HAYES, MAYRA I., Ed.D. Teacher Support for Language Development and Content Mastery in English Learning Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). (2019) Directed by Dr. Carl Lashley. 181 pp.

English Learners (ELs) as a whole are a diverse group culturally, linguistically, and academically. The EL group contains a subgroup of students who are either immigrants or refugees and whose formal schooling has been interrupted, causing them to begin in U.S. schools with many academic challenges. Due to war, trauma, cultural beliefs, and residing in refugee camps, students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) often encounter significant gaps in their formal education, ranging from two to 10 years, depending on their age (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno, 2011; Hos, 2016).

This qualitative study focused on the education of SIFE ELs based on three elements: program models, instructional practices, and strategies to promote social and emotional well-being. The data collection for this research study focused on interviews with educators, classroom observations, and student artifacts. Two EL teachers assigned to teach the middle and high school SIFE students, a principal, and a Curriculum Facilitator participated in this study. Findings revealed that teachers set high expectations for students and provided students with academic supports, strategies, and scaffolds. School administration expects that all teachers and staff make close connections to all the students and families, and the school administrator works with a local university to provide mental health services for students and families. Obstacles include time constraints mandated from the Office of Civil Rights that stipulate students are able to attend for one year, and the lack of specific professional development to target SIFE EL

needs. Based on the findings, suggestions are given to support SIFE EL teachers and students.

TEACHER SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND CONTENT

MASTERY IN ENGLISH LEARNING STUDENTS WITH

INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION (SIFE)

by

Mayra I. Hayes

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
2019

Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

I stand on mighty shoulders and I am grateful to all my mentors, teachers, and advocates who believed in this little girl from El Salvador.

For my husband, thank you for your encouragement and love.
For my children Brian, Will, Sissy, and Cinnamon, we did it!

This dissertation, written by Mayra I. Hayes, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

_____

_____

_____
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I stand on the mighty shoulders of Caryl-Sue Silkie, Dana Weiss, Kay Mealing, Susan Hennessey, Lionel Hush, and William Clyde. You met me when I was 18 years old and took me into your hearts and homes. You helped me navigate life and you were there to pick up the pieces when I could not. Along the way, you helped celebrate my accomplishments and awards. You are the reasons I have succeeded. You were the family that I did not have, and I am forever indebted to you. Mr. Hush and Mama Mealing, I know you are looking down and smiling.

My journey began in 2004 when I met Dr. Lashley and he asked me when I was going to enroll in the doctoral program. I would see him from time to time and he would smile and say he was still waiting for me to enroll. Dr. Lashley planted the seed and my husband pushed and encouraged me to enroll. Thank you, Dr. Lashley, for seeing something in me that I could not see in myself. Thank you for your guidance, encouragement, and believing in me. Dr. Jane, thank you for your guidance and mentorship. Your amazing spirit has guided me through this journey and I am forever grateful. Dr. Peck, thank you for your support and insight. All three of you have taught me to believe in myself because you saw something in me and I am thankful our paths have crossed.

Thank you to:

- Michael, Brian, Will, Sissy, and Cinnamon, I was able to accomplish my dream because of your love, push, and commitment. Your unconditional love

never faltered and your help with household chores, laundry, and hugs encouraged me to keep climbing. I love all of you. We did it!

- Suzanne, Robert, Annie, and Grace, this journey could not have been possible without your help, support, and love. Thank you for taking care of the kids when I had class, for stepping in when I was delayed, and your unconditional love.

- Dottie, you are the most amazing person I have ever met. Thank you for loving and encouraging me.

- To my sweet Alicia, thank you. I appreciate the help you provided reading my chapters and giving me feedback. You had your own work and you always made time for me. Thank you for your kindness and blessings.

- Dr. Zwadyk, I admire your leadership, kindness, and selflessness. Thank you for listening to me when I was at the brink of despair and thank you for your prayers.

- To the most amazing educators Riley, Will, Annie, and Sissy (pseudonyms). Your dedication and love for your craft is inspiring and admirable. Thank you for sharing your stories and allowing me to spend time in your classrooms. You believe in your students and give them hope daily and I am so inspired by your work.

- Beth, Soledad, Dana, Ms. Nie, Kelly, and Candice, you delivered cupcakes, attended birthday lunches, made dinners, cut and styled my hair, and took care

of my family when I could not be there. I am so honored to call all of you my friends.

- My work family, Jackie, Beth, Yvonne, Yule, Belen, Doreen, Soledad, H'Lidi, Alicia, AG, Randall, and Bob, you gave me support, encouragement, and you were my cheerleaders. Thank you for the snacks and coffee to get me through evening classes and Saturdays. You are the most amazing team!

- Richard Allen, you are amazing. Thank you for your help.

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

Luke 12:48

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> When working with students who are learning English as a second language, we often focus our attention on the external features of the language such as pronunciation, fluency, and grammar while overlooking the role of language as a cognitive tool used in complex thought processes. The use of language as a cognitive tool allows us to move beyond our immediate perceptual experience to engage in abstract thinking and novel problem solving. We use verbal thought to direct our attention, set goals, determine strategies, explore multiple meanings, make references, and draw conclusions. (Bylund, 2011, p. 6)

English Learners (ELs) as a whole are a diverse group culturally, linguistically, and academically. The EL group contains a subgroup of students who are either immigrants or refugees and whose formal schooling has been interrupted, causing them to begin in US schools with many academic challenges. Due to war, trauma, cultural beliefs, and residing in refugee camps, Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) often encounter significant gaps in their formal education, ranging from two to ten years, depending on their age (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Gahungu et al., 2011; Hos, 2016). The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction defines SIFE ELs as students with an educational gap of two or more years. SIFE students have deficiencies with basic academic skills, and many are unable to read or write in their native language. These academic gaps cause many challenges, in part because the educator is required to teach the academic standards that are on grade-level, even though the students may not be ready academically to learn them. As DeCapua and Marshall (2015) explain,

They are highly motivated and want to participate in their communities in the United States but not necessarily to attend school. It is imperative to find ways to reach this particularly vulnerable population and give these students the impetus and tools to remain in school. (p. 357)

As educators, we should be most concerned with this group because time is a factor. Many SIFE ELs are older; therefore, their window to graduate with a high school diploma within the four-year requirement is very limited. Refugee and immigrant families are leaving their home countries due to persecution, political turmoil, or war. Gahungu et al. (2011) explain, "These students come traumatized by war and violence, may lack literacy in their first or second language, and have limited knowledge and understanding of how school works" (p. 3). Due to extenuating circumstances, SIFE ELs do not have transcripts; therefore, they are not given credit for any courses they have previously taken in their home countries. Students are required to meet graduation requirements and must take the mandated courses to graduate from high school. Students are allowed to attend school until they are 21; however, students 18 or older will have difficulties meeting the four-year graduation requirements and for many students this can be disheartening. It is imperative to be aware of the courses they need and to know their academic gaps in order to provide necessary instructional supports.

This qualitative study focused on the education of SIFE ELs based on three elements: program models, instructional practices, and strategies to promote social and emotional well-being. The data collection for this research study highlighted interviews with educators, classroom observations, and student artifacts. All names herein are pseudonyms. Goode's Field Newcomers School hosts the majority of new arrivals to

Colbert County. SIFE ELs are placed in classes to address their academic gaps and language instruction. I conducted observations during the designated SIFE EL instructional class time and focused on the teacher's differentiation of instruction, content and language learning, and social and affective environment.

Background Context

In this section, the acronyms that are associated with the English as a Second Language program and students are explained. An overview is provided on social and academic development and strategies and differentiation. Social language takes up to five years to develop, and once acquired, communication is executed with ease. Academic language takes up to nine years to acquire; however, academic vocabulary is a moving target and we are constantly acquiring new words and concepts. ELs learn best when teachers integrate strategies into lessons and differentiate instruction based on data to target student needs. This study focused on Students with Interrupted Formal Education English Learners (SIFE ELs). ESL and English Language Program (ELP) can be used interchangeably to describe a language program for students who do not speak English at all age levels. The federal government mandates language programs for all school levels. State Departments of Public Instruction enforce mandates and programs for each state and hold districts accountable for English language programs. Each district creates programs within the framework and regulations established by the state.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction uses the following acronyms to describe second language learners:

- English Learners (ELs)

- English Language Learner (ELL)

- English Language Proficient (ELP)

- Limited English Proficient (LEP)

- Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)

- Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)

- Monitored Former Limited English Proficient Students (MFLEPS)

- Long-Term English Language Learners (LTELL)

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

These acronyms describe the learner and have been developed through time and are acceptable usages to describe ELs. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has moved to using English Learners to describe a student in the English Learner Program. The acronyms above are widely used and have been developed over the years for identification and funding purposes.

The SIFE and SLIFE acronyms specifically describe students with gaps, limited, or no formal education. MFLEPs are students who have recently exited the ESL program, but by law, the ESL teacher must monitor these students for four years. LTELLs are students who were identified as ELLs in elementary school and are still in the program after ten years of being identified. ELs learn language through two lenses: social and academic.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are the social component of the language. BICS takes up to 5 years to develop; students use BICS to conduct a basic

conversation (Bylund, 2011). Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is used in academic settings, and it takes up to nine years to acquire (Bylund, 2011).

In this study, ELs was used to describe English Language Learners and SIFE was used when describing students with gaps or no formal education. ESL was used when discussing the program provided by the school district.

Second Language Acquisition

Language theory is the foundation and process of acquiring a language. The theories focus on how practice and feedback affect language growth and the importance of having a solid foundation of the first language in order to transfer the foundational skills to the second language. Language acquisition is a process that takes many years to acquire and refine; therefore, being aware of the language process is critical for educators.

Second Language Acquisition is the process of learning a second language. Within this framework, there is a belief that the language the student knows will continue to develop and skills will naturally transfer to the second language. Language acquisition is based on three theories:

- skill based theories on second language acquisition,
- connectionism, and
- social cultural theory (Krashen, 1989).

Skill based theory is founded on the notion that practice of language will result in language acquisition. A language learner will use the skills learned naturally after mastery. Connectionism is receiving a positive or negative response and making

connections to an experience; it is practicing a skill until it is perfected. Social cultural

theory is based on the knowledge that the student knows and does not know and the

supports that are put in place to bridge the gap. The social piece of learning revolves

around the interactive tasks to which students are exposed and the interaction the student

has with peers. This theory is based on academic supports and scaffolding to support

academic learning. As the student grows, the supports are removed or replaced with more

appropriate supports.

Stages of Language Acquisition

Language acquisition varies from student to student, and it greatly depends on the

foundation they have in their first language. According to Haynes (2007),

> There are five different stages in the second language acquisition process:
> 1. Preproduction
> 2. Early Production
> 3. Speech Emergence
> 4. Intermediate Fluency
> 5. Advanced Fluency (pp. 29–35)

During the first stage of language acquisition, most new ELs will go through a

"silent period," which is a time during which they choose not to speak. This timeframe

may last from one day to a year. There are many factors that impact their reluctance to

speak, including being unsure of their pronunciation of words, feeling unsafe and/or

unaccepted in their environment, and perceiving a lack of emotional and academic

support. According to Haynes (2005), the silent period "occurs before ELLs are ready to

produce oral language and is generally referred to as the pre-production stage of language

learning. ELLs should not be forced to speak before they are ready, and we don't want to

embarrass students by putting them on the spot" (Haynes, 2005, para. 1). The remaining stages are developed in tandem once the basic skills are acquired. Students move through the stages at their own pace, and some may move through the stages faster than others.

The goal for an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher is to identify strategies to build academic language and accelerate language acquisition in a classroom setting where students may speak multiple different languages. For example, in Colbert County, North Carolina, where this study takes place, ELs speak over 110 different languages and dialects; therefore, it is common to have students who represent different countries and cultures in a classroom. To add complexity to the classroom setting, there are up to 15 different languages and dialects spoken in the same classroom. This language diversity is widespread throughout the district; however, there are certain areas that have dominant languages spoken at each site. This becomes a challenge for the educators in this setting because they have to differentiate instruction for all academic levels and accommodate for all of the spoken languages. SIFE ELs are learning their second language, facing academic challenges, and emotionally know that they are behind; many SIFE ELs struggle with emotional health due to these circumstances (Adams & Richie, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010, 2015; Echevarría, Frey, & Fisher, 2015).

The majority of SIFEs in Colbert County Schools attend the Goode's Field Elementary School. This school is a choice school for new arrivals in grades 3-12 and the mode of instruction is Content-Based ESL. ESL teachers teach the language of reading, math, science and social studies and embed social language in each academic lesson. The

structure exposes students to both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The main problem is that BICS

takes up to five years to develop, and CALP takes up to 10 years. To complicate matters,

the federal mandates require that ELs participate in all state mandated testing upon

arrival; therefore, there is urgency in school districts for students to acquire English

(BICS & CALP, 2014). Some SIFE ELs are illiterate in their first language and are

unable to do basic mathematical problems. SIFE ELs are learning the language, must

meet Federal mandates, and with prior gaps in their formal education, they are learning

basic academic skills. With all of the research surrounding ELs, we still do not know how

to best serve SIFE ELs.

Language acquisition is a process that takes time to develop; however, with SIFE

ELs, the process is cumbersome and difficult due to the student's significant gaps in

education. Students in a typical English language program are taught English and their

academic background in their first language will transfer to their second language,

allowing them to make connections. Although SIFE ELs arrive with a wealth of life

knowledge, they have academic gaps. The goal of this research is to analyze the

instructional programs and strategies intended to teach language development and content

mastery to SIFE ELs. This research will also focus on the instructional supports teachers

and administrators use to promote and enhance academic success and well-being of SIFE

ELs. The instructional strategies and differentiation described above are included in the

conceptual framework of this study.

Research Strategies and Differentiation

SIFE ELs are a most vulnerable group due to their gaps in formal education. The lack of academic language and prior knowledge present a temporary barrier for SIFE ELs. When educators are aware of the language process and strategies that can assist to bridge the gap, SIFE ELs can succeed and acquire the necessary skills to excel academically.

By law, ELs are required to have access to the curriculum, and educators are tasked with making learning comprehensible and building the students' background knowledge. For example, mainstream teachers who work with ELs may use visuals, pictures, videos, and anchor charts to make connections, but unfortunately, in many instances, strategies are not used consistently, high expectations are not set for individual students, and language instruction is not embedded in the lessons. According to Echevarría et al. (2015), "The four areas of focus—access, climate, expectations, and language—are equally important and interdependent" (p. 26).

SIFE ELs need access to the curriculum, and providing accommodations is not enough. Teachers must infuse strategies, differentiate for all students, and teach academic language. A positive classroom climate is imperative for learning a second language. Teachers must believe that students can succeed and set high expectations for them. Language acquisition is a process that takes time; however, with a combination of differentiation, respect, and understanding of students' backgrounds and cultures, SIFEs, who are the most vulnerable of the EL subgroups, can succeed and achieve academically (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007).

Research studies (Aclan & Noor, 2015; August & Shanahan, 2006; Bialystok, 2006; Ng & Wigglesworth, 2007; Genesee, 1999; Goldenberg, 1991; Kovacs & Mehler, 2009; Riches, Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006) show that when ELs are proficient in their first language, they are able to transfer these skills into their second language. The problem SIFEs encounter is that they have limited educational exposure and are often unable to make connections to the concepts being taught. Educators are tasked with exposing the learners to a variety of non-academic activities such as field trips, group work, and hands-on activities that build the student's background knowledge and vocabulary. Students are then able to draw from their experiences to make connections.

Vygotsky (1934/1986) developed the theory of thought and language in his Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This theory is based on students' working collaboratively on culturally relevant curriculum that is challenging. Vygotsky argued that students working collaboratively with supports from peers or teachers would be able to develop their skills to complete tasks and then be able to complete the assignment on their own. As Vygotsky notes,

> Success in learning a foreign language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the native language. The child can transfer to the new language the system of meanings he already possesses in his own. The reverse is also true—a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language. The child learns to see his language as one particular system among many, to view its phenomena under more general categories, and this leads to awareness of his linguistic operations. (pp. 195–196)

SIFE ELs lack language maturity, and difficulties arise when transferring content from their first language to the second. SIFE ELs have limited academic language banks from which to draw; however, for what they lack academically, they make up with life experiences. As educators we must celebrate what they can contribute socially and create supports to develop their linguistic skills.

Language Assessments

In North Carolina, all ELs, which includes SIFE ELs, are tested yearly to gauge academic language growth and must meet state growth standards. Regardless of their academic language gaps, the expectation is that EL teachers grow their students.

ELs are assessed from year to year to monitor academic language growth. World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), the company that creates the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) tests, provides districts with proficiency levels and the ranges of each level vary. WIDA growth varies between grades and proficiency levels; therefore, the ACCESS scores have been standardized. There are seven proficiency levels, but North Carolina recognizes five proficiency levels. The definitions of the seven WIDA recognized Limited-English language proficiency levels are:

Level 1—Beginning/Preproduction [WIDA level = Entering]:

A pupil shall be classified level 1 if the pupil does not understand or speak English with the exception of a few isolated words or expressions.

Level 2—Beginning/Production [WIDA level = Beginning]:

A pupil shall be classified level 2 if all of the following criteria are met:

a) The pupil understands and speaks conversational and academic English with hesitancy and difficulty.

b) The pupil understands parts of lessons and simple directions.

c) The pupil is at a pre-emergent or emergent level of reading and writing in English, significantly below grade level.

Level 3—Intermediate [WIDA level = Developing]:

A pupil shall be classified level 3 if all of the following criteria are met:

a) The pupil understands and speaks conversational and academic English with decreasing hesitancy and difficulty.

b) The pupil is post-emergent, developing reading comprehension and writing skills in English.

c) The pupil's English literacy skills allow the student to demonstrate academic knowledge in content areas with assistance.

Level 4—Advanced Intermediate [WIDA level = Expanding]:

A pupil shall be classified level 4 if all of the following criteria are met:

a) The pupil understands and speaks conversational English without apparent difficulty, but understands and speaks academic English with some hesitancy.

b) The pupil continues to acquire reading and writing skills in content areas needed to achieve grade level expectations with assistance.

Level 5—Advanced [WIDA level = Bridging]:

A pupil shall be classified level 5 if all of the following criteria are met:

a) The pupil understands and speaks conversational and academic English well.

b) The pupil is near proficient in reading, writing, and content area skills needed to meet grade level expectations.

(c) The pupil requires occasional support.

Level 6—Formerly Limited-English Proficient/Now Fully-English Proficient:

A pupil shall be classified level 6 if all of the following criteria are met:

a) The pupil was formerly Limited-English proficient and is now fully English proficient.

b) The pupil reads, writes, speaks and comprehends English within academic classroom settings.

Level 7—Fully-English Proficient/Never Limited-English Proficient:

The student was never classified as Limited-English proficient and does not fit the definition of a Limited-English proficient student outlined in either state of federal law (WIDA Proficiency Standards).

In order to analyze the distribution of growth by End of Grade (EOG) exams and to rank schools, the NCDPI created categorical values. A negative growth score constitutes a decrease in language development. The yearly ACCESS test gauges student language growth from year to year. All districts want to see positive growth because negative growth illustrates that ELs are not making language gains. A nominal scale is used to analyze the data and every growth score is assigned the following categorical labels:

- 1.55 to 2.8 = Strong Growth
- .5 to 1.5 = Moderate Growth
- -.5 to +.5 = Average Growth
- -.5 to -1.5 = Slow growth
- -1.55 to -2.43 = Very Slow Growth

The data below depicts an analysis of growth over two years in the Overall Composite Score of the WIDA ACCESS English Proficiency test, 2014 to 2016 for students in Colbert County, where this study takes place. Data reflect that the students at the Goode's Field Newcomers School exceed the expected language growth. When ACCESS data is separated by grade level, students at the Goode's Field Newcomers School exceed the other students by at least five points.

A *Growth Index* is calculated for each student, making a statistical comparison to other similar students based on: Grade in 2014 and 2014 Overall Composite Score (baseline).

A Growth Index Guide:

- Near zero indicates a student's growth was close to average for similar students.

- A Growth Index of 0.5 or higher (positively or negatively) shows growth that has statistical significance.

- Only schools with at least 25 data points (students with scores in 2014 and 2016) were included in the ranking.

- The Index is based on grade, so the average for a grade level will be close to zero, but by separating out the 2014 Goode's Elementary Newcomer students, we see that their contribution was above average at every grade level.

- The 11 schools selected in Colbert County had similar language groups and student demographics.

Tables 1 and 2 show the average Growth Index by schools and by grade. The tables reflect that student language growth at Goode's Field Newcomers is significantly higher than those with similar demographics.

Table 1

Average Two-Year Growth Index 2014–2016

2014 Grade	2014 Goode's Field Newcomers Cohort Average Growth Index	2014 All Other LEP Average Growth Index
3	0.7919	(0.0633)
4	0.3629	(0.0275)
5	0.9695	(0.0833)
6	0.9016	(0.0607)
7	0.2831	(0.0408)
8	0.3555	(0.0444)
9	0.3134	(0.0891)
Grand Total	0.5201	(0.0590)

Table 2

Ranking of Schools of 25 or More Students with Data

2014 School	Average of Growth Index 2014 to 2016	Count of Students with Data
Goode's Field Newcomers	0.5201	105
Arron MS	0.4634	25
Ward Colbert MS	0.2582	33
Riddle ES	0.1001	26
Space City MS	0.0286	26
Zip City MS	0.0239	27
Eastbound MS	(0.0629)	33
Southbound MS	(0.0631)	38
Apple Orchard MS	(0.1616)	50
Olive MS	(0.1710)	39
Fern MS	(0.2311)	43
Walker ES	(0.2586)	31

State Accountability

North Carolina Depart of Instruction holds districts accountable for annual growth and academic achievement. Educators of SIFE ELs are not excluded from these standards and must meet the same accountability standards as their first language peers. It is imperative that educators are aware of the mandates and ensure that their SIFE ELs are demonstrating content mastery.

All ESL students must participate in all state testing upon arrival to North Carolina. During their first year in the United States, they must take the reading and math End-of-Grade (EOG) and in high school End-of-Course (EOC) for participation. Districts must meet the 95% participation target. Students are required to meet the same mandates

as their American counterparts. ESL students struggle with the state assessments due to the language gap. New federal mandates and guidelines will go in effect with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for the 2017-2018 school year. The directives in ESSA will change the approach on how districts serve EL students. ESSA guidelines mandate that North Carolina continue to require a minimum of 30 students for any provision under Title I, Part A of the ESSA. The state policy of ELL Progress, Proficiency, and Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives III (AMAO) is as follows.

Progress

With the changes made by ESSA, the NCDPI has now set progress standards, which expect EL students to exit earlier and at a faster pace than prior expectations. Using 2016–2017 as the baseline school year when 64.7% of ELs made progress on the ELP assessment, the state has set a 10-year goal that requires 50.0% of English learners to make progress toward or exit EL status. This requires the state to improve by 3.21 percentage points per year.

Proficiency

All students identified as LEP in North Carolina participate in the annual English language proficiency assessment in order to determine the annual increase of student English language proficiency attainment. ESSA mandates that students "Exit" the ESL program within five years of being identified. The initial WIDA ACCESS score determines how many years the student has to be proficient in English. Table 3 reflects that students who score between 1.0-1.9 have 5 years to "Exit" the ESL program. Students whose score ranges between 2.0-2.9 students have 4 years to "Exit." Students

who score a 3.0-3.9 have 3 years to "Exit" the ESL program, and students scoring

between 4.0-4.9 have 2 years to "Exit." Students who score higher on the ACCESS have

less time to become proficient in English. If students do not "Exit" the program within

the designated time, students will be identified as "Long Term English Learners"

(LTELS) and schools will be out of compliance with the ESSA mandate. Schools will be

held accountable for language proficiency and progress. Students who "Exit" the program

will be included in the EL subgroup for 4 years.

ESSA places the responsibility on administrators, content, and EL teachers. The

responsibility to grow ELs rests on the shoulders of the school community. In previous

years, sanctions were placed on school districts; however, since ESSA's implementation,

sanctions will be placed at the school level.

Table 3

Number of Years Expected to Exit the Program

Initial Overall (Composite) Score on the *WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0* ™	Number of Years Expected to Exit
1-1.9	5
2.0-2.9	4
3.0-3.9	3
4.0-4.7	2

AMOs for the LEP Subgroup

Annual Measurable Objectives for the LEP subgroup for each subgrantee was

determined for Title III based upon the same decision rules used for AMOs at the LEA

level for Title I. "A Title III subgrantee's status on AMAO 3 is based on the performance

of the LEP subgroup on four sub-targets (two subject areas at two grade spans).

Performance on each sub-target is shown by functioning on two goals: Proficiency and

95% Participation" (NCDPI, 2014, p. 1).

SIFE ELs must meet all AMO standards and language progress and proficiency

standards. Assessments are state mandated and school districts are held accountable for

student performance. In general, SIFE ELs struggle academically and become

disillusioned with school. This is the main reason educators must provide a positive and

encouraging environment. SIFE ELs at Goode's Field Newcomers have an average 3-

year educational gap and are illiterate in their first language. SIFE ELs have many family

obligations and many work after school hours to supplement their family income.

Statement of the Problem

English as a Second Language (ESL) is not a new concept in public schools, but

the framework has changed over time. The need for daily social communication is

imperative; however, students are held accountable for their command of academic

language. Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, and Christian (2005) discuss the

importance of oral language development, "English oral language development can play

in the overall process of English language acquisition. With development and increased

proficiency in English, ELLs are better able to engage in more academic uses of

language" (p. 369). Educators are responsible for ensuring they are meeting the needs of

their students who are tested yearly to determine language growth. The federal

government has three mandates:

- English Learners (ELs) must "Exit" from the ESL program within five years;

- ELs must show yearly language growth in all four language domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing; and

- ELs must be proficient by scoring a minimum of level 3 on all End-of-Year exams (Department of Public Instruction, 2017).

ESSA mandates place the accountability back to the schools, and sanctions will be placed on schools that do not meet these criteria.

Due to the influx of SIFEs in U.S. public schools, educational leaders and educators have expressed concerns about their students' academic gaps and are seeking instructional strategies that will impact academic learning and success. The purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers utilize instructional strategies to support language development and academic mastery for SIFEs and how SIFE students perceive their educational journey. The environment is critical to language acquisition. SIFE ELs excel academically when they are taught in a developmental approach rather than a deficit manner (Hos, 2016; Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002). The greatest obstacles SIFE ELs face are their age, gaps in education, their own self-awareness academically, and their lack of technical skills to join the workforce. As we have seen above, there are many challenges SIFE ELs face and such a study could present strategies to assist educators working with SIFE ELs.

In their study focusing on SIFE academic challenges and programs that bridge academic gaps for these students, DeCapua and Marshall (2010) found, "These children, the majority of whom are English Language Learners (ELLs), face the dual challenge of

having to master English and learn grade-level content in a language other than their own" (pp. 159–160). In this qualitative study, I will examine the experiences and beliefs of EL teachers who work with SIFE ELs. Based on data collected from SIFE EL teachers, principal, and curriculum facilitator through interviews, observation of teacher, and student artifacts, this study will focus on strategies that EL teachers use to support instruction and negotiate challenges to address the needs of newly arrived SIFE ELs. The areas of focus of this research are to investigate what strategies teachers implement to promote social and emotional well-being for SIFE, program models that best support academic success, and the instructional practices infused into the lessons and student work to garner participation and language development of SIFE ELs.

Purpose of the Study

As we have seen above and will see further in Chapter II, there is abundant research on ESL strategies, theories, and best practices. There is existing research and policies on SIFE ELs, but in North Carolina the influx with this particular group is increasing. The purpose of my study was to research the instruction of SIFE ELs by gathering perceptions from administrators and teachers. Through my inquiry, I gathered instructional strategies that supported the language development and content mastery of SIFE ELs. I was interested in how differentiation of instruction, content and language learning, and social and affective environment improved instruction for SIFE ELs.

