SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTING ENGLISH

FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) STUDENTS:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Wendy Lane Bailey

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2021

SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTING ENGLISH

FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) STUDENTS:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by Wendy Lane Bailey

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2021

APPROVED BY:

Gail Collins EdD, Committee Chair

Kathy A. Keafer, EdD, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct English Language Learner (ELL) students. ELLs are the fastest growing population of students in the United States. As this group continues to grow, so do the challenges of providing equitable education. Although most schools have adopted one or more models of instruction for ELLs, there is no universal model. High stakes testing and improved college readiness curriculum are designed to provide higher expectations for student achievement. However, ELL students continue to fall behind their native English-speaking peers in math and reading. Secondary content teachers should be knowledgeable of the unique needs of ELLs and feel supported when teaching these students. Understanding the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers who instruct ELL students at the secondary content level can lead to a positive and successful learning environment for the students and the teachers. Participants included 12 secondary content teachers from three high schools in a southern state. I utilized one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journaling from all participants to gather data about what the participants experienced and how they experienced it. The theories guiding this study were Krashen's 1982 theory of second language acquisition and Cummins' 1980 theory of language development as both have been instrumental in developing models of instruction and strategies to instruct ELL students and continue to play an integral role in today's instructional methods.

Keywords: English Language Learners (ELLs), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), immigrant, language acquisition, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

Dedication

I would like to thank my husband, Mitch, for encouraging me to continue with my educational journey. For the past 30 years, you have always been supportive in my many ventures and you always make me feel smart and confident in my abilities. You have been my best friend, and I would not have made it this far without you. You are my rock and I love you!

I also want to express my thanks to my Chair, Dr. Gail Collins, for her immediate and constructive feedback and support. You required much of me and encouraged me to expect more from myself. Thank you.

Finally, I am a believer in prayer. All my life, I have relied on God to guide me in the direction He sees fit. I have said many prayers throughout my life and am thankful for the life that God has given me. He has provided me with a loving spouse, three beautiful children, and a career where I can impact lives.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

College and Career Ready Standards (CCR)

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

Emergent Bilingual (EB)

End of Course Test (EOCT)

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

English Language Learners (ELL)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (NHPI)

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

Structured English Immersion (SEI)

World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Traditionally, America has been known as the land of opportunity for people across the world. America was founded by early settlers who came to escape religious and social persecution in their homelands. For centuries, immigrants and refugees have found safety and opportunities in America to provide for and sustain their families. In recent years, the population of immigrants and refugees from other countries has rapidly increased, creating new challenges and adding cultural and linguistic assets to the educational system (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Currently, there are an estimated 4.9 million ELL students enrolled in the United States public school system, representing approximately 9.6% of the total public-school enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). This population represents over 400 different home languages spoken among public-school students. The predominant language is Spanish and the next seven most common languages are Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong, Somali, Russian, and Haitian (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Crowther (2017) reported that during the 2014–2015 school year ELLs accounted for 9.4% of the total K–12 student population in the United States. "This is a sustained increase from the 2004–2005 school year, when 4.3 million ELLs comprised 9.1% of the entire K–12 student population" (Crowther, 2017, p. 14).

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the framework for this research that explores the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. Chapter One is organized as follows: (a) background, (b) situation to self, (c) problem statement, (d) purpose statement, (e) significance of the study, (f) research questions, and (g) definitions. This chapter begins with a description of the historical context of federal reforms that have impacted

educational opportunities for ELLs because of changes in public opinion and policies. It also provides social implications that can interfere with an ELL's academic success followed by theoretical interpretations of second language acquisition. Additionally, this chapter explains why this study was selected and how it can be used to inform future educational practices to instruct ELL students in the secondary content classrooms. A detailed summary concludes the chapter.

Background

ELL students are the fastest growing population in the United States (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). Public school reforms and federal policies are evolving to meet the needs of this diverse group of learners. With higher accountability measures for student achievement, federal policies have reclassified ELLs from Title III to Title I for supplemental services and teacher preparation to instruct ELLs (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Within the ELL student population, recent changes have recognized subgroups of ELL students to include ELL students with disabilities and ELL students who recently arrived in the United States, or newcomers, within two years of arrival (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Newcomers represent a unique group who often come with interrupted formal education in their home countries and have limited to no English language proficiency (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). Because of this rapid increase in ELL student enrollment, there is a higher demand for qualified teachers and resources to improve educational outcomes for ELL students with a focus on college and career readiness skills (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015), and teachers report that they do not feel adequately prepared to meet the diverse needs of ELL students (Cárdenas-Hagan, 2018).

With a continued increase in the ELL student population, educational equity must evolve to meet the needs of this diverse population of students. Although there has been an increase in school accountability, students enrolled in an ELL program continue to be outperformed by their peers who are native English speakers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). According to a 2013 report, ELL students are underrepresented at post-secondary institutions and even fewer receive a bachelor's degree when compared to their native English-speaking peers (Kanno & Gromley, 2013). This study informs teacher awareness of the widening academic gap between students enrolled in an ELL program and their native English-speaking peers by exploring the lived experiences of the teachers who instruct these students at the secondary level content area. The purpose of focusing this study on secondary content teachers was because statistics revealed a significant gap between math and reading achievement among ELL students and native English-speaking students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). School districts are affected by student academic achievement, or lack thereof, and held accountable to state and federal requirements. When schools are deemed ineffective, funding can be cut, employees can be removed, and not only does the school suffer, but the community as well (Beuchert, Humlum, Nielsen, & Smith, 2018; Steinberg & MacDonald, 2019). It is in the best interest of local communities, schools, and policymakers to improve the educational equity and success of all students (Hu, 2018).

This study examined the lived experiences of secondary content teachers of ELLs to discover factors that shape the perceptions and attitudes towards teaching ELL students. Secondary content teachers need to be knowledgeable of the unique needs of ELL students and feel supported when teaching these students. Understanding the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers who instruct ELLs at the secondary content level can lead to a positive

and successful learning environment for the students and the teachers. Because the American educational experience has been different for minority groups, exploring historical implications can provide educators with needed knowledge and empathy to better inform instructional practices.

Historical Context

From its very beginning, America has been a constant evolution of cultural diversity and land of opportunity for some and oppression for others. Over the centuries, the influx of immigrants and refugees from other countries across the globe has shaped the culture, language, values and traditions of the United States (Haines, 2015). Because changes in political and economic events impact laws affecting immigration and refugee status, the 1948 Displaced Persons Act allowed for over 200,000 refugees to enter the United States yearly, and this number has increased over the years (Haines, 2015). For many, limiting entrance into the United States was viewed as discriminatory and led to negative perceptions about immigrants while posing questions of equality surrounding immigration. A new system was developed, The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, that eradicated limitations, or quotas, set by the government on immigration and proposed new preferences be given to refugees fleeing violence, political unrest, and religious persecution in their native countries (Stockman, 2019). Changes in public policy and American perceptions have led to a reevaluation of American values, renewed attention to the plight of refugees, and increased understanding of the contributions and needs of refugees and immigrants in American society (Haines, 2015).

Today, the United States receives more immigrants than any other nation that contributes to the increased racial, ethnic, and language diversity among its members (Hatton, 2015). Immigration has quadrupled in the United States since the passing of the 1965 Immigration and

Naturalization Act, and it is estimated that the population consists of 13.4% immigrants (Hatton, 2015). Students enrolled in public schools considered to be ELLs comprise about 9.2%, or 4.6 million, of the total school population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Currently, it is estimated that 25% of students in the public-school system speak a home language other than English (National Center for English Language Acquisition, 2019). Increased cultural, ethnic, racial, and language diversity creates challenges for ELL students and their teachers (Cho, Wang, & Christ, 2019).

Social Context

Educational reformers have made efforts to hold schools accountable for the academic achievement of all students; however, ELL students continue to receive lower scores in math and reading on statewide assessments (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). ELLs who enter American schools in the early elementary or primary years have more time to acquire English as a second language. However, those who enter public school at the secondary level have additional challenges including learning disabilities, previous substandard instruction, and an inability to afford qualified instruction that often lead to dropping out (Lumbrears & Rupley, 2019). Fewer than 50% of ELL students transition to a postsecondary education and even fewer, 15%, receive a bachelor's degree (Kanno & Gromley, 2013). For newcomers, those who have been in the United States less than two years, entering high school for the first time can be quite overwhelming (Flores, 2014). Language barriers, lack of formal education in their native country, and a plethora of cultural differences can impact the educational attainment of these newcomers. Additionally, there is the added pressures of family separation, legal concerns, social acceptance, and pursuing graduation before these students age-out at 21 (Flores, 2014). As the achievement gap widens between ELL students and their native English-speaking peers,

policymakers attempt to provide equitable education for ELLs that includes language support, cultural training, and accommodations to help students meet the rigorous demands of academia while decreasing achievement gaps and increasing graduation rates (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016).

Understanding the unique needs of ELL students is key to providing the right levels of language, academic, and social supports. Many secondary content teachers have reported positive attitudes towards their students who are ELLs, but most teachers feel that they lack the training and skill sets required to effectively provide instruction (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014). Misconceptions about an ELL's abilities often result in poor instruction or lowered expectations and many times an overrepresentation of ELLs in special education programs (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014). Students in an ELL program should not receive lowered expectations, rather, increased support (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). For secondary content teachers, most have been trained in one or two content areas but lack any teacher-preparation course or specific professional development that prepared teachers to instruct ELL students (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014). Understanding second language acquisition and development can help prepare teachers for instructing ELLs. When considering second language acquisition, educators must become knowledgeable in the processes involved in learning a second language and understand the theories that underpin educational practice.

Theoretical Context

Researchers in the field of second language acquisition have differing views of learning a second language. Over the years, many theories have emerged and been combined with others to better understand how people learn a second language. This study was grounded in two theorists prominent in the field of linguistics. Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition describes the processes of acquiring a language. Cummins' theories, rooted in Krashen's

research, focuses on the developmental stages of language acquisition to include two distinct stages including basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP; Cummins, 1980). Cummins (2009) theorized that BICS refers to the everyday communication between individuals and can include words and phrases of informal conversations generally requiring lower cognitive demand. CALP, on the other hand, refers to more complex language that is needed for higher cognitive and academic learning (Khatib & Taie, 2016). According to Cummins (2009), ELLs can acquire BICS faster because these students use social language more often to communicate and these words are often repeated. CALP generally takes longer to acquire due to the complexities of a language and requires more cognitive demands. Generally, Cummins (2009) believed that learners of a second language can acquire BICS in under two years while CALP can take five to seven years. Depending on other factors, like a learning disability, these stages of acquisition could take longer (Khatib & Taie, 2016). Cummins' (2009) theories built on the same premise as Krashen, who believed in natural order to acquire a second language.

