by teachers,

most school settings do not allow time for effective collaboration to take place. One

teachers said "that is probably something that we could definitely do more often." Jason described collaboration in his school by simply stating, "We don't, we haven't."

As described by Dove and Honigsfeld (2010), a part of collaboration understands student needs. The teachers who were interviewed in this study said, when asked about understanding ELL program service plans (PSP) and accommodations, that they had little to no knowledge of individual student accommodations or how to appropriately implement service learning plans in the mainstream classroom.

Teachers' limited knowledge of how to accommodate students and use student supports in class hinders their ability to create an overall inclusive learning environment that supports instructional outcomes. Susan followed by stating:

> Most people do not even know what a PSP is or the accommodations. One of our students did not get any accommodations for state testing because the district didn't put her information, her accommodations in the system. Instead of calling the district to say what are her accommodations, because they are not in the computer, it's as if they did not exist.

The schools in this study rely heavily on the support of the ESL coordinator or bilingual assistants (BAI) to support learning and instruction in the mainstream classroom. As cited by all interview participants, in most cases, there is only one ESL coordinator or BAI per school, and that coordinator or BAI serves several hundred ELL students. Most described those assistants as overstretched, making it "impossible to service all of the kids in general education classrooms." Others stated that, in most cases, the collaboration exceeds the training of assistants and their limited ability to address multiple languages spoken in a classroom. Susan said:

The BAI only feels comfortable helping the Hispanic students because that is the only language she speaks. But I have African students and other languages in my room. Who is going to help them?

Teachers said that in most cases, the role of the ESL school level coordinators or BAIs has not been clearly communicated with staff. Many teachers interviewed said they do not know how to utilize the assistant. In most cases, the ESL coordinator or BAI was primarily used to aid instruction by way of pulling students out of the mainstream classroom for small group instruction or one-on-one instruction. Two of the teachers interviewed expressed that they did not like pullouts because students often fell behind in content. Teachers stated that they have a good rapport with ESL coordinators and BAIs, but did not feel there was much progress made from pull-out instructional methods. Susan commented:

Part of the problem is that they are expected to cover the material that the teacher is covering and it is too much. It puts pressure on the ESL teachers to help meet proficiency.

Jason responded to collaboration practices, stating:

We reduced the amount of BAI resources. We got the strong feeling that our translators were aiding students in a . . . umm, unethical method, where maybe they feel like they were just trying to advise and help but in the process helped too much. I've had ESL students getting 90 . . . 95% on a test that is incredibly difficult even for the best English language learner.

Teachers stated that administrators rarely advocated for ESL collaboration and support. Many vented frustration at administrators' lack of knowledge and general

concern and care for ELL learners, often feeling expected to "just handle it" when it came to the delivery of effective instruction, curriculum, and behavior management of ELL students. Susan said:

> I feel like the administration team has not done enough to learn about ESL. We have to remind administration that ESL is a federally regulated program just like ECE, so you just can't be pushing them around and saying we will fix it later. Administration needs training.

Teachers viewed district level support negatively and perceived that most schools received more support for ELLs than does their school. Many teachers felt their ELL programs were under-staffed and under-supported. Teachers commented on the trends in school demographics, citing that their ELL enrollment had increased significantly, but the level of support had not. Mary said, "the district lets things fall by the wayside because our school is not a 'newlearner academy.'"

In the school district in which this study took place, a "newlear academy" provides support for new students' linguistic, academic, and social/emotional needs in grades six through ten. Students at newlearner academies are in their first year of instruction in a U.S. school and are at beginning levels of English proficiency or have had interrupted educational experiences in their native countries. The newlearner academies in the district are equipped with a staff of teachers who carry ESL endorsements or certifications. The academies have staff who are trained and equipped to not only address the academic needs of students but their social and emotional needs through multiple levels of resources and community support. Teachers in this study, who are in general education or mainstream environments, said they do not have adequate support to help

students once they enter the mainstream schools, but have had candid conversations with their professional learning communities about the needs.

Language, culture, and content. Educational scholars and advocates (Ladson-Billings,1994, Nieto, 1999, & Gay, 2010) have constructed theory and practice on CRT. These scholars posit that CRT (culturally responsive teaching) gives guidance to educators who are trying to improve the academic achievement of students from varied racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social-class groups by creating learning environments that increase engagement and motivation for students of color. Culturally responsive teaching integrates the culture of students with school curriculum and instruction.

Teachers in the current study were asked how they use materials relevant to a student's culture and language and how they create a culturally responsive learning environment for ELL students in the mainstream classroom. Drawing upon their personal experiences and practices in the classroom, teachers responded by talking about the overall school culture for EL learners as well as what each one does individually in their classrooms in order to promote diversity and inclusion. Teachers who were interviewed had limited training on CRT but felt that their practices did nothing to promote nor alienate any student. James said:

> Nothing is systematic. We need to do more considering of this based on our
> population.

Rebecca said:

> We try to ensure that the culture and climate of the classrooms represent the
> different cultures and students.

Jason responded by saying:

> I have not taken it upon myself to go any deeper into the ESL stuff because it has
> been top down, broad spectrum. I would not argue that I'm doing anything that
> will promote cultural diversity but I'm certainly not doing anything that would
> demote it.

A desire to shift the culture of the school was evident in many responses when
discussing how to create culturally responsive classroom environments. Teachers in the
study spoke of the importance of understanding school norms, cultural norms, and the
demographics of the school. Mary said that using district data books to gain a firm
understanding of the student population is helpful and equips staff in advance of knowing
what students they will encounter during the school year. With this understanding, many
teachers responded by asserting that each school implemented professional development
training on culturally responsive teaching, but the training was voluntary, not mandatory.
Susan said:

> The problem is that culturally responsive teaching is not a requirement. I have
> been saying this for five years because I could not believe how diverse this school
> was and how people are not trained on it.

She went on to say:

> Everything I see in this building is very stereotypical about how they deal with the
> kids and their culture.

Rebecca had a similar response:

> At this school, we do not do a good job with culturally responsive teaching and
> that is why our kids are in trouble all of the time.

Culturally responsive teaching rests on the idea that the culture of the student is integrated into the curriculum and instruction of the school and that each student feels appreciated and valued. Teachers in this study spoke to the importance of relationship building as a component of CRT in their classrooms. James said "just making sure they're appreciated and that they are involved" is key to culturally responsive teaching in his classroom. Other teachers drew upon personal experiences with students and empathized with them as a minority, thinking about what it means to belong. Susan said:

I know what it is like not to see images of me. Positive images. Only seen as negative. So I make sure to introduce kids to people like them that are positive and not just historical.

Other teachers stated the importance of using the student's experience to help create an inclusive learning environment that is culturally responsive. Rebecca said:

I use their experiences. Since many of the students come from worn torn countries, I really try to build within the classroom the idea of safety and security.

The importance of creating individual relationships resonated with all teachers interviewed. Having the ability to talk to students and gain an understanding of their home life was important to all teachers. Curtis stated that, over time, you ask questions like "who do you live with, where are you from, how long have you been in America, do you like it here, have you made friends" to nurture strong relationships and develop a sense of belonging and trust. He went on to say:

So, when you say "eat dinner," everybody has a picture of what that looks like at their house. For some of the kids it's, "I'm home by myself. I get a TV dinner. I put it in the microwave, I heat it up and I watch TV." For others, it's "My mom

and dad sit down at the table and we eat and nobody has their phones." So

understanding just those small differences before you walk in the classroom is

what culturally responsive teaching is to me.