This study focused on how educators created an equitable and welcoming environment that supported SIFE ELs to learn and achieve academic excellence. Additionally, this study focused on the process teachers used to select strategies and

determine individual goals for SIFE ELs. Educators must be aware of why they selected

strategies and goals, how they differentiated instruction, how they selected academic

language, and how their classroom environment impacted SIFE ELs. Through

observation and interviews, the protocol and process for strategy implementation and

differentiation selection was apparent. The data from interviews, observations, and

review of student artifacts helped in assessing how environment impacts language

acquisition with this subgroup and the strategies and practices that work. Identifying the

steps that were implemented to build the structure of the classroom can contribute to

creating a positive learning environment that promotes academic success of SIFE ELs.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, instructional strategies, and

challenges educators encounter in working with SIFE ELs at one Newcomers school.

Three specific research questions guide the design of this study:

1. What are teachers' experiences and beliefs regarding working with SIFE

   ELs?

2. How do teachers use various teaching strategies to support SIFE ELs?

3. How do teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIFE ELs?

This qualitative study was conducted at the Goode's Field Newcomers School. This

school is the only stand-alone school of its kind in North Carolina. As stated by Lichtman

(2013), "A third type of case study you might select is one that is considered unusual,

unique, or special in some way" (p. 92). The participants of this study were SIFE teachers

and administrators. As part of this research, I interviewed teachers and administrators, conducted classroom observations, and analyzed student work.

Significance of the Study

Due to the continuous influx of SIFEs, we must continue to build academic fluency with students who have experienced interrupted education in their home countries due to such factors as war or financial instability. Upon arrival, SIFEs are learning the language and simultaneously learning basic reading and math skills. SIFEs tend to be older and quickly become disillusioned, creating a greater tendency to drop out of school.

Educating our youth is important, but giving the gift of language will allow them to reach their potential. When a child can speak and write, he or she is given the opportunity to maneuver the world in ways that may not be possible in his or her own country. In some cultures, it is not necessary to educate females or only the wealthy can afford higher education, but in the United States, we educate all students, and developing their educational framework through language development provides skills that can be use throughout their lifetime. This qualitative study focused on the perspectives of teachers and administrators to determine the instructional opportunities that engage SIFE ELs. The benefits for finding the instructional strategies that engage SIFE ELs will not only support their academic content mastery but it will also support their success in life overall.

Researcher Perspective

As a Director of ESL, my experiences have defined me, and my passion is helping ELs navigate the educational system and acquire their second language. I was brought to the United States when I was six years old from El Salvador and was given the gift of a second language by many educators. I stand on many mighty mentors' shoulders who believed in me and provided me with many educational opportunities. Mentors and educators instilled in me the belief that I could excel and speaking two languages was an asset, not a deficiency. I believe EL classes provide a safety net and give solace and comfort to children learning the language and culture. The ESL teacher is an advocate for his/her English Language Learners, and through ESL programs and classes, ELs are provided with the opportunity to speak and to learn academic and content language. This study identified instructional strategies that support SIFE ELs academically and linguistically.

Summary and Forecast

In this qualitative study, I interviewed teachers, a curriculum facilitator, and an administrator who work with SIFE ELs. The perspective of these groups is unique to this research. I analyzed student work and school documents in order to discuss the education of SIFE ELs. This research included classroom observations to survey teacher interactions, instructional strategies, climate and environment of the classrooms.

In this first chapter, I introduced my study and explained the motivation and purpose behind my study. This explanation includes why I focused on SIFE ELs and the importance of concentrating on this subgroup. In this chapter, I discussed the questions

that focus on this basic qualitative study. The questions centered on identifying the instructional opportunities, administrative support, and practices that promoted academic success of SIFE ELs. This chapter includes the background of my study, description of the methods I used, the theories on which my study is based, my role as the researcher, and an explanation of the significance of this study.

In Chapter II, I discuss the literature that informs and provides a foundation for this research. The overarching theme for this research was instructional strategies. There was a vast amount of research that focused on best practices and instructional strategies that impacted language acquisition. I divide my literature into three categories: Characteristics and Needs of SIFE ELs, Program Models and Instructional Practices for SIFE ELs, and Social and Emotional Well-being of SIFE ELs. Chapter II focuses on the impact and the importance of differentiated instruction in order for students to make connections and provide students with comprehensible input. SIFE ELs have academic and language gaps, and in Chapter II, I discuss the limitations as well as the strengths. The environment in which SIFE ELs learn is crucial to their language acquisition and social and emotional development, and in this chapter, I explain the importance at length. This chapter provided information on the unique characteristics and needs of SIFE ELs, program models, and developing the social emotional well-being of the SIFE student.

In Chapter III, I discuss how basic qualitative interview and observation study was the foundation of this research and how coding guided the decisions and the next steps of data collection. The researcher captured the process and findings of data collection through interviews, observations, and student work written and then identified

recurring patterns and themes. This chapter analyzes the role of the researcher in the district and the steps taken and acknowledged prior to data collection. The chapter analyzes the educator's perception, beliefs, instructional strategies, and challenges educators encounter in working with SIFE ELs at one Newcomers school.

I discuss the findings in Chapter IV. I delineate the themes that emerged during my study as well as the interviews, observations, and student artifacts. This chapter details the findings from the teacher and administrator perspective.

In Chapter V, the data themes are reviewed, the research questions are answered, implications and limitations of the study are analyzed, further research opportunities are discussed, and concludes with my final thoughts.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Every child deserves a champion—an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.   —Rita Pierson

The review of literature provides a focus on SIFE ELs and builds background knowledge on the theoretical framework that encompassed this study. The review explores the complex factors of educating SIFE ELs and the importance of providing social and emotional support. The first part of this review focuses on the characteristics and needs of SIFE ELs, and this chapter focuses on the unique characteristics and needs of SIFE ELs. The subsequent section concentrates on program models and instructional practices of SIFE Els which emphasize the challenges of working with this particular sub-group. The last section of the literature review focuses on SIFE ELs social and emotional well-being and strategies that promote their well-being. These sections are woven together and set the stage to explore teachers' experiences, beliefs, instructional strategies, and challenges faced while working with SIFE ELs.

This qualitative study focused on the characteristics and needs, program models, instructional practices. According to Spees, Potochnick, and Perreira (2016), "In an era of increased school accountability pressures, states must address the needs of a growing and increasingly dispersed child of immigrant population" (p. 22). Though research-based strategies and approaches have been identified, schools are struggling to meet the needs

of their SIFE ELs. Motamedi, Singh, and Thompson (2016) confirmed that "median time to reclassification varied by English proficiency at entry to Kindergarten, gender, and home language" (p. 5). When ELs are not reclassified within their target time they become long-term ELs and are tracked in an educational pathway that will limit their potential. Hos (2016) explains,

> Because of their backgrounds and current situations, adolescent refugee SIFE become victims of "hidden" stratification within the education system. They do not possess strong formal education, they are tracked in lower class tracks in schools, and their prior experiences do not count as valuable knowledge in U.S. schools. (p. 6)

Understanding and identifying the supports that impact the education of SIFE ELs is vital to their success and growth. SIFE ELs are faced with additional challenges and Hos (2016) explains, "Both the students and their parents are not equipped with the necessary social and cultural capital to navigate the educational system" (p. 7). SIFE ELs struggle to navigate their new educational system but emotional and social supports must be integrated into their daily experience to impact their learning. In addition, supports must be in place to help their families establish a life in their new world.

Characteristics and Needs of SIFE ELs

Unique Characteristics and Needs of SIFE ELs

SIFE ELs are students who have an educational gap of two years or greater. In order for them to succeed, they must have a good handle on academic English. According to Echevarría, Short, and Powers (2006), "Academic English includes semantic and syntactic knowledge, along with functional language use" (p. 199). ELs need to

understand textbook jargon, be able to write persuasively, argue their point of view, and take notes. These are higher order thinking skills, and ELs must be able to articulate their thought processes and understanding.

Typically, SIFE ELs have low or no literacy skills in their first language. They often struggle to articulate their thinking because in many cases they do not have many academic experiences from which to draw. Educational leaders must find ways to support and assist teachers of SIFEs. Teachers need resources and professional development to develop appropriate and meaningful lessons for their students. Due to war, political unrest, and family financial instability, many ELs come to the United States with limited or no formal education. ELs' numbers continue to grow, and SIFE ELs have emerged as a subgroup. As stated by Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri (2001), "In 1993 an estimated 20% of those identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) in high school and 12% of those in middle school has missed two or more years of schooling" (p. 203). According to DeCapua and Marshall (2010), "These children, the majority of whom are ELLs, face the dual challenge of having to master English and learn grade-level content in a language other than their own. A key factor that influences their academic success is their prior exposure to literacy and formal education" (pp. 159–160). Students who have a command of their first language, both social and academic, have an easier time transferring their skills from the first language to the second. Those with interrupted education struggle because they are simultaneously learning social language, academic language, and foundational academic skills. According to Curtin (2005),

> Researchers like Cummins (1996) and other second-language acquisition theorists demonstrate that academic competency in a second language requires longer than a three-year period. While many ESL students quickly acquire "Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills" (BICS) before entering the mainstream classroom, they still need continuous English language support in order to achieve the higher "Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency" (CALP) necessary to pass state standardized tests. (p. 22)

Students experience poverty in all aspects of their lives and need stability in at least one setting. According to Dearing et al. (2016), "Developmental risk within contexts of poverty is multipronged: At home, in the community, and at school, poverty affects not only the amount and quality of learning support a child receives, but also the likelihood of experiencing stress, chaos, and violence" (p. 883).

SIFE ELs enroll in schools and are placed in their respective grades according to their age. Though they are placed accordingly, they often lack basic skills and may not be able to write or may be illiterate in their native language. SIFE ELs will be expected to perform on grade level and meet all academic expectations as their peers. Placing students according to their age is an equitable practice; however, this practice is setting them up for failure and discouragement. According to DeCapua and Marshall (2011), "War, migration, lack of education facilities, cultural dictates, and economic circumstances can all interrupt a student's formal education" (p. 40). This is especially true at the high school level. According to Morse (2005),

> Newly arriving immigrant teenagers have a very limited time to learn English, study the required material for high stakes tests, and catch up to their native English-speaking peers before graduation. Consequently, dropout rates are significantly higher for immigrants and for LEP youth. (p. 1)

"One in five of our nation's Latinos between the ages of 16 and 24 who ever enrolled in a

U.S. school left school without either a high school diploma or an alternative certificate

such as a GED, and that Hispanics account for nearly 90% of all immigrant dropouts"

(Osterling, 2001, p. 60). To reinforce the above findings, Gahungu et al. (2011) state,

> While some of these groups come from places that have educational systems that
> are somewhat similar to the ones that refugees find in the U.S., a good number of
> them come from countries where education is an incomparably scarce
> commodity, and where refugees receive truncated, or no formal education. (p. 4)

To make the school system even more challenging in the U.S., as DeCapua and

Marshall (2011) explain, "their lives have been shaped by pragmatic learning, the wealth

of information SLIFE bring to the school setting is generally not the knowledge valued in

formal education" (p. 36). SIFEs especially need structure with the best educators who

know how to work with students who are behind academically. Teachers who have an

ESL, bilingual, or reading background will be able to provide students with the

foundational skills they so desperately need. Curtin (2005) cautions by stating, "There are

many other variables like age of arrival in the United States and standard of education

from the home country that can further impact the speed and success of second-language

acquisition for ESL students" (p. 22). SIFEs will struggle when acquiring language due to

their academic gaps and skills, but hope is critical in order to encourage progress.

Students must feel a sense of belonging and must connect to at least one adult or

person in their educational setting. Dearing et al. (2016) state,

> In the context of high-poverty, urban elementary schools, we find good evidence
> that connections to community and school-based supports that build on children's

developmental strengths and address barriers to learning can improve the achievement of first-generation immigrant children, particularly those who enter school not being fluent in English. (p. 894)

Educators must find unique and creative ways to meet the needs of their SIFE ELs. Gahungu et al. (2011) explain, "Those students who have documents providing completion of high school credits tend to be assigned to a grade level based on the evaluation of their transcripts" (p. 9). Students who arrive with transcripts generally do not have interrupted education and the transitional period is seamless. If students are high school age, they are typically placed in ninth grade. Gahungu et al. (2011) further enlighten this concept by saying,

> This practice is questionable on both an emotional and psychological level. While placing these adolescents in 9th grade might initially appear to be a dream come true, it could contribute to low self-esteem once the students realize they do not belong in 9th grade. (p. 9)

This practice takes an emotional toll on SIFE ELs because they are acutely aware of their educational gaps and at times are embarrassed. Educators may also experience anxiety on how to bridge the language and academic disparity; therefore, they must be provided with strategies and accommodations that would benefit their students. Gahungu et al. (2011) provide an excellent suggestion: "The authors . . . are advocating for an accelerated literacy program that is not only designed to provide remedial and academic preparation, but is also infused with an intensive vocational preparation program for these adolescents" (p. 9). This is a wonderful unique idea, and Noguera (2008) reinforces this train of thought by stating,

School professionals who succeed in elevating student achievement accept responsibility for student outcomes. They avoid attributing student performance to factors they cannot control and pointing their fingers at others. It is true that students whose basic psychological, physical, and emotional needs have not been addressed often experience greater difficulty in school. (pp. 161–162)

There are districts and schools that care and continue to meet the needs of SIFE ELs because school officials structure the environment in a manner in which all students excel. Fairness and justice are prevalent in settings that respect and honor each individual's culture and home. As educators, it is important to be open to new ideas and to explore possibilities because our students deserve a chance to dream and to explore their potential and the possibilities of what they can become. This basic qualitative study researched the education of SIFE ELs through three lenses: differentiation of instruction, content and language learning, and social and affective environment. In order to make content comprehensible differentiation of instruction is critical; therefore, teachers must analyze student data and integrate appropriate strategies in order for students to make connections and to drive instruction. The content and language learning lens will examine how differentiation impacts academic and social language. The importance of a positive classroom environment and the impact it has on language acquisition will be researched through the social and affective environment lens. The three-lenses combined will be viewed through three perspectives: administrator, teachers, and students. The three lenses consisting of program models and instructional practices for SIFE ELs, social and emotional well-being of SIFE ELs, and characteristics and needs of SIFE ELs are the central focuses of this basic qualitative study.

Conceptual Framework

The central focus of the qualitative study is SIFE ELs viewed through three lenses. The three lenses overlap creating a web of support for SIFE ELs (see Figure 1). A global approach is critical to teaching SIFE ELs because culturally academic instruction is holistic and thematic (Curtain, 2005). To understand the academic journey, SIFE ELs need to overcome educators must be aware of the characteristics that define them and their needs.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

As stated by Niehaus and Adelson (2014), "We know from prior research that meeting the needs of students also involves meeting the needs of their families and

building strong home-school connection" (p. 813). The social emotional component is critical to educating SIFE ELs. Traditionally, language programs focus on language acquisition and not the social and emotional learning (Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017). The three lenses intertwined create a safety net for SIFE ELs and their families. The conceptual framework depicts the wraparound support that SIFE ELs need in order be successful academically and socially.

Program Models and Instructional Practices for SIFE ELs

Challenges for Working with SIFE ELs

SIFE ELs face many academic challenges due to gaps in their education. There are many contributing factors such as political ramifications in their countries, persecution, and family trauma. Educational systems must find ways to educate SIFE ELs and provide them with educational stability. One of the major obstacles to teaching SIFE ELs is that educators "teach to the middle" (Haager & Klinger, 2005, p. 19). Due to state mandates regarding high-stake testing, educators have the tendency to teach to the students that will show the most growth. This typically means focusing on the students with the mid-growth on benchmarks and assessments. According to Tomlinson (2004),

> *Differentiated instruction* is the process of "ensuring that what a student learns, how he/she learns it, and how the student demonstrates what he/she has learned is a match for that student's readiness level, interests, and preferred mode of learning." (p. 188, as cited in Rock, Gregg, Ellis, & Gable, 2008, p. 32)

A number of researchers have researched differentiation. Dack and Tomlinson (2015) write that "differentiation robustly creates environments and processes that make room for students' varied approaches to learning including those shaped by culture" (p. 13). As

stated by Gregory and Burkman (2012), "Teachers have to apply effective and inclusive

instructional strategies that avoid equity gaps and take into account student diversity" (as

cited in Santisteban, 2014, pp. 35–36).

Instructional Models

School districts have flexibility in developing their program designs to meet the

needs of ELs. There are different models of ESL: Content-based ESL developed by

Krashen (1989), Cummins (2017), Baker (2008), and Waggoner and O'Malley (1985);

Sheltered Instruction developed by Echevarría et al. (2006); Dual Language Two-Way

Immersion Program developed by Cazabon, Nicoladis, and Lambert (1998), Thomas and

Collier (2002), and Lindholm-Leary (2001); Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol

(SIOP Model) by Short, Vogt, and Echevarría (2011); and ESL Co-Teaching by

Honigsfeld and Dove (2015-2016). These models provide educators a framework to teach

ELs academics and acquire the second language. These frameworks provide teachers

with best practices, strategies, and processes in acquiring a second language.

Content-based ESL. According to Stephen Krashen, researcher and founder of

language acquisition theory, a second language is acquired in the same vein as the first

and there is not a difference. Krashen (1989) explains, "Language is subconsciously

acquired—while you are acquiring, you don't know you are acquiring; your conscious

focus is on the message, not form" (p. 2). Content-based instruction is founded on what

Krashen coins as "conscious learning," which in essence means the student knows a

concept by rote memory, corrects the idea subconsciously, and has the opportunity to

apply and work with the concepts or ideas (Krashen, 1989). Content-based instruction

encompasses vocabulary, multiple activities for a concept being taught, lessons taught with "real life" examples, and the language taught is related to the subject the student is studying.

Sheltered Instruction. Sheltered Instruction is a mode of delivery that content or ESL teachers use when teaching a class of only ELs with similar language levels. According to Short (2013), Sheltered Instruction is "delivered by the specialists (e.g., ESL teachers), the main focus is language learning but it supports the vocabulary, background knowledge, and tasks needed to be successful in the content classes" (p. 119). The delivery includes multiple embedded activities, chunking of concepts, vocabulary is infused in the curriculum, and readings are selected based on students' reading levels. Curriculum is on grade-level and teachers move forward to new concepts when students demonstrate understanding and mastery of concepts being taught.

Two-way Immersion Program. Two-Way Immersion is a dual language concept in which 50% of the students speak English and the other 50% speak another language. This concept requires that both languages be integrated into instruction, thus providing both groups the opportunity to learn and participate in both languages. The theory behind this approach is that students are able to develop their linguistic skills in both languages. According to Christian, Howard, and Loeb (2000), "When instruction through the first language is provided to language minority students along with balanced second language support, these students attain higher levels of academic achievement than if they had been taught in the second language only" (p. 258). The goal is to teach students academic

language, oral language, and literacy, which are embedded in content and not taught in isolation.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The Sheltered Instruction Protocol (SIOP) Model is a framework that provides teachers with a checklist to follow while planning and during instruction delivery. The model has eight components and 30 features. This framework integrates best practices, and it was specifically developed for ELs. The SIOP Model is research based and widely used due to the impact on academic language for ELs and non-English learners. According to Short, Echevarría, and Richards-Tutor (2011), "The SIOP Model is a framework for teachers to present curricular content concepts to ELLs through strategies and techniques that make information comprehensible to the students" (p. 364). This model was adopted to provide instruction opportunities to ELs, but professional development is required prior to implementation. Co-planning is critical in this model because both teachers are able to incorporate their skills and strengths into each lesson. As stated by Mastropieri et al. (2005),

> By its very nature, teachers can share more equitably in instruction with a hands-on emphasis. In fact, our observations have suggested that in using a hands-on approach, teachers are more likely to share responsibilities and ensure all students understand and complete activities. (p. 263)

The SIOP Model provides teachers with a framework that drives instruction and provides structure to lessons. One unique component of this framework is the observation instrument that assesses the rigor of the lesson plan. According to Short, Echevarría, et al. (2011),

the model combines features recommended for high quality instruction for all students, such as cooperative learning and reading comprehension strategies (Genesee et al., 2006) with specific features for second language learners, such as language objectives, oral language practice, and academic vocabulary development. (p. 364)

The SIOP Model has eight components: lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment. Echevarría and a team of researchers developed the framework for teachers to use during the planning of the lesson and during instruction. This framework allows teachers to differentiate instruction in order to provide students multiple opportunities to demonstrate content mastery (Short, Echevarria, et al., 2011). SIOP requires extensive professional development with coaching. Short (2013) states, "In our SIOP studies, coaching has been an important factor. We researchers acted as coaches or we trained instructional coaches in the SIOP Model so they could work with the teachers" (p. 7).

There are many strategies that can be embedded in the lessons; however, the framework requires that each step of the lesson be developed and delivered with fidelity. The strategies used have been proven to develop vocabulary, make connections to prior knowledge, and make learning comprehensible for all students.

ESL Co-teaching. Co-teaching is one mode of instruction for teaching ELs. This strategy requires two educators to collaborate with teaching, assessing, and incorporating language to teach content. The co-teaching model was implemented to meet the needs of students with disabilities; however, the mode of instruction is beneficial to all students. According to Rice and Zigmond (2000), "Co-teaching is expected to allow general and

special educators to combine their expertise to meet the needs of all students. This model was adopted to provide instruction opportunities to ELs, but professional development is required prior to implementation" (p. 190). The critical component of co-teaching is co-planning. Co-planning allows both teachers to discuss and incorporate their skills and strengths into each lesson. As Honigsfeld and Dove (2015-2016) mention, "This model requires that both teachers teach and not push in and pull aside. There are co-teaching scenarios in schools that have teachers in multiple classrooms with varying grade-levels, and this method does not work" (p. 57). Honigsfeld and Dove (2015-2016) further explain, "When teachers put in place all four components of the collaborative instructional cycle—planning, teaching, assessment, and reflection—learning will flourish" (p. 57). Collaboration is the key, and teachers must be given the opportunity to create lesson plans and activities that will meet the educational needs of their ELs and in particular their SIFE ELs.

Instructional Practices

It is a daunting experience to have textbooks, literature, or novels that are impossible to understand or read. SIFE ELs need strategies in order to understand a concept. Educators are able to make lessons meaningful when students are able to engage with their peers, explore the area being taught, and explain their learning. According to Walqui (2006), "I maintain that it is possible for second language learners to develop deep disciplinary knowledge and engage in challenging academic activities if teachers know how to support them pedagogically to achieve their potential" (p. 159). Facella, Rampino, and Shea (2005) expand on the premise of supporting ELs by explaining, "One

way to support a child's emergent language is to choose a strategy that is developmentally appropriate for the child's language acquisition stage. It is necessary for teachers to have some knowledge as to how children typically acquire language" (p. 210).

Differentiation

According to Tieso (2003) and Tomlinson (1999), as cited in Rock et al. (2008), there are four practices that guide differentiation in the classrooms:

> (a) a focus on essential ideas and skills in each content area, (b) responsiveness to individual student differences, (c) integration of assessment and instruction, and (d) an ongoing adjustment of content, process, and products to meet individual students' levels of prior knowledge, critical thinking, and expression styles. (p. 33)

Teaching SIFE ELs requires that educators analyze student data to determine the strategies that will impact student learning and language acquisition. Differentiation is critical in order for SIFE ELs to make connections to content and build their academic vocabulary. SIFE ELs are able to acquire social language; however, academic language is complex and concepts build from grade to grade, making it difficult for students to understand content if they have academic gaps. Differentiation is research-based and is beneficial for all students. According to Oaksford and Jones (2001), "Three areas of the curriculum which can be differentiated are the content, process, and products. The content area can focus on overarching themes, goals, and objectives" (p. 1). The key to differentiation is to modify student work by providing students with strategies and opportunities for flexible grouping, and the main focus of differentiation is to meet the needs of all diverse learners in the classroom. "The intent of differentiating instruction is

to maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is and assisting in the learning process" (Oaksford & Jones, 2001, p. 1). The key is to transfer the responsibility of learning to the students by "giving them a few key concepts that will help students relate to, organize, and retain. The educator will continually assess the readiness, interests, and personal assessment of their learning" (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 14).

Differentiation requires a focus on key concepts and the strategies support students in applying higher order thinking to the activities and answers. Teaching curriculum is important; however, Tomlinson bases her beliefs on catering to the students' educational needs. The curriculum is important, but in order for students to learn, strategies must be infused into lessons and their social and emotional needs must be met prior to teaching standards. Subban (2006) writes that differentiation "allows the teacher to focus on the same key principles for all students, however the instructional process, the pace and rate toward understanding these concepts varies" (pp. 940–941). Tomlinson (1999) writes that "among important skills that students apply are using resources effectively, interpreting information from resources, blending data from several resources, and organizing effective paragraphs" (p. 15).

The numbers of students with limited or interrupted education are increasing; therefore, teachers must be aware of their educational gaps. Awareness can help teachers to scaffold curriculum, teach basic foundational skills, and embed academic language in order for the language learner to acquire English. According to DeCapua et al. (2007),

The annual growth rate of the LEP population in America has hovered at 10 percent over the past five years. To date, it is the fastest-growing student group in the country. About 52 percent of the children are born in the U.S., while the other 48 percent come to U.S. schools from other countries at different times and enter at different grade levels throughout the year. (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 20)

The English as a Second Language (ESL) population in Colbert County, North Carolina has grown from 525 English Learners in 2003 to 5674 ELs to date. ELs in this district represent a diverse population and speak about 110 different languages. In the EL group, there is a subgroup of students that have multiple years of educational gaps. DeCapua and Marshall (2010) explain that educators must be aware of who has educational gaps:

In efforts to distinguish these ELLs from other ELLs, various labels have been used, including "Students with Interrupted Formal Education" or SIFE (New York State Department of Education), students with "limited or little prior formal education" (e.g., Freeman & Freeman 2002; Walsh, 1999), "newcomers" (e.g., Constantin & Lavadenz, 1993; Short, 2002), or "unschooled migrant youth" (e.g., Morse, 1997). (p. 160)

It is important to differentiate between English Learners and SIFE students because they have different language needs. Educators must be aware that differentiation of curriculum is important because with SIFEs they will be teaching basic concepts and integrating the grade-level material. DeCapua and Marshall (2010) further explain the characteristics of SIFE ELs:

These diverse labels reflect efforts of educators and researchers to identify specific characteristics shared by these ELLs, regardless of ethnicity, country of origin, or native language. These characteristics are: a lack of English language proficiency; limited or no native language literacy; and limited or no formal education. (p. 160)

The lack of language literacy in the first language impacts how rapidly a second language is acquired. Teachers must infuse academic vocabulary in each activity to accelerate language acquisition.