Krashen (1982) proposed a model of five hypotheses to explain how individuals learn a new language that included the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. Krashen (1982) believed that language acquisition of a second language occurs the same way that one acquires a first language: through a subconscious process used to communicate with others. Contrary to acquisition, learning a language refers to knowing the rules, grammar, and functions through explicit learning. According to Krashen (1982), language acquisition is more important than learning it because understanding the meaning and ability to communicate naturally occur when one learns a first language. The natural order hypothesis refers to this stage of making

meaning in a natural order and predictable pattern that occurs in the structure of any language. As ELL students acquire a second language through natural communicative processes, these students will begin to internally monitor the grammatical output of the language that Krashen (1982) called the monitor hypothesis. At this phase, ELLs have acquired the language and make corrections to grammar and function internally before it is spoken and written or will self-correct after it is spoken. The input hypothesis describes how language emerges when the learner extends his/her current proficiency level to just beyond proficiency level by using context, extra linguistic information, and knowledge of the world. The affective filter determines how much comprehensible input a learner can receive. According to Krashen (1982), ELLs are more motivated to learn a new language when they have higher self-confidence, less anxiety, and are more comfortable in their surroundings. When ELLs are motivated, the result is a lower affective filter and students are able to receive more comprehensible input. Krashen (1982) shared that ELL students who are nervous, have low self-confidence, or feel uncomfortable in their environment will have a higher affective filter that limits their comprehensible input. ELL students need to feel safe to pose questions and clarify and practice the language in a non-threatening environment. Acquisition of and learning a new language is a process that takes time. Teachers need to be aware that the timeline is different for each learner and it is important to encourage students to view mistakes as opportunities to learn (Krashen, 1982).

Situation to Self

For the first nine years of my teaching career, I taught students with disabilities in kindergarten through eighth grade. Five years ago, I was in the process of transferring to a local high school to work in the special education department; however, during the interview process I was offered a position to teach ELL students and was excited to try something new. My high

school is situated near a large city in a low socioeconomical urban community. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and poverty-stricken neighborhoods. The school serves approximately 2000 students and all of our students receive free lunch. Over the past several years, the number of ELL students has increased rapidly in my state, and my county serves students with over 70 different home languages. In my school, the largest number of ELL students are Hispanic. Our second largest population of ELL students is Vietnamese. My county utilizes the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) for all newcomers who have arrived within the past two years with limited English. The curriculum used relies on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model to effectively instruct language learners and support language development.

Over the past five years as an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher, I have found my true passion for education and have become an advocate for my ELL students. I have witnessed firsthand the many obstacles and frustrations that my ELL students face when learning content. For three years, my ELL students had a sheltered content ESOL class for language arts. Now, the county is pushing for all ESOL teachers to co-teach in a content course to support the ELL students. Prior to co-teaching, I worked with secondary content teachers who routinely asked for ELL students to be removed from their content class because the student did not know English. Other teachers would admit that they had no idea how or what to teach ELL students in the content class. My motivation for this phenomenological study was to better understand the challenges and experiences of secondary content teachers when instructing ELL students and how these experiences can affect a teacher's perception of instructing these students. Researching secondary content teachers' perceptions about teaching ELL students in a

content class can be beneficial in discovering how to improve the learning experience for ELL students and the content teacher.

This study addressed the following philosophical assumptions: ontological, axiological, and epistemological. Using the ontological assumption that realities are constructed through the lived experiences of individuals, I reported varying participant perspectives as themes developed from the data without including my own bias or beliefs (Creswell, 2013). The axiological assumption posits that the researcher acknowledges the presence of bias (Creswell, 2013). Because of my experiences instructing ELLs, I was purposeful in setting aside my own biases and shared the experiences as reported by the participants (Creswell, 2013). I approached the study using the epistemological assumption that all knowledge will be known through the subjective experiences of the participant (Creswell, 2013). I identify most with this assumption because I work within the context of the research study, which allowed for deeper understanding of the topic being examined. Within this assumption, the research paradigm for my study was social constructivism. Creswell (2013) shared that social constructivism offers individuals the opportunity to better understand the world in which they live and work. The social constructivist method of collecting data depends on open-ended questions that allow for participants to construct meaning from the phenomenon rather than rely on narrow research questions. This worldview allowed for participants' lived experiences to be shared through interaction and discussion and provided deeper, richer meanings to develop (Creswell, 2013)

Problem Statement

Today ELLs are the fastest growing population in the United States with an estimated 4.6 million ELL students enrolled in the United States public school systems (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). According to a 2016 report by the

National Center for English Language Acquisition there are over 400 different home languages spoken within the public-school system (National Center for English Language Acquisition, 2019). A majority of the ELL student population of K–12 students are U.S.-born children and this also includes Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (NHPI) which the U.S. Census defined as people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, the Marshalls, or other Pacific Islands (National Center for English Language Acquisition, 2019). The ELL students not born in the United States include those who are identified as refugees fleeing violence and political unrest in their native country, or asylees, and the others are identified as immigrants crossing the borders, often illegally, to escape drug trafficking and gang violence (Karam, Monaghan, & Yoder, 2017; Roseberry-McKibbin & Brice, 2000). Since 2014, the United States has received over 62,000 unaccompanied minors crossing the Mexican border from Central America to escape the violence in their native countries (Roseberry-McKibbin, & Brice, 2000).

For teachers of ELL students, it can be overwhelming to address the many diverse cultural and linguistic needs of these students while providing research-based effective instructional strategies to meet the needs of all learners to attain high stakes expectations (Song, 2016). For secondary content teachers, the task can be even more challenging because most content teachers receive training solely in their content area. Teachers who have received some form of training to instruct ELL students are few and their training experiences vary in length, quality, and depth. Because requirements differ from state to state, some teachers are only required to add an endorsement to their teaching certificate while others are required to complete master's level coursework (TESOL Association, 2013). Currently, there are no national standards for teacher education programs to prepare teachers to teach ELL students and no

guidelines on how to implement the common core standards (TESOL Association, 2013).

Because so many factors can impact the achievement level of ELL students, teachers'

perceptions and attitudes are important predictors of student achievement (TESOL Association,

2013). Secondary content teachers need to be knowledgeable of the unique needs of ELLs and

feel supported when teaching these students. Understanding the lived experiences and

perceptions of teachers who instruct ELL students at the secondary content level can lead to a

positive and successful learning environment for the students and the teachers. The problem is

that secondary content teachers do not feel prepared to meet the unique needs of ELL students

due to a lack of professional training, support, and knowledge of second language acquisition

(TESOL Association, 2013).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of

secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. For the purpose of this study, ELL is

generally defined as any student with limited English proficiency and having a home language

other than English (Pyle, Pyle, Lignugaris/Kraft, Duran, & Akers, 2017). The theories that

guided this study included Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition and

Cummins' (1980) theory of developmental stages of language acquisition. The theory of second

language acquisition (Krashen, 1982) provided the framework for this study as it is used to

examine the instructional pedagogies of content teachers and experiences instructing ELLs.

Cummins' (1980) theory of developmental stages of BICS and CALP connects the experiences

of secondary content teachers with prior knowledge, misconceptions, and possible bias of second

language acquisition.

Significance of the Study

This phenomenological study may be beneficial for understanding the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers who instruct ELLs at the secondary content level and can lead to a positive and successful learning environment for the students and the teachers. Educational reform will continue to address the needs of this unique population of learners because they are the fastest growing subgroup within public schools today (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), a revision under the No Child Left Behind Act, focused on the linguistic and academic development of ELL students. This new provision holds schools accountable for educational equity and equitable access of rigorous coursework to prepare all students for college and career goals. Nationwide, ELL students continue to score lower on standardized tests than their native English-speaking peers (Giambo, 2017). Cummins (2009) shared that understanding theoretical frameworks for second language acquisition is critical to the academic achievement of ELL students and can positively impact the achievement gap among this group of students. Theories of second language acquisition posit that basic interpersonal communication skills are the beginnings of learning a second language and generally takes fewer years to achieve, while cognitive academic language proficiency takes much longer to master (Cummins, 2009). Along with Cummins (2009), many schools nationwide have also utilized Krashen's theory of language acquisition as a natural order process for the basis of second language learning models to instruct ELL students (Krashen, 1982). Most teachers report that they have little confidence in instructing ELL students because they have received little or no training and the training is poorly aligned to common standards (TESOL Association, 2013). This phenomenological study may add to current research to examine secondary level content teachers' lived experiences instructing ELL students in the content area.

Information gleaned from this study can provide secondary content teachers the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences with others in the field of education. Understanding the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers who instruct ELLs at the secondary content level may lead to a positive and successful learning environment for the students and the teachers.

Research Questions

Research questions are developed to be the focus and guide of an investigation (Moustakas, 1994). In this phenomenological study, interviews, focus groups, and participant journaling were used to provide a portrayal of teachers' experiences that are rich and layered in texture and meaning (Moustakas, 1994). The following central research question guided the study: What are the experiences of secondary content teachers instructing English language learners?

Teachers' experiences are shaped by their perceptions and attitudes about instructing ELL students. When teachers are confident in their preparation to instruct all learners, a positive learning environment is likely (Albrecht & Brunner, 2019). Building strong relationships with students is paramount to student achievement (Haggis, 2017). Teacher training and professional development are important; however, improving relationships with students helps teachers better understand the needs of all learners to promote student success (Fischer et al., 2018).

Sub-Question 1: How do secondary content teachers describe the instructional strategies used to instruct English language learners?