The teacher stated that teachers must be cognizant of differences, no matter how big or

small, before they start to teach. "You can't assume."

Support was another big influence on how teachers demonstrated culturally

responsive teaching and used materials relative to student's culture and language. Many

of the teachers interviewed felt that they had minimal district and school level support

and resources from administrators. Many felt that ELL students were put in mainstream

classrooms and both the student and teacher had to "fend for themselves." Susan stated

that she felt administrators looked at it as "This is your classroom, you have them, do it

yourself." She stated:

No one comes in to check on our kids. And it's very disheartening because we see

our kids getting yelled at in the hallway and we have to stop and tell them, they

don't understand what you're saying. They have no idea. And I think it bothers

me a lot because we know the struggle these kids are going through, but because

most of the people in this building have not touched ELLs or ESL kids, they don't

see it. They really see them as somebody that operates like them. Like everybody

is on the same playing field. It is like they're privileged. It's part of the privilege.

Mary went on to say:

The district needs to specifically tailor instruction and support for each school, in

my opinion, based on demographics and needs. It's gonna take resources, and we

don't have resources. We just don't. We don't have all the dictionaries, we don't

have bottomless support.

Another teacher addressed the student experience through a reflection on the current

political landscape. Jason described what the district did to be responsive to students

under the immigration ban. He recounted:

Again, I do think that it's great you give me a lesson on how to make the Hispanic

population feel that they are invited once they get into the classroom, especially

with the election of Donald Trump, blah blah blah. I get that. I remember seeing

that a few months back, but I don't have a lot of Hispanics. If I do, they're not the

ones in dire need of tailored instruction. Again, when I think of ESL, the first

thing that pops in my mind is Nepalese. It's the first thing. The district should

survey the staff to know what our needs are. We do things for ESL populations at

the back of our minds, not the forefronts.

Creating a common culture in the classroom is one of the principle components of

culturally responsive teaching. Teachers gave examples of how they work to create a

community within a school in their classroom. Teachers stated that they want students to

come into their classroom and feel welcomed and supported. CRT recognizes that the

culture of teachers may be significantly different from those of the students they instruct,

but that there is an intentionality to bridge cultural differences that creates one

community of learners. Teachers interviewed spoke of teaching and demonstrating

tolerance and respect for one another in class. Curtis described how a community is

created in his room and with social media, how his classroom community is viewed by

hundreds of teachers and educators. He described how he intentionally creates the sense of "one" community in his room. He said:

> I have my students to imagine my class as a sporting event and we create celebrations that we can all relate to. It creates community. It's like, "Well, I'm from this country and you are from this country" but we all know how to give a "golf clap." The class creates the celebrations together. Now, the students have something in common, something that connects them. They can celebrate accomplishments together, as one. And this is high school. It's amazing to watch. Wow, it is … (laughs) amazing.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine mainstream teachers' practices and perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. A survey of current teachers instructing ELLs in the mainstream classroom was given to teachers at three high schools that rendered descriptive data. That survey was followed by interviews with six teachers who instruct ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Using descriptive statistics to provide summaries about samples, measures, frequencies, distributions, and percentages created a landscape for the study on teacher attitudes and perceptions on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The major areas explored in the survey: inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, classroom practice, the impact of inclusion on teachers, teacher support for service with ELLs in the mainstream classroom, and challenges and benefits of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. These areas provided conceptual knowledge and understandings from the teacher perspective.

The qualitative data gathered from the teacher interviews rendered a deeper understanding of teacher perceptions, offering a look at inclusion and access to culturally responsive teaching as experienced by secondary teachers of ELLs. The interviews offered an intimate understanding of the teacher experience of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom from a practitioner viewpoint, examining inclusion, instruction, collaboration and support, and culturally responsive teaching.

Results from this study are based upon a small sample of survey and interview participants selected from three high schools within a large urban school district. The school district in which this study was conducted has seen a surge in immigrant student enrollment. Schools selected for this study have doubled and, in some cases, tripled their English as a Second Language program participation over the last five years, according to district data. The size of the sample and the urgency to address ELLs within this school district limits the generalizability of the findings. Data from the survey and interviews were presented separately.

In Chapter 5, these finding are examined through an integration of data that explores the themes from the survey and interviews. Themes were categorized based on the relationship between codes, code frequency, and the underlying meaning applied to the conceptual framework, to help frame the findings in a meaningful way. These findings have been assessed as they relate to the existing body of knowledge, with details regarding any expected or unexpected findings.

CHAPTER 5

INTEGRATION OF DATA

If education is to empower marginalized groups, it must be transformative (Banks, 1991).

This chapter is divided into two sections: summary of the study and integration of data. The first section will summarize the purpose of the study and the research design. The second section will integrate the findings from Chapter 4 and highlight the research questions. This chapter will close with an analysis of the conceptual framework and the themes that emerged through the study. Furthermore it will demonstrate how these themes are supported by the four motivational conditions for culturally responsive teaching.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of secondary school teachers on the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classrooms and identify instructional practices of ELL teachers that are utilized in order to build culturally responsive schools. "Perceptions," as used in this study, are what teachers believe and feel about the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The study also examines how these perceptions shape instructional practices. Three research questions guided this study: What are high school teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom? How do teachers' perceptions of inclusion shape instructional practice? What culturally responsive teaching practices are used in the mainstream classroom to enhance instruction for the inclusion of ELLs? To answer these questions, a qualitative dominant

research design was used, employing two research methods: an online survey to provide descriptive data from secondary teachers who currently instruct ELLs in the mainstream classroom and in-depth, face-to-face interviews. The interviews yielded the most information and served as the primary data source for this study. The semi-structured interviews explored secondary teacher's personal experiences through stories, examples, and perceptions of six teachers who instruct ELLs in the mainstream classroom, while the survey provided a landscape of the perceptions of teachers who instruct ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This design allowed the teacher's voice to be heard and practice to be explored, with a focus on teacher perceptions and instructional practices.

Literature in this study explored effective principles of mainstreaming ELLs (Roxas, 2011), instructional strategies and practices (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier, 1987; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014), transcaring (Garcia, Woodley, Flores & Chu, 2012), and social and emotional learning (CASEL, 2014). In focusing on teacher beliefs and perceptions, literature led us to examine culturally responsive teaching by engaging in culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Milner, 2011) and access for culturally responsive teaching (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Olneck, 1995; Sleeter & Stillman, 2007). The elements of culturally responsive teaching examined in this study were the key role of the teacher and the teacher's influence on culturally responsive teaching practices in the mainstream classroom. Literature on the inclusion of ELLs provided valuable insight. However, more in-depth research on the connection between teacher perceptions of inclusion and practice is needed in order to provide equity-based instruction in multilingual school environments that are inclusive of ELLs.

With shifting demographics, there is a critical need for schools to meet the needs of ELLs both culturally and academically. This will require a pedagogical shift for educators.

In order to explore the research questions, this study conducted a survey that gathered responses from 125 participants from three high schools within one large urban school district. The school district chosen for this study has experienced an increase in the number of ELLs enrolled in the district. The schools selected for this study have had an increase in the number of ELLs enrolled in their schools who receive ESL program services. The survey examined four areas: teacher perceptions and attitudes on the inclusion of ELLs, school level support, professional development and responsibilities, and instructional practice in the classroom. The survey asked respondents to select choices that clearly and closely represented their opinions, establishing frequencies and trends among their responses.