Building Background Knowledge

SIFE ELs represent many different cultures and countries and have background knowledge of their country's history and systems; however, they have limited exposure to Western life and history. It is difficult for SIFE ELs to understand passages or texts when they do not have the schema from which to draw. It is imperative for teachers to build their students background knowledge prior to teaching a concept or material. According to Brown (2007),

> Textbooks, as the example shows, assume that all readers share similar cultural experiences and have the necessary background knowledge to comprehend the text. It is likely that most mainstream students grow up hearing or reading about cowboys and Indians, but the same expectation cannot be applied to all ELLs. (p. 34)

Therefore, it is critical for teachers to build the students' background knowledge by displaying realia, showing pictures, and discussing the concept prior to the lesson. This strategy of building background is imperative because ELs, and specifically SIFE ELs, who may not have what is needed from which to draw. They will have to attempt to learn from the literature which will pose difficulties. Zashchitina and Moysyak (2017) state,

> The use of background knowledge activation strategies in the second language teaching is widely supported. These strategies focus on building up and activating background knowledge; helping the learners to connect new information about the world with what they already know. (p. 269)

They further explain,

> Research studies stress the importance of pre-reading activities, such as discussion of a story, providing background information, explaining lexical items, etc., in order to help learners develop and activate background knowledge that is relevant to their reading materials. (p. 269)

Neuman, Kaefer, and Pinkham (2014) mention, "Background knowledge, in contrast, acts as a road map for students, allowing them to stay on target despite the interesting details" (p. 146). Barone and Barone (2012) explain, "Braunger and Lewis (2006) contend that background knowledge is a prerequisite for comprehension. If a student does not have a combination of sufficient literacy skill and world knowledge, he or she struggles in building comprehension" (p. 10). In order to build background knowledge teachers may have students participate in conversations and students could complete anticipation guides or KWL charts. Barone and Barone (2012) stress that "for many students in intermediate grades, background knowledge is the sticking point in their development of text understanding" (p. 10). Garza, Kennedy, and Arreguin-Anderson (2014) cited Brown (2007) by stating,

> There are several strategies that are useful for ELLs in their development of content area learning. For example, she discussed implementing the use of graphic organizers such as content maps that point out the location of the main idea and draw students' attention to it. Guiding questions were also a useful strategy for students in order to focus their attention on the most important points of the theme being studied. Teachers also required that students activate their prior knowledge in their first language in order to engage in comprehension of a text or concept. (p. 499)

Research of Susan, Neuman et al. (2014) stipulates that teachers need to teach words in categories, use contrast and comparisons, use analogies, encourage topic-focused wide reading, and embrace multi-media to building background knowledge (pp. 145–148). ELs benefit when educators use a variety of strategies to build background knowledge. Background knowledge builds vocabulary, introduces cultural events or language they may not know, and helps them make connections to the concept being taught. Background knowledge may be used to differentiate instruction but the degree that is needed may vary for SIFE ELs.

Vocabulary Instruction

Research shows that when working with ELs, content vocabulary is the key because it takes up to ten years to develop. SIFE ELs have academic language gaps in their native language; therefore, the language transfer to their second language is virtually impossible for them. As stated by Chen and Li (2010), "Vocabulary learning is vital within English learning because vocabulary comprises the basic building blocks of English sentences. Meaningful vocabulary learning occurs only when the learning process is integrated with social, cultural and life context" (p. 341). Vocabulary embedded in differentiated activities reinforces the meaning and students have a better understanding of the concept. Differentiated instruction encompasses the whole child and meeting their needs on their educational levels.

SIFE ELs in particular have academic vocabulary gaps in their first language; therefore, comprehension is very difficult. It is also important for teachers to teach vocabulary that is embedded in a text and not teach vocabulary in isolation. Nam (2010)

explains, "In the ESL context, vocabulary supports the four language skills, listening,

speaking, reading, and writing. If ESL teachers are attuned to effective strategies for

teaching vocabulary, they could facilitate students' proficiency in the four skills" (p.

127). In order to increase content vocabulary, students must be taught the targeted

vocabulary and infuse incidental vocabulary simultaneously. Nam further explains, "With

regard to vocabulary retention, Hulstijn (1992) demonstrated that target vocabulary items

were retained significantly longer when their meanings were correctly inferred than when

explained by their synonyms" (p. 128). Wong-Fillmore (2014) explains,

> The fact is that academic language can be learned only from texts in which it is
> used, and only by interacting with those texts in non-superficial ways: it calls for
> the reader to read not only for meaning and understanding, but also with attention
> to how things are said. (pp. 628–629)

Nam (2010) states,

> First, the use of visual representations such as pictures and drawings can promote
> vocabulary retention. Second, L1 translation equivalents, as in Figure 2, can
> promote L2 vocabulary-learning. Third, higher involvement in vocabulary
> production processing, for example, a composition task or retelling a text, can
> contribute to vocabulary retention. Finally, task-based vocabulary-learning
> through various activities can promote vocabulary learning. (p. 134)

In order to be able to read or write, students must be taught how to read complex and

compelling text. Text that is complex and above a student's reading ability with lots of

supports enhances his or her vocabulary. Research by Nassaji (2006) confirms, "The

present study supports the findings of previous research that L2 learners need good

vocabulary knowledge to be able to successfully derive word meanings from context" (p.

397). Vocabulary knowledge is critical for communicating, reading, and understanding.

Folse (2006) solidifies this point by stating, "Schmitt (2000) notes that L2 students need

approximately 2,000 words to maintain conversations, 3,000 word families to read

authentic texts, and as many as 10,000 words to comprehend challenging texts" (p. 273).

Folse (2006) further discusses,

> empirical studies (Paribakht & Wesche, 1999; Zimmerman, 1997) show that L2
> vocabulary retention is higher for students who complete written vocabulary
> activities after reading a task than for students who complete another reading
> assignment (with the same target vocabulary) after reading the task. (p. 275)

It is critical for teachers to select the vocabulary that students will need and determine the

appropriate scaffolds students need to make learning comprehensible. Gomez-Zwiep,

Staits, and Topps (2015) discuss graphic organizers as a best practice to help with

vocabulary by indicating, "We recommend that graphic organizers be used during the

explore and explain phases since children should have the opportunity to develop their

ideas about the concept before these ideas are organized" (p. 85). Dunston and Tyminski

(2013) reiterate the importance further by stating, "Graphic Organizers are particularly

beneficial to English Learners because they require students to think deeply, determine

relationships, and connect new concepts and words to what they already know" (p. 41).

According to Moen (2007), "I have developed a literacy-rich environment in my

classroom that nurtures vocabulary development through independent reading, teacher

read-alouds, and activities during which students work and play with words. With this

approach, young adolescents bring to life words that take root in their literacy lives" (p.

20). Thus, purposeful and targeted vocabulary instruction is critical when developing

language for ELs but specifically vital for SIFE ELs. Differentiating vocabulary may not

be needed to the same degree for all SIFE ELs, but various degrees of these strategies

may be given to SIFEs as a way to differentiate. It is important to differentiate the

process and the product.

Social and Emotional Well-being of SIFE ELs

Our perceptions become our reality, and we must be acutely aware of our non-

verbal communication. Students flourish in a classroom where mistakes are embraced

and encouraged. The climate of the school and classroom is critical to language

acquisition and students blossom in an environment where their cultures are embraced

and respected. Elias (2004) notes,

> The term social-emotional learning (SEL) was developed for use in research and
> practice in emotional intelligence as applied to the schools because it reflected a
> strong recognition of the role of both social and emotional factors in successful
> academic learning. (p. 54)

Immigrant children may experience other variables due to their language barriers,

documentation status, and how others perceive them. DeCapua et al. (2007) explain,

"War, migration, lack of education facilities, cultural dictates, and economic

circumstances can all interrupt a student's formal education" (p. 40). U.S. Department of

Education Newcomers Tool Kit Chapter IV explains,

> some newcomers may have trauma from fleeing war-torn countries or being
> separated from family members during the immigration process; they are dealing

with this trauma while simultaneously negotiating new roles and identities in an unfamiliar cultural context. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, p. 2)

Newcomers need emotional support in order to navigate their new educational system.

Perceptions and Attitudes of Educators

The steady increase in the EL student population means that mainstream teachers will encounter ESL students in their classrooms. It is important that mainstream teachers do not act on their perceptions or biases when interacting with their culturally diverse student population. Youngs and Youngs (2001) state, "Mainstream teachers' attitudes toward ESL students are likely to affect what ESL students learn" (p. 98). Teachers set the tone, culture, and climate of their classrooms. When the climate is tense and the affective filter is high, students will feel anxious, bored, and at times alienated. According to Youngs and Youngs (2001),

> Teachers' attitudes and expectations with regard to their students often lead to the expected behavior, even when teachers are unaware that they are communicating different expectations for different students. Thus, there is reason to be concerned that significant numbers of mainstream teachers may find it difficult to create a truly welcoming atmosphere for ESL students. (p. 98)

School administrators and teachers must be committed to know their students' background and academics as well as personal challenges. Ajayi's (2011) study on how teachers' own ethnicities and backgrounds impact their practice revealed "that teachers' ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation are a crucial component in determining their pedagogical practices" (p. 257). According to Ajayi (2011), "Teachers tend to

emphasize their personal interpretations of teaching events based on experiences that are

rooted in their beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, and assumptions" (p. 257).

Ajayi (2011) states, "Individuals have habits, dispositions, attitudes, and

behaviors that have been ingrained in their bodies and these embodied practices mediate

their thoughts and actions" (p. 271). Noguera (2008) also discussed that "In many

schools, differences in age and life experience make it difficult for students and teachers

to communicate and understand one another" (p. 107). SIFE ELs are not culturally

accustomed to communicating with their teachers. Philosophically, in their home

countries teachers are there to provide education and students are there to receive

instruction. According to Noguera (2008), "When such differences are compounded by

race and class differences, a huge gap can be created that can easily be filled by fear and

suspicion" (p. 107). Ajayi (2011) explains,

> Ellis (2004) and Duff and Uchida (1997) argue that ESL teachers' own
> experiences as learners, their perceptions of self-image, language biases, and
> understandings play a critical role in their teaching practices. Therefore,
> theorizing teachers' instructional practices need to reflect their personal histories
> based on experiential basis. (p. 271)

Supporting the study of Ajayi, George (2009) states, "Thompson (1998), Valenzuela

(1999), and Rolon-Dow (2005) argue that for teachers to care for their culturally and

linguistically diverse students, they cannot pretend to be color-blind" (p. 29). Only when

educators are able to cultivate an atmosphere where the school community genuinely

cares and knows their personal stories can they set a precedent for social justice.

Roessingh (2006) claims, "it is clear that the teacher is the intermediary and the key in building bonding and bridging levels of social capital -trust -with ESL students, which is then shared within the tight circle of the ESL student's family and the immigrant community" (p. 582). In other words, it is important for ESL teachers to build trust, bonding, and social capital, and it is necessary for ESL teachers to ensure that ELs benefit from the ESL program. The ESL teacher must have the academic knowledge, or discipline area expertise, the experience, the desire to develop a relationship of trust with the students, and the will to advocate for ESL learners outside the context of the ESL classroom.

SIFE ELs in general need access to curriculum and academic language; however, that is just one aspect that needs to be met. SIFE ELs' social and emotional needs must be met along with their academic needs. According to Theoharis and O'Toole (2011),

> Theoharis (2007), along with Frattura and Capper (2007), contend that social justice cannot be achieved for ELLs without creating inclusive services. Inclusive service delivery for English as a second language (ESL) involves valuing students learning English and positioning them and their families, languages, and cultures as central, integral aspects of the school community. (pp. 648–649)

Serving this delicate population means valuing their culture and families. Keo (2010) explains,

> Once trust and reciprocity are achieved, partners can begin to discuss matters of mutual relevance regarding the child, share information on cultural, family, and school expectations, and then present and address concerns once information has been disseminated back and forth. (p. 21)

One main objective for teachers is to listen to the families and make changes accordingly to positively impact student achievement. Schools cannot blame a student's home life for academic failure because schools have to find a way to meet the needs of each individual in our schools. Keo (2010) goes on to explain, "A preponderance of data has suggested that academic performance is linked inextricably to family income, and that the stresses and complexities of one's home and community environment need to be factored into the debate" (p. 21). Students have to find solace either at home or school. Due to some home dynamics, many SIFE ELs only experience positive interactions with adults at school. Some students defy the odds and in spite of their contentious environment they succeed; however, feeling valued, cared for, and being part of a trusting environment cultivates a positive learning atmosphere for children of color. Our students' success rests on our shoulders. Educators must be able to leave their perceptions, implicit and explicit biases and attitudes far away from the school building. Students know when they are genuinely liked and supported. It is up to us to inspire, encourage, and push every student in our schools to reach his or her potential. It is the belief that administrators must find opportunities to meet their families in the communities and not in the confines of the school building. Auerbach (2007) states, "Parents-especially, low-income and minority parents-are more likely to be involved in education when schools invite their participation, provide multiple entry points for involvement, value their perspectives, and reach out in culturally appropriate ways" (p. 700).

Strategies to Promote Social and Emotional Well-being of SIFE ELs

Typically, families provide the social and emotional foundation for their children. The social emotional piece will vary from culture to culture, but it is the building block for human growth. Students benefit from being taught social emotional skills; as described by Adams and Richie (2017),

> Social emotional learning is a process of obtaining and effectually applying 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 in life for both children and adults. (p. 77)

All children can benefit from social emotional teaching which helps students manage their emotions and how to interact with their peers (Adams & Richie, 2017; Elias et al., 2017; Herrmann, 2015; Zins & Elias, 2007). A brief written by Castro, Garcia, and Morkos (2013) from the Center for Early Care and Education Research-Dual Language Learners discusses that "children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may experience different expectations for social development when compared to monolingual children reared in the U.S. mainstream culture" (p. 3). Herrmann (2015) explains, "In any given culture, there are specific norms of behavior that are manifested through social skills. Empathy, kindness and generosity, for example, may be perceived, emulated and received in differing ways depending on the cultural norms of the person or group" (p. 4). Feelings are difficult concepts to convey and their appropriate response depends on their age and knowledge of cultural norms. Educators can assist ELs by identifying the problem, finding a solution, helping students recognize their feelings, and

how others may react which necessarily may not be wrong or right depending on their

culture (Payton et al., 2000). As Niehaus and Adelson (2014) remind us, "school-based

prevention practices may include a caring school community, strong bonds between

students and teachers, and direct instruction to promote social and emotional skills among

students" (p. 839). Greenberg et al. (2003) added,

> Key strategies that characterize effective school-based prevention programming
> involve the following student-focused, relationship-oriented, and classroom and
> school-level organizational changes: (a) teaching children to apply SEL skills and
> ethical values in daily life through interactive classroom instruction and providing
> frequent opportunities for student self-direction, participation, and school or
> community service; (b) fostering respectful, supportive relationships among
> students, school staff, and parents; and (c) supporting and rewarding positive
> social, health, and academic behavior through systematic school-family-
> community approaches. (p. 470)

Adams (2007) further explains, "in order for children and young people to thrive in

contemporary society, their holistic development should be prioritized, and in this

endeavor, schools have an extremely important role to play" (pp. 225–226). ELs need a

classroom that is safe, welcoming, and a trusting environment to learn academically and

grow socially.

Newcomers bring with them life experiences, struggles, trauma, and some may be

separated from their family, or reunified with a parent who may have established another

life. Newcomers are dealing with many struggles and simultaneously navigating their

new community and culture. According to Kugler and Price (2009), "As the children

learn English before their parents, many children take on typically adult roles, serving as

interpreter and negotiator for family business from finances to health" (p. 49). The

majority of all newcomers will struggle adjusting to the new culture and social norms;

however, schools can provide newcomers with the social and emotional support that is

needed to adjust to their new culture and community (National Clearinghouse for English

Language Acquisition, 2013). According to Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel, and Martin (2009),

> Successful adaptions among immigrant students appear to be linked to the quality
> of relationships they forge in their school settings. Social relations provide a
> variety of protective functions—a sense of belonging, emotional support, tangible
> assistance and information, cognitive guidance, and positive feedback. (p. 717)

School faculty and staff must be aware of student cultural norms, as Kugler and Price

(2009) further explain,

> Attitudes toward mental health in the cultures of recent immigrants differ
> significantly from the mainstream U.S. approach. Most recent immigrants attach a
> stigma to mental health issues, seeing them only as mental illness. In fact, there
> are no phrases to define "mental health" in most home languages of recent
> immigrants. (p. 50)

Kramer, Guarnaccia, Resendez, and Lu (2009) explain,

> The stigma of having a mental illness is one of the most significant obstacles
> preventing Latinos from seeking help. Some Latinos associate mental illness with
> loss of control, violence, and incurability that affect the patient and the whole
> family. Having a mental illness is also seen as a sign of personal weakness. (p. 12)

Educators must be aware of cultural norms and provide families with appropriate and

culturally responsive opportunities. Connections with teachers, counselors, coaches, and

other supportive adults in the school are particularly important to the academic and social

adaptation of adolescents in general and appear to be particularly important for immigrant

adolescents (Adams & Ritchie, 2017; Elias, 2004; Greenberg et al., 2003; Kugler & Price, 2009; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Newcomers are facing many challenges and need to be assigned to a trusting adult that will provide a safe place for them to ask questions and make mistakes. Assigning mentors will provide students with an adult who can model and guide them through the window of uncertainty, struggles, and will be able to connect them to community resources. Adams and Richie (2017) further explain, "Learning to manage oneself through SEL leads to improved academic success, to positive relationships within and beyond the classroom, and to students increasingly seeing themselves as assets in their community" (p. 81). In order to build SEL classrooms teachers must establish a trusting, caring, and supportive environment where students set and manage their educational and personal goals and learn strategies to problem solve (Adams & Richie, 2017; Beyer, 2017; Castro et al., 2013; Kramer et al., 2009; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). It is important that educators know about the cultures of their students and what is considered rude or appropriate. Knowing about the students' culture such as hand gestures, eye contact, and social norms and the cultural norms of their new area should be shared with the student either in a classroom setting or privately (Herrmann, 2015).

Teaching to Learning Styles of SIFE ELs

SIFE ELs bring their cultures and educational experiences with them to school and educators must be acutely aware of the different cultures their students represent. "Because SLIFE are generally members of collectivistic cultures, and most of these learners are accustomed to group interdependence and with fostering and maintaining

group relations" (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011, p. 37, as cited in Gahungu et al., 2011, p. 4). Many SLIFE ELs come from learning environments that work together, while typically in American schools, students are held accountable for their own learning. This way of thinking is not acknowledged in formal educational settings in many countries; therefore, educators of SIFE ELs need to know how their students learn and meet their needs. DeCapua and Marshall (2011) further explain, "[SIFE] . . . prefer group learning and shared responsibilities; being an independent learner and individually accountable for their learning is not common nor highly valued, in contrast with the assumptions and expectations of U.S. educators" (p. 39, as cited in Gahungu et al., 2011, pp. 4–5). In order to provide ELs with the support they need, appropriate strategies must be inserted in their academic plan and educators must provide them opportunities to work in groups and be able to share their ideas and thoughts. DeCapua and Marshall (2011) paint a picture of urgency: "The challenge for educators who work with SLIFE is how to take their strengths and their knowledge and build on their different approach to learning to help them succeed in U.S. mainstream education" (p. 37). A print-rich environment is critical for language learning; however, a positive learning climate is also crucial to language learning. Generally speaking, ELs are from economically disadvantaged homes and need tangible resources, but above all, they need encouragement and mentors to show them how to access information to advocate for themselves.

Providing Equitable Access to the Curriculum

By law, ELs are entitled to an education with access to the curriculum, but modification is not enough because the curriculum must be comprehensible. Hammond

(2006) explains, "The curriculum may be modified to ensure access, such modification is an interim step to students' full and equitable participation in the curriculum. The challenge then for teachers is to support equitable participation in the curriculum" (p. 270). Equitable access requires scaffolding, strategies embedded into schoolwork, accommodations to support the learners, and student participation in all projects and assignments in order to participate fully in the curriculum. Researchers Freeman et al. (2001) provide research on SIFE ELs and the article describes how one teacher, Sandra, is breaking the barriers with educating these students in a multi-age classroom. Freeman et al. (2001) state that in their study focusing on SIFE ELs, "Sandra's students frequently work in heterogeneous groups so students with different talents can share their knowledge and help others" (p. 206). Providing SIFE ELs with a variety of activities to reinforce concepts is a critical component to language development. There are various ways to provide content and language instruction and have students succeed academically. The very novice SIFE ELs may be asked to illustrate a concept, while teachers may pair an academically strong student in group activities or centers. In this time of accountability, it is imperative to ensure academic success for all students.

Students with little to no schooling struggle with academics; however, often they can pick up the social language easily. Teachers struggle to provide the foundational skills that they need, but after modeling best practices and infusing strategies into lessons, they can see the benefits. Bunch (2006) stated an interesting point:

. . . teachers tended not to modify their speech for ESL students, either through verbal adjustments (e.g., rate, complexity of speech) or non-verbal support (e.g.,

graphic organizers); they spoke rapidly and used puns, humor, sarcasm, and asides that were difficult for ESL students to understand. (p. 285)

Building Background Knowledge in a Culturally Inclusive Environment

Culturally inclusive environments pre-teach or build students' background knowledge by providing access to content curriculum. Bunch (2006) explains further,

> What is essential is to envision and work toward providing more equitable access to the academic "goods" that schools are responsible for providing, and to continue to challenge ourselves to re-examine the role that conceptions of "academic English" play in that process. (p. 299)

The language semantics are a struggle for language learners because English words may have different meanings, contain false cognates, and they may have vocabulary gaps that prevent them from being able to transfer meaning from one subject to another. The other factors that impact language learning are ELs' vocabulary bank in their first language and lack of content background knowledge. Samson and Lesaux (2015) provides a great point: "The challenges that Language Minority (LM) students face due to low socioeconomic status begin long before they start school, placing them at a disadvantage in accessing the social capital available to children of more gainfully employed, highly educated parents" (p. 17). Families from higher socioeconomic backgrounds have the resources to provide their children with books, technology, excursions, camps, and activities to build background knowledge and educational jargon. As educators, we must find ways to support students by building their background knowledge through real-life experiences and increasing their academic vocabulary.

Conclusion

What is Known about the Topic

The needs of SIFE ELs vary due to individual experiences. Learning theories provide educators with a framework of instructional practices that impact and provide ELs with instructional opportunities. These instructional strategies and frameworks are research-based and have been proven to impact language acquisition and academic language growth. The ESL program has been researched for many years; therefore, we know a lot about the strategies that impact language acquisition. However, looking at SIFE ELs through the administrator, curriculum facilitator, and SIFE EL teacher lens is a unique approach that has not been fully investigated.

What is Not Known about the Topic

Researching SIFE ELs would be an ideal area to research to create programs that would meet the needs of this special population. As stated earlier, SIFE ELs have an educational gap of greater than two years and are the most vulnerable because they tend to be older students and at times are illiterate in their first language. This qualitative study investigates the perception of administrator and teacher regarding providing equitable access of instruction for SIFE ELs, and it is focused on program models, instructional practices, and strategies to promote the social well-being of SIFE ELs.

How the Literature Informs the Study

The literature review provided a wealth of information on ESL practices, frameworks, and strategies that impact learning. To provide equitable opportunities teachers must provide SIFE ELs opportunities to work collaboratively and to be engaged

in the curriculum. It is not enough to modify the assignments; SIFE ELs must be exposed to both social and academic language. Differentiation is key to accelerate content curriculum. Differentiation will look different for every student if appropriately executed and students will obtain the information being taught.

Content language is based on the curriculum and is taught in tandem with social language. Studies have affirmed that the teacher's rate of speech must be modified, and cultural puns and sarcasm should be eliminated or explained because these are usually rooted in the dominant culture and students will not be able to make meaning from this verbiage. This is critical because SIFE ELs are listening and interpreting to their first language the presentation of material, which takes extra thinking time. Teachers need to be aware that this adjustment is critical to support the language development of SIFE ELs. Through this lens, equitable participation is expressed by providing supports. Equitable access requires scaffolding, non-verbal supports that include hand gestures, pictures, visuals, Total Physical Response (TPR) in which students use their bodies to convey a concept, and graphic organizers. SIFE ELs in general are from different cultures; therefore, they have acquired their own scope of background knowledge that may differ from the American culture. It is imperative that teachers build the students' background knowledge through visuals, drama, group work, and provide opportunities to accelerate language development. Classroom instruction should be based on data, what students can do, and structures in the classroom will support SIFE ELs academically.

The whole child is addressed with the social and well-being component. The environment is critical to the emotional and academic growth of SIFE ELs. If the

environment is tense and the affective filter is high, students will struggle to produce language and learning will be difficult. SIFE ELs are vulnerable due to their life-experiences and are suffering trauma due to war or economic circumstances. The teacher's attitude and perception of a culture or a group plays a tremendous role when educating students. The research addressed this point by advising educators to come to terms with their personal beliefs and understand that their perceptions will impact student learning. In order to build a positive learning environment conducive to learning, educators must know their students' backgrounds and family challenges. In order to provide an inclusive environment, the educators must be aware of their explicit and implicit biases. Statistics on SIFE ELs is alarming and research reflects that 12% of high school students and 20% of middle school students had an educational gap of at least two years. The research has provided many factors on the practices that impact academic and language acquisition. Extensive research has been done on instructional frameworks, student language acquisition, academic learning, and the environments that impact student language and academic growth.

Contributions to Scholarly Work

This qualitative study contributes to the literature and informs the ESL community on instructional practices that teachers use to support language and content mastery of SIFE ELs. It is also important to describe administrative practices that support teachers who educate this vulnerable population and how they set the cultural tone of the school. The culture is important and elements that are in place create a positive or unpleasant environment. I hope my findings reveal the strengths and challenges of

teaching SIFE ELs who need for the educators overseeing their education to be well

versed in instructional practices that work, be able to create a welcoming and caring

environment, and be able to support each SIFE EL academically so he or she can

eventually achieve and excel.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative study, I examined the experiences and beliefs of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers who work with Students with Interrupted Formal Education English Learners (SIFE ELs). The New York State Department of Education has state mandates and programs to specifically meet the academic needs of SIFE ELs. According to the New York State Department of Education,

> SIFE ELs are students with interrupted formal education come from homes in which a language other than English is spoken and have entered a U.S. school after 2nd grade. In addition, they have had at least two fewer years of schooling than their peers and function at least two years below grade level in reading and math, criteria that differentiate them from other English language learners. (as cited in DeCapua et al., 2007, pp. 41–42)

English Learners (ELs) are comprised of many languages and cultures and as a group are growing in numbers each day. In addition to challenges all ELs face, SIFE ELs face unique challenges in U.S. K-12 settings. Many SIFE ELs have low literacy skills and are sometimes illiterate in their first language. SIFE ELs tend to be older and are learning their second language along with basic educational skills.

To better prepare and support teachers working with SIFE ELs, it is important for educators to explore experiences, beliefs, and practices of current ESL teachers working with SIFE ELs. Based on data collected from interviews, observations, and student

artifacts, this study focused on strategies ESL teachers used to support instruction and negotiate challenges to address the needs of newly arrived SIFE ELs.

Research Design

The goal of this study is to explore teachers' experiences, beliefs, instructional strategies, and challenges faced in working with SIFE ELs. Qualitative Inquiry was applied to construct meaning based on interview, observation, and artifact data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Basic qualitative interview and observation study, according to Merriam and Tisell (2016), "would be interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 23). This basic qualitative study focused on what it means to teach SIFE EL students from the perspective of teachers and the curriculum facilitator. The goal was to portray what it is like to teach these students, to bring forward the challenges teachers face, and how they address those challenges instructionally. The goal of basic qualitative study is to understand the participant's viewpoint of their lives and experiences based on human emotions, feelings, and perceptions. The researcher captures the details via observations, documents, and interviews. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state, "What questions are asked, what is observed, and what documents are deemed relevant will depend on the disciplinary theoretical framework of the study" (p. 24).