For teachers, understanding the language and cultural needs of ELL students is key to providing meaningful content delivery. Creating a learning environment that is culturally relevant increases student motivation (Haggis, 2017). ELL students in a secondary content class must have their literacy developed alongside the content acquisition (Wexler, Mitchell, Clancy,

& Silverman, 2017). Understanding content teachers' instructional practices and pedagogy can lead to potential instructional recommendations to address the achievement gap between ELL and native English-speaking students.

Sub-Question 2: What are teacher concerns with instructing English language learners in the secondary content class?

Identifying challenges and rewards of instructing ELL students can contribute to a teacher's perceptions of ELLs (Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019). Concerns exist that can lead teachers to develop both positive and negative perceptions depending upon individual experiences. Some teachers do not feel confident in their training to instruct ELL students, which can lead to reluctance to instruct ELLs in their classroom (Fischer et al., 2018). Those teachers who have the knowledge and experience of the cultural, racial, and language diversity of their students will develop a higher sense of self-efficacy when instructing ELLs (Zeynep, Tuba, Huzeyfe, Yasemin, & Seyma, 2017). Lack of experience and/or training leads some teachers to be unsure of student abilities, and, as a result, the rigor of curriculum instruction is decreased for ELLs, and these students are often overidentified for special education services (Desimone, 2013; García, 2015). Identifying these concerns can potentially lead to more thoughtful planning and consideration for all student needs in the classroom.

Sub-Question 3: How does understanding second language acquisition affect a secondary content teacher's instruction of their English language learners?

Understanding the process of second language acquisition is necessary for teachers that instruct ELLs. Krashen (1982) explained the differences between acquiring a new language and language learning. Acquisition is described as the meaningful interactions used to communicate in the second language. Once an individual has acquired the second language, then language

learning can develop. Language learning refers to the conscious processes used to understand a language and its form and functions (Krashen, 1982). The purpose of this research question is to describe how secondary content teachers utilize knowledge of second language acquisition to support content learning for their ELL students.

Definitions

1. *ELL* – English Language Learner – an individual who is not proficient in English and whose native language is other than English (Pyle et al., 2017).

2. *ESOL* – English for Speakers of Other Languages – refers to programs used in public/private schools to help English language learners develop English proficiency in the social and academic language (Peercy, Martin-Beltran, Silverman, & Nunn, 2015).

3. *ESOL Teacher* – English as a second language teacher – Teachers, ideally with training, who work with English language learners to develop their social and academic language (Peercy et al., 2015).

4. *Newcomers* – Students who have arriving in the U.S. within the past two years and have limited to no English proficiency (Sugarman, 2017).

5. *SIOP* – Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) – a lesson planning and delivery model that uses content and language objectives to support English language learning in the content classroom (Inceli, 2015).

Summary

This chapter discussed the problem and purpose for this phenomenological study. The problem focused on the rapidly growing ELL student population in the United States and how educators may be inadequately prepared to instruct this group of learners. Teacher preparatory coursework and training are limited and, because there are no standards for certification, states

vary in their requirements to teach ELL students. A historical background included educational policies that have contributed to the learning experiences for ELL students. Theoretical frameworks for second language acquisition were used as the context for the study. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. This chapter concludes with definitions of terms relevant to the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of relevant literature guiding this study that sought to understand the experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. Chapter Two includes the theoretical framework to English language learning education, models of instruction, self-efficacy, teacher preparation, second language acquisition, and culturally responsive learning environments. This study was grounded in two theories prominent in the field of linguistics. Krashen's theory of second language acquisition describes the processes of acquiring a language (Krashen, 1982). Cummins' theories, rooted in Krashen's research, focus on the developmental stages of language acquisition to include basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1980). Through the theoretical lens of second language acquisition, teacher's knowledge and strategies utilized to instruct English language learners in content and language acquisition skills will be examined.

Theoretical Framework

Teachers of English language learners (ELLs) require a foundational knowledge of second language acquisition to effectively instruct students in a content classroom. No longer do ESOL teachers have the sole responsibility of providing language support to ELL students. This foundational understanding of language acquisition plays a key role in preparing teachers to plan, implement, deliver, and properly assess the unique learning needs of ELLs. In the field of linguistics and second language acquisition, there have been many theories of how one acquires and learns a second language. This study focused on the works of two key theorists, Stephen

Krashen (1982) and Jim Cummins (1980), because their work has impacted educational models and teacher practices.

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition

Krashen (1982) developed theories to second language acquisition and has revisited these theories over the years. Krashen's theory of second language acquisition is comprised of five hypotheses:

1. The Acquisition-learning hypothesis

2. The Monitor hypothesis

3. The Input hypothesis

4. The Affective Filter hypothesis

5. The Natural Order hypothesis

For Krashen, language acquisition and language learning are two distinct domains. He refers to acquisition as the meaningful interactions among individuals who promote communication. To Krashen, language acquisition is fundamental and important prior to any language learning to occur. Language learning refers to the conscious processes and knowledge about language. Once an individual has acquired the second language they can move towards learning about the language (for example, grammatical functions and forms). The monitor hypothesis refers to the relationship between acquisition and learning the new language and relies on the learner to have consciously learned the language (Krashen, 1982). As individuals have acquired the language, they begin to develop skills to monitor the language, whether verbalized or internalized, for correctness and form. However, according to Krashen, this process can only occur if the learner has mastered the rules, can consciously think about correctness, and had ample time to process.

Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis explains that acquiring a second language requires comprehensible input that is one step beyond the learner's current stage of linguistic competence. The input hypothesis has been used to develop one of the eight components of the widely used Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model to provide language development. According to Krashen, when we "understand messages, we acquire a language" (as cited in Lai & Wei, 2019, p. 1461). The affective filter hypothesis describes factors of motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and personal traits as contributing to one's level of language acquisition. When a learner has high levels of motivation and self-confidence and lower levels of anxiety, new learning is more accessible. These variables can inhibit or accelerate language learning and acquisition and should be factors to consider when instructing second language learners (Krashen, 1982).

Krashen's (1982) final hypothesis, natural order, posits that individuals acquire a second language in a natural process and that in language, the functions and grammar occur in predictable patterns. Because Krashen believed that acquiring a second language is more important than learning it, this hypothesis emphasizes the importance of not teaching grammar in isolation, rather in context, with the goal of enhancing the message being sent (Lai & Wei, 2019, p. 1463). Understanding how language is acquired is crucial for content teachers to feel prepared to instruct ELLs in the secondary content class.

Cummins' Language Acquisition Model

Cummins (1980) theories of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) have been influential in the education of English language learning. The ideas presented by Cummins (1980) supports Krashen's (1982) theories of natural order in which individuals learn through social communication to develop

meaning. According to Cummins, BICS refers to the everyday exchanges of information within a social setting and are cognitively undemanding, non-specialized, and context embedded (Aukerman, 2007). For individuals to reach a language proficiency in BICS, it generally can take from six months to two years (Cummins, 1980). However, to develop CALP, it can take from five to seven years, provided there are no underlying deficits in prior education or learning discrepancies (Cummins, 1980). CALP refers to deeper cognitive demands of abstract concepts required for academic success and, according to Cummins, this process takes more time for learners to develop (Rolstad, 2017). Some criticize Cummins' theories of CALP as promoting a deficit theory for underachievement due to cognitive/academic proficiency versus inappropriate education (Khatib & Taie, 2016). Others believed that the stages of BICS and CALP can be misinterpreted and place too much emphasis on reaching a level of proficiency in CALP before being ready to move on to more challenging cognitive activities (Khatib & Taie, 2016). Rather, a teacher needs to understand where each individual learner is and work from there to develop relevant language experiences (Aukerman, 2007). Most educational models and strategies used in schools today use Cummins' theories of second language acquisition (Khatib & Taie, 2016). Utilizing proficiency levels of language can provide teachers of ELL students with a general description of the language needs of the learner to develop more differentiated instruction that meets the students' needs.

For this study, theories of second language acquisition underpin the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of teachers who instruct ELL students. Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition guided this study as it hypothesizes how individuals acquire and further develop a second language. Cummins' (1980) theories were used to help frame this phenomenological study as these theories focus on a distinction between BICS and CALP.

Taken together, these two theories of second language acquisition provided a foundational understanding of how students experience learning a new language that in turn transforms the experience of the teacher.

Secondary content teachers have unique challenges to instruct ELL students (Whitehead & Greenier, 2019). These teachers must understand how language is acquired and determine best practices for teaching the content for mastery while simultaneously supporting language development. For students at this secondary level, learning a new language can be very difficult because it requires the brain to construct new cognitive frameworks and must receive consistent, sustained practice (Treffers-Daller & Calude, 2015). Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition and Cummins' (1980) theory of language development have been instrumental in developing models of instruction and strategies to instruct ELL students and continue to play an integral role in today's instructional methods.

Related Literature

The existing literature related to ELL students in secondary schools includes multiculturalism, culturally responsive teaching, English language learning models, teacher preparation, teacher self-efficacy, second language acquisition, learning environment, and instructional challenges. Information gleaned from this literature may help secondary content teachers balance curriculum expectations with English language development for ELL students. This section provides a synthesis of the literature that shapes the current study.

Multiculturalism

Classrooms today have diverse language, culture, race, religion, gender, learning styles, age, individual needs, background, and social classes (Valeriu, 2017). There is an urgent need for educators who can develop learning opportunities through a multicultural approach to create

an environment that promotes cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism views each learner individually with his or her own identity and within the context of the learning environment (Maniates, 2016). Globalization and rapid social change have created unique opportunities for educators (Chen, 2017). Teachers' attitudes and perceptions of readiness to instruct culturally and linguistically diverse students can impact performance and self-efficacy that, in turn, can affect student achievement. In response to diverse student needs, the idea of culturally responsive teaching has emerged.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is a term defined and elaborated upon by Gay (2010) that refers to "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). Educators can develop pedagogies that are sensitive to cultural diversity by learning about the culture of different ethnic groups and strategies to differentiate among the different learning styles and linguistic variations (Valeriu, 2017). When developing culturally responsive pedagogies, teachers are prompted to design instruction from a student's perspective, thus, viewing diversity as strengths instead of weaknesses (Kieran & Anderson, 2019). Other factors to consider when planning for a culturally responsive pedagogy are students' prior educational experiences, learning styles and interests, socioeconomic status, cultural educational norms, and students' readiness to learn (Kieran & Anderson, 2019). Culturally responsive teachers must be reflexive and examine one's own beliefs about diversity and culture (Zhang & Wang, 2016). When teachers are prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students, students feel valued and more willing to learn (Abacioglu, Isvoranu, Verkuyten, Thijs, & Epskamp, 2019).