After extracting information from the survey about overall teacher attitudes and perceptions, the researcher conducted an interview of six participants in order to provide a deeper understanding of the teacher experience through the teacher's voice. The interview allowed teachers to expand upon their beliefs and perceptions using their own words. The interviews allowed the researcher to understand teacher experiences in general education classrooms that include mainstreamed ELLs. Teacher's beliefs and perceptions toward the development of personal practice was studied using a six-question interview protocol. The interview questions explored the themes examined in the survey while highlighting the teacher's voice. The interview investigated the perceptions of teachers as they related to inclusion, instruction, support, and culturally responsive

teaching. In total, six teachers engaged in face-to-face semi-structured interviews on inclusion and access to culturally responsive teaching in the mainstream classroom.

The findings revealed themes supported by the existing body of literature. The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching was used as a theoretical framework (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) that shaped the study and allowed the researcher to determine how motivation and culture, social and institutional school climates, and support lend access to inclusion for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching served as a guide, helping to interpret findings that emerged from the study. Using the framework to link findings extracted from the survey and interview identified issues, norms, procedures and practices, and structures critical for inclusion, effective instruction, and access to culturally responsive teaching. Using cross-analysis to integrate data (multiple participant attitudes and perceptions from the survey and interviews in four major areas of study: a) the impact of inclusion, b) instructional practices, c) teacher collaboration and support, and d) culturally responsive teaching) yielded findings that expanded our understanding of ELL inclusion and access to culturally responsive teaching. These themes rest against the backdrop of ever-changing political school and community climates, school culture and leadership, and state and district accountability reforms. These themes and findings are fully explored in the "Integration of Data" section below.

Integration of Data

  Impact of inclusion. Inclusion is the process of integrating ELLs into the regular classroom and providing rich instruction that cultivates the student's learning both culturally and linguistically. Literature by Hollins and Spencer (1990) supported

inclusion in schools, changing traditional school systems into multilingual, diverse school environments that were culturally consistent, relevant, and meaningful to all students (See Figure 2).
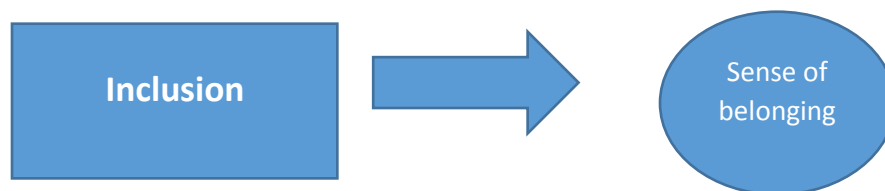

Figure 2. *Impact of inclusion*.

The first phase of analysis was driven by the research question: What are high school teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom? The survey and interviews identified internal and external factors when addressing inclusion. Examining the impact that inclusion had on participant beliefs and perceptions uncovered two major factors that lay between the teacher (internal) and the school (external). Participants identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, including lack of training, adequate support, resources, responsive curriculum, and administrative support. In this study, participants expounded upon their personal feelings and connections as it related to inclusion against the backdrop of teacher competency and quality in their ability to effectively service ELLs in their classroom. Current school reform efforts that push for all students to reach proficiency place added external pressure on teachers of ELLs in the mainstream classroom and looming political rhetoric hinders the social and emotional growth of students, jeopardizing ELLs' sense of belonging.

The term *inclusion* should not be given a negative label, but, as identified in this study, the word *inclusion* was perceived as having a negative impact on the participant's

sense of competency in addressing student needs and sense of belonging. Participants expressed negative feelings about inclusion and felt that district leaders and school level administrators were not addressing the realities teachers face when servicing ELL students in the classroom. Participants responded that they need more training and support and lack research-based methods for working with ELL students in the general education classroom. As participants stated, "We have to fend for ourselves," indicating a sense of hopelessness and defeat.

An examination of perceptions regarding language acquisition demonstrated that most teachers in this survey said they support legislation to make English the primary language in the U.S. and support the statement that ELLs should not be allowed in the mainstream classroom until they reach a minimum level of English language proficiency. However, participants welcomed ELLs in their classrooms, agreeing that ELLs provide a rich and diverse classroom environment, and acknowledging that they know of very few research-based practices to help move students toward proficiency. They cited language barriers as a main factor that hinders student success.

Under the pressures of school reform and district accountability, participants said they struggle with balance between content and communication, indicating that most of them modify coursework, and alter the structural and cognitive levels of material presented to ELL students. Interventions such as response to interventions (RTI) systems, strategic grouping, and program accommodations still generated a lackluster response from interview participants, as the interventions relate to increasing student achievement. Participants generally felt that students often fall further behind in the classroom when

they are subject to interventions that remove them from the classroom, and thus experience exclusion rather than inclusion.

The literature has demonstrated that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are often formed by the values they hold and these play an important role in student performance (Freeman & Freeman, 1994). Participants in the current study said they value education and collectively had an appreciation for ELLs in their classes. Participants felt that ELLs brought a level of diversity as well as shared experiences to classrooms. However, participants felt a sense of frustration at being under-supported and under-resourced to provide an inclusive learning environment for ELL students. The teachers' belief that they could effectively support student learning was low. This can be attributed to external variables.

Roxas's (2011) study on Somali refugee students in a U.S. classroom environment found that teachers were frustrated, disappointed, and regretful in their efforts to support the Somali students' learning in the mainstream classroom. Roxas (2011) also found that the teachers lacked effective skills to successfully integrate the academic and cultural needs of students in order to increase student academic outcomes in the mainstream classroom.

Data from the current study showed that participants in both the survey and interview portions of the study indicated those same negative feeling toward inclusion when associated with external factors of support and training. They admitted to lacking the skills or having the training to effectively provide a culturally responsive and inclusive learning environment for ELLs.

Beliefs and attitudes toward ELLs in the mainstream classroom have often shifted and adjusted according to the schools' culture and climate. Nieto (1999) recommended that improvement in teacher connections between home and school can create positive learning.

Many participants in the current study proclaimed a sense of acceptance when inclusion was positioned to reflect their positionality as a teacher. It was also viewed positively when participants spoke of creating a sense of belonging in their classroom for ELLs. The value of inclusion, although perceived as a challenge in the survey, was still readily accepted and welcomed. Participants felt that school environments lacked a level of responsiveness in helping create an inclusive learning environment and this perception affected the classroom. Participants in the study stated that because school cultures and climates often did little to connect to ELLs and families, discipline became an issue. This disconnect was demonstrated in participant accounts of how behavior was addressed in schools with ELLs and how it lacked general cultural awareness. Participants felt that the only time communication happens with families of ELLs is to communicate discipline rather than student achievement. Communication, they said, did not serve as a bridge to support learning but as a tool to communicate disciplinary concerns, doing little to increase the student's sense of belonging. Platt, Harper, and Mendoza (2003) stated that "if the school ignores the linguistic and cultural diversity that ELLs bring, then the goals of inclusive education are subverted" (p. 125).

The findings from this study challenge teachers, staff, and administrators to recognize the differences in students, their communities, and the diverse ways in which they learn in order to create an inclusive learning environment. Understanding the

external and internal factors that influence inclusion helps to provide a greater understanding for teacher practice in the mainstream classroom.