To develop an understanding of the factors that impact the education of SIFE ELs, in this basic qualitative study, I explored participants' perceptions through data collected in multiple forms to identify repeating themes and patterns. Interviews, observations and student artifacts were collected and analyzed to address the research questions. Basic

qualitative interview and observation study was employed to guide the data analysis process. As stated by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "The primary goal of a basic qualitative study is to uncover and interpret these meanings" (p. 24).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, instructional strategies and challenges educators encounter in working with SIFE ELs at one Newcomers school. Three specific research questions guide the design of this study:

1. What are teachers' experiences and beliefs regarding working with SIFE ELs?

2. How do teachers use various teaching strategies to support SIFE ELs?

3. How do teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIEF ELs?

Setting

Colbert County

This study was facilitated in an urban school district with a diverse immigrant and refugee population. There are four refugee resettlement agencies that are charged with resettling refuges in this urban county. There are a variety of community agencies that provide advocacy services, assistance with employment, as well as mental and medical services. These agencies provide a plethora of support to families in need. This urban school district serves 72,196 students and 10,394 employees who work in 67 elementary schools, 22 middle schools, 26 high schools, and seven alternative schools. There are 48 Title I elementary schools which include 11 middle schools, six high schools, and four alternative schools. This district was selected because of its unique component of a

standalone school serving grades three through 12 and district approval to conduct research. This district has experienced a steady increase of English Learners over the past 14 years and is comprised of 6,320 ELs, which is 8.2% of the total student population. Colbert County students speak 110 languages and dialects with Spanish speakers being the largest language group. Table 4 reflects the breakdown of the top eight languages spoken in Colbert County. Most of our Hispanic and Latino students are from Mexico and Central America.

Table 4

Number of Speakers by Home Languages: Colbert County

Languages	Number of Speakers
Spanish	3,580
Arabic	520
Vietnamese	315
Urdu	255
Nepali	173
Karen	142
Swahili	122
French	112

Goodes Field Newcomers School

Goodes Field Newcomers School is a stand-alone school that serves students in grades three through 12 who have recently arrived in the United States. The school has 362 students, all of whom are ELs. Among these ELs, 100 are elementary students, 140 are middle school students, and are 122 high school students. The school has 15 middle school and 20 high school SIFE ELs. The staff is comprised of 18 teachers including one

art teacher, one music teacher, one physical education teacher, one counselor, one social worker, and four community liaisons/interpreters. The community liaisons/interpreters, school social worker and school counselor work closely with the resettling agencies to support and assist families with cultural, social and emotional transition. They connect families with resources, agencies, and advocacy groups to meet their needs. The faculty and staff work collaboratively to ensure that students have the essentials and that the transition into their new school environment is seamless.

Goodes Field is considered a segregated site; therefore, during the conception of the school the Department of Public Instruction and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) were contacted to define guidelines, policies, and procedures. OCR worked with district officials to develop guidelines with the following stipulations: (a) Goodes Field Newcomers must be designated as a school of choice, (b) students may not stay longer than a year without documentation, (c) students who stay longer than the stipulated year must have documentation justifying the need for the extended placement (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). School officials are required to conference with individual parents/guardians in the language they are most comfortable using to discuss the recommendation, reasoning behind the recommendation, and give the parent or guardian the opportunity to provide input. The mission of the school proudly displayed in the front office is "We strive to empower students and families through challenging academics and language learning to help them become independent lifelong learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in American schools and society

while honoring all cultures and heritages." Table 5 summarizes the breakdown of

languages spoken by students at Goodes Field Newcomers.

Table 5

Number of Speakers by Home Languages: Goodes Field Newcomers School

Languages	Number of Speakers
Spanish	102
Arabic	20
Swahili	25
Nepali	15
Vietnamese/Rade	13
French	8

The six languages spoken at Goodes Field Newcomers reflect the languages

spoken district-wide (see Table 4). Over two-thirds (or 64%) of the students at the

Goodes Field Newcomers School receive free and reduced lunch, therefore qualifying

them for Title I funds. The school serves 14% of the district's newly arrived SIFE ELs.

Two ESL teachers instruct the students at the middle grades and high school level

respectively.

Research Participants

The participants were chosen for this study due to their roles in the school. In

addition to the principal and curriculum facilitator at the school, the two teachers who

teach SIFE ELs at the middle grades and high school were also invited to participate in

this study (see Table 6).

Table 6

Participant Backgrounds

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Curriculum Facilitator	Principal
Grade Assignment	Middle Grades	High School	Whole School	Whole School
Number of Years at Goodes Field Newcomers	5	4	10	1
Total Years of Teaching Experience	7	15	29	14

The two teachers were selected by the principal to teach the middle and high school SIFE classes due to their background experiences, commitment to this subgroup of students, engaging instructional styles, high and rigorous expectations, and strategies to establish a positive classroom environment (Grace, personal communication, June 16, 2017).

Principal: Riley (Pseudonym)

Riley is in his first year at Goodes Field Newcomers and in the middle of his 14th year in education. Riley is 42 years old and English is his second language. He came to the United States when he was 12 years old from South Asia. Riley graduated from college with a Business degree and worked in the corporate world for several years. He began his educational journey attending his younger brother's football game when the principal recruited him to teach mathematics. He returned to college and obtained his teaching and administration license.

Riley has held administrative positions and has taught in both high school and middle school settings. He believes as an administrator visibility and engaging with the staff, students, families, and community partners is critical to his daily work. He engages with students in the hallway and has a genuine connection with them. One of his strengths is networking with community partners to provide the essential supports and opportunities for his school, staff, students, and families. Riley is an advocate for his school community and his main goal is to positively impact every student in his building.

Curriculum Facilitator: Will (Pseudonym)

Will is in his 10th year at Goode's Field Newcomers and in the middle of his 29th year in education. He taught across all academic grade levels as a Spanish teacher and EL teacher before moving to Goode's Field Newcomers as the curriculum facilitator. Will is 52 years old and has taught since he graduated high school. He is motivated by the opportunity to learn and support teachers with different initiatives across all academic levels. His office walls are covered with student data and written goals he and the teachers have identified and set.

Will advocates for his students and his advocacy begins with the curriculum. He reads and researches the latest trends and puts into motion new ideas and collaborates with his team of teachers to implement strategies and programs.

Teacher 1: Annie (Pseudonym)

Annie is in her fifth year at Goodes Field Newcomers and in the middle of her seventh year in education. Annie is 29 years old and always had a passion to learn languages. This drive led her to pursue her dream of becoming a fluent Spanish speaker.

On her journey, she was intrigued about teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) and obtained a licensure to teach ESL. She began her education experience teaching middle school ESL in a rural part of the county and found her passion teaching newly arrived ELs in this setting. She applied to teach at Goodes Field Newcomers School and has taught in this school for seven years.

Her class is composed of the following languages: Kinyarwanda (1), Karen (1), Nepali (2), Kinyabuisha (3), and Spanish (4). The majority of the cohort of 11 students are Spanish and Kinyabuisha speakers and the average educational gap is 5 years. The students who speak Kinyarwanda and Kinyabwisha are from Central Africa. The students are illiterate in their first language; however, they have a great social command of the home language.

Teacher 2: Sissy (Pseudonym)

Sissy is in her fourth year at Goodes Field Newcomers and has 15 years of teaching experience. Sissy is 42 years old and English is her second language. Her language acquisition experience created her passion for teaching ELs. She taught middle school English as a Foreign Language in her home country of Colombia. Sissy is able to relate to the struggle of acquiring academic language and her patience and positive demeanor was noted as a strength; therefore, her principal assigned her to the cohort of the 20 SIFE ELs.

The SIFE high school class is comprised of the following languages: Kinyabuisha (4), Kinyarwanda (4), Spanish (10), and Nepali (2). The students have an average

educational gap of 6 years and are illiterate in their native language but have a good

command of the social use of the home language.

Data Collection

To collect credible data, multiple sources such as observation, interviews, and

field notes were generated (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Observations and interviews were

connected to provide the researcher an in-depth look and exhaust any correlations the

data may provide. Kolb (2012) reinforces that "the research examines written documents

to gain a deeper understanding and description of the participant's convictions, conduct,

and experiences" (p. 83).

The data collection for this research study focused on interviews with educators,

classroom observations, and student artifacts. Administrators and teachers had an initial

interview in August 2018. Observations were conducted during the 2018-2019 academic

year. Table 7 illustrates how data was used to address the three research questions.

Table 7

Data Collection Crosswalk

Research Question	Interview	Observation	Student Artifacts
What are teachers' experiences and beliefs regarding working with SIFE ELs?	X		
How do teachers use various teaching strategies to support SIFE ELs?	X	X	X
How do teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIFE ELs?	X	X	

Interviews with Educators

Three rounds of interviews were conducted. The first interview conducted gathered background information and teaching beliefs. The second round of interviews took place at the end of August and focused on the instructional plan for the year. The third round of interviews asked teachers to reflect on instructional experiences and beliefs. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data were collected through interviews, and memos were written to capture formal and informal observations. Student artifacts were used in conjunction of interviews and observations.

Initial Interviews. The initial interview took take place in August 2018. The purpose of this initial interview was to gather background information and teaching beliefs of educators. Initial interviews were approximately 60 minutes and were digitally audio-recorded. Each interview was transcribed, and participants were asked to review content to member check the information for accuracy. The school principal participated in the initial interview. The questions focused on student backgrounds, teacher selection process, how students are identified and grouped in class, and the overall decision-making regarding educating SIFE ELs.

Second and Third Interviews. Prior to the first classroom observation, the curriculum facilitator and teachers participated in two interviews each in August and October. The August interviews focused on the instructional plans and strategies. During this interview, questions delved into the selection of curriculum and why those components were selected. In October, teachers were asked to reflect on instructional effectiveness, teaching beliefs, and instructional practices. The questions for the

curriculum facilitator focused on how the curriculum shifted to accommodate students' academic needs. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Participants were asked to review transcribed documents to member check the accuracy of the interviews.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were scheduled after the initial and second interviews. Three week-long half-day classroom observations were conducted in August, September, and October. Classroom observations focused on teaching strategies, refocusing of instructional strategies when encountering challenges with the delivery of a lesson, and progression of student classwork. Classroom observations were conducted five times a week in both classrooms. The teachers were observed a total of 20 hours per week for a total of 60 hours each (see Table 8).

Table 8

Classroom Observation Rotation

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Teacher1	Teacher 2	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 1
Teacher 2	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 1	Teacher 2

Observations included hallway and lunchroom interactions. After observations, debriefing sessions were conducted to clarify teaching strategies, instructional plan, and student interaction. Adhering to CCM procedures, the researcher wrote memos to document additional observations.

Artifact Collection

To ensure data connections, student artifacts were collected. Artifacts focused on student writing, classroom assessments, and reading assessments. Student work samples focused on current work, individual, and group assignments. The analysis of student work focused on assessments, differentiation, strategies provided to SIFE ELs, opportunities for student interaction and collaboration on class work, and the expectations of the teacher for student practice and application. Student artifacts were reviewed specifically for student integration of academic language. In keeping with the CCM guidelines, notes and memos were taken to analyze student artifacts and data was used for coding. Artifacts were discussed during the debriefing sessions to better understand the teachers' focus and purpose. Artifacts were explained in field notes and for additional details and explanations memos were written. The collection of data is explained in Table 9.

Table 9

Data Collection Sequence

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Curriculum Facilitator	Principal
Interviews				
Interview 1-June	60 mins.	60 mins.	60 mins	60 mins
Interview 2-August	60 mins.	60 mins.	60 mins	
Interview 3-October	45 mins.	45 mins.	60 mins	
Total Interview	165 mins.	165 mins.		

Table 9

Cont.

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Curriculum Facilitator	Principal
Observations				
Observation-August	20 hours	20 hours		
Observation-September	20 hours	20 hours		
Observation-October	20 hours	20 hours		
Total Observations	60 hours	60 hours		

Data Analysis

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), basic qualitative study is an analytic process where "findings are these recurring patterns or themes supported by the data from which they were derived" (p. 23). In this basic qualitative study, transcriptions were generated while interview and observation data were collected. Analysis and writing were furthered developed in November and December.

The researcher analyzed data from interview transcripts, observation memos, and student artifact notes multiple times to code and connect to the literature review and theoretical framework. The coding allowed the researcher to ultimately create themes and to identify recurring patterns. The themes and patterns emerged to provide a practical approach to educating SIFE ELs. Interviews were transcribed by an outside source and transcriptions were sent to all participants to review for accuracy. The researcher conducted conversation debriefings after each observation. Emerging themes were discussed with teachers, curriculum facilitator, and principal to eliminate inaccurate perceptions and misinformation.

Researcher Role and Positionality

I am the ESL Director for Colbert County and oversee the education of ELs, the daily logistics, and the professional development of the ESL teachers. I am acutely aware that I have biases that must be confronted prior to the collection of data. As the ESL Director, I am familiar with strategies that impact language acquisition for ELs, but I must not allow my background knowledge to infringe on the data collection. With the extensive knowledge that I have I must be aware of the implicit biases I bring when analyzing the data. I am one of the founders and creator of the Goode's Field Newcomers School, so I have a personal investment with the success of this school. I know that I am a fierce defender of the teachers and students, and I must be open and know that I cannot allow my feelings to interfere with the study. I recorded the interviews and observations and asked the participants to review them for accuracy. The most efficient way to eliminate my biases is to member check my data. Member checking adds reliability and trustworthiness to the data; therefore, I recorded my interviews and sent the transcripts to the participants for review and approval.

As the director, I refrained from wearing my supervisory hat and was mindful of my researcher role. I am an advocate for our teachers, students, and families and it is natural for me to become involved with solving daily issues that arise. I foreshadowed that while I am in my researcher role, I would be pulled from my task to assist with a school dilemma. I was able to adjust accordingly with different situation. I was aware that I need to be cognizant of my perceptions and perspectives and be able to be an objective researcher.

Ethics

In qualitative research, there are ethical parameters that protect participants. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), "For the protection of participants, it is essential that researchers mask participant names as soon as possible to avoid inclusion of identifiable information in the analysis files" (p. 182). In order to avoid disclosing the enmity of the participants, pseudonyms were assigned to participants, school, and school district. Participants were given consent forms to sign prior to participating in the study. In addition, Creswell and Poth (2018) further explain, "Engaging participants in the data analysis may foster collaboration in how the data is interpreted and ultimately represented" (p. 182). Goodes Field Newcomers is the only stand-alone school for new arrivals in grades third through twelfth grade in North Carolina; therefore, this poses a challenge. The researcher must be cognizant of this and be mindful and respectful of the participants and the community.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research the researcher is interpreting the data; therefore, trustworthiness must be taken into consideration and steps must be taken to ensure the data maintain credible. According to Elo et al. (2014), "Conformability of findings means that the data accurately represent the information that the participants provided and the interpretations of those data are not invented by the inquirer" (p. 2). It is important to review trustworthiness in all the phases of research.

I am acutely aware of the biases I bring to this study; therefore, I must integrate several checks and balances to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the study. As the

primary researcher I ensured trustworthiness with member checks, triangulation of data, and the substantial amount of time spent in the classroom. All participants were given multiple opportunities throughout the study to respond to the data being collected via transcripts, field notes, memos, and preliminary findings.

Summary

I have described the research methods that were applied to this basic qualitative research. This research study focused on teachers' beliefs, instructional strategies to support SIFE ELs, and the way teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIFE ELs. I have described the participants of this study, data collection and analysis, ethical issues, biases, and concluded with trustworthiness.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to describe the characteristics and needs of SIFE ELs, identify strategies to promote social and emotional well-being of SIFE ELs, and explore program models and instructional practices that support SIFE ELs at the Goode's Field Newcomers School. The study examined the academic, social, and emotional needs of SIFE ELs and the instructional practices and beliefs of two SIFE EL teachers, a curriculum facilitator, and a principal in this unique setting. A qualitative research method was employed to analyze data collected through teacher interviews, classroom observations, and collection of student work samples.

The chapter begins with a detailed description of instructional settings. Then, findings are organized to address three research questions:

1. What are teachers' experiences and beliefs regarding working with SIFE ELs?

2. How do teachers use various teaching strategies to support SIFE ELs?

3. How do teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIFE ELs?

I discuss the teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and experiences working with SIFE ELs and explain the various strategies implemented to support the students. I also highlight how teachers negotiate challenges and provide social and emotional support to their SIFE ELs.

Description of Instructional Settings

Goode's Field Newcomers School

Goode's Field Newcomers School is nestled in the outskirts of the main city and celebrating its 11th year since opening its doors to new arrivals. The school educates students from third through 12th grade. The community supports the teachers, students, and parents by providing essential home goods and school supplies. The information highlighting the first day of school connects to the support that is provided by the teachers and community, and taken from field notes and observations. The classroom observations provide additional background details on how the educators establish social and emotional connections with their students.

As I entered the front door of Goode's Field Newcomers School on the first day of school, I felt the excitement and energy exuding from the teachers, staff, students, families, and community. It is the first day of exhilarating future adventures with opportunities and possibilities for the students at Goode's Field Newcomers School. The hope-filled dreams of the students in the hallways and classrooms are felt throughout the building. Hopes for future dreams fill the hallways and classrooms. Most of the students are new arrivals to the United States. As I walk towards Annie's classroom, I encountered community volunteers pulling three large wagons filled to the brim with book bags. I stopped to peruse the book bags filled with notebooks, pens, pencils, crayons, binders, scissors, and glue sticks—enough to last for many months to come. The volunteers happily went from classroom to classroom distributing the items and I heard the students' voices filled with excitement. The first day of school was already a success.

Annie's Instructional Setting

As I entered Annie's classroom, all students were quietly eating breakfast, and Annie was taking attendance. She explained that each student would have assigned morning duties and described cafeteria routines and expectations for walking in the hallways. Annie asked students to demonstrate walking in a line in the classroom and then to the media center where the media specialist greeted them and distributed dictionaries that they checked out for the year. As they returned to the classroom, she stopped and shared the bathroom rules and demonstrated the difference between an inside voice and outside voice. She was very dramatic, and the students giggled. They returned to their classroom and settled into their seats, while Annie pulled up her PowerPoint presentation and asked them why they thought they were in the SIFE class. Students who spoke the same language supported each other and responded. Annie advanced to the next slide and showed a picture representing Equality vs. Equity. She pointed to the picture and asked, "Is this okay? Why not?" Students began speaking their first language, looked in their dictionaries, and responded to the questions. Annie explained the difference between Equality and Equity. She said,

> You are in my class because some of you do not know how to read or write. In this class, everyone is going to learn how to read and write. Some of you may get more help and others will get a little less depending on your needs. You will get a box, two, or less depending on your needs. My expectation when you learn what to do is to help any new student that enrolls in our class.

Students collectively shook their heads yes and agreed to do to their best and support each other to meet their goals. Annie praised her students and thanked them for the hard work that they would be demonstrating during the time they would spend together.

Annie's SIFE High School Classroom. Annie's classroom is in a middle trailer that is a good distance from the main building. Each morning, the cafeteria staff delivers breakfast to her classroom in insulated bags. Each student receives milk, juice, muffins, cereal, or fruit, which are items that are stored in the insulated bags. As part of a school-wide program, staff serve students breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Principal Riley applied for a grant to serve dinner to his students. Two students delivered the announcements over the loud speaker. As they spoke, students ate their breakfast and listened attentively. The room was clean and decorated brightly with flags, six clocks displaying different international time zones representing the students' countries, Power Words posted throughout the room, and posters hung on walls representing different religions. The bulletin boards had Word Walls and reading levels to track individual reading progressions. Annie arranged the student desks in a U-shape with a long table for group work and a kidney-shaped table for reading centers. The room had a low affective filter, and respect and high standards were already in practice on the first day.

Annie asked students to introduce themselves as they finished breakfast and to tell them what they did in the evening. Most students explained that they worked immediately after school and got home around 10:00 in the evening. Annie's instructional day began at 8:00 and the first class concluded at 9:30. The morning SIFE reading block was packed with whole group, small, group, and individual centers. Annie

worked with students to set individual goals. All assignments were tailored to individual student needs and linked to IRLA reading assessments. Annie reviewed or introduced Power Words (sight words), students were placed in groups to work on writing assignments, reading groups, an individual writing center, and independent reading. Annie assigned a student teacher and an EC teacher to work with the students in centers. Students were held accountable for their work and progress and every minute was accounted for. Transitions from the very first day were smooth and signaled by a timer. This 90-minute block of instruction was designed for reading and writing. The rest of the day was divided for specials, lunch, dinner, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The structure of the day was purposeful and driven by data.

Sissy's Instructional Setting

As I entered the classroom, Sissy was explaining her point system to her students. She explained that the goal was to earn 10 points in a week to choose a prize, and if the class got 100 points, then they would have a party at the end of the quarter. The community partners entered the classroom with book bags. The teacher used an online generator to determine the order students would receive their book bags. Students were excited and opened them, showing each other what they had inside. Sissy checked the supplies in each book bag and called on a student leader to assist her to even out the supplies and ensure that everything was equal. The excitement was heartwarming. Sissy said, "Give me five," and half of the class raised their hands; she responded, "That's not bad; 50% of the class remembered what give me five meant." Students were asked to line up and they walked to the media center. The media specialist was waiting for them and

she asked the students which language they preferred because several were trilingual. Students checked out dictionaries and calculators and then returned to their classroom where Sissy commenced with her presentation on Equality vs. Equity. Sissy asked the students to look at the picture and infer what equality vs. equity meant by the viewing the picture. Sissy explained that in their class, they would get what they need, and the amount of assistance would vary according to the focus. Sissy explained that they would develop personal goals and they would work together to accomplish their goals.

Sissy moved from this section to demonstrate Class Dojo. She used a document camera to demonstrate how to install it on their cell phones. Then she took them through the app gradually and explained that this was one way for her to communicate with their parents and to demonstrate how they were doing. Sissy distributed Dojo sheets and homework folders and asked students to take them home to their parents.

Sissy transitioned to another activity and asked her students to take out two crayons; she demonstrated what she needed them to do using her Elmo. She said, "Please review these Science topics and use one color to identify your interest and the second color to show less of an interest." She explained that they would not be interested in everything and said, "Sound is not of interest to me or motivating to study, but I am aware of this and will make sure I pay attention." They reviewed the sheet and Sissy demonstrated by using thumbs up and thumbs down, "Like, thumbs up and do not like, thumbs down." Without being promoted and without hesitation the students began working collaboratively and using their first language to complete the sheet. Sissy circulated modeled, used gestures, and assured them that this was their opinion, therefore,

"There is not a right or wrong answer." After the students completed the assignment, they

shared their likes and dislikes with their classmates. Students were asked to come to the

board and to point to what they liked and disliked. Students were encouraged to answer

why, and many tried to respond in one word or in their first language.

Sissy distributed schedules and when the students asked what they should do with

it she projected an example of a schedule on the board. She told them that this schedule

shows them where they need to go each day. She gave an example, "Your math teacher,

lucky for you, is someone else." Then she told them to look at their schedules, which

showed that it was now lunch; she passed out their lunch cards. The students walked to

the cafeteria and she helped them go through the line, demonstrating how to use the card.

They walked to their table and she informed them they had 25 minutes to eat. The

students consumed lunch quietly but began to talk to their classmates once they finished.

Sissy's SIFE Middle School Classroom. Sissy's SIFE middle school classroom

was on the back wing of the main building. As soon as students arrived, they were served

breakfast in the classroom and the instructional day started with Science, then reading

block, lunch, specials, Language Arts, math, and Social Studies. Sissy taught the reading

block with two tutors in charge of two centers and the reading teacher. Students rotated

from each center. Sissy used a variety of strategies that were integrated for students to

access content. She infused demonstration, "turn and talk," partner work, gestures,

leveled readers, growing words, differentiated work, scaffolding, manipulatives, project-

based assignments, theme-based lessons, repetition, Total Physical Response activities,

building background, graphic organizers, outlines, highlighted text, appropriate speech,

questioning, wait time, elaboration, and summarization of lessons and activities daily.

The low affective filter and high expectations provided the students with a classroom

setting that invited questions and mistakes. They thrived and excelled as the days

progressed and turned into weeks.

The instructional time was divided into what Robert Marzano calls explicit

instruction, "I Do, We Do, and You Do." The "I Do" portion of the lesson was short and

concise with visuals, repetition, modeling, and true-life connections. The whole class

instruction took place with students in their chairs facing the front of the classroom in a

traditional setting. During this time, Sissy gave the students an opportunity to turn and

talk, come to the board, work in small groups, discuss in first and second language, and

read-to-partner stations. Data driven individual centers were created for each student and

activities changed daily according to daily data checks. The academic expectations were

high. Sissy expected that they help each other, and this demand was evident from the first

day. Conflicts were non-existent even though some students came from countries that

were in conflict. Students engaged in groups, worked independently, and every second

was accounted for; therefore, students did not have the opportunity to disengage.

Will's Instructional Setting

Walking into Will's, the curriculum facilitator's office, one heard academic math

conversations as he and four teachers worked collaboratively to build a unit. The respect

each teacher displayed for each other was evident. They were encouraged by Will to

think about each student and use their student data to create activities and centers for their

unit. When the teachers disagreed with an approach, they respectfully did so and

presented another way to approach the task. There were times that teachers accepted the ideas and there were other times they chose to keep their approach and explained why. The groups were cohesive, and the students were the center of the conversation.

Teachers attend Professional Learning Communities (PLC) planning, department meetings, and vertical alignment department meetings. The global planning approach allows for teachers to focus on their craft in a small group with teammates, a larger group that includes other colleagues, and the vertical planning that includes teachers from other grade-levels to ensure that content is aligned throughout the school. Annie and Sissy attend all the curriculum meetings, and in addition, Will meets with them to bring all the information together and to tailor the lessons to their students' specific needs.

The teachers' planning sessions are segmented into two components, one for teacher as learner, and the other as a facilitator of instruction. The teacher as learner encompasses articles and books, or teachers bring their questions and share best practices. The second segment focuses on the development of lessons focusing on data and infusing grade-level content. During this session, the teachers and Will discussed modifying and Will said, "We need to keep in my mind how the modifying may be perceived. It could say to the student that we are modifying this to such an extreme for you to be able to do it, or it could say to the student that I am doing this because you cannot do the assignment." The teachers agreed and began on reworking the lesson.

Will's Office. Will's office was in the building towards the back of the school and was a revolving door. Teachers and students walked in and out of his office to ask questions, get books, ask for academic advice, receive hugs and high-fives, and to share

personal triumphs and tribulations. The curriculum facilitator's office had a huge wooden table in the middle of the room with an expansive data wall that housed every students' academic and language performance. Behind the huge table, there was a smaller table with a few chairs for small group work. The room had shelves that housed student textbooks, theory textbooks, classroom management books, and many how to teach reading to ELs. The office had anchor charts and inspirational quotes posted and a variety of cultural artifacts representing different countries.

The table faced the board where a lesson plan was projected, about which teachers spoke honestly and voiced their opinions. Will coached them reminded them, "Most of our students come from cultures that value collectivism rather than individualism, so we have to keep that in mind when we are creating independent activities." The teachers took a few minutes to review the lesson individually and then collaborated until everyone was satisfied with the work. Will and the teachers began the work and left with a solid foundation, so they could continue to expand on their lessons individually. The work was rigorous, student centered, and data driven. The teacher collaboration and respect were admirable.

Teachers' Perspectives and Viewpoints

Three interviews were conducted with each teacher and the curriculum facilitator and one interview was conducted with the principal. Based on the interview data, I summarized educators' experiences and beliefs in terms of their work with SIFE ELs in this section (see Figure 2).

Annie

Know students' cultural background

Human capital

Students create personal goals

Independent thinkers

Self sufficient

Low effective filter

Differentiation

Educating the whole child

Community is an integral part of the student's education

Communication with parents

Building relationships

Sissy

Personal connection

Low effective filter

Environment where students are encouraged to code switch

Foster student independence

Attend student activities in the community

Teach students to become their own advocates

Setting high expectations

Will

Educators must provide opportunities and access to knowledge

Teaching the person and not the subject

Educators must know the research

Urgency to teach content and academic Language

Figure 2. Teachers' Experiences and Beliefs.