CRT includes the awareness of the social, emotional, and educational experiences of students that can have an impact on new learning opportunities. This form of teaching relies on a community that embraces and cares for the cultivation of students' intellectual capacities, potentials, creativeness, and diverse cultures (Yuan & Jiang, 2019). Teachers who strive for CRT practices do not rely solely on strategies; rather, these teachers consider cultural diversity as a positive attribute and a valuable resource in the learning environment (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Communication and developing strong relationships with students and their families are important to providing relevant and effective learning experiences (Abacioglu, Volman, & Fisher, 2019). CRT challenges educators to reflect on prior teaching pedagogies, explore culturally diverse implications to improve teaching practices that will empower their students and develop rich learning environments (Yuan & Jiang, 2019).

Within the framework of CRT, three aspects emerge: the institutional, personal, and instructional dimensions (Zhang & Wang, 2016). The institutional refers to values of the school administration. The personal aspect refers to processes that teachers undertake to become culturally responsive. And the instructional encompasses all the materials, resources, strategies, and instructional activities that will be used to promote a culturally diverse curriculum (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Developing these three components may lead to a positive school climate that respects diversity and celebrates cultural differences.

Institutional. Institutional frameworks contribute to a school's climate and can be instrumental in the effectiveness of a multicultural community of learners (Maniates, 2016). For school administrators and policymakers, integrating multicultural education into the curriculum is necessary to develop a diverse culture of respect and awareness. By deconstructing traditional teaching approaches to examine how these models actually contribute to institutional oppression,

schools can move toward a climate of cultural pluralism (Schachner, Noack, van de Vijver, & Eckstein, 2016). This shift in practice and belief system can create positive school climates that reduce psychological and behavior problems (Maniates, 2016). Schools, unintentionally, can create student aggression by insensitivity to student diversity, inadequate classroom placement, irrelevant instruction, overcrowded classes, inconsistent management, and rigid behavioral requirements. Also, it is recognized that schools' standardized approach to assessing student achievement and the school ranking process should be reoriented with emphasis placed on creative critical thinking that encourages deep social awareness. To capitalize on student potential, educators need to develop pedagogical practices that truly offer equal opportunities for all students (Valeriu, 2017). Culturally responsive education can improve the school climate by strengthening student connectedness with the school, improving student achievement, and reducing undesirable behaviors (Larson, Pas, Bradshaw, Rosenberg, & Day-Vines, 2018).

Because cultural knowledge and understanding may not come naturally, professional development opportunities are necessary for schools to develop an inclusive learning environment sensitive to ethnic and cultural differences (Chen, 2017). Teachers may want to make changes, but it is up to the school leaders to make reforms. Educational leaders can guide an institution toward culturally responsive approaches by first developing their own cultural repertoire and then strategically plan and implement professional opportunities to develop the classroom teachers (Chen, 2017). Opportunities for professional development should be relevant and ongoing to meet the ever-changing needs of a diverse population. Activities to encourage teacher self-reflection can include writing journals, online discussions with other colleagues, and video reflections that can help teachers evaluate beliefs about cultural diversity to improve practice (Zhang & Wang, 2016). When school leaders demonstrate a commitment to academic

achievement for all learners through a culturally responsive approach, the learning environment can reflect a community of life-long learners no longer separated by language or cultural differences (Chen, 2017). Effective leaders understand the importance of developing teachers' motivation to embrace cultural diversity in the classroom and how this can impact teachers' perceptions about instructing ELL students.

     Personal. An educator's personal values and beliefs about cultural diversity can impact the learning environment (Johnson & Chang, 2012). Classrooms have been described as being a complex social system in which the actions and reactions of teachers and students play a vital role in student motivation and academic success (Abacioglu, Isvoranu, et al., 2019). In a study to examine multicultural approaches to teaching, Johnson and Chang (2012) discovered a strong connection between a teacher's cultural pedagogy and student engagement in learning. The results showed that a classroom teacher who promoted an environment of cultural diversity, tolerance, and respect, reported a reduction in discrimination and student victimization. Further results of this study showed that a multicultural instructional approach led to both majority and minority students' development of cultural awareness, connectivity with peers and teachers, and a classroom culture that promotes fairness and approachability (Johnson & Chang, 2012). Students who feel accepted and supported by their social group are more likely to be motivated to engage in learning. This study also noted that in classrooms with few minority students, teachers will be less likely to emphasize multiculturalism. It is important that these classrooms develop a multicultural approach as it can lead to tolerance, acceptance, respect, and affirmation (Abacioglu, Volman, & Fischer, 2019).

     In traditional classrooms, a more teacher-centered approach that relies heavily on teacher-directed instructional practices can lead to fewer opportunities for students to engage in higher

level critical thinking activities. Often, this practice can create lower expectations of student achievement and cause students to disengage from the learning process. For ELLs, it is imperative that teachers develop cultural pedagogies that encourage collaboration, higher level critical thinking skills, and balanced language levels of support (Kieran & Anderson, 2019). Teachers do not need to become experts in their student's cultures. Teachers need to be willing to learn, observe, analyze, and evaluate teaching styles that demonstrate respect for others and be a model of diversity (Johnson & Chang, 2012).

As teachers develop and deepen their cultural understandings, it is important for self-reflection (Yuan & Jiang, 2019). Because students are coming to school with diverse backgrounds and educational experiences, teachers need to be aware of how these events factor into the classroom norms and expectations (Lee & Buxton, 2013). As students participate more fully in class discussions and interactions, it is necessary for the educator to recognize patterns of student behaviors and examine one's own interpretations of student interactions. Students' cultural norms may differ from the traditional expectations and a teacher may not identify with newly formed interactions among students. Teachers need to be careful not to overgeneralize a group of students or develop stereotypes that could negatively impact the learning process (Lee & Buxton, 2013).

As educators reflect upon practice and personal beliefs about culture and diversity, it is important not to limit diverse education practice to celebrating holidays and food from other cultures as these practices do little to promote equality (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Depending on a school's location in the world, there are varied levels of beliefs about diverse cultural education. Often, the beliefs of the members of a school are not in concert with the students they serve (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Several ideologies are used globally to educate diverse populations of

learners. Color-evasion refers to the practice of educators to ignore diversity by de-emphasizing

cultural differences. Teachers who practice this method reject any cultural capital that students

bring to the classroom. Schools that embrace this ideology hold that by downplaying cultural

differences and emphasizing similarities that they can promote equality and inclusion (Zhang &

Wang, 2016). Educators that practice color-evasion, also called color-silent, limit classroom

discussions about race, religion, and ethnicity because they are not comfortable with these topics

in a classroom setting (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Multiculturalism, on the other hand, refers to the

belief that culturally diverse groups add value to the learning environment. Teachers who

embrace this ideology are more willing to reflect upon personal teaching pedagogies and

celebrate the diverse cultural backgrounds of their learners (Zhang & Wang, 2016).

Understanding the cultural and linguistic needs of students, teachers can better identify

instructional strategies and resources that can improve the learning experience for students.

Instructional. Instructional dimensions contribute to the culturally diverse classroom

and a teacher's pedagogy can be changed to meet the needs of all students (Maniates, 2016).

Effective instructional strategies that promote cultural awareness that teachers can utilize include

displaying charts, videos, books, and information about different cultural groups (Larson et al.,

2018). Additionally, teachers can observe different religious and/or holidays for students, show

contributions of different cultural groups and individuals, and plan cultural visits (Valeriu, 2017).

Teachers may also utilize instructional activities to promote discussions that increase

understanding and awareness of different cultural practices, create an environment that respects

the feelings and experiences of others, and promote cooperative learning activities involving

different groups (Maniates, 2016). These inclusive practices strengthen student peer

relationships, increasing student motivation and providing a safe and inclusive learning environment (Chen, 2017).

To identify new strategies for instruction, Chen (2017) recommended "color talk" (p. 80) where all educators are cognizant of the cultural diversity of their students and develop curriculum to meet those needs. Another term, culturally-responsive caring-in-action, refers to the development of openness in the classroom where culturally diverse students are encouraged to express their feelings, emotions, and thoughts. Characteristics of this instructional practice include patience, persistence, facilitation, validation, and empowerment for the student (Chen, 2017). Students who felt that teachers truly cared for them exhibited higher levels of success than those who did not (Abacioglu, Volman, & Fischer, 2019). In considering language learning, CRT practices have demonstrated that students who are proficient in their native language can often facilitate learning in the new language with more ease (Chen, 2017). CRT can be powerful in engaging all learners to become integral parts of the learning process (Kieran & Anderson, 2019).

English Language Learning Models

As the ELL population continues to grow, educational policies and reforms continue to evolve to ensure that all students receive an equitable education (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). In recent years, the preferred model for instructing all students is in the mainstream classroom, minimizing the cultural and linguistic diversity of ELL students (Harper & de Jong, 2009). Many policymakers hold the assumption that ELL students, like their native English peers, will acquire language naturally through the mainstream learning environment and can develop language in one to two years. However, researchers caution that placement of ELL students in a mainstream class without teacher preparation and appropriate accommodations can

be detrimental to student achievement. Harper and de Jong (2009) shared that if ELL students are placed in classes that cannot meet their language and developmental needs, students can feel isolated, lack participation, and often become invisible in the classroom.

Throughout the history of educating ELL students, there have been several models of instruction (Murphy, Torff, & Sessions, 2019). In the bilingual education model of instructing ELLs, the students are instructed in their first language for all of their classes and will have periodic English instruction throughout the day (Gallo, Garcia, Pinuelas, & Youngs, 2008). Because this model relies on the teachers to be bilingual, many schools lack the finances or resources to hire bilingual teachers. Often, these programs are found in charter schools or school districts with a large concentration of a particular non-English home language or districts who have greater financial resources (Gallo et al., 2008).