Instruction. When examining high school teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, this study identified that the teachers who were interviewed had both positive and negative experiences. Richardson (1996) stated that a teacher's beliefs are an important element in teacher education because beliefs drive teacher action and practice in the classroom. This study's second phase of study, sought to determine how teacher perceptions of inclusion shape the instructional practice of teachers with ELLs in the mainstream classroom (See Figure 3).
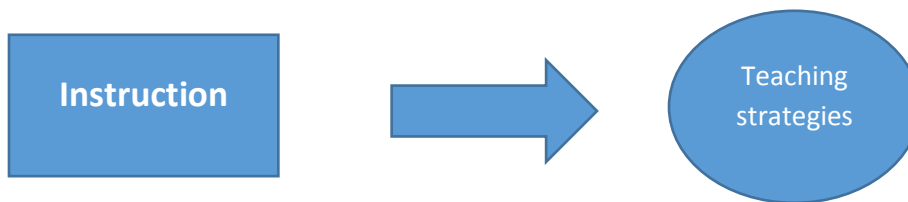
Figure 3. *Instruction and teaching strategies.*

A review of the literature identified studies that emphasize that teachers must learn to teach in a society that has become increasingly cultural and linguistically diverse (Collins, 1991; Gay, 2010; & Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers attempt to respond to cultural, linguistic, and social diversity in their classrooms, but must recognize their own beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, and experiences about teaching, and learn to promote culturally responsive teaching for students (Cochran-Smith, 1995).

According to the survey administered in this study, 38.21% of the participants had received just 1 to 5 hours of training and another 32.52% had received less than 1 hour. Forty-four participants in the survey stated that they did not have adequate training in order to build effective supports for learning for ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Minimum training and professional development devoted to instructional practices and teaching strategies to help support the learning of ELLs in the mainstream classroom contributed to participants' negative beliefs and perceptions. Beliefs and perceptions influence instructional practices and teaching strategies. Effective instructional practices and teaching strategies are a critical element in overall student achievement.

In the study, participants said that much of what they use instructionally for ELLs generally is what they use for all students. Participants in the study rarely discussed differentiated instruction or research based methods designed for the instruction of ELLs. Ladson-Billings (1994) stated that most practices used by teachers are described as "just good teaching," but lack the foundation and critical consciousness to be culturally responsive. Research on the content of texts and other instructional materials shows that many materials provide poor, inaccurate, and absent representations of diverse cultural and linguistic groups (Gay, 2010). Participants in the current study stated that the school or the district does not provide materials designed for use with ELLs. Participants said that much of the materials they use in the classroom that are tailored for with ELL students are things that they have created on their own in order to better serve students.

Participants spoke positively about the efforts they have taken upon themselves to help ELLs students in their classrooms. Participants shared that they spend many hours outside of school preparing materials and instructional supports to help students reach success in their classrooms. Achinstein and Ogawa (2006), stated that attempts to create instruction that is responsive too often becomes difficult for teachers who have less time to develop instructional curriculum that students can relate to, given the demands of accountability and testing. Participants generally lacked research-based methods to

support ELL instruction in the classroom but often said those are things they would do for "all of my students."

In an effort to bridge the gap between content and language, as described, most ELL students of teachers in this study receive limited content in some mainstream classrooms because teachers assessed the student's need to be more language-based (vocabulary) versus content. A participant stated on the survey's open-ended response section, "I often will just give an ELL student a vocabulary sheet or a seek-and-find. I know it is not the content, but I am trying to help the student learn the language." As identified in the survey, most respondents stated that they rarely if ever, provide materials in the student's language, making grasping the content more difficult for non-English speakers.

Effective instruction for inclusion means ensuring that instructional materials can be made available in the student's native language, thus helping with language and vocabulary gaps. Only three teachers who participated in the overall survey said that this practice takes place in their classes. Researchers say that ELLs must be exposed to a language-rich environment and teachers must be conscious of the relationship between their native language and English (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier, 1987). Participants in the interview portion of the current study understood the importance of content and language objectives that are involved in effective mainstreaming of ELLs students, but they lacked the training, resources, and professional development to deliver lessons that they deemed were appropriate for learning. Instructional practices for effectively mainstreaming ELLs in the general education classroom calls for content teachers to provide rich and meaningful lessons to promote both content and language development.

Other factors that influence study participants instructional practices of ELLs are the placement of ELLs in lower-level classes and a lack of understanding of student program services. Many students have deep content knowledge in their native language but lack the language skills to demonstrate these concepts in English. Therefore, they are often placed in lower-level tracked courses or are misdiagnosed with learning disabilities (Oakes, 1985). Participants in the interview portion of the current study mentioned these realities and questioned whether ELLs are given access to equitable educational practices. During the interview, participants said that most of their ELL students are in their lower level classes, in which "all the students are struggling learners." They said this makes providing differentiated instruction focused specifically on language time-consuming and daunting to tackle within a class period. Students participating in many ESL programs have PSPs to guide instruction, and these are designed to support teachers. However, this study uncovered that many teachers lack knowledge or understanding of how to implement PSPs in general education classes. Again, these factors created negative teacher perceptions when it came to the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Guiding instruction in the mainstream classroom for ELLs is challenging with minimal support, training, and teacher development. As the survey uncovered, over half of those surveyed had participated in just 1 to 5 hours of training devoted to the instruction of ELLs. Participants in this study do not have the training and support needed to successfully integrate the academic and cultural needs of students in the mainstream classroom. This study demonstrates that teachers who are teaching in school climates with increased enrollment in ESL program participation may not have sufficient knowledge of how to best serve these students.

Roxas (2011) research supports these findings and recommends that in order to have effective instructional practices in mainstream classrooms, teachers must connect schoolwork to prior knowledge, background of student, and experiences, and build on student strengths. Content area teachers who are teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom will need to provide instruction that is culturally responsive in which all students are encouraged to learn through effective instructional practices that connect the gap between language and content. Instructional practices and teaching strategies must connect school, home, student experiences, cultures, race, and language.

Collaboration and support. Teachers face many challenges in meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse students. These challenges are multidimensional and complex. Researchers have begun to explore the positioning of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, citing that ELLs have not been receiving the level of support needed to be successful (Mohr & Mohr, 2007). Much of the lack of support has been associated with teacher attitudes and perceptions of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, compounded by personal experiences, epistemologies, political views, and federal accountability mandates. In answering the research question of how teacher perceptions shape the instructional practices of ELLs, the third phase of analysis in the current study addressed the level of support that is needed in order to help ELLs reach learner goals and meet state and district proficiency goals (See Figure 4).
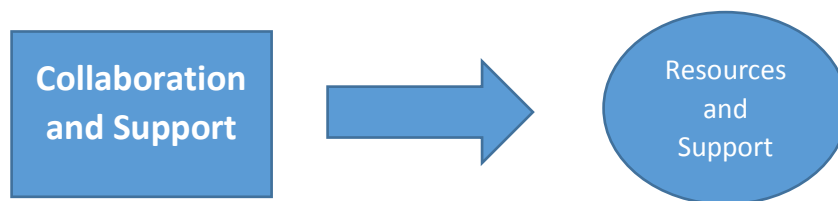

Figure 4. *Successful collaboration depends on resources and administrative support.*

Participants in this study addressed the level of support, or lack thereof, when instructing ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Support was defined by administrator support, state and district support, and ESL program service support. Teachers require consistent levels of support in order to nurture teacher growth and development and improve instructional practices for ELLs. This improvement in instruction will generate student engagement that is critical for student achievement (Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002). Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll also said that, in order to close the achievement gap and build on ELLs' strengths, education must provide teachers for ELLs that have additional skills and abilities (2005). They added that these skills and abilities must be fostered through endless and bottomless support.