Annie's Experiences and Beliefs

Annie's personal experience as an English Learner herself and as a single mother defines who she has become as a teacher. She can relate in some respects to the parents having experienced transitioning to a new land and struggling with learning the language. Annie explained, "You learn English back home but once you get here, you're like, I don't know anything. So, it takes time to re-learn the language." Annie stated that the

educational experiences of her students depend on their cultural background and zone of

proximal development.

> Some of the students who are from Arabic countries have usually come with some English background. There were just a few I have had in the past who were illiterate in their own language. Some of our children from certain African countries do not have a written language, everything is oral, so it's quite difficult for those babies to come here and start grabbing a pencil and writing even just their names, let alone sitting and try to pay attention for more than 20 minutes. Now Latinos have it a little bit easier in some respects because number one, English is written the same way. We have the same letters, so they tend to pick it up easier. The students can learn. What I have noticed is that for this specific group of kids it takes longer, but I have seen growth and progress by the time they leave us because they are with us for a year.

Sissy's Experiences and Beliefs

In contrast, Sissy's educational experiences and her husband's experiences as an

EL student define who she has become as an educator. Sissy received her bachelor's in

Spanish and her Masters in ESL. She has had middle and high school experience and has

taught at Goode's Field Newcomers Schools for six years. She began her career in high

school as a teacher cadet and received a teaching scholarship. She explained

> I think one of the big question marks of my teaching career is what motivates middle school boys to read, so I have worked hard on that. I have been reading some books about middle school boys and their performance in reading. Once you know where someone is and what gets them going, you can advance where they are able to get too academically. At this school, we try to help them adjust emotionally as needed.

Will's Experiences and Beliefs

As for Will's experiences and beliefs, he expressed that "teaching is seeing the

whole child." He believes that educators must provide students with opportunities and

access to knowledge. Will encourages collaboration among the SIFE EL teachers, EL

teachers, content teachers, and support staff; together they write lesson plans that target

content skills and language, but at the forefront is the belief that focusing on the social

emotional component of each student is critical. Will shared,

> I have never pushed a student to tell me what is happening in his or her life, but I always make it clear that I am open to listen and support. I explain to them that I know resources in our community and I know what a social worker can do, so I can be a bridge.

Will believes that his greatest influence has been watching his sister, who is an educator.

She taught him how to connect with his students. He said, "She is an amazing teacher.

She connects with her students in an amazing way. She makes the rocks willing to

study." He believes he has the "passion to learn and the heart to teach." He explained,

> You may not know the content, but you can learn it; but if you do not have the passion, resilience, and the desire to impact positive change, and the understanding that the child is not the problem, but rather the situation around the child is what is causing him or her to act in a certain way, you will not be effective. If you do not understand that it is not personal, it will be very hard to enjoy getting up in the morning and facing the kids.

Will believes that when he teaches, he is teaching the person not the subject or the score.

He says, "I get up every morning to help you become a better you." Will uses data to help

the teachers target specific needs and structure each lesson to meet the needs of their

students. The teachers use data and believe it is the key to academic growth for SIFE

ELs; they assess students daily and weekly to determine language and content growth.

Teachers' Beliefs Regarding Their Personal Professional Development

Annie shared, "I acquired my knowledge of best practices and learning about ELs' languages, backgrounds, experiences, and proficiencies through my educational degrees." Annie has integrated those theories into practice that she learned in her educational programs; however, she continues to grow by reading and researching. She strongly believes

> students change, and we do not always get the same kind of kids, so I believe that I need to keep on learning; I need to continue learning about my babies. Whatever was valid ten years ago or five years ago when I did my masters might not be what they need now, so I need to continue learning; that's why I was looking at those books that I told you about before.

She indicated that she reads literature that focuses on reading comprehension, fluency, or phonemic awareness because she has students who range in ages from 14-19 and are unable to read. She shared that she will attend the professional development focusing on Learning, Language, and Literacy but is looking for classes specifically for high school SIFE students.

Sissy expressed that for her professional development she has researched best practices and strategies for working with SIFE ELs. Will provides Annie and Sissy with professional development sessions during which they discuss the latest research. These discussions have led her to experiment with female and male groupings which she has found successful. Sissy reports, "I find success with gender groups, but I have not experimented with same language pairings" (Sissy, interview, October 1, 2018). She

constantly changes groupings based on data and attempts to find groups and pairs that work and keep things fluid based on their needs as their language develops.

Will is the researcher and brings ideas to Annie, Sissy, and the administration. They collaborate and integrate best practices. All three educators read books and Will has attended conferences. During each set of interviews, all three educators requested to attend professional development specifically targeting SIFE ELs. He expressed that he continuously researches best practices for ELs and has attended several professional development sessions. Goode's Field receives local, state, and funding earmarked specifically for immigrant and refugee students. This funding provides tutors, SIFE teachers, allocation for student and family counseling, materials and resources. The district provides professional development opportunities, but they are not specific to SIFE ELs. Will explained that visiting existing SIFE EL programs broadens the possibilities of new ideas and exposure to a variety of models.

The district offers professional development that targets ELs but not specific to SIFE ELs; therefore, on his own Will has sought out this specialized professional development. He has read a lot on how to best educate them and has met Andrea DeCapua. He credits their conversation to adding another layer to what he already knew. Will's experience solidified his belief that their transformational approach is the best fit for their SIFE ELs. SIFE ELs are EL students; however, their needs are extensive, and the approach needs to be different. The SIFE ELs at Goode's Field are separated and spend most of their time with one teacher. He has reached out to a Newcomers school in New York, and they also have a specific class for their SIFE ELs. Will explains,

I have received is a lot of teacher training and have brought things in from graduate school. I have read Piaget, Marzano, Vygotsky, Maslow and have combined their philosophies because these kids have so many different needs that one professional development is not enough. I see five different levels that we tackle: literacy, language learning, content knowledge, learner identity (social emotional), and culture.

The belief is that the staff must always stay on top of the research, modify, and adjust according to what data reflect. Will knows that SIFE ELs bring "a lot to the table, but it is a different set of skills that are not valued within schools; there is an academic set of skills that they need to learn." Will explains,

There we go again with DeCapua in that transitional approach where we bring them from point A to point B, not as a dichotomy but as a continuum; we bring them from point A, and we add point B to what they already know.

Will and SIFE teachers traveled to Texas and were able to visit a newcomer's school, but they had a tiered approach in which they had students separated by levels. Will was able to see what they had implemented years ago, and the opposite currently implemented at Goode's Field. Will expressed,

It was a good reminder to see what it looks like to have SIFE students together with other EL students and by opposition, it helped me to see that I am definitely glad we are not doing that for our SIFE students. We have them in a different group because they need a different type of instructional approach.

Will believes that language instruction comes through a type of natural approach, but he explains, "I am a strong believer in being explicit and deliberate in the teaching of the language instruction to ELs, because time counts.". There is an urgency to expose and

teach SIFE ELs content and academic language. The academic success of their children is the goal.

Professional development is key to educating SIFE ELs, and they expressed the interest in visiting established SIFE EL sites and attending conferences specific to meeting the needs of this fragile group. The program has evolved due to Will's determination and perseverance. Will's goal for his team is to visit the SIFE EL school in New York. He has expressed an interest in submitting a request to the district's EL Director. Will's guidance and the work of the team have created a solid program for their SIFE ELs.

Strategies to Support SIFE ELs

Teacher interviews and six classroom observation data were used to address the second research question: "How do teachers use various teaching strategies to support SIFE ELs?" Curriculum was infused and connected to instructional strategies and differentiated tasks to make content comprehensible, so students can access to grade-level instruction. The standard course of study is the foundation and connected closely to instructional strategies and assessments. Pertinent student artifacts, such as student notebooks, student homework, photographs of instructional material, and student projects were also used.

Annie's Strategies to Support SIFE ELs

Annie shared that teachers assess students as soon as they enroll, so she has a baseline of their content knowledge and reading levels. "From the beginning, I already know their reading levels and based on that, I will plan activities according to my babies'

levels." She expressed that volunteers and tutors provided small group instruction which was critical in meeting individual SIFE needs. Other critical components she listed for successful language development with SIFE ELs were student talk, using data to align instruction to academic and language growth, individual and small group activities, differentiation specific to each student's needs, and explicit reading and writing instruction. She focused on student data to personalize instruction to meet the academic needs of her SIFE ELs. Instruction was detailed and explicit for the 90-minute reading block. SIFE ELs were able to create their own goals and track their progress on a weekly basis.

All 22 students are illiterate and are learning how to read at the beginning of the year. Annie assesses every Friday and the students are growing at a steady pace. Student expectations are for them to grow two reading levels and when they exceed goals, they create new targets. The system is in place "but it feels as though we are running a race going up a hill." Annie is confident that she provides students access to the content and grows them. She returns to the basics:

> I am teaching them how to write with a pencil, how to write in their notebooks, how to behave in class because most of them have not been in a classroom. Everything we do is responding to their needs and sometimes it is very difficult. Some of our students need to hear I love you, or you did a great job, or take care, because they do not hear words of affirmation. We teach the basics and love them unconditionally.

Annie introduces the letters of the alphabet by asking her students to write the alphabet in their language and then she asks them to circle the letters that are similar to the English alphabet. Then she asks them to dissect the letters and choose the letters that

are most difficult and to explain why. The students engaged in a whole class discussion

regarding similar and different letters and letter sounds. The class discussions often lead

to how reading and writing in some cultures is from left to right, but in others it is

different; students demonstrate the writing on the board and they discuss the differences.

This discussion leads to sentence structures. Annie explains to her students that these

discussions are important because each of them will have difficulties in some areas and

others will not, so they must assist and support their classmates.

Annie believes that it is her duty to teach SIFE ELs grade-level content,

specifically reading and writing,

> My students are 14, 15, and sometimes 19 and we have to teach them how to read
> and write because they have to survive in society. They have to sign papers if they
> are going to work, but I think for certain students it is better if they are learning a
> trade.

She stated that differentiation is key but "we have to know their struggles, culture,

cultural history, and expect the best from them." Annie indicated that this whole child

approach came from raising her own son and from her own personal education.

Since her studies in the master's ESL program included differentiated strategies

and scaffolds, implementation was easy. In addition, the conversations with Will and

Sissy cultivated a student-centered classroom environment with large and small group

work and individual centers. Her expectations for the students are high and each group

targets a specific skill that may include working with letter sounds, reading fluency, and

low or illiterate readers. Annie differentiates the work in each group and explains, "If

they are 'Read to Me' the work designed for them would be moving letters, touching

letters, or tapping sounds with their hands." As the students work on their differentiated

task, she rotates from group to group and works on mini lessons that focus on reading

comprehension, phonemic awareness, and building academic vocabulary using a reader.

Differentiation looks different for each group and she explains,

> The activities for each group are scaffolded to meet the specific needs of each individual. The Read to Me group will have to show me the letters using magnetic letters. They ae able to touch them and trace the shape of the letter. The students in the yellow group practice writing letters on the white board. The other groups with a little foundation may write sentences or use a graphic organizer.

The school administration expects teachers to progress monitor daily and weekly.

Annie indicated she forms groups based on data. Student selection into the SIFE class

depends on their performance on the Independent Reading Level Assessment Framework

(IRLA). The American Reading Company (ARC) created IRLA and integrates Common

Core State Standards to provide students skills to reach college and career readiness. This

framework tests the students and determines their reading level and scaffolds reading and

writing instruction based on the student's level. Annie explained, "We look at the cut

scores as a team and students are divided into levels. I always take the 'Read to Me' or

'Yellow' students because these are typically SIFE ELs. The EL teachers and content

high school teachers work together to create groups and schedules. It is a team effort."

Annie believes that building literacy is the top priority and the IRLA Framework

provides a great foundational support and scaffolds students' skills to proficiency levels.

The SIFE ELs have a 90-minute block for reading in addition to Language Arts.

This reading block is to build basic reading skills. She pushes them by giving them work

with which they will experience a productive struggle. Students in this reading block

work independently and in small groups with peers who have mixed reading levels.

Student pairing by reading levels allows peers to help each other. Annie believes "that we

work as a family and expectations are that we push each other to excel." The IRLA

Framework provides students the opportunity to measure where they are and set goals

and expectations for themselves. Annie assesses her students every Friday, and after each

assessment they develop weekly and monthly goals.

 Annie holds her students accountable for their learning and focuses on academic

content, language development, and the social emotional growth of her students. Her

students keep their data notebooks and track their reading growth on a bulletin board in

the back of their classroom.

 Students track their progress and establish short and long-term goals. Annie

knows that each of her students face many challenges at home and many of her students

work after school; however, she is able to care for their social emotional needs as well as

focus on their academic achievement.

 Annie incorporates different strategies into her mini lessons, small group

instruction, and during reading groups. Her knowledge on best practices and strategies

comes from reading books and from her curriculum facilitator. She expresses an interest

in attending workshops that focus on SIFE needs. Annie has a wealth of information on

how to provide scaffolds to the assignments to support ELs, but implementation of

generated ideas from visiting other SIFE programs strengthen the current model. They

work hard in collaborative planning to create learning opportunities for colleagues and

read books that focus on best practices for SIFE ELs and newcomer students. Annie

expressed that relationships are key on the adult level because they have candid

conversations about their students and reaching them. Annie shared,

> I do not think that the problem is that they do not understand what is going on or
> the concept. I think the problem is that they do not know the vocabulary because
> you are just talking about that word, and students do not know what you want
> them to do. So that's how they end up just staring at you. So, can you just show
> them with Total Physical response (TPR) or show them pictures.

Annie believes in the power of pictures and visuals. To introduce a writing

assignment, she selected a picture for the teacher to use at the beginning of whole group

instruction. She then brainstormed vocabulary that is associated with the picture and

modeled how to write sentences with the whole group. When they finished

brainstorming, the students worked independently. She established a systematic process

that begins with one single visual and expanded on that theme throughout each station.

Annie teaches the whole child and adheres to state mandated assessments. She

believes if she teaches the grade-level content and infuses language development skills,

then she is preparing them for life and for the state assessments. Students need time to

become proficient in English, but they hurdle many obstacles to increase their language

proficiency. State assessments are challenging mandates, but Annie and the Goode's

Field administration team have a holistic approach and use data to personalize instruction

for all SIFE ELs. The team realizes it is an unrealistic expectation for students to be fully

proficient in reading and writing in one year, but the expectation is to give each student

the tools, resources, and social and emotional support to build a sturdy foundation for

continued growth in the years that follow.

Integrating culturally diverse literature in small groups is something Annie

routinely does. The books are leveled readers and it is difficult to find appropriate content

for high school students. She infuses multicultural pictures that represent various

countries and cultures. Annie explains,

> I display a variety of cultural pictures because in our countries, beautiful people
> are white, and my students feel inferior. I teach them how to read but we also
> must discuss the human aspect of life. My room has a representation of many
> different cultures; therefore, my students will see their faces in the pictures and
> visuals.

Annie sets high expectations and pushes her students to exceed their personal

goals. She works individually with students depending on their target needs and moves to

another group and serves the needs of a group of five SIFE ELs. The usual strategy of

pairing a high speaker with a low speaker is not used in this SFE EL class. Instead, she

explains,

> I try to pair them by languages, by abilities, and either by strengths or
> weaknesses. Sometimes I do pair the lower language levels together and can
> observe who is the strongest; that is the one I will have helping somebody else in
> the future. They learn to help each other because at this school we get new
> students weekly, so we learn quickly to help others.

Annie expressed the importance of knowing her students' interests and she

incorporates music, auditory centers, visuals, coloring and drawing, and kinesthetic

activities. Songs are sometimes used to differentiate student work and Annie works

diligently to find songs her students can connect to. She explains,

> We sing songs. I take a song that is number one in the charts and we look for high frequency words or we look for the sounds that we have been learning. They love songs, and I must look for clean versions. Even though my babies are my babies, here, in my heart, they are old people, so I need to find something that is appealing. I try to look for things that get their attention according to their age.

She allows students to experience a productive struggle by asking them to attempt

activities above their reading level. This productive struggle challenges them and pushes

them; however, she must monitor closely to make sure they do not give up. Annie and her

students spend time using laptops, but initially she must teach them the basic of how to

use laptops. When students learn how to operate the laptops, they complete assignments

in centers.

Students complete their work using dry erase boards, laptops, or notebooks. She

receives students that lack the use of fine motor skills, and she needs to teach them how

to hold a pencil and how to hold a pair of scissors and cut. She incorporates cutting and

pasting into individual activities, so students can practice these skills in conjunction with

creating a PowerPoint presentation. All work must be differentiated because students are

on different ability levels and she is acutely aware that data allow her to scaffold

activities and assignments to meet their individual needs.

Annie infuses her students' first language and culture in the lessons so that

students are able to make connections. She provides students with opportunities to work

independently and in groups. There are many chances for students to collaborate, and

Annie uses strategies such as turn and talk, graphic organizers, repetition, gestures, Total

Physical Response, chunking, pictures, realia, gestures, songs, and chants. They have

many group discussions and Annie provides opportunities for them to speak, ask

questions, and challenge each other with questions. She integrates different strategies for

each activity to meet the needs of all her SIFE ELs and they are able to connect to at least

one way of executing a problem or a writing prompt. Annie has prepared them

academically and provided her students a solid foundation to support their language and

academic growth.

Sissy's Strategies to Support SIFE ELs

Sissy shares that the educational background of her SIFE ELs is challenging and

requires a team approach to target and meet their academic needs. The 20 students in her

class have an average five-year gap and are illiterate in their first language. The

challenges are monumental and overwhelming, but the teachers and curriculum facilitator

analyze data, group the targeted areas, identify strategies, and with student and parent

input, devise and implement a plan. The student plan evolves on a daily and weekly basis

and is modified based on progress monitoring results.

Establishing a plan to combat the academic gaps involves teacher collaborative

planning sessions. Teachers collaborate to infuse appropriate scaffolds and strategies into

each activity and lesson. The process is lengthy, and the necessary commitment is

admirable. Sissy shares,

> I think especially in a SIFE classroom, learning is an individual process, and I
> track it individually. I would encourage anyone coming into my classroom to look
> at their individual trajectories, even though it may look different from the

trajectory of a child who was fortunate enough to have consistent schooling experiences.

Sissy indicated that the lesson planning process is critical to the work because each individual student has his or her specific needs and instructional supports need to match the gaps. The philosophy in her classroom is that all students must be given the opportunity to dream. Students share future goals with her, and she capitalizes on that emotion and joy. The state assessments are comprised of defined, grade-level content, but despite this constant academic pressure, Sissy says,

> I try to make our classroom a place where people feel safe and where they like to be, and where it is okay to be funny or it is okay to dance. I had a boy last year who wanted to dance all the time. I made space in our rules and expectations where he could still do that without getting into trouble.

Sissy explains her beliefs regarding educating SIFE ELs:

> I believe in getting to know students and seeing what they can do academically when I first meet them. Getting to know them as people is what helps me motivate them. We also try to help them adjust emotionally as needed.

Sissy believes that hard work is the key to her teaching. She says, "I am here in the morning, I am here in the afternoon, and I do not leave until I am finished." She believes in going out to the community and meeting parents and community members. She shares,

> I have been to many of the refugee churches in the area, so I have met parents. I attended a Christmas play, and that meant a lot to my students that I had taken the time to see their play. I think it's important to not only think of them as students

but to think of them as people. It is also important to get to know the community. I think building trust with parents is key.

She feels strongly that relationships are the building blocks to teaching the core standards, reading, and writing. She believes in making sure every student is making reading growth and if the students are not progressing in either language, then they are referred for further testing; the staff has referred submitted EC referrals. She believes that giving up is not an option and says,

If something is not working, it's our job to find what will work, how we are going to help this child grow academically and adjust appropriately to being in a school setting in the United States. This takes persistence.

Sissy explained that differentiation is key to making content comprehensible. She expressed that when she has a student she is struggling with, she imagines that they are a 12-year-old version of her husband. She stated that this vision keeps her focused and patient even at the height of frustration. "I think keeping about the people in my life that I want to be successful in mind helps me stay motivated." She believes that the success of her students is a direct reflection of her teaching and she takes the responsibility seriously.

Sissy's SIFE EL reading instruction includes a tutor and reading specialist. All students, and especially the ones with the greatest need, work with the reading specialist. The students spend the majority of the time with Sissy and she teaches foundational literacy, small group instruction, English Language Arts, and Science. In order to give the SIFE ELs a modified middle school experience, the students go to another teacher for

word work which includes spelling, vocabulary, and writing instruction. The tutor

facilitates the small group reading instruction. The experience of switching classes will

prepare them for middle school and as much as they need the safety net, they need to

experience and work with other teachers. The students range in ages between 10 and 15

in grades six through eight, and as they grow academically and socially, moving students

to mainstream classes within Goode's Field Newcomers is a common practice. Sissy

believes it is her responsibility to provide her students with a solid education because she

is astutely aware that

> students who have interrupted instruction or lack of access to formal schooling in
> their native countries or in refugee situations need a teacher who is willing to find
> any means possible to ensure that they can read, write, and speak.

The challenges do not impede her determination to meet the needs of her students but

drive her to close their achievement gap. The importance "is to build their stamina and

endurance so they can finish their personal race against struggles and mandates."

Sissy infuses pictures, videos, music, and examples that are inclusive of different

backgrounds and cultures. She explains,

> National Geographic publishes the textbook we have. It is inclusive, so just
> making sure that everyone sees himself or herself in what we are doing helps
> them see themselves being successful in what we are doing. I try to differentiate
> appropriately so that everybody can access it.

Prior to distributing any work, books, or pictures, she reviews and takes into

consideration the diversity of the characters, theme, and setting of the books. Cultural

differentiation and strategy integration are critical to the work of language and content

development. Sissy shares,

> I am going to use a documentary called "On Their Way to School." It shows four
> different schooling experiences, and we are going to talk about how those are
> different and similar to ours

Differentiated instruction in Sissy's classroom depends on the students' reading

levels. She scaffolds and provides work on the students' levels when they are working

independently. Students who are working with Sissy complete work that is a little above

their reading levels and experience a productive struggle. She explains, "When they are

with me, we are working on getting them to the next IRLA level." During their English

Language Arts block students engage in the Learning, Language, and Literacy (3Ls)

Framework which integrates grade-level academic themes and language standards, using

complex and compelling texts. The 3Ls Framework focuses on acceleration of English

Learners rather than remediation. This district initiative incorporated training for all EL

teachers and full implementation began in the fall of 2018. Sissy shares, "We use the 3Ls

Framework, so students have access to grade level content and content they could not do

independently without my support, scaffolds and differentiation." SIFE ELs in Sissy's

class are with her most of the day; therefore, it is critical that she differentiates and

modifies all assignments, classwork, projects, and homework to make learning

comprehensible.

Sissy has an extensive depth of knowledge understanding the complexity of the

academic language demands of the classroom. When she is writing sentence frames, she

anticipates what will be challenging and disclosed, "Sometimes I do a pretty decent job and sometimes it does not work like I imagined it was going to, and this is when I have to innovate during instruction." She expresses the importance of not assuming that students know a concept and assessing their background knowledge. She explained that she taught a unit on plants and was a week into the lesson when she began discussing roots and explaining that the root was in the ground. Her students did not believe her, and she had to show them a video and have the following discussion: "Let's talk about how everything I am going to tell you in Science is true. This is not up for debate. This is not philosophy. I think things that I believe are known or obvious, but sometimes I get it wrong." Sissy trusts her instincts and adjusts her lessons according to the needs of her students.

Sissy's lessons reflect a variety of strategies and group work. In a specific lesson, the following Essential Question (EQ) is on the board: What types of plants grow in different habitats? She explains that to the students that they can use adjectives to describe a habitat using a language frame. The EQ is the central focus of the lesson and strategies such as pictures, repetition, chunking, sentence frames, questioning, graphic organizers, and Total Physical Response (TPR) are used to unearth the answer to the EQ. Students are reading independently while Sissy circulates the classroom and assists individual students by reading to them or asking questions. She explains that she is going to read aloud, and she wants them to listen for adjectives. While she reads, she has pictures and words for students to make connections. As the lesson progresses, she

embeds Tier 2 and Tier 3 words such as *text evidence*, *habitat*, and *prairie*, as well as Tier I words as part of the lesson.

Small group reading instruction consists of students with the same reading levels as measured by the IRLA assessment. The students range from Read to Me to Level I. Instruction focuses on suffixes, prefixes, prediction, and compound words. She reinforces the importance of using context clues, strategies, and looking at the pictures to make connections. She reminds them to predict the meaning when they do not know it and to cover up the suffix, sound out the word, and try to read the root word. Sissy led the students on picture walks and prediction conversations and made connections to students' culture and families during the readings. She reinforced strategies that students could use to convey meaning of a word and asked questions to assess their reading comprehension. Students integrate the skills taught in this lesson across all disciplines.

Sissy exposes the students to a variety of literature. Students immerse themselves with learning the lines to a Uganda and Swahili folk tale and a favorite of Nelson Mandela. She introduced the play and explained the importance of reading diverse plays, "It is important that we read but we must read different genres to grow our view of the world and increase our vocabulary and improve our grammar and punctuation." Sissy rewrote the play to include the students' level Power Words or sight words. Students struggled pronouncing words and were enthusiastic about acting out the scenes. The dramatic element to this assignment engaged students in a fun and interactive manner. The integration of harp music in the background was calming and students working independently, swaying to the music. During the 90-minute reading block students

rotated form Quizlet centers with a tutor to vocabulary, reading, writing, and keyboarding centers. Sissy explains, "Most of my students have not been on a computer and I have to teach the basics. I have taught them how to use a keyboard and they are practicing this very important skill."

Differentiation and scaffold supports are integrated into the four language domains: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. In the Animal Kingdom unit, she used verbal questioning, sentence frames, TPR, word banks, interactive whiteboard, choral reading, wait-time, and she provided many examples. She explained to the students, "If the author says something twice it is important. If the author says the word many times, then it is very important. If you see the word multiple times, then that is the main idea." She used gestures, facial expressions, repetition, and requires students to justify their answers. Scaffolds and differentiation were embedded into the content to support and provide students with a rigorous curriculum. SIFE ELs were encouraged to help each other in their first language and students supported each other using their native languages. If a student was not understanding a concept being taught, other students raised their hands and asked the teacher if they could try to explain it in their language to help make the needed connections. Sissy has taught them that they have the power and knowledge in being bilingual. The students are used to working on different content with a variety of classmates with differing language levels. They do experience productive struggles, but it pushes them to learn and help each other.

Sissy displays anchor charts, pictures, and student work in all the units that she teaches. The classroom walls are evidence of the work produced by the students.

Evidence of animal kingdoms, the tundra, or habitats hangs on the walls. Student work

hangs on the walls and bulletin boards reflect the concepts students have learned.

The amount of time that students are able to attend Goode's Field is frustrating to

Sissy. She understands the philosophy behind the rule, but this does not allow sufficient

time to work with SIFE ELs. There are many district initiatives and Sissy is determined

to adhere to the mandates while meeting the needs of her students. Time is challenging

but she realizes that for now the time constraint is not going to change, so she pushes

forward. She candidly shares,

> I think I am always trying to learn how to be a better teacher. I definitely do not
> think I have all the answers. I am going to try to meet everybody's goals this year.
> We have American Reading Company (ARC), this SIFE textbook, and the
> Learning, Language, and Literacy (3Ls) framework. I teach grade-level science
> standards, and I try to synthesize all the expectations into a coherent daily plan
> with my students. I am trying to make everything work. That is my challenge
> instructionally.