For those districts that do not have the option of first language or the financial resources to hire bilingual teachers, a dual language model is often used to teach ELL students (Takahashi-Breines, 2002). A dual language model is similar to the bilingual model in that students are taught in their home language, but in a dual language model the students receive instruction in both their home language and English. Although bilingual students are taught with same language students, a dual language model instructs both ELL students and native English language speakers (Takahashi-Breines, 2002). Murphy et al. (2019) reported that,

> Students in dual language classrooms become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural, and research has shown that students in dual language programs perform better on standardized English tests than students taught only in English. However, it can be challenging to enroll a sufficient number of native English speakers to execute a dual

language program, since not all parents support core academic instruction in a language other than English. (p. 404)

Murphy et al. (2019) shared that an English as a second language (ESL) self-contained class, or sheltered class model, refers to instructing ELL students who have different native first languages. This classroom is comprised only of ELL students who receive instruction in core academics taught in English with the goal of transitioning students to a mainstream content class. In this model, ELL students are pulled out of classes each day for intensive English instruction. Benefits of the ELL student pullout model are that it provides focused literacy instruction without the distractions of other students or content learning (Murphy et al., 2019). However, this model poses a problem because ELL students are losing time in a content class (Carder, 2015).

The push-in model is one in which an ESL teacher provides language support within the content class, but the ESL teacher may or may not be certified in the curriculum (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). The content teacher provides the expertise of the curriculum while the ESL teacher provides language support. Benefits of this model can include content expertise alongside the language support that would ideally assist ELL students in receiving instruction in the mainstream class. Some educators worry that this model often uses a sheltered content approach in which ELL students only receive language support at key points of the lesson and limits the rigor of the content (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). Ideally, this model (also referred to as co-teaching, collaborative teaching, and team teaching) would benefit both native English-speaking and non-ELL students, and the teachers would collaboratively plan and implement lessons and language strategies (Maxwell, 2014). However, this model relies on the two teachers to work

effectively and often the ESL teacher becomes viewed as an adjunct or helper versus a second professional with experience and expertise to instruct (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010).

The Structured English Immersion (SEI) model has been adopted by states like Arizona to educate emergent bilingual (EB) students (Cruze, Cota, & López, 2019). Emerging bilingual students are those whose native language is not English and who are in the process of mastering English (Cain, 2018). The SEI model of instruction requires the majority of an ELL student's instructional day to be focused on an English development of grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills to the exclusion of the general education curriculum. This preferred approach to English learning has been used by many schools for years to help ELL students master the language quicker with the idea of rapidly transitioning to content learning (Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, Mathes, & Kwok, 2008). However, restrictive language models have shown little evidence of narrowing the educational gaps between native English-speaking and ELL students. Many educators believed that this model of instruction is increasing isolation of ELL students and further limits their access to the general curriculum (Cruze et al., 2019).

Newcomer and Collier (2015) interviewed teachers regarding the SEI model and found that the model was easy to implement for ELL students, but it lacked effectiveness. The model of sheltered instruction is often led by teachers with little experience or training in language acquisition or effective instructional preparation to teach ELL students (Newcomer & Collier, 2015). Because students spend a majority, if not all, of their instructional day in a sheltered environment, these students lack socialization with their native English-speaking peers, have limited access to content and language acquisition, limited access to high school credits and graduation, and are segregated from the mainstream classroom (Cruze et al., 2019).

The final model, known as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, has been influential in providing a tool for educators to instruct ELL students in the sheltered instruction content classroom (Daniel & Conlin, 2015). Originally, the SIOP model was meant to offer researchers a tool to evaluate lessons for best practice; however, many schools have adopted this model to instruct ELL students in both the sheltered classroom and a strategy for mainstream teachers of ELLs (Daniel & Conlin, 2015). The components of the SIOP model included:

1. Preparing lessons with content and language objectives and meaningful activities and materials.

2. Building background knowledge of students through linking concepts with prior knowledge and emphasizing key vocabulary.

3. Providing comprehensible input with clear speech and a variety of techniques.

4. Using strategies to scaffold and question learners and get them to practice learning strategies.

5. Providing opportunities for student interaction.

6. Developing manipulatives and activities for students to practice and apply content and language knowledge.

7. Delivering the objective-aligned lesson with appropriate pacing and high student engagement.

8. Reviewing key concepts and vocabulary and assessing student comprehension. (Daniel & Conlin, 2015, p. 171)

Echevarria, Richards-Tutor, Canges, and Francis (2011) noted that although the SIOP model has shown positive results in literacy and language, it may have been misinterpreted by

educators. Some educators have viewed SIOP as a step-by-step process to deliver instruction; however, that was not the intended purpose. Others believed that the model is too teacher-centered and limits focus on the student (Echevarria et al., 2011). Some recommendations to improve the SIOP model include a heavier emphasis on developing student ideas and incorporating the student's cultural and linguistic resources (Daniel & Conlin, 2015). The SIOP model of instruction has shown promise for improving the content literacy of ELL students (August & Shanahan, 2017). The model builds on the key principles of effective instructional practices of building student background knowledge, explicit and rigorous discourse, active student engagement, providing activities that promote student success, scaffolded instruction, visual aids and graphic organizers, ongoing feedback to students, and proper attention to discourse (McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Muñoz, & Beldon, 2010).

Learning Environment

Flint, Dollar, and Stewart (2019) reported that the learning environment can have either a positive or negative impact on both the teacher and the student and the correlation with student achievement. A positive, nurturing, culturally responsive learning environment that respects individuals and diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic differences promotes a sense of belonging and security (Flint et al., 2019). A learning environment includes the physical, social, and emotional interactions between the teacher and the student (Park, Stone, & Holloway, 2017). Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) shared that the most successful ELL teachers have a positive feeling of self-efficacy to instruct ELLs and communicate effectively with the students and their families that fosters an environment of respect and cultural inclusiveness. Additionally, teachers who have poor rapport with students have lower levels of teacher effectiveness that can result in job dissatisfaction and lowered student achievement. A positive school culture is

conducive to learning and when schools display a collective efficacy and the school teachers and administrators work together to assume responsibility for student learning, higher student motivation and academic outcomes may occur (Göker, 2012).

Social emotional factors can contribute to an individual's motivation to learn and "belonging is an essential aspect of psychological functioning" (Allen, Kern, Vella-Brodrick, Hattie, & Waters, 2018, p. 1). Cook, Purdie-Vaughns, Garcia, and Cohen (2012) discovered that "academic belonging is the view of oneself as fitting in school—that is, having the qualities necessary to succeed in school and to be accepted by others there" (p. 482). Allen et al. (2018) identified themes that influence a student's sense of school belonging including academic motivation, parent support, teacher support, and race and ethnicity. Of these themes, "teacher support and positive personal characteristics were the strongest predictors of school belonging" (Allen et al., 2018, p. 1). Students who are learning a foreign language, including ELL students, experience foreign language anxiety that MacIntyre (1999) defined as "worry and negative emotional reaction when learning or using a second language" (p. 27). Language learning can cause anxiety and stress for learners that can inhibit their language acquisition (Dewey, Belnap, & Steffen, 2018). In a study of correlations between classroom environment, emotions, and willingness to communicate, researchers found that in classrooms where teachers and students help each other, tasks are more engaging, challenging, and interesting for students and they felt less anxiety and were more willing to communicate in the target language (Khajavy, MacIntyre, & Barabadi, 2018).

Curriculum shifts in education to develop a more standardized approach have created challenges for teachers (Murphy & Haller, 2015). Because all students, regardless of language or academic needs, are required to demonstrate mastery of the same curriculum standards,

teachers must develop strong teaching pedagogy. As content teachers attempt to implement these rigorous standards, concerns about how to make the curriculum equitable for ELL students arise. Some teachers feel that students in the process of acquiring English as a second language are not at the same capacity as native English learners to meet the full demands of the standards (Murphy & Haller, 2015). Others believe that the premise of a standardized curriculum undermines the culturally responsive pedagogy because it fails to link students' cultural and linguistic experiences with the curriculum (Johnson, Bolshakova, & Waldron, 2016). When considering how the content standards impact learners, many teachers question the appropriateness of the standards with respect to students who will not attend college. The College and Career Ready (CCR) standards, designed by the United States Department of Education (2020), focus on knowledge and skills required for college and career readiness that some educators feel do not meet the needs of students with disabilities or ELL students (Murphy & Haller, 2015).

Misconceptions about content learning for ELL students exist and some educators believe that math courses are naturally easier for ELLs while courses heavy in reading, like social studies and language arts, are more challenging (Hansen-Thomas, Richins, Kakkar, & Okeyo, 2016). However, Master, Loeb, Whitney, and Wyckoff (2016) found that math cannot be reduced to simply a universal language of symbols; rather, students need to develop language needed to fully understand complex math concepts. Further, teachers need to consider how to make new math concepts accessible for ELL students (Master et al., 2016). These misconceptions lead to teacher's content pedagogy and impact how teachers instruct ELLs in the content classes (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016). Many teachers believe that an ELL student is at an academic deficit level upon entering the classroom because the student is not proficient in English. This

lack of knowledge of how language learning and education are related can lead to teacher frustration and ultimately poor student achievement (Diaz, Cochran, & Karlin, 2016; Khajavy et al., 2018).

When teachers are unprepared, lack the training to work with ELL students, and/or are unsure of how to effectively instruct ELL students, they inadvertently rely on their power when teaching (Diaz et al., 2016). "The power that teachers possess is evident when a teacher communicates and behaves in ways that influence students' achievement of desired individual and class goals" (Diaz et al., 2016, p. 159). Research by Schrodt, Witt, and Turman (2007) identified five types of teacher power:

1. Coercive power (communicating threats of punishment to ensure conformity).

2. Expert power (the teacher's competence and subject-matter knowledge).

3. Legitimate power (based upon the teacher's assigned academic role or position).

4. Referent power (cultivated by building relationships and communicating on an authentic level with student).

5. Reward power (using positive reinforcements or negative reinforcements – the removal of negative consequences to create rewards). (p. 159)

The messages, both verbal and nonverbal, that teachers send directly impact the learning environment and can be the difference between student achievement or failure (Imms & Byers, 2017). Of the five powers that Schrodt et al. (2007) identified, ELL students found that legitimate power provided them with a desirable strict, but fair, learning environment; expert power made them feel that the teacher cared about them beyond the scope of academics; and reward power was motivating and fostered encouragement to succeed (Diaz et al., 2016). ELL

students shared that those teachers who displayed coercive power created a learning environment of humiliation, disrespect, and devaluation of students (Diaz et al., 2016).