The survey portion of the current study asked participants whether they received adequate support from school administrators when ELLs are enrolled in their classes. Participants expressed feelings of concern and disappointment when responding to levels of support they received to work with ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The survey discovered that 28 teachers (31.46%) believe that they receive support some of the time, 23 (25.84%) most of the time, 16 (17.98%) never, and 10 (11.24%) receive support all of the time from administrators. This reporting demonstrated an imbalance of administrator support as perceived by teachers of ELLs. In deepening our understanding of support, participants interviewed stated that administrator support was low or non-existent because it was perceived that ELLs were "not their problem." Participants stated that they believed most administrators lacked the general knowledge and understanding needed to work with teachers of ELLs and support ELL student learning in the mainstream classroom.

Administrators need to be fully on board with ELL inclusion. Successful inclusion requires that administrators understand the level of support teachers need from administrators (principals, assistant principals, and counselors as defined by the district of study). Jones and Nicholas (2013) stated that effective school leadership is key to creating culturally responsive school environments. Support is understood as addressing teacher needs, building relationships with ELLs, leading efforts in schoolwide cultural awareness, and attending professional development with teachers in order to understand the needs of ELLs. The idea of a shared vision when providing instructional support for ELLs is a critical component in effective mainstreaming and creating a culturally responsive school.

In shifting to district level support, participants believed that there was a genuine lack of concern. Participants in this study associated district support with their ability to access resources and support, but expressed concerns about limited professional development, limited funds for resources, limited staff support, limited awareness, limited training, and limited understanding of how best to serve ELLs in the general education environment. Participants referred often to "newlearner" institutions and felt that the district did not fully support those students who leave these beginner facilities, once they enter a general education setting. Teachers perceived that students at newlearner sites were provided more support from the district than those in general educational settings. Participants voiced feelings of concern that when these students enter general educational settings, they no longer have access to those same resources (resources for the study were defined by participants as professionally trained ELL teachers, staff, administrators, and translators) and support.

A variety of programs have been designed to serve ELLs in general education settings. For this study, ELLs were serviced through an SEI model adopted by the state and district. The SEI model is a technique for rapidly teaching English to ELLs. High school students under this model spend a small portion of their instructional day in an ESL room. In most schools identified in this study, students receive all content training in mainstream classrooms, with ESL program services for pullout, remediation or intervention support, and language development. Schools in this study most commonly used a "bridge" approach to ELL's instruction in their classrooms. This approach used student pullout methods, small group teaching, or BAI support in the classroom. Many of these approaches did little to enhance content knowledge or ensure that ELLs reach proficiency, according to participants in this study.

Research conducted by Guerro (2004) on the SEI model found that SEI was more about politics than the best interest of ELLs. However, this is still the preferred model, and is implemented in many school districts across the U.S. The SEI model did little to provide consistent support for the teachers or the students, according to participants in this study. Participants expressed discontent with the use of ESL program supports, often stating that ESL staff members were overstretched. Many sympathized with their workload and felt they were not equipped to work with multiple academic levels, cultures, content, and languages, especially under the pressure of students reaching state-mandated proficiency. This study revealed that most schools functioned with only one to two BAIs for hundreds of ELLs on various grade levels in various content classes. Participants felt that these practices are inequitable and decrease the amount of authentic instruction that ESL services can provide for students. They admit that this is the case

because they are "just stretched thin" and lack the language and content knowledge to help reach academic achievement.

Educators are demanding that teachers of ELLs receive more support from states and districts. Although Title III says that LEP students must be challenged and receive high quality instruction, existing research has demonstrated that students need more assistance and programming to be academically successful (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). The debate on how to best service ELLs in the school system continues to grow among policymakers and educators who fall short of providing the level of resources mainstream teachers need in order to service ELLs in the classrooms. As identified in this study, teachers need unwavering levels of support from both within the school (administrators and ESL program services) and outside of the school (state, district, and community). Teachers of ELLs need a high level of collaboration and support in order to provide equitable instruction that embraces inclusion in the mainstream classroom.

Culturally responsive teaching. In the final phase of analysis, this study sought to identify culturally responsive teaching practices that teachers use in the mainstream classroom to enhance instruction for the inclusion of ELLs. This study defined cultural competence as the acceptance of the significance of sociopolitical, economic, and historical experiences of different racial, ethnic and gender subgroups inside and outside of formal and informal education settings (Jones & Nichols, 2013). See Figure 5.
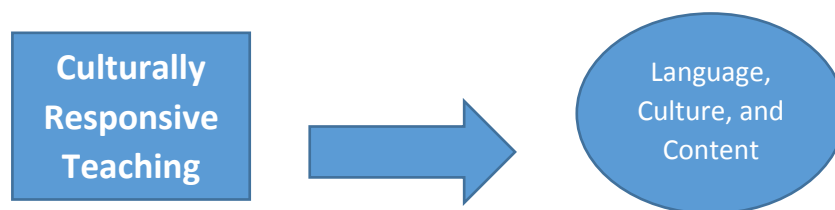
Figure 5. *Culturally responsive teaching is sensitive to language, culture and content.*

The traditional ways of teaching and engaging learners in the classroom will not meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students in urban school settings (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Ladson-Billings (1992) defined culturally responsive teaching as teaching that is designed not only to fit the school culture to the students' culture but also use the students' culture as a basis for helping students understand themselves and others, structure social interactions, and help conceptualize knowledge. In this study, it was important to understand characteristics of culturally responsive teachers in order to identify culturally responsive practices. These factors help to enhance the instruction of ELLs in the mainstream classroom to create an inclusive learning environment.

The study first identified the level of training and/or professional development hours participants had devoted to understanding what it means to be culturally responsive. The survey in this study asked teachers how many hours they had devoted toward culturally responsive teaching. The survey found that, 51 of 125 respondents (40.80%) had spent just 1 to 5 hours on professional development related to culturally responsive teaching. That is to say, over half of the participants surveyed had minimal training on culturally responsive teaching and practices. Another 24 participants (19.20%) had less than 1 hour of culturally responsive teaching training.

Training is deemed critical in preparing teachers to work with an increasingly diverse student body. Students are now entering the classrooms both culturally and linguistically diverse. Many teachers grow up in segregated environments and had few interactions with other cultures and races. Having a teaching force that often is not reflective of the student population calls for teachers to embrace training to help them move beyond merely "good teaching" to being culturally responsive conduits for students

from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Collins (1991) stated that teachers who have limited exposure to other races and cultural understanding have limited ability to consider the significance in the perspectives of people of color. Teachers must inherit affirming views of students that promote learning that uses the student's culture as a vehicle for learning (Gay, 2010).

In the current study, teachers informants expressed their sense of being culturally responsive as tied to forming and creating community in the classroom and building personal relationships with students. Many participants in the study, through in-depth, face-to-face interviews, expressed the same concern for students' achievement and sense of belonging. Participants wanted their classroom to be a safe place for students to grow and learn, but admitted that they fell short of providing students the appropriate resources for learning to effectively take place. Participants in the study were all conscious of creating learning environments that fostered respect and connectedness, but often would fall back on the notion of language being a barrier to establishing a sense of complete inclusion in their classrooms. Again, participants expressed that a lack of support for fostering culturally sensitive learning environments hindered their ability to move students forward academically. This left teachers feeling defeated when attempting to provide equitable services for ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Identifying characteristics of culturally responsive teachers allowed this study to explore practices in the classroom that enhance instruction for ELLs. Teachers who fail to acknowledge culture and begin to teach academic content without knowing students' backgrounds (Collins, 1991; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto 1999) create barriers for ELLs' academic success in the mainstream classroom. When asked about

culturally responsive practices, participants in the study stated that they concentrate more on meeting students where they are and trying to bridge the gap between language and communication as opposed to focusing on content learning. Participants in this study said they spend time trying to understand all ELL students' needs. Participants collectively expressed that ELLs in their classrooms were placed in challenging courses with multiple levels of content learning where all students, both ELLs and non-ELLs, demonstrated a lack of content knowledge. This creates additional barriers for ELLs who often struggle with both language and content development.