It is evident that Sissy differentiates and provides multiple supports for each

activity that she delivers. The routines are established, expectations are high, and student

work is challenging. Sissy's lesson plans reflect each idea that she has fleshed out and the

many hours she has spent delving into student data to orchestrate linguistically

challenging and beautifully delivered lessons.

Will's Strategies to Support SIFE ELs

As the curriculum facilitator at Goode's Field, Will sees teachers infusing best

practices into instruction on a weekly basis. When teachers plan, they keep academic

language demands at the forefront of each task as well as the supports and scaffolds that

will provide students with what they need to be successful. They analyze student data,

determine the needs of each student, and create centers, reading groups, and activities

based on their needs. Daily assessments and weekly progress monitoring are essential to

creating fluid groups and targeted lessons and activities. The time invested in planning

allows for differentiation in all activities and lessons. Will believes,

> For me differentiated instruction comes hand in hand with equity, which is what the student needs. It is on us, the instructors, to reach the student where he or she is. So, again, we go to Piaget when we talk about prior knowledge. We go back to Vygotsky when we talk about the zone of proximal development and talk about scaffolding so that differentiation is there; differentiation is in the scaffolding that I need in order to reach that zone of proximal development. If the kid is not getting it, it is not the child, it is that I have not been able to figure out what that zone of proximal development is.

He views differentiation as "the way you present the materials." It was evident in both

classrooms that students have access to on grade-level content using multiple infused

strategies. Will states,

> We make content accessible by looking at their learning styles and presenting the same content in different ways. Therefore, as I present I may hook them with something that is visual, and that may grab some of my students, but then I use TPR to pull in another group.

He has worked with both SIFE EL teachers to develop whole group instruction that

embeds differentiation. He shares,

> You know, sometimes we tend to think that differentiation only happens at one set point. No, whole group is not a one size fits all. Whole group needs to have different entry points for your students.

SIFE ELs in middle school are in an elementary schedule setting named in-house hybrid schedules. The students will go to a math or a science class in their grade-level cohorts, attend literacy support with their teacher, and slowly transition to the "mainstream" classes. Will coaches the SIFE EL teachers from a natural, explicit, and deliberate approach. Student exposure to language is a critical component because they pick up the language in the natural approach, but language instruction must be explicit and deliberate because time is of the essence. Students that have that innate ability to pick up language will do so with ease and those with different learning styles will struggle to acquire language. Will reflects,

> Kids are required to perform at the end of the year when they take the End-of-Grade exams; therefore, we need to pair language acquisition that comes naturally with the language learning that is deliberate and explicit. So, for me language instruction is a good balance when using both approaches.

Culture is a critical component to climate and content instruction. The majority of the SIFE ELs come from collectivism cultures, so teachers must keep that in mind when planning and integrating activities. Students' oral communication is valued in most of the cultures represented in the SIFE EL class; however, they face a new culture that values print communication. Will shares,

> Another way of being culturally responsive is to start from the oral communication and transition the students into writing. We must always keep in mind that if the language learner is not a big part of what we do, then the kids may as well be in any other school besides Goode's Field.

Teachers who differentiate tasks consider the whole child and Will is the integral part; he models, researches, and provides professional development to the SIFE EL teachers. Based on data, the three educators collaborate and discuss the best practices for each activity and what strategies will affected each student.

Will has a unique questioned-based approach to science that he has shared with Annie and Sissy. They start with what the students know and scaffold up to the scientific method. The belief is that someone in the group knows because "we are speaking about middle school and high school students. They have had many experiences." The students can engage in many of the opportunities presented in each lesson because of the variety of strategies infused in each activity.

The use of the students' second, third, or in some cases fourth language is encouraged and accepted. Will believes that the teachers must make the decision because they "need to be comfortable with other people speaking other languages without their understanding what is going on." He explains that if a student is going through an emotional situation, "I will resort to that native language, because that is the language of their heart." The teachers have shared their opinions with the students and have explained the importance of using English as much as possible to become fluent. Teachers built relationships with their students and know them; therefore, this implementation has worked well. Will believes,

> You may want to try to learn some words in their language because that shows that you also have a growth mindset. They are not the only ones who have to figure it out and somehow, you level the playing field a little bit. Therefore, you are telling them that you are a learner as well. It does not matter that I am the teacher, I am a learner too, and I can try to learn some of your languages; they

love and respect that you try. Nevertheless, at the same time, I really want you to learn English, because this is how you are going to be successful here in this reality today, so I need you to practice as much as possible.

The educational gaps are challenging, but keeping in mind the trials and tribulation students have conquered keeps Will focused. The students "are very resilient and are eager to learn, but at the same time in their social emotional area, they are struggling with many things." The responsibility to provide a path with less obstacles and support is the goal of the educators.

The perception that SIFE ELs are not capable is a notion Will struggles to understand. SIFE ELs have years of interrupted education but have years of knowledge on how the world functions and operates. Will shares,

> I was impressed with one child who was not able to do the two plus whatever it was. He was not able to do the paper-pencil math, but he could tell you about meters, kilos, and how to add and how to subtract, even though he did not know that was adding and subtracting. He could also add and subtract with money.

SIFE EL teachers analyze data to help determine students' educational gaps. Data determine the course of action for each student. Will shared that four years ago they were having difficulties serving SIFE ELs. They were struggling in regular classes and teachers expressed that "they could not reach them academically because of the severe gaps." SIFE EL data reflected that they were not growing as expected. Will researched and learned more about educating SIFE ELs. Will shares,

> I learned about the programs that are specific for the needs and tailored to the needs of SIFE students. I learned about a specific school in New York that was

successful with SIFE students and the program we have now for SIFE ELs was created from that model.

Will indicated that they had doubts on how to transition students to other groups because it was not good to isolate them completely. Will researched the best transitions and as a group, they determined the strategy that impacted the students the most. They concentrated human capital and resources into the classrooms and focused on their needs. Will and the teachers progress monitor and are attentive to their growth and they slowly transition them to classes within Goode's Field. They provide the safety net and are careful to maintain the levels of support and include the social worker, counselor, EC teacher, mainstream teacher, and reading specialist. Will explains that it is important that "they are protected in many ways and all the resources are concentrated where they are."

Summarizing Instructional Strategies

Annie and Sissy's classrooms were inviting and fun. It was evident in the teacher and student interactions that the students were happy and that their affective filters were low. Each segment of instruction embedded teacher and student talk. The conversations revolved around content, but teachers joked with their students, smiled, laughed, and hugged. Coding reflected that interaction was a strategy frequently implemented. The environment was safe and engaging in both classrooms. Teachers consistently demonstrated respect, advocacy, and cultural and linguistic appreciation for each student in each classroom.

Annie
Explicit Reading and Writing Instruction
Student Centered Classroom
Mini-Lessons
Music
Coloring
Drawing

Respect   Advocacy   Established Routines   Analyze Data   Graphic Organizors   Repetition
Baseline Assessments   Gestures   Safe Environment   Scaffolds   Justification of Answers   Scaffolds   Chunking
Realia   Timer   Group Discussions   Questioning   Language Frames   Visuals
Human Capitol   Pictures   Student Talk   Centers   Total Physical Response   Rigorous Expectations
Grade-Level Instruction   Turn and Talk
Cultural Material   High Expectations   Progress Monitoring   90-Minute Reading Block
Group Discussions   Exposure to different Types of Genere   Targeted Independent Student Work
Use of First Language   Differentiation According to Need   Daily and Weekly Assessments
Student and Teacher Interaction   Data Aligned Instruction   Individual and Group Activites
Integrating Culturally Diverse Literature   Cultural and Linguistic Appreciation   Teacher Collaborative Planning

Sissy
Facial Expressions
Anchor Charts
Display of Current
Student Work

Will
Start with what students
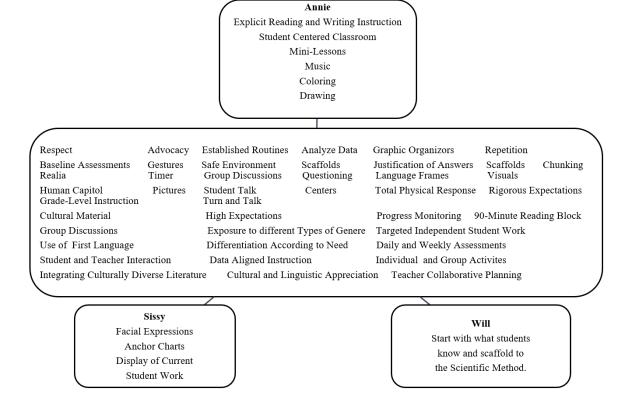know and scaffold to
the Scientific Method.

Figure 3. Strategies to Support SIFE ELs.

The collaboration between Will, Annie, and Sissy allowed content to be comprehensible and students had access to grade-level curriculum. Strategies were used 90% of the time and multiple strategies were embedded in one section of the lesson. In one lesson focusing on habitats, Sissy used the interactive board, large and small group instruction, individual work, visuals, read aloud, a graphic organizer, language frames, TPR, a timer, chunking gestures, the use of the student's first language, scaffolds, and pictures. Annie's strategy implementation mirrored that of Sissy's. Annie engaged in conversations with her students and she asked them to justify their answers. Cultural material, cultural diversity of pictures, and implementation of diverse content were widely used. Teachers worked diligently to find and utilize diverse material. Both

teachers expressed that it is worth the time and effort because their students must see their own reflection in the characters in the books, the videos they see, music they hear, and the songs they sing. The content was rigorous, expectations were high, teacher and student engagement were remarkable, and students were successfully producing academic work.

Negotiating Challenges with SIFE ELs

Interview and observation data were used to answer the third research question, "How do teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIFE ELs?" These interviews were conducted at the commencement of the study, during the middle, and at its culmination.

Social and Emotional Support

To describe the characteristics and needs of SIFE ELs, strategies to promote social and emotional well-being of SIFE ELs, and program models and instructional practices of SIFE ELs, four themes are highlighted: relationships, curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments. Relationships involved the interactions among the teachers and students. In both classrooms, strong relationships were established to create a positive learning environment.

Annie's Beliefs Regarding Social and Emotional Support

The main focuses for Annie are her students on an academic level and social emotional level. The students do not have cumulative folders; therefore, the school is the first point of contact and must build the folder. Annie works with the school

interpreters/community liaisons, school counselor, and social worker to call homes and

conduct home visits to get background and cultural information. Annie discloses,

> Assessments begin during the summer months. Teachers administer language
> assessments during registration and we spent this time getting to know our
> students and families. We spend the time assessing language, reading, content
> area knowledge, and asking questions about their lives. We work hard on building
> that connection, so the process may take several hours with one family.

Annie communicates expectations with parents during phone calls and home visits

and believes that this is a critical component to her classroom management. She relies on

the community support and is grateful to have so many volunteers, tutors, and a student

teacher. Annie explains,

> We have tutors, we have interpreters, and we have volunteers, many volunteers.
> They come and read with students. They read to those who are at the Read to Me
> level, since they need someone to read to them. Tutors in SIFE classes are very
> important. At the very beginning of the year it is kind of difficult for them to
> function independently, so it takes a while. It's better to have two or three adults
> in the room if possible.

Annie expressed that one of her challenges is the perception that her students are

lazy is one that general education teachers at Goode's Field Newcomers School often

have about her students. When encountered with this notion, she advocates for her

students and gives teachers suggestions. Annie responds,

> No, he or she is not lazy. It would help if you differentiate because you are
> teaching something that is 10th grade-level and he is reading on a Kindergarten
> level. We talk and discuss their options and at times, when asked, I model a
> lesson.

When students have behavior issues, she explains, "Many times it has to do with the fact that the content is too difficult." This train of thought compounds when the students' families focus on their deficiencies. Students know their shortcomings and they are acutely aware when their teachers or parents believe they are not up to par with the other students their age. Annie offers suggestions to her colleagues and with their parents. When she addresses parents, she explains,

> Everyone is born good at doing something. Some people are great at learning languages and others are lucky that they went to school in their home countries. We all have different ability levels and it is my job to tap into their strengths and teach them to read and write. Along the way, your child will teach me because he is smart.

Annie has built relationships with her colleagues and they respect her; therefore, they heed her advice and parents listen to her feedback.

Students in Annie's class have varying home situations. Sometimes they are experiencing reunification situations in which they have not seen a parent, in some cases for over ten years, and now find themselves with siblings and maneuvering the challenges of stepparents. There are students who have witnessed parents being murdered, themselves experiencing sexual and emotional violence, or have lived in refugee camps for several years. The emotional struggles play out in the classroom and eventually these students open up to Annie. She works closely with the school social worker and counselor and connects students to counseling services provided by a local university which offers group counseling services during the school day as well as outpatient family counseling. The social and emotional connection and trust that Annie's SIFE students and

their parents have with her is admirable. The home challenges are often significant, but the counseling services provided by the university's professional psychologists and interns is a service unique to Goode's Field.

The academic challenges are extensive, but the supports in place provide the building blocks for students to learn. The challenge lies in the amount of time the students can spend at the school. Goode's Field is a segregated setting; therefore, students are permitted to stay one year unless there is detailed supporting documentation proving otherwise. Most of the students attend Goode's Field for one year, but Annie believes that additional time would serve the SIFE students well. Annie works diligently to provide students with foundational skills, language development instruction, and content language, but it is a race and the runner has a disadvantage due to time. Annie believes that, "my babies are smart, and they can and do learn. They need time to master basic skills, learn to read with confidence, and with time they will be successful."

The academic challenges are obstacles, home situations are extremely difficult, and the limited amount of time at Goode's Field is minimal, however, resolve and commitment demonstrated by Annie and the staff is admirable. They focus on each student to determine the best supports, develop an academic plan, and include parents and students in the decisions. Annie shares,

> We must give our students a chance to breathe, feel loved, and feel that someone does believe in them. It is my calling to help my students learn the academics and help them fit into this new society or in their new world where they were brought to live.

Annie believes that they can and will learn if she provides her students with the necessary differentiation, scaffolds, rigorous content with supports, and focused personalized instruction. She believes that building personal connections creates trust and respect which equates to student success. SIFE ELs in her class use the strategies she has taught them and work diligently in her class to complete assignments and to read and write, even when it is difficult. In her classroom they are family and are expected to help each other. Every day Annie says, "We help each other and do not leave anyone behind."

Sissy's Beliefs Regarding Social and Emotional Support

One of the most important elements to achieve success with SIFE ELs is a low stress environment. Sissy shares,

> I try to have a low stress environment so that their affective filter stays as low as possible. I try to always have something written for them to look at so that they do not have to memorize oral instructions or go with what they think I am saying. I try to foster independence as much as possible because I think real confidence comes from being successful independently; they will be more motivated to keep going because they feel like they can do it.

She believes in creating an atmosphere that reflects teacher and students as learners. She says, "If I do not know some words in Swahili or Spanish, I ask them, and I let them laugh at me if I do it wrong to show them everyone is learning something and nobody's perfect." From time to time she will co-teach with other teachers and observes that her students immediately stop talking. In her classroom, she reflects, "In our class we laugh, joke, and dance, and really have that community aspect where you feel like it is okay not to be perfect." She understands their cultural backgrounds, knows that they are from

collectivistic cultures, utilizes this strength, and embeds this concept in throughout her

instruction and activities.

Sissy has encountered people who believe that students need to speak English at

school. She approaches this comment with the following statement,

> The children are bilingual children. I am also bilingual, and I understand that to
> try to get a child during the hours between 7:30 – 3:30 to not be bilingual or to not
> validate their life experience is ultimately not helpful because this restricts their
> expressiveness. Therefore, I try to kindly interact with teachers, especially
> teachers who are not bilingual, and share that point of view.

Sissy believes that bilingual individuals can code switch at school. She is also aware that

others have very different and strong views. She says, "I try to always have productive

and constructive conversations with my colleagues while also standing up for what I feel

like is going to be the best environment for our students." Sissy is an advocate for her

students and her personal story fuels that advocacy.

Sissy explained that her husband is from a very rural small Central American

town, and she has visited his school. She had first-hand accounts of her husband's

education and saw the challenges that he and children in that area encountered due to the

lack of consistent access to high quality education. She believes that if she keeps this at

the forefront, she will continue to provide her students with a solid education. As she

explained,

> When I read articles, or I speak with Will, it always feels like we are talking about
> people who are far away. Nevertheless, when I think about the people and the
> schools they went to, it makes it real. Having had my life experience, I do not
> know if I am ever able to create true empathy, but I try to get as close as I can to

empathy for what my students have experienced by educating myself and by being the most prepared that I can be to meet them where they are.

Sissy shared that some students display emotional outbursts due to peaks of frustration. It is natural to view these outwardly aggressive outbursts as major behavior issues but getting to the root causes of these outbursts is the remedy to the problem. There are times that the fix is as simple as teaching students some coping strategies to cope with their frustration because they are going to continue to be frustrated for a while. When students display behavior issues, Sissy's first inclination is advocacy. Sissy shares,

> My advocacy begins with contacting interpreters to help with the communication and we visit the homes to speak with the family. The families and I work to together to generate a plan.

Sissy works with the counselor to disseminate the course of action taken, and generally, this involves reaching out to the local university providing counseling services. The collaboration with the home is critical to the work and the school staff works seamlessly to provide social emotional supports to the students.

She fosters independence in her students and expects them to take responsibility for their own learning. Students tracked their reading progress and kept track of their points to earn prizes at the end of the week. She also expects them to help each other and they take pride in helping their peers. The students are responsible for their homework logs and all assignments. Students demonstrate that they understand the expectations by following directions and asking for points when they follow the rules.

Sissy gets to know her students by going to their place of worship and homes to speak with their parents. She reviews language assessments, content assessments given to the students when they register, and relies on the IRLA reading assessment to give her a baseline. She assesses her students with the IRLA assessment weekly and adjusts her instruction accordingly. She uses a point system to keep track of their points. They become their own advocates and ask for their points if she does not immediately award them a well-deserved point. She knows her students and believes in each child.

Sissy knows her families. The expectation from administration is that all teachers have to call all parents in their homeroom within the first 30 days of school. There are interpreters that represent the top languages spoken at Goode's Field Newcomers, and Sissy utilizes their services to communicate with her parents. She explains that the first contact is always positive in order to establish a relationship. She encourages the parents to call and visit her. She states,

> When we have students whose parents want to meet with me, but they are unable because of lack of transportation, an interpreter and I go to meet with the parents. We visit the homes frequently because transportation is an obstacle and some neighborhoods are very far from the school.

Community is an integral part of a student's education and Sissy believes and supports volunteer and community involvement. She explains,

> I think that the community plays a psychological role of making people feel or not feel welcomed. If they feel welcomed, they are able to be vulnerable and try new things but if not, they feel nervous. I think people really do make newcomers feel welcomed in Greensboro. Community churches are supportive of refugee churches by providing school supplies and allowing them to use their facilities when enrolling our students for Pre-K.

Sissy is grateful for the vast number of volunteers and tutors that assist the students on a consistent and daily basis. Trained tutors are imperative to the work with the students. If the volunteers are tutoring, training is essential to their work as well. It is an expectation to work with all tutors and volunteers, and Sissy appreciates the extra hands. The tutors provide another layer of social and emotional support to students.

Sissy is open about her strengths and candid about being a life-long learner. She acknowledges that she reaches out to her curriculum facilitator and colleagues when she is having difficulties, as well as reaching out to parents when she needs support. She believes that she cannot do her job by herself and needs the community to rally around her children for them to experience success. She believes in investing time to establish relationships and sets high expectations for her SIFE students. They will succeed and have a wonderful academic foundation by the time they leave her classroom. The social and emotional supports are a critical component to support SIFE ELs.

Will's Beliefs Regarding Social and Emotional Support

Will believes that parents play an integral part in their children's education. Parents understand the importance of obtaining a high school diploma or a college degree and they are insistent that their children excel and create a better life for themselves. Will expressed,

> I am going to go back to something I learned not many years ago, the Mother Read program. That program solidified in me something that I think I always knew. Parents play an important role in their child's education and through the program parents obtain the skills to help their child academically at home. They may not have the time to execute this program, but they demonstrate to their children the importance of an education through their actions.

Parents demonstrate the importance of school by bringing them to school when they miss their bus or when they are waiting for transportation to be provided, and when they call or visit the school to inquire how their child is doing in school. Their time off from work is limited; therefore, the staff takes note and appreciates this action.

The community plays an important role to the students at Goode's Field and Will appreciates how they support the whole building. The community plays a huge role in the wellbeing of the children. Will further explains,

> Kids can come into this building and the parent can be told, "Do not worry, you do not need to bring a book bag, you do not need to worry about pencils or notebooks." The children smile because they know it is brand new; they are used to receiving used items, but they get a new book bag, a new notebook, and new pencils, and when they break, they get another one here at Goode's Field. The families can go to the clothing room and select whatever they need; the community has made this possible, not us. They play a huge role on the wellbeing of the children.

Will expressed his concern of the time constraint of one year for students attending Goode's Field. SIFE ELs have academic challenges and one year is not enough to meet their needs. Based on state assessments, individual student social and emotional needs, and intensive supports, an additional year at Goode's Field would strengthen the educational base for each student. Will mentioned, "If students were allowed to stay with us for two years, we could build a 2-year plan from the beginning."

He believes that educating SIFE ELs and giving them the foundational skills to tackle any obstacles they encounter is essential and by giving them these skills, he hopes that there are "less obstacles than the ones they have already experienced."

Time Constraint

Goodes Field serves students in grades three through 12 and based on the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), this is a segregated setting; therefore, students are able to attend for one year unless they have extenuating circumstances and with proper documentation may have up to another year. All three educators acknowledge the need for SIFE ELs to have an additional year extension. The OCR mandate and the students' needs to have a year extension are two competing goals which hinder the students' access to content and language development. The teachers do not allow this to impede how they educate and advocate for their SIFE ELs. Will understands the many initiatives and mandates, but he also believes "we are the bridge to what they understand today and for the requirements expected of them." The teachers and Will revise their lessons plans, check curriculum, and progress monitor their students. The staff works diligently to meet the students' needs and provide differentiation and scaffolds to support each lesson.

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

In Chapter II, the literature reviewed on SIFE ELs was extensive and contained both theory and practicum. The literature review contained a myriad of stories, strategies, program models, and a wealth of information regarding SIFE ELs' social and emotional development. This basic qualitative study of the two teachers and curriculum facilitator examined the academic gaps, social and emotional needs and the instructional practices and beliefs in this unique setting. The teachers' collaborative spirits and genuine care for their students was evident in their lessons and facilitation of the work. The varying differentiation and strategies infused in each lesson met the needs of all learners in their

classroom. The respect, care, and unconditional love was woven into the fabric of the classroom climate.

The beliefs were aligned across all three educators. Will, Annie, and Sissy believed that differentiation of grade-level content was a non-negotiable and the infusion of multiple targeted strategies for each task was necessary to meet the needs of each learner. Annie and Sissy provided the social and emotional care and advocated for each child. They linked families to resources and utilized the counseling services provided by the local university. Teachers accepted and valued the cultures and languages of each student.

Annie and Sissy focused on state standards and rigorous student expectations. The teachers focused on reading for a 90-minute block. During this time students were taught to read, and in addition, they had a 90-minute reading block designated for language arts. Will's research of best practices was infused in each lesson and collaborative vertical alignment planning kept Annie and Sissy focused on individual student goals. Teachers were assigned to work with tutors, the EC teacher, the reading teacher, and trained volunteers. Will and the teachers were strategic on how they utilized the team. The reading teacher, tutors, and volunteers each had specific groups with tailored student tasks. Progress monitoring data determined the targeted tasks, and as student data changed, the activities evolved to meet the needs. The use of the students' first language was strategic and used appropriately. Teachers encouraged the use and parameters were set as well. Teachers made sure the students understood that they valued and respected their languages and they could use it to figure out an assignment, to help each other, and

in personal emergencies; however, they needed to use English to communicate to the teacher. Teachers infused cultural books, pictures, songs, dance, art, and visual representations into lessons. The artifacts displayed in the classrooms connected to the students' cultures. The two educators made a consciousness effort to visit and call homes, visit community churches or mosques their students attended, go to hospitals to visit children that were ill, and attend soccer matches. The camaraderie in the classrooms with the teacher and students was evident.

In conclusion, the three educators were selected for these positions because of the care, the respect, and dedication they have for SIFE ELs. Will, Annie, and Sissy are passionate, dedicated, and diligently put an enormous amount of time to develop lesson plans and facilitate impeccable lessons to educate their children because they believe in their students and their students' success are their legacies.

Without a doubt, state standards, district initiatives, and daily and weekly progress monitoring are cumbersome; however, they adhere to the mandates and forge ahead because it is about the children. The students want to be part of these two classes and they want to contribute. Sissy shares,

> I need to let them show me how they want to contribute. I have noticed that even kids who cannot talk at the beginning really like to hold the door open. It is like they are saying, teacher, this is my contribution. I am going to hold the door for the class. So, I always try to make sure that everybody has a way to contribute so they feel valued and part of the group.

The team has set high expectations and students are rising to meet the mandates. They believe that they can do the work, and they do so with their teachers by their sides, preparing them to transition to their assigned home school.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As I walked towards Sissy's classroom I could hear the chatter from the hallway. I entered to find students practicing their fable from Uganda. Sissy took the fable and inserted the student's high frequency words. I encountered them acting out their scenes with laughter and enthusiasm. Sissy explained that they will perform for the elementary students and the students cheered with jubilation. The students' excitement and love for learning was exhilarating.

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was about capturing these moments and highlighting the teacher's creativity, hard work, and seeing it transferred over to student implementation. This study focused on the educational structures in place at Goode's Field to educate SIFE ELs. This basic qualitative study captured data through interviews, observations, and student work to explore the instructional beliefs and practices of two teachers, a curriculum facilitator, and a principal educating SIFE ELs. The study examined the academic needs, social and emotional supports, and instructional practices.

Summary of Findings

This chapter summarizes the findings presented in Chapter IV. It elicits findings from the literature review that focus on the integration of differentiation, social and emotional care of SIFE ELs, and family advocacy. Based on the findings of this study,

discussions and implications for teacher professional development, retention of SIFE staff, and recommendations for policy makers and researchers are also provided. This chapter includes the findings of the research based on the three research questions posed in Chapter I:

1. What are teachers' experiences and beliefs regarding working with SIFE ELs?

2. How do teachers use various teaching strategies to support SIFE ELs?

3. How do teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIFE ELs?

The discussion centers around teachers' perceptions, beliefs, negotiation of challenges, creating a positive social and emotional environment, and teachers' experiences working with SIFE ELs.

SIFE ELs are facing self-doubt, learning how to speak English, learning how to read for the first time, navigating their home life, learning their new culture but trying to honor their first, and in many cases working to contribute to their families' income. They face many precarious stages; however, it takes one person to change the trajectory of their lives. The teacher's perceptions, beliefs regarding educating SIFE ELs, the classroom environment, and background knowledge of educating this group of students is critical to their success. SIFE ELs need warriors to help them navigate their new world and at times their teachers and school community are the only ones able to assist them to circumvent their new world.

Teacher Experiences and Beliefs

The tendencies of educators to "teach to the middle" to the students with mid-growth was discussed in Chapter II. Due to this, a teacher's mindset regarding differentiation is key. Differentiation ensures that students learn and are able to demonstrate their learning (Dack & Tomlinson, 2015; Gregory & Burkman, 2012; Rock et al., 2008; Santisteban, 2014). The two participating teachers were acutely aware of the benefits of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of their SIFE ELs. Annie believed that differentiation was critical to the work. She believed that student talk was a critical component and that explicit reading and writing instruction was crucial to language development. Her belief derived from research that she and Will had conducted. They differentiated instruction, activities, and projects based on data. Sissy believed that relationships were crucial to teaching core standards and literacy, and that differentiation was important to making content comprehensible.