Teacher Preparation

With the rapid growth in ELLs, teachers nationwide are under pressure to effectively teach students with diverse language and cultural backgrounds (Cho et al., 2019). Historically, large populations of non-native English language speakers resided in urban areas of the country. Often, schools in rural communities lack the financial and human resources required to offer adequate support and training for teachers. ELLs are commonly placed in the mainstream classes and rely on the teacher for language support. Schools that have more resources may provide alternative models for instruction of ELLs that include an ESOL co-teacher in the content class for support, pull-out to a smaller group, or sheltered instruction (Shim, 2018). However, because rural communities are experiencing increased growth of non-English language speakers, it is more critical than ever to ensure that all teachers are prepared to effectively instruct ELLs (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016).

Although content standards have outlined considerations and respect for a student's native language, little information has been provided to teachers on how to assist and meet the demands of ELL students at various levels of English proficiency in the content class (Harper & de Jong, 2009). Prior to 2002, there were no specific standards for English as a second language and teacher preparation, and programs for ELL students had no consistent accountability measures (Harper & de Jong, 2009). Although national standards and school reforms have attempted to provide guidelines for social integration and communicative goals for mainstream content, there is still much to be done to ensure that teachers feel prepared to instruct ELL students in their content classes (Choi & Yi, 2016). Recommendations to improve teacher

preparedness include targeting more informed attitudes towards teaching ELL students by developing better understandings of second language acquisition, literacy development, language demands of content texts and tasks, and more effective ways to integrate language and content instruction class (Harper & de Jong, 2009).

English teachers in Arizona who instruct ELLs in a sheltered SEI class reported that the required certification is not sufficient to prepare them to effectively teach ELL students (Cruze et al., 2019). According to Cruze et al. (2019), many school leaders and teachers believed that advanced certification and more quality professional development opportunities are needed to improve teacher's knowledge of instructing ELLs. Appropriate training for all teachers is required to ensure that teachers are not only understanding the diverse cultural, religious and language backgrounds, but, more importantly, that teachers integrate them into pedagogical goals (Harper & de Jong, 2009).

One study in a California school district by Gandara et al. (2005) found that ELL students with teachers who had specialized training and who spoke the students' language demonstrated higher achievement than students with teachers without these skills. Additionally, these teachers reported that professional development that highlighted the characteristics of second language learners and developmental processes were most useful in preparing the to meet the needs of their ELL students. These teachers also believed that opportunities to observe skilled teachers of ELL students in a working classroom would be most beneficial (Gandara et al., 2005). Another study across the state of California by Téllez and Manthey (2015) discovered that schools with effective curriculum and instruction for their ELL students utilized collaborative learning among the teachers. "Within these schools, teachers plan units, lessons and activities that take language

teaching into consideration and professional development for teachers centers on students' needs and academic learning" (Téllez & Manthey, 2015, p. 115).

Secondary content teachers believed that more professional development is needed in English language arts and social studies because these subjects are more difficult for ELLs while math is less difficult for ELL students (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016; Misco & Castañeda, 2009). Teachers seek out professional development if they perceive it to be beneficial to their instructional needs but, if no value is perceived, then it is disregarded (Sachs, 2016). In their study about teachers' beliefs in teaching ELL students, Gleeson and Davison (2016) discovered that there was a conflict between experiences of teachers versus their attitudes towards professional development. Many teachers' experiences led to their educational pedagogies of teaching ELLs and many did not experience a discomfort between their beliefs and theories. Other teachers reported the value in professional learning opportunities not because they believed they needed it but because they were influenced by colleagues (Gleeson & Davison, 2016).

Professional development has been the avenue that schools have adopted to train teachers and provide collaborative efforts (Coldwell, 2017). For many teachers, professional development opportunities have been instrumental in not only offering training and instructional strategies, but a place where they can share experiences and draw from other teachers' strengths (Robutti et al., 2016). Schools that have been effective in improving the academic achievement of their ELL students have also successfully utilized professional development (Song, 2016). Professional development needs to be relevant to the daily demands faced by educators and should not be stand-alone workshops. For professional development to truly be effective, it needs to be planned with student and teacher needs as the focus and it needs to be ongoing and

relevant to impact higher outcomes (Driee, Janssen, & Groenendijk, 2017). Teachers who feel less prepared to instruct ELL students report that their training has been limited and not relevant to what they actually face in the classroom (Song, 2016).

Of added concern is that most professional development for content teachers focuses on specific content strategies and pedagogies and lacks the component of language development. To increase student achievement, it is necessary to develop professional development that targets the integration of language within the content area (Shea, Sandholtz, & Shanahan, 2018). For math and science, content specific terminology and vocabulary can be interwoven using scaffolding strategies to support language learners. Schoolwide initiatives to provide content coupled with language development can better equip content teachers in improving student outcomes for ELLs in the content class (Shea et al., 2018).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

A person's perceptions of their ability and competence in doing a certain task is referred to as their self-efficacy and can impact one's motivation to attaining goals (Bandura, 1986). There is a relationship between a teacher's self-efficacy and student achievement (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Hansen-Thomas et al. (2016) found that teachers' perceptions of instructing ELL students varied depending upon how much training or coursework teachers received. For example, those teachers who had taken at least two college courses that focused on ELLs reported higher perceptions of applying ELL strategies and effective teaching methods and perceived themselves as:

> effective in applying instructional methods and teaching strategies in ESL in different environments and situations; efficient in helping students transfer their knowledge from their first language to the second language, and thus facilitating ESL students' cognitive

academic language development and content area learning effectively. They also

indicated having a greater understanding of the cultural and language diversity seen in the

ESL classroom than those who did not have ESL training. (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016,

p. 319)

Other teachers reported a higher level of competence and improved self-efficacy when prepared

with training experiences to instruct ELL students (Linville, 2016). A teacher's actions and

behaviors are directly related to their attitudes, motivation, perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions

leading to job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Beck & Kosnik, 2014). The higher level of

satisfaction equates to less stress, anxiety, and burnout (Göker, 2012).

When instructing ELL students, providing a culturally responsive environment is an

important factor to motivate learners and improve a sense of community (Malo-Juvera, Correll,

& Cantrell, 2018). Because a teacher's self-efficacy relies on perceptions of competency in

instructing ELLs, it is critical for teachers to develop knowledge of the cultures and backgrounds

of their students (Doran, 2017). Through professional development opportunities that target

culture and linguistic strategies and interventions, teachers can develop ways to become more

responsive to the unique needs of their ELL students that, in turn, can improve a teacher's self-

efficacy and confidence in instructing ELLs (Malo-Juvera et al., 2018). Many professional

development courses for instructing ELL students focus on classroom strategies to differentiate

content or teach basic English language grammar and sentence structures (Doran, 2017).

However, it is recommended that professional development courses should encourage

organizational changes concerning attitudes and beliefs about the importance of developing

culturally responsive educational opportunities (Doran, 2017). Professional development

provides training opportunities for teachers within a school district and can take place locally or

abroad. Previously an option for teachers, professional development has now become a requirement for most schools (Song, 2016). Professional development often does not consider the needs of the teachers, rather, a planned training by the administrators. Training based on administrator needs may not be relevant to the needs of classroom teachers. For this reason, many teachers lack interest or motivation in participating in development opportunities and do so out of obligation (Song, 2016).

Teachers' perceptions and beliefs about instructing ELL students contributes to feelings of competency and impacts self-efficacy (Yough, 2019). The term self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) has been used for years to explain the cognitive processes that individuals use to develop beliefs about how their persistence, response to potential failure and coping strategies can affect their performance. There has been much research into the relationship between one's self-efficacy and his or her actual performance (Téllez & Manthey, 2015). In considering instruction of ELL students, collective efficacy has shown higher outcomes of performance. Collective efficacy refers to the competencies shared among a group that work together for a particular task, in this case, programs and instructional practices to improve academic achievement of ELL students. A shared vision at the school level can increase a teacher's feelings of readiness to instruct ELLs (Téllez & Manthey, 2015).

To better prepare teachers to instruct ELLs, many colleges are offering courses to improve perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards teaching these students. For many preservice teachers, varied comfort levels and feelings of apprehension exist. Courses aligned to student needs have showed promise for these preservice teachers (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). As preservice teachers become more knowledgeable of the language needs of ELL students, self-efficacy improves. For veteran teachers, making changes in curriculum and instructional

pedagogies often create tension and many are reluctant to change (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018).

Most teachers have found that making these changes to a shift in how to teach ELLs is easier

when the students' culture is more similar to that of the teacher. However, with the growing

population of ELL students in the classroom, more schools are opting for more professional

development opportunities to meet the demands of this increasing diverse population of learners

(Yough, 2019).

Second Language Acquisition

Effective teachers of ELL students require a knowledge of second language acquisition

and application of ESL methods and strategies to inform educational decisions (Hansen-Thomas

et al., 2016). Misconceptions exist about the process of second language learning and many

teachers believed that good teaching for all includes ELL students. These teachers also believed

that ELL students should be able to learn and be successful using the English language within

two years of entry into a U.S. school (Reeves, 2006). Gagné et al. (2019) shared that it is the

expectation that ELLs will be lower academic achievers until they improve their English. Harper

and de Jong (2009) outlined several misconceptions about teaching ELL students that included:

1. Exposure and interaction with native English learners will result in English language
   learning.

2. All English language learners learn English in the same way and at the same rate.

3. Good teaching for non-English language learners is good teaching for English
   language learners.

4. Effective instruction means nonverbal support. (p. 157)

Because the context for learning differs from native English speakers, it is imperative that

teachers understand the linguistic demands of their content and integrate language and content

objectives in their instruction. Exposure in an English-speaking classroom does not equate to

English language learning (Harper & de Jong, 2009). Although ELL students may develop a

common English social language, little is accomplished in developing proficiency towards

comprehension of abstract concepts. Secondary content teachers need to be aware of the more

advanced cognitive skills of older students and how these ELL students can be more active in

their learning process (Harper & de Jong, 2009). Simply providing ELL students an opportunity

to interact with native English language speakers is insufficient because these interactions do not

occur naturally, and they are often limited to brief verbal exchanges (Przymus, 2016). ELLs

require more language models and structured linguistic activities to promote practice and

language negotiations in the mainstream classroom (Case, 2015).