The most important barrier to culturally responsive teaching and practice is the teacher's lack of belief that the student comes to class each day and *wants to learn* and the teacher's lack of belief that the student *can learn*. The study examined teacher practice through multiple lenses, from grading practices (effort versus proficiency), to looking at teacher beliefs and practices of simplification of work or modification of work. The study also examined teachers' perceptions on student placement in mainstream classrooms, asking whether students should be in mainstream learning environments if they have not proven English proficiency. These questions revealed various beliefs and perceptions among all participants but did indicate that a teacher's personal belief or perception of a student can influence instructional practices in the classroom. The study revealed that the teachers in the study, regardless of a student's proficiency level, believe that the student can achieve content learning. Those who felt that the students lacked the general English proficiency to be successful in their class often resorted to language and communication as a focus of instruction, versus content. The study revealed that in order for ELLs to be provided access to culturally responsive teaching that fosters language,

communication, *and* content learning, teachers must receive high levels of support, training on CRT, and modeling best practices, to be successful. Teachers must push back their personal beliefs on language and English proficiency and use culture to create common communication where content learning can be achieved. Culturally responsive teaching is critical in creating a sense of belonging in the classroom, and that sense of belonging helps ELLs meet learner goals.

Participants overwhelmingly had an innate desire for all students, ELLs and non-ELLs, to be successful in their classroom and achieve levels of proficiency, but emphasized that there are challenges in supporting ELLs' academic achievement in mainstream classrooms.

Conceptual framework in practice. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) identified four characteristics of culturally responsive teachers. They stated that culturally responsive teachers 1) establish inclusion, creating learning atmospheres in which students and teachers feel respected and connected to one another; 2) develop attitude, creating a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice; 3) enhance meaning, creating challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that include student perspectives and values; and 4) engender competence, creating an understanding that students are effective in learning something they value. These qualities become central to teachers' becoming culturally responsive and give coherence to teacher practice. This study argues that in order for students to reach academic achievement, they must be given access to culturally responsive teaching that is consciously and systematically woven into their learning experiences.

The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching respects individual cultures and works at the same time to create a common culture in the learning environment that all teachers and students can accept (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). The themes presented in this study—a) the impact of inclusion, b) instructional practices, c) teacher collaboration and support, and d) culturally responsive teaching—have shaped teacher beliefs and perceptions on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. These themes must work together, cyclically, to create a culturally responsive school where ELLs can thrive culturally, linguistically, and academically. The framework for culturally responsive teaching works to accommodate race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to every student's cultural identity (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

The study finds that linking effective inclusion, instructional practices, collaboration and support, and access to culturally responsive teaching will enhance student engagement, create a student's sense of cultural integrity, and develop a sense of belonging that is a critical component in inclusive learning environments that enable ELLs to achieve academic success. Uncovering teacher attitudes and perceptions on inclusion is the first step in providing access to culturally responsive teaching for ELLs. Teachers must adapt to a pedagogical shift that emphasizes how their personal beliefs and perceptions play into instruction. Once teachers discover how these perceptions shape and influence action, teachers must be provided a multitude of resources to support them as they become proficient in creating culturally responsive classrooms in which mainstreamed ELLs can attain success. This study challenges the need for not only a pedagogical shift in the mainstream classroom but also in a school's climate and in a

school district, so that not only teachers, but the whole system, supports the learning of ELLs. The study shows that when teachers develop affirming attitudes on inclusion that are supported through training, professional development, collaboration and support, instructional guidance rooted in research based methods, and access to provide culturally responsive teaching to ELLs, it transforms the school climate and culture, and creates culturally responsive schools.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The trend toward ELLs in the mainstream classroom raises the question of equal treatment and whether this will be achieved through inclusion. This study sought to open this discussion by exploring the beliefs and perceptions of secondary teachers on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The integration of data works to steer school and district recommendations on the inclusion of ELLs. This is guided by a focus on effective instructional practices rooted in culturally responsive teaching. These recommendations help to support the implementation of culturally and linguistically diverse learning for equity-based education. These findings inform best practices for culturally responsive schools, classrooms, and teachers. Figure 6 displays how each of the themes presented in the study work cyclically to create a learning environment that meets the needs of ELLs in the mainstream classroom.
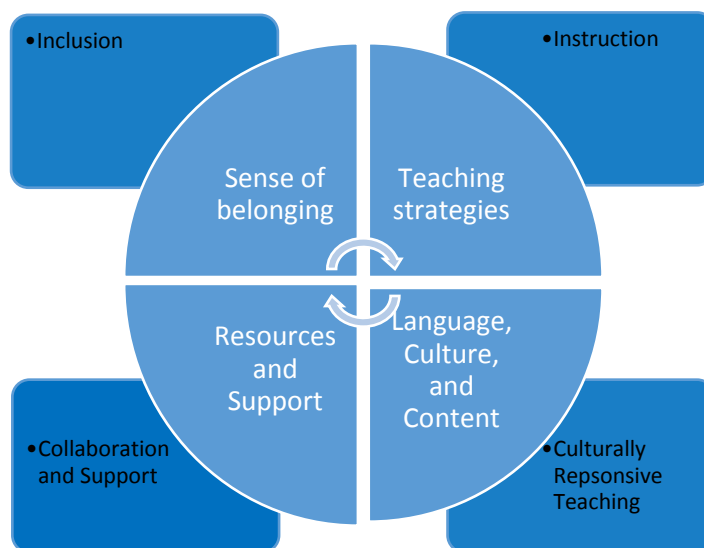
Figure 6. *Access to culturally responsive teaching for the inclusion of ELLs.*

Implications for School Districts

The study discovered that when teachers care about culturally responsive teaching, they will embrace practices that nurture inclusion, despite a non-supportive school environment. In order to serve students in increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse environments, school districts must be transformative and provide a culture, climate, and level of support that is inclusive of ELLs.

Districts must create professional learning opportunities to mentor the growth of not only teachers, but school leaders and support staff. Districts must encourage ongoing professional development that is focused on creating a sense of belonging for ELLs as well as parents. As understood from this study, student sense of belonging develops from a level of respect and connectedness that is found in the classrooom of culturally responsive teachers. School distrricts must support ELLs' learning and family needs academically, emotionally, and socially. These efforts must be consistent and cyclical.

Implications for Policy and Programming

Schools under the support of the district will need to create policies that view diversity as an asset. The literature indicates that backlash politics have been the root of backlash pedagogies (Gutierrez et al., 2002). These pedagogies have produced new forms of exclusion that threaten ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Current program models such as SEI do little to promote mastery of content in the mainstream classroom. Schools, working with district officials will need to resist political pressures to adopt programming that does little to increase language and content knowledge for learners. Schools must adopt a philosophy of inclusion that increases sociocultural learning. This philosophy must support teachers through professional development and students through academic (content) growth. Above all, teachers will need "bottomless support" and resources from school systems in order to help students reach academic success through inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Policies and programming must reflect an inclusive practice of equalizing educational opportunities in the mainstream classroom for ELLs.

Implications for Instructional Practice

The study uncovered that school districts must be willing to transform the current curriculum that addresses students' needs and create access to culturally responsive teaching. As previously stated, incorporating instruction and curriculum reflective of students' cultural background is a strategy of culturally responsive teaching that can lead to better student outcomes for ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Districts will need to invest support to transcend the content of texts and other instructional materials in order to provide representation for diverse groups. The study confirmed that many students have content knowledge in their native language but lack

the English skills to translate this knowledge into mastery. This lack of mastery often places students in lower-level classes with students who struggle with content.