Annie and Sissy demonstrated competencies with integrating and infusing strategies into each activity and lesson. The use of graphic organizers, guiding questions, building background knowledge, small and large group instruction, and KWL charts were several of the strategies used to differentiate each lesson (Barone & Barone, 2012). The teachers infused differentiated tasks consistently on a daily basis. Supported by their curriculum facilitator, both Annie and Sissy attended vertical alignment planning sessions with colleagues. The lack of SIFE EL professional development opportunities hindered the team; therefore, they began researching best practices and educational programs specific to their academic needs. All three educators noted that their research unveiled the

implemented transitional model and reinforced the importance of integrating

differentiated tasks into lessons and activities. They embedded rigorous grade-level

standards into many levels of differentiated tasks.

The integration of SIFE ELs' culture into instruction is a critical component.

Teachers who are open and accepting of the different cultures in their classroom have

students who are willing to take risks, develop, and grow socially and academically

(Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Research reveals that teachers' backgrounds significantly

affect how they deliver instruction. Their beliefs and content interpretation influence the

delivery of lessons (Ajayi, 2011). Will, Annie, and Sissy were acutely aware of their

biases and made an effort not to allow their perceptions to influence instruction. They had

checks and balances infused during planning and both teachers had checkpoints with

Will. Research pinpoints the importance of genuinely caring for your students and

cultivating a cultural for social justice (Ajayi, 2011; Roessingh, 2006). They are the

advocates for their students and their students and families trust them, which research

reveals is essential (Roessingh, 2006).

Strategies to Support SIFE ELs

The second research question posed was, "How do teachers use various teaching

strategies to support SIFE ELs?" The integration of differentiated strategies is a critical

component for students to understand the content, make connections, and build academic

fluency. Curriculum can be segmented into three areas, "content, process, and product,"

and these segments can be scaffold to "overarching themes, goals, and objectives"

(Oaksford & Jones, 2001, p. 1). Modifying student work incorporates flexible groupings

and meeting the students were they are and providing supports. Differentiation includes "transferring the learning" to the students and assessing students at each level (Oaksford & Jones, 2001; Tomlinson, 1999). Annie and Sissy incorporated flexible grouping. They differentiated all tasks by providing multiple ways for students to engage in activities. Annie and Sissy were very clear in their beliefs with incorporating multiple opportunities to engage with grade-level content.

Differentiation is critical to the work; however, the social and emotional well-being of the SIFE EL is important as well. When the students do not feel secure or supported, this impacts their language development. Based on research, all students benefit from teaching social emotional strategies to interact with their peers (Adams & Richie, 2017; Elias et al., 2017; Herrmann, 2015; Zins & Elias, 2007). Differentiation and social emotional teaching go hand-in-hand and are not disconnected.

Based on research for this basic qualitative study, differentiation allows various opportunities to engage with content and embed culture to circumvent equity gaps (Dack & Tomlinson, 2015; Gregory & Burkman 2012; Santisteban, 2014). Both teachers utilized multiple strategies for one activity and each activity was based on individual student data. Both teachers implemented the four practices of differentiation, which include targeted content standards, data defining students' needs, incorporating assessments with instruction, and continuous adjustments of content (Tieso, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999). Activities, classroom instruction, group work, and all tasks were consistently differentiated and based on student data.

Community Partnerships

The school administrator expects that all his teachers make close connections to all the students at Goode's Field. The SIFE team worked closely with the social worker and counselor to provide support and connect the families to community agencies. The team worked in tandem, focusing on individual and family needs. The support provided to families is vital to the education of SIFE ELs. Parents are new to the educational system, culture, and do not possess the tools needed to navigate or advocate for their child. In addition, families may be facing personal obstacles such as finding employment, housing, utility needs, and transportation dilemmas (Hos, 2016). Additionally, poverty affects the child in the community, school, and home, and it is possible for them to experience stress, violence, and bedlam (Dearing et al., 2016). Goode's Field provides individual family assistance and the safety net the community provides is remarkable. The literature is clear on providing family supports due to dropout rate of SIFE ELs, specifically Latinos (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Osterling, 2001; Gahungu et al., 2011). Goode's Field staff rally around the families and provide monetary supports, nourishment, clothing, and household items. The social worker has a community room where families "shop" for the needed items. The principal is working with a community church to purchase an industrial washer and dryer and donations for laundry detergent so that families have access to clean clothes. The whole child is educated at Goode's Field, and the outpouring support provided to the families is like none other. Will and the SIFE teachers connect with their students and have relationships and trust with the families, so they feel comfortable reaching out when they encounter obstacles and needs.

A local university provides mental health services and parents approve the services without hesitation. Research from Chapter II denotes that school staff must be aware of cultural norms regarding mental health services and the stigma attached to mental illness. Recent arrivals may associate a mental illness with a weakness. School staff give parents counseling information and an overview on counseling services in their native language (Kramer et al., 2009; Kugler & Price, 2009; Suarez-Orocco et al., 2009). When students need services and parents refuse to participate, the counselor and staff member visit the homes. Staff at Goode's Field give SIFE ELs supports, modeling, adult mentors, and classrooms that are safe, inviting, and filled with love.

Reflective Summary

As a former EL student, I can relate to the challenges and experiences our students and families face on a daily basis. I am acutely aware that I have climbed mountains and succeeded because of my teachers, mentors, and administrators. My personal conviction each day is to open doors and provide the supports and advocacy to the students and families I encounter. It is my obligation to teach them about our educational system and give them the tools to maneuver through the challenges they are presented.

I appreciated the opportunity to research an area in my field. As a teacher, principal, and district administrator I was keenly interested in researching SIFE ELs in this unique setting. SIFE ELs face many challenges in addition to learning English. I was intrigued by their plight and the teachers in this unique setting that educate them. I learned that the students and teachers are resilient and people are important. The

educators at Goode's Field are an integral part of the school and are committed and invested to their students and families. The retention of these educators is critical to the foundation of the school.

As I conducted research, I reflected on the findings and was able to identify several areas of need that could be immediately implemented. In collaboration with the SIFE EL teachers, we identified several professional development sessions that could be offered to Goode's Field and Colbert County educators. Professional development targeting the SIFE EL population would enhance the current work implemented at Goode's Field Newcomers and provide strategies to educators in the district. The logistics are currently being devised and course offerings are forthcoming.

My new learning focused on the students and providing vocational opportunities for them. In collaboration with human resources, school administrators, teachers, counselors, and transportation department, we devised a plan to offer vocational courses to students in the areas of construction, metals, collision and repair, and culinary. Goode's Field administration and Annie spoke with the students regarding their interests and explained their choices. The school counselor and interpreters reached out to the families to discuss the options and the students chose their area of interests. We were able to hire a bilingual tutor to assist the students with the content material and transition. The new semester has commenced and the students began their new journey with excitement and hope for the future.

I personally learned a lot from this research and was able to see the school from another perspective. I celebrated the phenomenal work of the administrators, teachers,

students, families, and community. I was able to step out of my role to research this incredible school, the educators, and community that open doors of opportunity to our most vulnerable students. I discovered that this gem supports and truly creates a bridge between home and school. I encourage administrators to step out of their roles and conduct research at their sites. The findings can be used to create additional opportunities and confirm the shortcomings. I have been placed in my role to open doors of opportunities for the next generation. I stand on mighty shoulders of those educators and mentors who opened doors of opportunities for me.

Negotiating Challenges

Chapter IV outlines the challenging factors that become barriers with educating SIFE ELs. This section discusses how the teachers and staff negotiate the challenges to meet the needs of their SIFE ELs. The challenges have become stepping stones to create opportunities for students and families. The Goode's Field staff collaborate with community partners and staff to find solutions for the challenges they encounter.

Time Constraint

The third question of focus was, "How do teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIFE ELs?" Mandates from OCR stipulate that SIFE ELs are able to attend Goode's Field for one year and with documentation, an extension for an additional semester may be permissible. This poses a challenge to the teachers educating SIFE ELs. In Annie and Sissy's classrooms, the focus was teaching students to read, teaching academic content, and infusing social language and social cultural expectations into everything they did. They taught vocabulary based on literature and infused strategies

across content instruction. Lessons were data driven and strategies were integrated into large and small group work, individual tasks, and project-based activities. Their SIFE ELs had a 90-minute block of reading instruction during which they rotated to different centers targeting their specific needs. Teachers used anchor charts, pictures, visuals, realia, videos, songs, and games on a daily basis to reinforce the concepts taught. The differences in the two classrooms were the materials and content because of the different grade levels. Teachers seamlessly intertwined essential questions, language objectives, and content vocabulary into each lesson. They progress monitored daily and administered reading assessments weekly. Data from daily assessments helped adjust lessons and teachers used reading assessment data to construct reading groups, assign readers, and create centers.

The staff does not have any control on the time constraint; however, they know that the delivery of content and teaching their SIFE ELs to read is of the upmost importance. Will and the teachers consistently remained focused on writing and facilitating targeted lessons to impact language and reading development.

Use of First Language

SIFE ELs bring their life experiences, languages, and cultures to school and Will, Annie, and Sissy encouraged the use of both languages. The disapproval of students using their first language at Goode's Field was very strong, and all three educators had intense conversations regarding the importance of the students using their home languages. Will, Annie, and Sissy advocated for their students and understood the power of respecting the students' cultures and languages. Research from Chapter II indicates

that integration of the first language with the second language provided with supports contributes to students achieving substantial academic gains (Christian et al., 2000). The goal is to embed language into the content and not teach in silos. Their colleagues' personal views did not influence what the SIFE teachers executed in their classroom instruction. Research and administration supported the use of the student's first language.

Goode's Field interpreters translate all the letters, documents, and any school or district communication in the languages represented in their school. Staff, along with bilingual staff members, conduct home visits, record connect ed messages, make phone calls, send home flyers, and send home assessments in the home languages. The Goode's Field staff understands the importance of communicating with parents in their first language; however, the struggle is with students speaking their first language at school.

Will, Annie, and Sissy work collaboratively with the Goode's Field staff when a student's family member is deported, if sickness affects the family, when there is a loss of employment, or with any difficulties the family encounters. Even though there are differing philosophies about first language usage in the classroom, the staff unites to provide students with a safety net. Will's research of best practices and program models were implemented into the SIFE program developed at Goode's Field. He trained the teachers and they worked collaboratively to infuse best practices, student language and culture into their classrooms.

Sissy integrated individual computer assignments with reading and writing assignments. Colbert County had installed firewalls making it very difficult to access many sites; however, as Sissy was circulating the classroom, she encountered several

students playing computer games. When Sissy inquired how they were able to access the games, they told her they used their languages to access the sites. Sissy contacted the technology department and they confirmed that the system was unable to recognize the students' home languages. SIFE ELs brought their knowledge to school and teachers celebrated their skills and talents.

Professional Development

Colbert County district office provides professional development for EL and content teachers. The EL office provides a variety of training on strategies, differentiation, language acquisition, and culture. All training focuses on EL students and teacher preparedness to teach content and language acquisition. District professional development does not focus specifically on SIFE ELs; instead, Will researched best practices and programs and provided training to Annie and Sissy. The SIFE teachers made content comprehensible by infusing strategies in centers, group and individual work. Collaborative and vertical planning allowed them to align content and language objectives and to infuse writing into lessons and writing centers. They aligned all work to student data and focused on authentic texts as they infused strategies into activities and lessons; these strategies included pictures, TPR, repetition, visuals, realia, graphic organizers, class Dojo, gestures, appropriate pacing, computers, demonstration, and wait time. Student talk is central, and both educators asked questions and engaged students in conversations. They asked students to engage in project-based activities using whole group, small group, and partner interaction routinely. Consistency was a key element in both classrooms.

Community

The community partnerships at Goode's Field has taken many years to build. Administrators have connected with faith-based organizations, community agencies, advocacy groups, and private organizations to donate clothing, household supplies, establish a food pantry, sponsor soccer teams, coordinate dental services, assist with housing, and provide students and families with individual and family counseling. The staff has enveloped the children with care and have pinpointed the exact needs of the families. The social worker, counselor, administrator, and teachers collaboratively seek resources and match families with organizations that provide the assistance needed. The challenge has been organizing parents because they are often working several jobs and adjusting to their new situations.

Research reflects that community support is essential in assisting SIFE ELs with the transition and any trauma that they may be experiencing. SIFE ELs experience success if they feel connected to a community or school (Dearing et al., 2016). The security and support for the student and family help establish the social and emotional wellbeing of the student. The key to student success is to provide academic supports and build security and trust; Goode's Field staff and community provide the students and families with wonderful wraparound services. Research from Chapter II reinforced that embracing SIFE ELs' cultures and languages provides them the opportunity to emotionally blossom in their environment (DeCapua et al., 2007; Elias, 2004). Administrators and school staff constructed the Goode's Field parent organization in a non-traditional fashion which does not reflect negatively on the parents or their care for

their children's education. The administrators carefully thought of another option to bring the needed wraparound supports to the school. The parent group reflects partnerships that have developed through the years to support the most vulnerable families fleeing from war, persecution, and exile. Administration has found ways to provide supports and safety nets for their students and families because they truly believe that it takes a community to educate a child.

Implications for Professional Development

Professional development of targeted teacher needs and coaching is key to improving student outcomes. Colbert County provides a plethora of professional development opportunities across all content arenas. The EL Colbert County office offers professional development for administrators, content teachers, and EL teachers on ESL instruction, language development, best practices, Sheltered Instruction Protocol Model (SIOP), Language, Literacy, and Learning (3Ls) Framework, and EL student portfolios. Professional development targets the larger EL student population but does not specifically focus on SIFE ELs. The curriculum facilitator has researched and provided targeted SIFE EL professional development for the two SIFE teachers at Goode's Field.

This study contributed to unveiling the limited SIFE EL professional development for teachers. Goode's Field educates the majority of SIFE ELs and there is a need for targeted professional development for the teachers of this vulnerable student group. The staff researched and created their own levels of support for their students and continue to strengthen the program.

The CF and teachers expressed the desire to attend conferences that specifically targeted SIFE ELs and to visit established programs in New York. I believe providing targeted professional development and coaching to the staff will strengthen the supports for SIFE ELs. The teachers are implementing best practices and strategies into each lesson and differentiating all tasks. Based on data, teachers and students develop personal goals and students are responsible for tracking their progress and meeting their goals. This study can serve as an example for putting in place structures to support the whole the child. Professional development and school visits to established SIFE EL school programs are beneficial to teacher growth. Despite the challenges, both teachers are implementing best practices and students' assessments reflect growth in content and language instruction. The teachers and curriculum facilitator have established a well-rounded program that focuses on the academic, social and emotional well-being of the students.

The findings from this study have ignited professional development conversations. The Goode's Filed SIFE teachers, curriculum facilitator, principal, and Colbert County ESL Director have discussed professional development needs and are in the process of designing targeted professional development specific to the needs of SIFE ELs. The first focused professional development for the SIFE EL teachers will focus on choosing complex and compelling text with videos that demonstrate how to integrate literature into their lessons. Sissy expressed an interest in learning Swahili in order to communicate with her students and families; therefore, the principal and ESL Director identified a Swahili speaker who is currently developing lessons and will facilitate classes

during the summer months. It is important to listen to the needs of the teachers and
follow through builds trust, teacher capacity, and respect.

Professional Development for In-service Teachers

Professional development offerings focusing on SIFE ELs are limited in Colbert
County and as a result, there are opportunities to develop course offerings across
curricular areas. SIFE ELs attend schools throughout the district; therefore, professional
development for in-service teachers is critical to the scope of their work. Ongoing
professional development that focuses on teacher needs beyond local school context is
crucial for teacher development. Professional development that targets SIFE ELs' social
and emotional and instructional needs that is on-going, collaborative in nature, and
infuses a variety of technological platforms would provide in-service teachers with
critical information to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of students. Focusing on
what the teachers are doing well and building on those skills instead of their deficits
would build teacher capacity and grow teachers as learners.

Professional Development for Preservice Teachers

Another approach to extend professional development is to work with local
universities and their preservice teachers. Preservice teacher programs allow school
districts to grow and retain future teacher leaders. Providing preservice teachers with
opportunities to become familiar with teaching contexts in local and international settings
broadens their educational scope and perceptions. Professional development that is
proactive instead of reactive enables educators to be creative and find solutions to
problems before they become concerns. Providing preservice teachers opportunities to

collaborate and present lessons to their colleagues would allow for professional growth and practice. It is vital to deliver in-service on strategies and skills that teachers can immediately implement with immediate feedback, which is essential to building teacher instructional capacity. It is imperative for teacher preparation programs to provide preservice teachers diverse learning opportunities with authentic examples of student data and real-life problems for practice opportunities.

Professional Development for School Administrators

School administrators are charged with educating all of their students; therefore, professional development focusing on the stages of language acquisition and development is a critical component to educating SIFE ELs. Professional opportunities that focus on a growth model as opposed to a deficit model would present the capabilities of the students and what instruction looks like in an EL classroom. Providing administrators the opportunity to visit EL classrooms would allow them to make connections to their own buildings and build their capacity on instructional ESL best practices. In addition, rendering families needed support is critical to educating SIFE ELs. As educators it is imperative that they know the advocacy groups and community resources that are available to their students and families. Providing administrators an opportunity to speak with local advocacy groups and agencies regarding their services would help them to continue building networking opportunities for their students and families.

Professional Development for Content Teachers

SIFE ELs are in mainstream classrooms with content area teachers; therefore, it is critical to extend research into the content area classrooms. It would benefit districts to administer surveys or speak with content teachers to understand their professional development needs. Districts could identify teacher leaders to facilitate professional development to other content teachers. Infusing a reflection component on current teacher practices would allow for content teachers to examine their classroom practices and instruction. To extend professional development it would be beneficial for the teacher leaders to model lessons and collaborate with the content teachers in their classrooms. This approach would give the content teachers another opportunity to reflect on their delivery of instruction.

Professional development for content teachers can focus on differentiation and collaborative work in the classrooms. Teachers from Goode's Field Newcomers can share their experiences and strategies that they have identified and found successful with their students. The approach of having Goode's Field Newcomers teachers to present builds leadership capacity within the staff and connects content teachers to collegiate experts in their field; this allows for candid conversations and reflections.

Transition for SIFE ELs

The transition for SIFE ELs to their home school is a critical component to their social emotional and academic learning. Goode's Field staff invites the teachers from the school to meet the SIFE ELs and begin the process of establishing relationships. The Goode's Field staff divide up the schools the students are transitioning to and schedule

appointments to speak with a staff member. During the meeting they share individual students' experiences and supports that have been identified and provided to the student and their family. The EL teacher at the school monitors the students' support and progress. Colbert County district office provides additional supports that include tutoring, access to bilingual tutors, and opportunities to participate in literacy programs that are offered throughout the district. SIFE ELs are usually assigned to EL classes and in many cases, the EL teachers push into their content classrooms to provide academic supports. The transitional process has evolved throughout the years and each year the staff adds another layer of support.

Colbert district office works with high school EL teachers to identify SIFE ELs who failed a course and provides summer support for them to take an online course for credit recovery. An EL teacher is identified and works with the students for the duration of the class, infusing strategies and differentiating instruction in order to make content comprehensible. The transition must include supports in order for students to be able to navigate their new surroundings.

Classroom Observations and Reflections

As important as it is for the SIFE EL teachers and curriculum facilitator to observe in other districts and states, it is important for other educators to observe their classrooms. This SIFE team understands the concept of progress monitoring and using data to drive instruction. Differentiation is key, and teachers infuse multiple strategies into each lesson, activity, and project. Inviting educators to observe in these classrooms would allow them to see how these SIFE teachers infuse best practices into lessons and

how the first language is scaffolded into class work to make learning comprehensible. When educators observe other classrooms, they reflect on their own practices and beliefs. The environments in these classrooms are inviting, culturally accepting, and respect is in display between the teachers and students. The engaging classroom atmosphere is filled with student whispers, teacher and student talk, and productive struggles. Educators who have SIFE ELs in their classrooms must observe this environment to generate ideas and to witness how the students engage with grade-level content. Many can learn from the dedication of the teachers and resilience of the students. The observation of teachers and students leads to self-reflection, which is a critical component of self-efficacy. Self-reflection leads to change of practices, beliefs, and perceptions. Observing and reflecting outside of classrooms and buildings can lead to changes in teaching practices and beliefs.

Implications for Personnel

Each teacher and curriculum facilitator brings his or her individual strengths to the team and replacing a member would be difficult. The SIFE EL transitional program works because of the curriculum facilitator's vision and dedication. Will's experience as a teacher having a student leave his classroom without knowing how to read transformed him as an educator. He promised himself that he would not allow any student to leave his classroom without knowing how to read again; this pushes him to find solutions and set high expectations for his teachers and students. Annie and Sissy are committed to their students and their personal experiences have defined them as educators.

The Goode's Field principal and staff have established a balanced program for their SIFE ELs. The collaboration between administrative staff and teachers is a model

for other programs to emulate. The ongoing professional development and teacher

coaching facilitated by the curriculum facilitator is critical to the development of the

teachers. The groups' cohesiveness and collaborative spirit will be difficult to replicate if

one of the members were to leave. This program works because of the curriculum

facilitator. The SIFE EL transitional program and supports developed by the principal,

curriculum facilitator, and teachers impact student learning. It would behoove the school

administrator and EL district office to collaborate in developing a transitional plan that

includes training for a curriculum facilitator and SIFE EL teacher positions. If the SIFE

teachers or the curriculum facilitator ever leave, the team would be fragile until the

administrator and team found colleagues with similar beliefs and practices. The culture of

high expectations, respect, and data driven instruction is established, and the key would

be to identify educators with similar beliefs and vision.

Implications for Policymakers

Students at Goode's Field are all newcomers and identified as ELs. The Office of

Civil Rights views this school as a segregated setting and allows students to remain at the

school for one year unless students have detailed documentation justifying an extension.

SIFE ELs with documentation may have an additional semester at Goode's Field.

Administrators must determine who needs the additional time, document and justify the

student's extension. Colbert County Central Office officials must approve the request for

an extension followed by making contact to the Office of Civil Rights for next steps and

approval. SIFE ELs benefit from additional time in classrooms that use data to target

reading and content instruction. The Goode's Field staff believes that it would be worth submitting a waiver asking for an extension.

Due to this finding, Goode's Field Newcomers administrators and Colbert County Central Office EL staff established a partnership with one of the technical schools in the district. The staff spoke with students and five students were interested in visiting the technical school. Colbert County EL staff members took the five students to visit and explore the offerings. Each SIFE EL selected their technical path and divide their instructional time between Goode's Field Newcomers and the district technical school. The implementation of this new partnership may open up other opportunities at other school sites. SIFE ELs come with world experience and it is our job to explore what they know and connect them to programs and opportunities that best suit their talents and interests.

Limitations of Study

I was fully aware of the first limitation to this study when asked how I planned to conduct observations during my workday and duties as a director. We reviewed several options and I agreed to submit seven and a half days of annual leave, which the Colbert County research committee approved. As the director of EL instruction, I was acutely aware of my biases. I am one of the founders of the school and a fierce advocate of the administrators, teachers, and staff. As I walked into the building on the days to interview and observe the teachers, I took off my badge and signed in as a visitor. I reminded the teachers my purpose of the interviews and observations and they respected my role as a student; however, it was difficult to remove my title from this study. Even though the

staff respects my position, the interviews were candid, and teachers and curriculum facilitator discussed the needs and supports in an open and honest manner. I was uncomfortable when discussing professional development needs because our department decides the course of action we take to train EL teachers. This was a humbling experience, which widened my lens and enabled me to look closer at the needs of the teachers. As a student researcher, I was able to see the school through a different perspective and the impact was very rewarding in many aspects.

Interviews with the teachers were enlightening and required for me to self-reflect on the implementation of professional development and resources. The teachers and curriculum facilitators were honest about not receiving professional development targeting the needs of SIFE ELs. I spend time reflecting on the current practices which focus on ELs as a group. The thought behind professional development is that we provided best practices that impact learning for the group. SIFE ELs have varying needs and educational gaps that need targeted attention and focus. This area deserves further analysis.

The second request for funding to visit SIFE sites in New York and to attend SIFE workshops was a reasonable request that I had not though of prior to the interview. This simple viable request requires the director to add it to the grant and allocate funds. As the director for the county, I realized I needed to stop, reflect, and determine the next steps to make changes. It is very different to conduct walk-throughs and speak with the teachers as the director. This opportunity allowed me to observe through a student lens

and at times it was uncomfortable, but the learning process and reflection were

rewarding.

Interviewing and observing two SIFE EL teachers and a curriculum facilitator is

the second limitation of this study. The small cohort of teachers provided a limited subset

of data and a view into only two classrooms. At the time of the proposal submission,

there were two teachers identified to teach the SIFE EL classes. As the year progressed

students transitioned into other content classrooms, I could have extended an invitation to

additional teachers to participate in the study.

The time allotted for classroom observations is the third limitation of this study. I

scheduled the observations for the mornings, which consisted of 20 hours per week for

three weeks. The constraint of morning observations allowed for a partial view of

instruction. I might have missed valuable data and information with the limited time in

the classroom and the three-week timeline. The morning observations consisted of

observing the reading block in high school and reading and science in middle school. I

did not conduct observations in other content areas due to the time constraints, but

teachers discussed differentiation and scaffolding of strategies in the interviews. Goode's

Field is a unique site and from this study I hope that educators can glean best practices

and ideas on how to cultivate a positive and encouraging classroom climate for SIFE

ELs.

The study focused on one school setting, limiting the collection of data. There are

two classrooms of focus within a large urban district. The majority of SIFE ELs attend

Goode's Field and very few SIFE ELs choose their neighborhood schools, thus requiring

expanding the research out of district. The inclusion of other urban districts would have broadened data collection. However, many practices and program details established through this study contain beneficial aspects that can be taken from this research.

My position and the role I undertake at the school influenced my perception and there was a tendency to be biased. With this in mind, I generated copious notes and member checked and triangulated the data. My detailed field notes captured my classroom observations. The observation guide I created allowed me to document what I actually saw, and a section was created for my own personal reflection and analysis. The observation guide, interview questions, student work, and my own coding and detailed notes provided the evidence for the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

In light of the limitations in this study, further research is recommended. The study focuses on a fragile subgroup of the larger EL group and expanding the study to include similar urban school districts would generate additional data. Expanding the research to other districts may uncover additional program models, social and emotional platforms, and practices deemed to work. Further research may uncover implementation of successful professional development and coaching models that target SIFE ELs that initially appear intangible.

Additional research focusing on SIFE ELs' transition to their home schools and supports provided to them in their new environment is necessary. SIFE ELs are leaving a safety net where their academic, literacy, social and emotional needs are accounted for, and experiencing a seamless transition is critical to their continued growth. Another angle

to explore is the support given to parents during the transition from Goode's Field to their home school. The connection parents have to resources is critical to the family's wellbeing, and at Goode's Field, they are accustomed to full support and community resources. It would be ideal to research how other districts support and engage their SIFE ELs and families. Research focusing on an ethnographic case study would allow for the researcher to explore the point of view of the SIFE EL group. There is a lot to gain from being able to hear from the students' point of view and be able to provide supports that impact education for this group of students. The point of view of students matters because they are experiencing accomplishments along with challenges and obstacles. Researchers can learn from their journey and implementation of strategies that worked for them can be shared with other students experiencing the same challenges. It is human nature to learn from personal stories of others and this research would encompass their journey of experiences.

This research identified the importance of extending the time SIFE ELs are permitted to stay at Goode's Field. Is an extension a viable option? Will an extension provide SIFE ELs the additional supports needed? Investigating SIFE EL programs that offer extensions and the justification they provide to OCR would give districts options. What does data reflect on time extensions? These are critical factors to explore because findings can provide justification for remaining in the program and identifying additional strategies can add extra layers of advocacy and supports.