The second misconception that all ELL students learn the same way and at the same rate

stems from lack of knowledge of language acquisition and the needs of their learners (Harper &

de Jong, 2009). Some ELL students arrive in the U.S. with limited first language acquisition

while others have developed a strong educational background in their first language, and these

students will not necessarily take the same steps to acquire a second language (Harper & de

Jong, 2009). Additionally, like native English language speakers, ELLs may present with factors

that influence second language acquisition such as developmental differences, various cognitive

abilities, sociocultural factors that shape attitudes and motivation, and personal aptitudes

(Carjuzaa & Ruff, 2016). When teachers assume that good teaching practices are appropriate for

all learners, some student needs may be overlooked. It is important to understand best teaching

practices while being cognizant of the language demands of the content and how it impacts

learning for ELL students (Harper & de Jong, 2009). When teachers consider making content

comprehensible, visual aids and graphic organizers can be useful in helping ELLs navigate the

text and help mediate the language demands. But relying solely on these strategies and not using tools for language development will not meet the needs of ELLs and may ultimately lead to their failure in the class (Harper, de Jong, & Platt, 2008). Teacher's misconceptions can lead to developing bias or attitudes about the intelligence, ability, or motivations of ELL students (Carjuzaa & Ruff, 2016).

Instructional Challenges

ELL students present themselves with a variety of strengths and challenges in a classroom learning environment that includes language barriers, limited education in their native country, social and emotional traumas, and sometimes learning deficits (Flint et al., 2019). However, it is important for teachers to establish a positive relationship with students and their families to better understand the needs of the students while also exploring their strengths and cultural resources that can contribute to the learning experience (Banse & Palacios, 2018). Although positive teacher-student relationships are important for all students, it is even more critical for ELLs and immigrant students (Flint et al., 2019). High school immigrant students often come to the United States leaving one or more parents behind. These youth cite teachers and family members as important to their achievements, and students must feel more important than the curriculum (Flint et al., 2019).

Being able to communicate with students about their academic content and social and personal issues creates challenges, especially for secondary content teachers (Flint et al., 2019). One study that examined teachers' self-reported knowledge of ELL students and the students' cultural and linguistic needs found that although teachers reported being comfortable with ELL students, the data suggested that the teachers' knowledge of the individual students was very limited (Doran, 2017). Teachers in the study were given a survey that asked questions about

second language acquisition, basic interpersonal communication skills, cognitive-academic language proficiency, and the teachers reported to having little to no knowledge of these terms (Doran, 2017). Other instructional challenges reported by teachers include needing more time to teach the content alongside the language, lack of appropriate resources and tools, and lack of support from school leaders (Edmonds, 2009). In rural schools, lack of financial and material resources impacts the instructional environment (Contreras & Fujimoto, 2019).

Effective instruction for ELL students in the content classroom relies on educators' depth of content knowledge and knowledge of teaching and learning while sustaining rigor, engaging students in quality interactions, and teaching with a pedagogical focus on language (Gandara et al., 2005). Gleeson and Davison (2016) shared that for many teachers, confusion about how to effectively teach content and language simultaneously can create teacher apprehension and negative attitudes towards ELL students. Understanding the language acquisition process and encouraging students to interact in conversation with teachers and peers can improve language acquisition (Aukerman, 2007). As teachers become experts in their content, one effective way to provide rigorous, meaningful content and language learning is through scaffolding (Walqui, 2006). Scaffolding, in general, refers to a teacher providing planned initial supports, as needed, for students to be eased into a concept and then the teacher gradually releases responsibility to the student (Walqui, 2006). Careful planning and preparation for teaching ELL students requires consideration of the learning goal, steps to achieve the goal that might need to be pre-taught, and reflection on the language demands of the content. Scaffolding can be utilized in several ways that include scaffolding steps over a period of time, for one activity or lesson, or as part of the collaborative process (Walqui, 2006).

When teachers lack the knowledge of language learning and how it relates to content, confusion can cause teachers to approach instruction by an education down approach or a practice up approach, depending on the teacher's beliefs and experiences when instructing ELL students (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). Gleeson and Davison (2016) described a teacher's education down approach as "replicating low challenge teaching practices like a focus on spelling and essay memorization which do little to promote language learning" (p. 54). Additionally, Gleeson and Davison described a teacher's practice up approach as "practices learned from many years in the classroom, but long past any professional development they had received about ELLs which had not made an impression on them" (p. 55).

Understanding the needs of ELLs and language development is critical for a student's success (Rolstad, 2017). A careful balance of educational goals can create a positive and productive learning environment. When teachers focus on intellectual attainment, the focus of instruction tends to be driven by student interest that motivates them to learn. However, when the focus becomes the academic skills, students can disengage intellectually and become unmotivated to learn (Rolstad, 2017).

Summary

Chapter Two includes Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition that explains the process of language acquisition, and Cummins' (1980) related language acquisition model that serve as the theoretical lens to explore the experiences of the teachers in the study. Using the second language acquisition theories of Krashen and Cummins, this study explored how knowledge of language acquisition impacts the instructional practice of content teachers. Literature related to multiculturalism, culturally responsive teaching, English language learning models, learning environment, teacher preparation, teacher self-efficacy, second language

acquisition, and instructional challenges provide a context for the study. Although a review of the literature reveals that many educators feel unprepared to instruct ELL students, there is little in the research to articulate what steps should be taken to improve teachers' experiences and perceptions of readiness. This study is beneficial in providing a voice for educators and identifying factors that can lead to more effective instruction.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct English language learner (ELL) students. As the ELL population grows, it is important to investigate the phenomenon of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students to explore the realities of teaching content in classrooms with diverse language, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. A transcendental phenomenological design was chosen for this research because it relies more on the lived experiences of the participants and less on the viewpoint of the researcher (Creswell, 2013). Data collection for this research was obtained through one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journaling and further analyzed through descriptive participant transcriptions (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of Chapter Three is to provide a detailed description of the design, research questions, setting, participants, procedures, researcher's role, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations for phenomenological study.

Design

A qualitative approach was used to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. Yin (2016) stated, "Qualitative research most of all involves studying the meaning of people's lives, as experienced under real-world conditions" (p. 9). Social interactions occurred between myself, as the researcher, and the research participants because the questions were not delivered in the form of an online questionnaire. The research participants had the opportunity to share the real-world events that have happened to them, and not a statistical representation of the population (Yin, 2016). Next, a phenomenological research method assisted in understanding the nature of the participants' classrooms as socially and

culturally organized environments for learning (Kozleski, 2017). This phenomenological study also discovered "how the role of the teacher and the design of curriculum shape some students' access to knowledge and discovery while constraining others" (Kozleski, 2017, p. 24). Furthermore, utilizing a qualitative research method gave the research participants the chance to become storytellers and provide issues that are important but may not have occurred to me as the researcher. As participants shared their experiences, richer narratives emerged to provide more in-depth discussion of the phenomenon of instructing ELLs. "Qualitative methods allow for new discoveries in the moment, unlike more restrictive quantitative data sources such as surveys that are structured for participants to respond to rather than with the research team" (Kozleski, 2017, p. 24).

This qualitative research followed a transcendental phenomenological design, and as Vagle (2016) stated, "The primary purpose of phenomenology as a research methodology stemming from its philosophical roots is to study what it is like as we find-ourselves-being-in-relation-with others (e.g., teacher with students, nurse with patient, therapist with client)" (p. 20). Sokolowski (1999) shared that "the term phenomenology is a compound of the Greek words *phainomenon* and *logos*. It signifies the activity of giving an account, giving a *logos*, of various *phenomena*, of the various ways in which things can appear" (p. 13). Further, a transcendental phenomenological approach was more appropriate for this study than a hermeneutical approach because a transcendental approach "focuses on a specific topic freshly and naively, constructs a question or problem to guide the study, and derives findings that will provide the basis for further research and reflection" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 44).

The use of a transcendental phenomenological approach was chosen to best describe the lived experiences of these participants because they share the phenomenon of instructing ELL

students in their content class. I utilized one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journaling to gather data about "what" the participants experienced and "how" they experienced it (Creswell, 2013). Finally, the data were analyzed for "significant statements, meaningful units, textual and structural description, and the description of the experience" (Creswell, 2013, p. 105).

Research Questions

Central Question: What are the experiences of secondary content teachers instructing

English language learners?

Sub-Question 1: How do secondary content teachers describe the instructional strategies used to

instruct English language learners?

Sub-Question 2: What are teacher concerns with instructing English language learners in the

secondary content class?

Sub-Question 3: How does understanding second language acquisition affect a secondary

content teacher's instruction of their English language learners?

Setting

The setting for this phenomenological study was the Smith County School System, a pseudonym, in a southern state. The school system is located near a large city and, according to the United States Census Bureau (2018), has a population of almost 149,000 residents. The median household income of Smith County residents in 2017 was $52,336, but over 18.4% of the population lives in poverty. White Americans make up the largest racial and ethnic group in the county at 57.1%, followed by Blacks at 31.4%, and Hispanics at 9.6% (Georgia Department of Education, 2019).

Of the more than 175 school districts in this southern state, the Smith County School System ranks in the top 10% with regard to size of student population. This school system is the county's largest employer with over 3100 employees, including over 1700 teachers serving over 22,000 students. The teacher to student ratio is 16 to 1 across 20 elementary schools, eight middle schools, and four high schools with 42% of the students eligible for free or reduced meals (Georgia Department of Education, 2019; Georgia Free and Reduced Lunch School Data – 2018 Qualified Schools, 2019). Of the almost 22,000 students in the Smith County School System, 61% are White, 23% are Black, 10% are Hispanic, 4% are Multi-racial, and 2% are Asian/Pacific Islander (Georgia Department of Education, 2019).