Culturally responsive classrooms acknowledge the presence of diverse students and the need to find connections to content that expose student knowledge and understanding beyond language. The findings in this study suggest that teachers bring materials into the mainstream classroom that engage learners through culture. Teachers will need to be given support to shape curriculum and content that builds inclusion in the classroom. The goal is to prevent failure and increase overall academic success for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This study argues for a curriculum that advocates for culturally responsive materials in the classroom along with a high level of instructional support (i.e., ESL support staff, BAIs).

Districts will need to work with immigration groups to strategically link services geographically to student placement in schools. In the study, it was disclosed that many schools had large pockets of specific student cultures (i.e Nepal, Russian, Somalian) but support given lacked the cultural language and awareness to effectively support student learning. Districts working with local government, housing, and family placement services can work to streamline services to meet the needs of students in the ESL program. Classrooms will need to be provided with district support equipped with culturally diverse resources in order to foster inclusion in the classroom.

Implications for Teacher Preparation

In order for teachers to move toward a belief that effective inclusion can be achieved in the mainstream classroom, this study points to teacher training and teacher preparation to deepen teacher competency. Teachers who are tasked with educating ELLs

in the mainstream classroom often come into teaching with limited preservice training and professional development geared toward ELLs. Limited training and understanding of how to work with diverse cultures shapes teachers' attitudes and perceptions. This limited training creates negative perceptions toward addressing the instructional and academic needs of ELLs. Teachers who have minimal to no training in meeting the needs of diverse students are still faced with meeting state and district benchmarks of mastery. The responsibility to then meet the needs of ELLs from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds becomes an even greater challenge for teachers.

Teacher beliefs that they can educate ELLs must be reflected in their daily practice and instruction. This can be difficult when teachers have biases that hinder their understanding of cultural diversity. In the study, white fragility was addressed and how this influences teacher beliefs and perceptions in the classroom. Collins (1991) states that limited exposure can result in an inability to consider significance in the perspectives of people of color.

This study advocates for an increased emphasis on giving students access to culturally responsive teaching by consciously recognizing differences and building better instructional practices. This must be achieved through intense pre-service training at the college level. Most institutes do "assertions" that include a level of cultural training which may include stand-alone courses or courses with embedded practices. Many students have limited hours in this area prior to entering schools. Colleges must prepare pre-service teachers with training and professional development that is devoted to working with ELL students in urban school districts.

Teachers and pre-service teachers undergoing professional development geared toward ELL students can reshape perceptions and negative attitudes. Effective teaching of ELLs requires a mastery of content knowledge and pedagogical skills that embrace and welcome culture into the classroom. Teachers and pre-service teachers will need unwavering support, training, and modeling in order to provide effective instruction to ELLs to build inclusion in the classroom.

Lastly, teachers both in-service and pre-service must be willing to embrace culturally responsive teaching in order to transcend teacher perceptions and beliefs to create a learning space that is inclusive versus exclusive. As stated in our findings, the most important barrier to culturally responsive teaching is a lack of training. With training, pedagogical practices move to enhance learning through culture, content, and language.

Recommendations for Future Research

At the conclusion of this study, several areas for future research were identified that would contribute to the understanding of the impact of inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This study surveyed 125 teachers who currently provide instruction for ELLs at three schools with ESL programs. This survey was followed by semi-structured, face-to-face interviews of six teachers on their perceptions of inclusion and access to culturally responsive teaching. This research design used descriptive statistics to analyze and interpret findings from the survey and used the interviews for qualitative inquiry. While this approach allowed the researcher to look at teacher perceptions through multiple teacher perspectives, it prevented the researcher from gaining full saturation in both areas.

A recommendation for future research is to replicate the study using interviews only to solicit responses from multiple schools with ELL enrollment and ESL programs. In this study, more in-depth information on student inclusion was gained from the interviews. The survey helped to understand the general perceptions associated with inclusion, but the interviews provided a deeper understanding of these perceptions. Using an interview-only approach would allow the researcher to explore using more teacher voices and allow the study to reach full saturation.

In addition to defining this study using only one research method, it is recommended that the study be expanded to include teacher voices from all levels—elementary, middle, and high school. This study specifically looked at teacher perceptions on inclusion through the lens of secondary/high school teachers. However, literature explored in this study suggested that the gap between inclusion and instruction exists on all levels. If multiple voices were highlighted, it would allow the study to identify whether the concerns are across grade levels in the district.

Administrative support was a key factor identified as playing a significant role in teacher perceptions, negative or positive, on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Research in this area should explore the role of the administrator in the effective mainstreaming of ELLs in the classroom. Administrators are viewed as instructional leaders. This level of study would help to identify how key school-level stakeholders address inclusion in the mainstream classroom. An intensive study that examines the role they play in ELL instruction would be valuable to understanding the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

A final recommendation for future research is the implementation of more qualitative studies that examine ELL student perceptions and beliefs on their experience in the mainstream classroom. This study only focused on the teacher voice. The goal was to explore teacher perceptions, beliefs, and instructional practices. A greater understanding of inclusion can be found in the counternarratives of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The counternarratives provided by participants can serve as an opportunity to share personal stories, lived experiences, and perceptions on inclusion from the student point of view. This would offer a sense of understanding for practitioners as they seek to provide equity-based instruction for ELLs.

Concluding Thoughts

"I see you." Simple words that pack a greater meaning. Imagine if every student who sat in a classroom had a sense of belonging, an assurance that "I see you." The aim of this study was to give voice to teachers who struggle to find a way to allow students to be seen, to be heard, to be understood. The findings work to direct school and district recommendations for professional development on the inclusion of ELLs, effective instructional practices for inclusion, and the implementation of culturally responsive teaching for culturally and linguistically diverse students. The results of this study show that academic success and cultural consciousness are developed simultaneously and shaped by teacher's beliefs and perceptions. This must be cultivated under a vision that ELLs can find success in the mainstream classroom. Teacher training and competency, professional development, and consistent support drive this success from both school leaders and district staff. In order for ELLs to find success in mainstream classrooms, teacher instructional practices must be transformative and involve students in developing

knowledge, skills, and language. The connection between language, content, and culture

is key in equalizing educational opportunities and advancement for ELLs in school.

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Appendix A: Survey (page 1)
(adapted from Reeves' 2002 survey on secondary teachers' attitudes
and perceptions of the inclusion of ESL students in mainstream classrooms)

ELLs Students in the Mainstream Classroom
A Survey of Teachers

Instrument will be presented in an electronic form using Survey Monkey

Section A
Please answer the following questions. Your answer will assist in the categorization of the responses.

Please indicate your gender.

- o   Male
- o   Female

Please indicate the number of years you have been teaching.

- o   1–5 years
- o   6–10 years
- o   11–15 years
- o   16–20 years
- o   21+ years

Please indicate your age.

- o   21–30
- o   31–40
- o   41–50
- o   51–60
- o   61+ years of age

Please indicate the highest level of education you have received.

- o   B.A.
- o   M.A.
- o   M.A. + (Rank one)
- o   Ed.D.
- o   Ph.D.

What core content area do you teach?

- o   English
- o   Math
- o   Science
- o   Social Studies
- o   Vocational
- o   Arts & Humanities
- o   Other

Please indicate your location site (school names will be used in initial survey but in reporting pseudonyms will be used)

- o   Location A
- o   Location B
- o   Location C

Please indicate your race/ethnicity.