In addition, another area to explore would be teacher burn out. How do we keep educators like Annie, Sissy, and Will from experiencing exhaustion? SIFE ELs carry

many challenges to school and teachers are at the forefront working, encouraging, and teaching them on a daily basis. Research from their perspective would give us a look into how they manage their challenges and their outlets of supports. How can teachers learn from their experiences? What supports are in place at their schools to help them navigate their challenges? What struggles with students and families were most challenging and what supports did they received navigating these tribulations. The social and emotional piece of the educator was not explored, but additional research could provide additional information on how to supports them.

Conclusion

This qualitative study focused on the education of SIFE ELs based on three elements: strategies to promote social and emotional wellbeing of SIFE ELs, program models, and instructional practices. Data collected for this research study focused on interviews with two teachers, curriculum facilitator, classroom observations and a collection of student artifacts that were analyzed. The research was conducted in two classrooms; however, the community embraced and rallied around this group of children and the teachers knew they were not alone. The school staff's outpouring of support and the consistent daily outreach from the community assist in educating SIFE ELs. The teachers, students, and families are not alone. They arrive to a school community that embraces, respects, and honors their journey and the experiences they bring with them. Teachers are charged with educating these students and they rise with a smile and face the challenge.

The plethora of notes, interviews, observations, and student artifacts are evidence that the administrator, curriculum facilitator, and teachers are dedicated and committed to the work. The work is challenging, but I have seen teachers become emotional when their 18-year-old student reads a sentence by himself. I have witnessed the same 18-year-old stop in his tracks, leaving the classroom to come back and thank his teacher for her hard work; he was grateful that she believed in him. The time constraint did not allow them to falter; they proceeded with determination and data driven agendas. When professional development was not readily available, the curriculum facilitator forged forward and researched best practices and models. He is determined to have every child leave Goode's Field reading.

Teachers differentiate instruction in all content areas, activities, and projects. Data drives instruction and evidence is reflected in student assignments and classwork. The teachers believe that SIFE ELs can achieve and will meet the challenges. The vertical alignment planning team allows teachers to collaborate and ensure that their lessons align to the standards. The curriculum facilitator and SIFE EL teacher planning team allows them to work collaboratively to scaffold each activity and lesson.

The education of all children is important, but SIFE ELs with greater than a two-year educational gap need to be surrounded with supports and committed educators who will challenge and support them. Due to war, trauma, persecution, and life challenges, this group of children have educational gaps, but parents register their children at Goode's Field with hearts full of hope, feeling grateful for the opportunity of a second chance.

REFERENCES

Ajayi, L. (2011). Exploring how ESL teachers relate their ethnic and social backgrounds to practice. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 14*(2), 253–275. doi:10.1080/13613324.2010.488900

Aclan, E., & Noor, A. (2015). *Why and how* EFL *students learn vocabulary in parliamentary debate class*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1128239.pdf

Adams, P. (2007). Learning and caring in the age of the five outcomes. *Education 3-13, 35*(3), 225–237. doi:10.1080/03004270701467192

Adams, S., & Richie, C. (2017). Social emotional learning and English language learners: A review of the literature. *INTESOL Journal, 14*(1), 77–93. Retrieved from http://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/intesol/article/view/21625

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. Retrieved from http://www.cal.org/ content/download/2243/29073/version/3/file/developing-literacy-in-second-language-learners-executive-summary.pdf

Auerbach, S. (2007). Visioning parent engagement in urban schools. *Journal of School Leadership, 17*(6), 699–734.

Baker, B. (2008). L2 writing and L1 composition in English: Towards an alignment of effort. *McGill Journal of Education, 43*(2), 139–155. Retrieved from doi:10.7202/019579

Barone, D., & Barone, R. (2012). Building background knowledge within literature circles. *Voices from the Middle, 20*(1), 10–15.

Beyer, L. N. (2017). *Social and emotional learning and traditionally underserved populations.* Policy Brief. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. Retrieved from http://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SEL-Special-Populations_Final.pdf

Bialystok, E. (2006). Effect of bilingualism and computer video game experience on the Simon task. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology, 60*(1), 68–79. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16615719

Brown, C. L. (2007). Supporting English language learners in content-reading. *Reading Improvement, 44*(1), 32–39.

Bunch, G. (2006). Academic English in the 7th grade: Broadening the lens, expanding access. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 5*(4), 284–301. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2006.08.007

Burroughs, M. D., & Barkauskas, N. J. (2017). Educating the whole child: Social-emotional learning and ethics education. *Ethics and Education, 12*(2), 218–232. doi:10.1080/17449642.2017.1287388

Bylund, J. (2011). Thought and second language: A Vygotskian framework for understanding BICS and CALP. *Communique, 39*(5), 4–6. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ920353

Cazabon, M., Nicoladis, E., & Lambert, W. (1998). *Becoming bilingual in the Amigos Two-Way Immersion Program.* Research Report 3. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED424754.pdf

Chen, C.-M., & Li, Y.-L. (2010). Personalised context-aware ubiquitous learning system for supporting effective English vocabulary learning. *Interactive Learning Environments, 18*(4), 341–364. doi:10.1080/10494820802602329

Christian, D., Howard, E. R., & Loeb, M. I. (2000). Bilingualism for all: Two-way immersion education in the United States. *Theory Into Practice, 39*(4), 258–266. doi:10.1207/s15430421tip3904_9

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cummins, J. (2017). Teaching minoritized students: Are additive approaches legitimate? *Harvard Educational Review, 87*(3), 404–425, 453. doi:10.17763/1943-5045-87.3.404

Curtin, E. (2005). Teaching practices for ESL students. *Multicultural Education, 12*(3), 22–27. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ711231.pdf

Dack, H., & Tomlinson, C. (2015). Inviting all students to learn. *Educational Leadership, 72*(6), 10–15.

Dearing, E., Walsh, M. E., Sibley, E., Lee-St. John, T., Foley, C., & Raczek, A. E. (2016). Can community and school-based supports improve the achievement of first-generation immigrant children attending high-poverty schools? *Child Development, 87*(3), 883–897. doi:10.1111/cdev.12507

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2010). Students with limited or interrupted formal education in US classrooms. *The Urban Review, 42*(2), 159–173. doi:10.1007/s11256-009-0128-z

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2011). Reaching ELLs at risk: Instruction for students with limited or interrupted formal education. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 55*(1), 35–41. doi:10.1080/10459880903291680

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2015). Reframing the conversation about students with limited or interrupted formal education: From achievement gap to cultural dissonance. *NAASP Bulletin, 99*(4), 356–370. doi:10.1177/0192636515620662

DeCapua, A., Smathers, W., & Tang, L. (2007). Schooling, interrupted. *Educational Leadership, 64*(6), 40–46.

Dunston, P., & Tyminski, A. (2013). What's the big deal about vocabulary? *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School, 19*(1), 38–45. Retrieved from https://www.nctm.org/Publications/mathematics-teaching-in-middle-school/2013/ Vol19/Issue1/mtms2013-08-38a_pdf/

Echevarría, J., Frey, N. & Fisher, D. (2015). What it takes for English learners to succeed. *Educational Leadership, 72*(6), 22–26.

Echevarría, J., Short, D., & Powers, K. (2006). School reform and standards-based education: A model for English-language learners. *The Journal of Educational Research, 99*(4), 195–211. doi:10.3200/JOER.99.4.195-211

Elias, M. J. (2004). The connection between social-emotional learning and learning disabilities: Implications for intervention. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 27*(1), 53–63. doi:10.2307/1593632

Elias, M., Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Frey, K. S., Greenberg, M. T., Haynes, N. M., & Shriver, T. P. (2017). *Promoting social and emotional guidelines for educators.* Retrieved from http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/

Elo, S., Kääriiäinen, M., Kanste, O., Pölkki, T., Utrianent, K., & Kyngäs, H. (2014). Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness. *Sage Open, 4*(1). doi:10.1177/2158244014522633

Facella, M., Rampino, K., & Shea, E. (2005). Effective teaching strategies for English language learners. *Bilingual Research Journal, 29*(1), 209–221. doi:10.1080/15235882.2005.10162832

Folse, K. (2006). The effect of type of written exercise on L2 vocabulary retention. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(2), 273–293. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/ 1440409/The_effect_of_type_of_written_exercise_on_L2_vocabulary_retention

Freeman, Y. S., Freeman, D. E., & Mercuri, S. (2001). Key to success for bilingual students with limited formal schooling. *Bilingual Research Journal, 25*(102), 203–213. doi:10.1080/15235882.2001.10162790

Garza, E., Kennedy, K., Arreguin-Anderson, M. (2014). ESL/SSL strategies that bridge content and language in science: Experiential learning in an environmental education workshop. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 5*(3), 498–504. doi:10.4304/jltr.5.3.498-504

Gahungu, A., Gahungu, O., & Luseno, F. (2011). Educating culturally displaced students with truncated formal education (CDS-TFE): The case of Refugee students and challenges for administrators, teachers, and counselors. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 6*(2), 1–19. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ973832.pdf

Genesee, F. (1999). *Program alternatives for linguistically diverse students.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED428569.pdf

Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, W., & Christian, D. (2005). English language learners in U.S. schools: An overview of research findings. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 10*(4), 363–385. doi:10.1207/s15327671espr1004_2

Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction.* White Plains, NY: Longman.

Goldenberg, C. (1991). *Instructional conversations and their classroom applications.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED341253.pdf

Gomez-Zwiep, S., Straits, W., & Topps, J. (2015). 5E for ELL adaptations to the learning cycle provide an authentic context for English language development. *Science and Children, 53*(2), 80–86. Retrieved from http://www.covington.kyschools.us/ userfiles/15/My%20Files/2nd%20add%20chg/2-PS1-1%205E%20for%20ELL.pdf?id=2783

Greenberg, M. T., Weissberg, R. P., O'Brien, M. U., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist, 58*(6), 466–474. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/ 12971193

Gregory, G. H., & Burkman, A. (2012). *Differentiated literacy strategies for English language learners: Grades 7-12.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Haager, D., & Klinger, J. K. (2005). *Differentiating instruction in inclusive classrooms.* Boston, MA: Pearson Allyn and Bacon

Hammond, J. (2006). High challenge, high support: Integrating language and content instruction for diverse learners in an English literature classroom. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 5*(4), 269–283. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2006.08.006

Haynes, J. (2005). *Pre-production and silent period.* Retrieved from http://www.everythingesl.net/inservices/pre_producti_silent_period_93415.php

Haynes, J. (2007). *Getting started with English language learners: How educators can meet the challenge*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Herrmann, E. (2015). *Social emotional learning and English learners.* Retrieved from http://exclusive.multibriefs.com/

Honigsfeld, A., & Dove, M. (2015-2016). Co-Teaching ELLs: Riding a tandem bike. *Educational Leadership, 73*(4), 56–60. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/ publications/educational_leadership/dec15/vol73/num04/Co-Teaching_ELLs@_Riding_a_Tandem_Bike.aspx

Hos, R. (2016). The lives, aspirations, and needs of refugee and immigrant students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) in a secondary newcomer program. *Urban Education, OnlineFirst.* doi:10.1177/0042085916666932

Keo, P. (2010). Cambodian family-school partnership: Toward an evolving theory. *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement, 5*(1). doi:10.7771/2153-8999.1003

Kovács, A., & Mehler, J. (2009). Flexible learning of multiple speech structures in bilingual infants. *Science, 325*(5940), 611–612. doi:10.1126/science.1173947

Kramer, E. J., Guarnaccia, P., Resendez, C., & Lu, F. G. (2009). *No Soy Loco! I'm not crazy: Understanding the stigma of mental illness in Latinos.* Retrieved from https://ethnomed.org/clinical/mental-health/Facilitators%20Guide%20 123108%20final%20_2_.pdf/at_download/file

Krashen, S. (1989). We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the input hypothesis. *The Modern Language Journal, 73*(4), 440–464. doi:10.2307/326879

Kugler, E., & Price, O. (2009). Go beyond the classroom to help immigrant and refugee students succeed. *Phi Delta Kappan, 91*(3), 48–52. doi:10.1002/pits.20398

Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide* (3rd ed.). London, England: Sage.

Lindholm-Leary, K. (2001). *Dual language education.* Tonawanda, NY: Cornwell.

Mastropieri, M. A., Scruggs, T. E., Graetz, J., Norland, J., Gardizi, W., & McDuffie, K. (2005). Case studies in co-teaching in the content areas: Successes, failures, and challenges. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 40*(5), 260–270.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Moen, C. (2007). Bringing words to life and into the lives of middle school students. *Voices from the Middle, 15*(1), 20–26.

Motamedi, J., Singh, M., & Thompson, K. (2016). *English learner student characteristics and time to reclassification: An example from Washington State.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED565624.pdf

Morse, A. (2005, March). *A look at immigrant youth: Prospects and promising practices.* Retrieved from http://www.ncsl.org/documents/immig/CPIimmigrantyouth.pdf

Nam, J. (2010, March 8). Linking research and practice: Effective strategies for teaching vocabulary in the ESL classroom. *TESL Canada Journal, 28*(1), 127–135. doi:10.18806/tesl.v28i1.1064

Nassaji, H. (2006). The relationship between depth of vocabulary knowledge and L2 learners' lexical inferencing strategy use and success. *Modern Language Journal, 90*(3), 387–401. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2006.00431.x

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2013). *Social and emotional supports for newcomer students.* Retrieved from https://ncela.ed.gov/files/feature_topics/newcomers/ElevatingELs_SocialEmotionalSupportNewcomer.pdf

Neuman, S., Kaefer, T., & Pinkham, A. (2014). Building background knowledge. *The Reading Teacher, 68*(2), 145–148. doi:10.1002/trtr.1314

Ng, B., & Wigglesworth, G. (2007). *Bilingualism: An advanced resource book* (Routledge applied linguistics). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Niehaus, K., & Adelson, J. L. (2014). School support, parental involvement, and academic and social-emotional outcomes for English language learners. *American Educational Research Journal, 51*(4), 810–844. doi:10.3102/0002831214531323

Noguera, P. (2008). *The trouble with Black boys and other reflections on race, equity, and the future of public education.* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2014). *Title III improvement for 2014–15 school year (based on 2013–14 data).* Retrieved from http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/slep/

Oaksford, L., & Jones, L. (2001). *Differentiated instruction abstract.* Tallahassee, FL: Leon County Schools.

Osterling, J. (2001). Waking the sleeping giant: Engaging and capitalizing on the sociocultural strengths of the Latino community. *Bilingual Research Journal, 25*(1-2), 59–88. doi:10.1080/15235882.2001.10162785

Payton, J. W., Wardlaw, D. M., Graczyk, P. A., Bloodworth, M. R., Tompsett, C. J., & Weissberg, R. P. (2000). Social and emotional learning: A framework for promoting mental health and reducing risk behavior in children and youth. *The Journal of School Health, 70*(5), 179–185.

Rice, D., & Zigmond, N. (2000). Co-teaching in secondary schools: Teacher reports of developments in Australian and American classrooms. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 15*(4), 190–197.

Riches, C., Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, B. & Christian, D. (2006). *Literacy: Instructional issues.* Retrieved from http://www.psych.mcgill.ca/perpg/fac/genesee/25.pdf

Rock, M. L., Gregg, M., Ellis, E., & Gable, R. A. (2008). REACH: A framework for differentiating classroom instruction. *Preventing School Failure, 52*(2), 31–47.

Roessingh, H. (2006). The teacher is the key: Building trust in ESL high school programs. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 62*(4), 563–590. doi:10.1353/cml.2006.0039

Samson, J., & Lesaux, N. (2015). Disadvantaged language minority students and their teachers: A national picture. *Teachers College Record, 117*(2), 1–26. Retrieved from http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=17772

Santisteban, L. N. (2014). The effects of differentiated instruction on the literacy process of learners with interrupted schooling. *Gist Education and Learning Research Journal, 9*(July-December), 31–49. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1062662.pdf

Short, D. (2013). Training and sustaining effective teachers of sheltered instruction. *Theory Into Practice, 52*(2), 118–127. doi:10.1080/00405841.2013.770329

Short, D., Echevarría, J., & Richards-Tutor, C. (2011). Research on academic literacy development in sheltered instruction classrooms. *Language Teaching Research, 15*(3), 363–380. doi:10.1177/1362168811401155

Short, D., Vogt, M., & Echevarría, J. (2011). *The SIOP model for teaching science to English learners*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Spees, L., Potochnick, S., & Perreira, K., (2016). The academic achievement of limited English proficient (LEP) youth in new and established immigrant states: Lessons from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 24*(99), 1–27. Retrieved from https://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/download/2130/1829

Suarez-Orozco, M., & Paez, M. (2002). *Latinos: Remaking America.* Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

Suarez-Orozco, C., & Pimentel, A., & Martin, M. (2009). The significance of relationships: Academic engagement and achievement among newcomer immigrant youth. *Teachers College Record, 111*(3), 712–749.

Subban, P. (2006). Differentiated instruction: A research basis. *International Education Journal, 7*(7), 935–947. Retrieved https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ854351.pdf

Theoharis, G., & O'Toole, J. (2011). Leading inclusive ELL: Social justice leadership for English language learners. *Education Administration Quarterly, 47*(4), 646–688. doi:10.1177/0013161X11401616

Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement.* Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED475048

Tieso, C. L. (2003). Ability grouping is not just tracking anymore. *Roeper Review, 26*(1), 29–36. doi:10.1080/02783190309554236

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). Mapping a route toward differentiated instruction. *Educational Leadership, 57*(1), 12–16. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el199909_tomlinson.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2005, September). *Education in the United States: A brief overview.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED497134.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *Newcomers tool kit.* Office of English Language Acquisition. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/ncomertoolkit.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2018). *Office for Civil Rights.* Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. (Originally published in 1934)

Waggoner, D., & O'Malley, J. M. (1985). Teachers of Limited English Proficient Children in the United States. *NABE: The Journal for the National Association for Bilingual Education*, *9*(3), 25–42.

Walqui, A. (2006). Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: A conceptual framework. *Journal International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 9*(2), 159–180. doi:10.1080/13670050608668639

Wong-Fillmore, L. (2014). English language learners at the crossroads of educational reform. *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(3), 624–632. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/43267984

Youngs, C. S., & Youngs, Jr., G. A. (2001). Predictors of mainstream teachers' attitudes toward ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*(1), 97–120. doi:10.2307/3587861

Zashchitina, G., & Moysyak, N. (2017). *Some aspects of developing background knowledge in second language acquisition revisited.* Retrieved from http://bces-conference-books.org/onewebmedia/2017.265-270.Galina.Zashchitina_Natalia.Moysyak.pdf

Zins, J. E., & Elias, M. J. (2007). Social and emotional learning: Promoting the development of all students. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 17*(2-3), 233–255. doi:10.1080/10474410701413152

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA GREENSBORO

OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY
2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.0253
Web site: www.uncg.edu/orc
Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #216

To: Mayra Hayes
Ed Ldrship and Cultural Found
Ed Ldrship and Cultural Found

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 6/05/2018

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption
Exemption Category: 1.Educational setting,2.Survey, interview, public observation,4.Existing data, public or deidentified
Study #: 17-0604
Study Title: Teacher support for language development and content mastery in Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)

This submission has been reviewed by the IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

English Learners (ELs) are comprised of many languages and cultures and as a group are growing in numbers each day. In addition to challenges all ELs face, SIFE ELs face unique challenges in U.S. K-12 settings. Many SIFE ELs have low literacy skills and are sometimes illiterate in their first language. SIFE ELs tend to be older and are learning their second language along with basic educational skills.

To better prepare and support teachers working with SIFE ELs, it is important for educators to explore experiences, beliefs, and practices of current ESL teachers working with SIFE ELs. Based on data collected from interviews, observations, and student work, this study will focus on strategies ESL teachers use to support instruction and negotiate challenges to address the needs of newly arrived SIFE ELs.

Study Regulatory and other findings:

- If your study is contingent upon approval from another site, you will need to submit a modification at the time you receive that approval.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. Please utilize the most recent and approved version of your consent form/information sheet when enrolling participants. The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be

scanned to you in a separate email. **Stamped consent forms must be used unless the IRB has given you approval to waive this requirement.** Please notify the ORI office immediately if you have an issue with the stamped consents forms.

Please be aware that valid human subjects training and signed statements of confidentiality for all members of research team need to be kept on file with the lead investigator. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university "Access To and Retention of Research Data" Policy which can be found at http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/research_data/.

CC:
Carl Lashley, Ed Ldrship and Cultural Found

APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT

Consent to Act as a Human Participant

Project Title: Teacher support for language development and content mastery in Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)

Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor: Mayra Hayes and Dr. Carl Lashley

Participant's Name: Principal, English as a Second Language teacher, and Curriculum Facilitator

General Information about Research Studies

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not join or withdraw from this study at any time.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This research may not directly benefit you and there also may be risks to being in a research study. If you choose not to participate in the study or leave the study prior to the completion, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

What is the study about?

This is a research project. The goal of this study is to explore teachers' experiences, beliefs, instructional strategies, and challenges faced in working with SIFE ELs. To develop an understanding of the factors that impact the education of SIFE ELs, in this qualitative study I seek to explore participants' perceptions through data collected in multiple forms to allow for themes and patterns to emerge (Olsen, Walden, Grinnell, Walters, & Appunn, 2016). Interviews, observations, and student artifacts will be collected and analyzed to address the research questions.

Why are you asking me?

You are being asked to participate because as an educator in this building you have tremendous experience and expertise. To better prepare and support teachers working with SIFE ELs, it is important for educators to explore experiences, beliefs, and practices of current ESL teachers working with SIFE ELs.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in this study?

During the research study, you will be asked to participate in three one-on-one interviews. The interview questions will ask general questions about your career in education, the use of instructional strategies to teach SIFE ELs, and integration of content. Based on data collected from interviews, observations of ESL teachers in the classroom, and student work, this study will focus on strategies ESL teachers use to support instruction and negotiate challenges to address the needs of newly arrived SIFE ELs. The interviews will focus on existing practices, strategies, resources, and EL teacher perceptions of SIFEs.

The interviews will be recorded and last approximately one hour and observations will total to approximately 20 hours per week. The interviews will be transcribed and shared with you to determine accuracy.

If all your questions have been answered please see attached form. By signing the form you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in this study described to you by Mayra Hayes.

Sincerely,

Mayra Hayes (Principal Investigator)
Hayesm2@gcsnc.com (336) 467-2430

Dr. Carl Lashley (Faculty Advisor)
c_lashle@uncg.edu (336) 549-9163

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

INITIAL TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather information on your background, experiences, and teaching beliefs. The interview will take about 60 minutes. I would like to audio record this interview so that I can best capture our conversation. May I have your permission to record?

[If yes, start recording]

Background and Experiences

1. Can you share your teaching background?
    a. How many years have you been teaching?
    b. When and where were you educated?
    c. When and where did you begin teaching?
    d. How many years have you been teaching at this school?

2. Can you tell me more about your current teaching context?
    a. Can you describe your current teaching assignment? (grade level, number of students, etc.)
    b. How would you describe the students you are working with?
    c. How would you describe families you are working with?
    d. Are there things you notice specifically about being at Goodes Field Newcomers School?

Teaching Beliefs

3. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching? What do you believe works?
4. How did you learn how to teach? What are your sources of your teaching beliefs?
5. What is it that makes you a great teacher? Can you share some examples?

Working with SIFE ELs

6. What are some of the strengths you see SIFE ELs bringing to the classroom?
7. What kind of role do you believe parents play in the success of SIFE EL students?
8. What kind of role do you believe the community plays in the success of SIFE EL students?

9. What are some things you think you are doing really well to reach out to SIFE ELs?
   a. How would you describe your goals for your SIFE EL students?
   b. What kinds of things have you done in your classroom to facilitate the success of SIFE ELs?
   c. How would you describe the kinds of relationships you've had with parents of your SIFE EL students?

10. What kinds of supports are available to teachers working with SIFE EL students?

Given my study on educating SIFE ELs, is there anything else you would like to add that I didn't think to ask you about?

MID-POINT TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for participating in this second interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather information on your instructional plan and strategies. The interview will take about 60 minutes. I would like to audio record this interview. May I have your permission to record?

[If yes, start recording]

1. Thinking about our first interview, was there anything you wanted to add, clarify, or discuss?

Instructional Plan and Strategies

2. What professional development or other opportunities have you attended that have helped prepare you to work with SIFE EL students?
   a. What would you describe as differentiated instruction? What does it look like in your classroom?
   b. Can you tell me about your collaborative planning with other teachers?
   c. In what ways do you infuse students' languages and cultures into those plans?
   d. In what ways are the needs of your SIFE EL students reflected in your own lesson plans?

Teaching Beliefs

3. How would you describe your beliefs about language instruction?
   a. How are these beliefs operationalized in your classroom?
   b. In what ways are those beliefs represented in your teaching? interactions with students? others?
   c. What has influenced your beliefs about SIFE EL students?
   d. What has influenced your classroom practices with SIFE EL students?

Working with SIFE ELs

4. How are you notified about your students?
   a. How are home visits/parent conferences used in your classroom?
   b. What assets do you believe SIFE EL students bring to the classroom?
   c. How do you capitalize on those in your instruction? Can you give me an example?
   d. There are times during independent work that your students speak in their native language. How does that make you feel? How did you decide to make a space where that was acceptable?

FINAL TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL CARD SORT ACTIVITY

Thank you for participating in this third interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather information on your reflections on instructional experiences and beliefs. The interview will take about 60 minutes.

Opening statement: I would like to ask you a few questions about some of the instructional strategies I have observed in your classroom. How often do you implement these strategies? Are you okay with me recording our conversation?

[If yes, start recording]

Research questions: 1.) What are teachers' beliefs in teaching SIFE ELs? 2.) In what ways, do teachers enable SIFE ELs? 3.) What do teachers identify as competing factors that influence their beliefs and practices?

Part 1: Card Sort Activity: Read to the teacher: These cards contain phrases or practices you may have said or presented. I would like to understand how often you do these things in your classroom or use these practices in your teaching.

Sample Card Sort items: • Develop a knowledge of best practices • Demonstrate caring and building learning communities • Integrating diverse content • Cross-cultural communication • Inclination to advocate for ELLs • Understanding the academic language demands of classroom tasks • Scaffolding instruction to promote language acquisition • Applying key principles of second language learning • Learning about ELL students' language backgrounds, experiences, and proficiencies • Use family/household knowledge (outside of school) in classroom instruction

Task 1: Teachers read the card and tell whether or not this was something they enact in their classroom. They will be instructed to place the cards in a 'frequently, 'sometimes', or 'almost never' pile.

Task 2: Teachers will be asked to describe what each practice in the 'frequently' pile means to them ("What does ELL advocacy look like in your classroom?") and to give an example of when and/or how they enacted this practice.

Task 3: Teachers will be asked to choose three cards that they felt best described the ways they enacted a culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.

Task 4: Teachers will be asked to identify the practices they seldom enact and explain why. ("What influences/impacts your ability to do these things?")

Final question: Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your teaching practices, curriculum, or interactions with students that you have not had the opportunity to share before we complete the interview.

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATION GUIDE

Setting:

Time:

Date:

Location:

Surroundings:

How do the teachers use various teaching strategies to support SIFE ELs?

How do teachers negotiate challenges in their work with SIFE ELs?

What are the cultural norms that appear to characterize the setting?

What kinds of supports are available to teachers working with SIFE EL students?

What can teachers and administrators potentially learn from this observation?

Time	What do I actually see?	What does differentiated instruction look like in the classroom?	What does language instruction look like in the classroom?	Reflect and Analyze