- o African-American
- o Asian/Pacific Islander
- o American Indian/Alaska Native
- o Hispanic/Latino(a)
- o White
- o Other

Is English your native language?

- o Yes
- o No

Do you speak a second language?

- o Yes
- o No

Have you received any special training on teaching English Language Learners?

- o Yes
- o No

How many professional development hours have you devoted towards learning to teach English Language Learners?

- o Less than 1 hour
- o 1–5 hours
- o 6–10 hours
- o 11–15 hours
- o More than 15 hours

How many professional development hours have you devoted towards culturally responsive teaching?

- o Less than 1 hour
- o 1–5 hours
- o 6–10 hours
- o 11–15 hours
- o More than 15 hours

Do you currently instruct English Language Learners in your class? (if respondents select No, the survey will close)

- o Yes (PLEASE PROCEED TO THE REST OF THE SURVEY)
- o No (IF NO, THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.)

Appendix A: Survey (page 3)

Section B
Please read each statement and place a check in the box which best describes your opinion.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
1. The inclusion of ELL students in subject area classes creates a positive educational atmosphere.					
2. The inclusion of ELL students in subject area classes benefits all students.					
3. ELL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.					
4. ELL students should avoid using their native language while at school					
5. ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S schools.					
6. Subject area teachers do not have enough time to deal with the needs of ELL students.					
7. It is a good practice to simplify coursework for ELL students.					
8. It is a good practice to lessen the quantity of coursework for ELL students.					
9. It is a good practice to allow ELL students more time to complete coursework.					
10. Teachers should not give ELL students a failing grade I the students display effort.					
11. Teachers should not modify assignments for ELL students enrolled in subject area classes.					
12. The modifications of coursework for ELL students would be difficult to justify to other students.					
13. I have adequate training to work with ELL students.					
14. I am interested in receiving more training in working with ELL students.					
15. I would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my class.					
16. I would support legislation making English the official language of the U. S					

Section C
Which, if any, of the following are descriptive of your classes when ELL students are enrolled? Please indicate the extent to which each of the following apply in your classes.

	All the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never	No Opinion
CLASSROOM PRACTICES					
1. I allow ELL students more time to complete their coursework.					
2. I give ELL students less coursework than other students.					
3. I allow an ELL student to use her/his native language in my class.					
4. I provide materials for ELL students in their native language.					
5. Effort is more important to me than achievement when I grade ELL students.					
IMPACT OF INCLUSION					
6. The inclusion of ELL students in my classes increases my workload.					
7. ELL students require more of my time than other students require.					
8. The inclusion of ELL students in my class slows the progress of the entire class.					
TEACHER SUPPORT					
9. I receive adequate support from school administrators when ELL students are enrolled in my classes.					
10. I receive adequate support from the ESL staff when ELL students are enrolled in my classes.					
11. I conference with the ESL teacher.					

Section D (open-ended response questions)
1. Please list what you consider to be the greatest benefits of including ELL students in subject area classes.

2. Please list what you consider to be the greatest challenges of including ELL students in subject area classes.

3. Please write any additional comments you may have concerning the inclusion of ELL students in subject area classes.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

English Language Learner's Interview Guide for Core Content Teachers

1. What strategies do you use in class to support the learning of ELL students?

2. What resources do you use in class to support the learning of ELL students?

3. How often do you collaborate with ESL program teachers to support the learning of ELL students in your class? How do you implement the Program Service Plans (PSP's) to support the learning of ELL students in your class?

4. How do you communicate with families of ELL students to support learning in your class?

5. How do you use materials relative to student's culture/language in the development of lessons in your class?

6. How do you create a culturally responsive learning environment for ELL students in your class?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Tamela N. Compton
Tamela.Compton@jefferson.kyschools.us

OBJECTIVE
I am seeking the opportunity to diversify my background in Jefferson County Public Schools. I wish to expand my current knowledge of practices and policies while exposing myself to different leadership styles. This exposure to different curriculums and school settings can help me fulfill my long term goal of becoming a building leader as a Principal within the district.

EDUCATION

Ed.D, Educational Leadership, University of Louisville; Louisville, Kentucky
Level II Principal Program Completion, University of Louisville; Louisville, Kentucky
Rank I Leadership Foundations & Human Resource Education, University of Louisville; Louisville, Kentucky
Level I Principal Certification, Western Kentucky University; Bowling Green, Kentucky
M.A., Secondary School Counseling, University of Louisville; Louisville, Kentucky
B.A., Arts and Sciences, English concentration, University of Louisville; Louisville, Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant Principal, Central High School; Louisville, Kentucky

- Assistant Principal

Assistant Principal, Noe Middle School; Louisville, Kentucky

- 6th Grade Assistant Principal

Counselor in Education, Central High School; Louisville, Kentucky

- Counseled students with career, academic, and social expectations

- Helped with student retention, promotion, and graduation

Counselor in Education, Moore High School; Louisville, Kentucky

- Counseled students with career, academic, and social expectations

- Helped with student retention, promotion, and graduation

Teacher, Doss High School; Louisville, Kentucky

- Senior English and Senior Seminar, grade 12

Minority Teacher Recruitment Director, Jefferson County Public Schools; Louisville, Kentucky

- ➡ Oversaw operations of 24 High Schools and 16 Middle Schools with Future Educators Association chapters

Teacher, Moore High School; Louisville, Kentucky

- ➡ English, Art and Humanities, and Theatre, grade 9-12

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Management/Supervision

- ➡ Directed recruitment of 8th grade students
- ➡ Retention and Graduation of students
- ➡ Trained, supervised and evaluated clerical staff
- ➡ Successfully refined and implemented new projects
- ➡ Coordinator of school accountability and all state/national testing
- ➡ Curriculum coordinator chair
- ➡ English as a Second language intake and testing coordinator
- ➡ Lead on ECE child count and audits
- ➡ Coordinator of in-school athletic eligibility and clearinghouse compliance
- ➡ Staff training and professional development
- ➡ Kentucky School Counseling Association High School Vice President
- ➡ Jefferson County School Counseling Association Public Relations Chair
- ➡ Jefferson County School Counseling Association Steering Committee

Program Coordination

- ➡ Successfully established the Guidance Comprehensive Program for Moore Traditional School
- ➡ Wrote grants, secured funding and established a Performing Arts Program through a University of Louisville and JCPS partnership for Moore High School
- ➡ Reorganized Counseling Programs and increased the schools credit recovery for prospective graduating seniors
- ➡ Instrumental in the implementation of Trimester scheduling for Moore High School
- ➡ Instrumental in the implementation of high rigor courses and the A.P program for Moore High School

- Organized school wide testing and building plan for Moore High School
- Counseled students on defining career and work related goals and objectives
- Formulated, wrote, and implemented new student orientation manuals and workshops
- Developed career, academic, and social counseling programs
- Development of Extended School to help with the completion of diploma standards
- Supervision and School safety
- Served as member of school SBDM and Curriculum committee
- Coordinate school partnerships and academic agreements with major colleges and universities

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Louisville Chestnut Street YMCA Black Achievers Program, Education Cluster Leader
- LaNita Neal Rockettes, Dance oordinator
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Member
- KYACAC (Kentucky Association of College Admissions Counseling), moderator and presenter
- KSCA (Kentucky School Counselors Association), member, moderator, and presenter
- JCSCA (Jefferson County School Counselors Association), member
- CCIE (College Counseling Information Exchange), member
- GLASBE (Greater Louisville Alliance for Black School Educators), member
- Jefferson County Administrators Association, member