I selected 12 secondary content teachers of ELL students, who volunteered to participate in this study, from three of the four high schools in Smith County. There were no volunteer participants from the fourth high school. The identities of the participants and their school locations are protected using pseudonyms (Yin, 2014). The Smith County School System was selected for this phenomenological study based on the growth of the ELL student population. Over the past 10 years, the kindergarten to 12th grade ELL student population in Smith County has grown by 62.8% with the largest growth occurring over the past four years. Secondary school enrollment of ELL students represents 99.6% of this growth (Georgia Department of Education, 2019). Unlike rural areas, urban communities tend to be more diverse and include a higher number of ELL students (McFarland et al., 2017), making Smith County an ideal site for this study.

Participants

This phenomenological study first utilized a homogenous sampling strategy to focus and reduce the selection of high school teachers in Smith County to those who teach ELL students

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The target population for this study was secondary content teachers of ELL students from the four high schools in Smith County. I set a goal of 12–16 research participants and ended up with 12 participants. A secondary content teacher is an individual who completes additional coursework, participates in supervised field experiences, and passes additional exams to earn their content area teaching certificate (Mason-Williams & Gagnon, 2017). Purposeful sampling was used to select participants able to "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 156).

In 2019, the southern state reported that the Smith County School System had over 1700 teachers serving over 22,000 students, and more than 65% of these teachers held degrees above the master's level (Georgia Department of Education, 2019). For this study, the participants had to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, a current state certification in the field in which they taught, be employed in Smith County as a full-time teacher of the subject they were certified to teach, and teach a minimum of five ESL students across all of their classes. However, the participant's degree level above a bachelor's degree, specific certified teaching subject, number of years teaching, age, ethnicity, and gender did have a bearing on the research, but it was not considered as a variable or influencer. I conducted one-on-one interviews and focus group interview sessions with each of the volunteer participants, and each of these participants also participated in participant journaling during the research.

Procedures

In preparation for this study, the data collection tools and methods were examined by two experts in the field of education to determine content and face validity (Yin, 2014). The first expert reviewer has a PhD in Teaching and Learning with a focus on Language and Literacy.

This reviewer has over 15 years of experience teaching English-speaking and ELL students. The second reviewer has an EdD in Curriculum and Instruction. This reviewer has over 17 years of experience teaching English-speaking and ELL students and has also held several leadership positions in education. Using feedback from these reviews, I edited several of the interview questions to elicit further explanations from the participants, allowing for more in-depth reflections on practice.

The first step for this phenomenological study was to receive permission from the Smith County School System to conduct research in their high school sites. I filled out the Smith County School System's Research Application that explained the research that I planned on conducting in the county. Along with the research application, I requested a list of all of the high school secondary content teachers, listed by the individual schools, who currently teach in the county. After gaining approval from Smith County, I requested and received permission from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this phenomenological study. An IRB is a system that emphasizes the protection of human subjects as an essential safeguard in clinical research. The IRB approval letter can be found in Appendix A.

Immediately after receiving IRB approval, I completed a pilot study. All procedures for the pilot study were identical to the actual study, and data collected were not included in the study. The pilot study utilized my set of research questions and participants completed the interview questions. The two additional research study activities, the focus groups and participant journaling, were not conducted as part of the pilot study. The interviews were conducted online through virtual meetings and were beneficial in refining my interview skills, ensuring that online interviewing could be recorded and used for later analysis, and practicing appropriate pacing for time. Feedback from participants in the pilot study led to a modification

of the IRB letter to include a $25.00 Amazon gift card for participants. Upon completion of the

pilot study, the modified IRB was approved. The modified IRB approval letter can be found in

Appendix B.

There are four high schools in Smith County with an average of 110 teachers per school.

I estimated that half of these content teachers do not teach ELL students; therefore, I

approximated that there would be a pool of 220 potential research participants. Of these four

schools, I began my search for research participants at the two largest schools by teacher

population, then completed my search for research participants at the other two high schools.

The Smith County School System superintendent's office would not provide me with a

list of teachers but recommended that I check each individual high school's website for a

complete list of the secondary content teachers and their email addresses. Utilizing this

information, I emailed a recruitment letter (Appendix C) and a link to a screening survey

(Appendix D) to all of the teachers listed in the two largest schools. Because the number of

volunteer participants was not reached from the two largest schools, a recruitment letter

(Appendix C) and a link to a screening survey (Appendix D) were then sent to all of the teachers

listed in the remaining two high schools. Data saturation was met from three of the four high

schools in Smith County as there were no volunteer participants from the fourth high school.

The recruitment letter that was sent to all of the teachers at each of the four high schools

explained the purpose of this phenomenological research, the criteria for volunteer participants,

compensation for participating in the study, and a timeline for those teachers who volunteered to

participate in the research. All participants' names, school locations, and other confidential

information that arose from this study were given pseudonyms (Yin, 2014). The screening

survey that was located in a private Google Document was purposely designed to select

participants who have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, hold a current southern state certification in the field in which they are teaching, be employed in Smith County as a full-time teacher of the subject they are certified to teach, and teach a minimum of five ESL students across all of their classes.

Once I received and reviewed the screening surveys (Appendix D) and selected suitable research participants, an email was sent to those I selected to inform them of their selection to participate in the study (Appendix E). The letter of consent (Appendix F) and a self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to each participant so they could sign and mail this letter back to me. The letter of consent explained the purpose of this phenomenological research, how the participants or others could benefit from this research, how the participants' personal information would be protected, and a timeline for those teachers who volunteered to participate in the research. When each letter of consent was returned, a pseudonym was assigned to ensure the confidentiality of participants. As my research was conducted during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, I practiced social distancing with all participants and utilized the U.S. mail to send and receive their letters of consent as these required the participant's signature. Additionally, I utilized Google Meets for all one-on-one and focus group interviews. The Google Meet information was downloaded and saved on a password-protected external hard drive that is stored in a locked safe in my home.

As I received consent forms from the 12 research participants, I began conducting the one-on-one interviews on Google Meets until all were complete. All participants participated in a focus group session at a time that was convenient for them and all one-on-one and focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed by me. At the conclusion of each one-on-one interview, the participants were provided a link to a private Google Document for their participant journal.

The participants wrote responses to three prompts that I provided to them for a total of five school days. Some of the participants also wrote additional comments beyond the three prompts and the journals were downloaded and saved on a password-protected external hard drive that is stored in a locked safe in my home.

At the conclusion of all one-on-one and focus group interview sessions, the participants were asked to review their one-on-one interview transcripts and their part in the focus group interviews for accuracy, a process known as member checking (Creswell, 2013). When this was complete, I began the analysis of the data by following Moustakas's (1994) organization and analysis of data that is also a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Moustakas, 1994).

The Researcher's Role

I currently teach English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) in an urban high school located in the same state as the Smith County School System. Four years ago, my responsibilities were instructing ELL students in a sheltered instruction ESOL language arts classroom. For these sheltered classes, there is one ESOL teacher and all learners are ELLs. This model has been used in schools to promote language acquisition in a content course for ELL students. Smith County, like others statewide, is moving away from sheltered content instruction and towards a push-in model in that a trained ESOL teacher co-teaches with a content teacher to deliver instruction in a mainstream class. Although the preferred model of instruction, this model relies on how well the content teacher and the ESOL teacher can work together to plan and deliver instruction to meet the needs of all learners. This southern state has a large and diverse group of immigrants and refugees and these populations will continue to grow over the coming years. Identifying research-based best practice for educating ELLs in today's diverse

classrooms is important to providing equitable learning opportunities in an attempt to narrow the achievement gap between ELLs and native English-speaking students. I became interested in understanding the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELLs because I have realized that ELL students continue to fall behind their native English-speaking peers on content-specific statewide assessments. Understanding the lived experiences of teachers of ELLs in the content courses can serve to identify trends or themes associated with providing support, resources, and training opportunities to adequately prepare content teachers to instruct ELL students.

During this phenomenological study, I practiced *epoché* which is "a Greek word meaning to stay away from or abstain" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 73). In the *epoché* I set aside any prejudgments and biases and look at the phenomenon with a fresh eye. To remain objective, I used a researcher reflexive journal (Appendix J) that recorded all my thoughts, decisions, and observations before, during, and after the study. My key role as the researcher was to maintain objectivity and confidentiality with respect to participants, setting, and all data collection with the goal of delivering an unbiased account of the lived experiences of the teachers in the study. I did not have any authority over the research participants.

Data Collection

Data were collected for this research using three methods including one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and journaling from all the participants to discover "what" the participants experienced and "how" they experienced it (Creswell, 2013). I followed the method form of data triangulation "which involves the use of multiple methods of data collection about the same phenomenon and is frequently used in qualitative studies" (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014, p. 546). Additionally, the use of triangulation offered the

researcher more than one approach to gather richer, fuller data and/or to help confirm the results of the research (Wilson, 2016).

Interviews

The first method of data collection for this study was one-on-one interviews with all the participants. The interviews were conducted online through Google Meets to make the participants comfortable. When participants feel at ease, responses will be more honest and forthcoming (Moustakas, 1994). The 15 questions for the one-on-one interviews were open-ended to encourage participants to direct attention to the central phenomenon of the study (Yin, 2016). By using their own words, participants engage in discourse about the topic "that can further lead to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 163). Interview questions (see Appendix G) for this phenomenological study are listed below:

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions:

1. What content do you teach?

2. Which type of instruction (direct instruction, teacher-centered, student-centered, other) do you perceive to be most effective in your secondary content class for ELLs? Why do you prefer this method?

3. What type of professional development and/or training has prepared you to effectively instruct your students who are ELL?

4. What additional professional development and/or training do you feel would better prepare you to effectively instruct ELL students?

5. Describe the diversity among your ELL students with respect to culture, language, and formal educational background.

6. What challenges, if any, have you experienced when connecting with an ELL student?

7. How have you been able to connect with the ELL students in your secondary content class?

8. What are some activities you implement to encourage collaboration between your English-speaking students and ELL students to acquire content knowledge?

9. What are the primary obstacles encountered in learning content for ELL students? Why?

10. How would you describe the instructional strategies used to instruct ELL students in your class?

11. What has been effective when instructing ELL students in your content class? Why?

12. What has not been effective when instructing ELL students in your content class? Why?

13. What types of assessments do you utilize to ensure your ELL students have learned the content?

14. Explain your understanding of how an individual learns a second language?

15. What are some ways that you show your ELL students that you support their language acquisition and development in your content class?

Wilson (2015) asserted that "research using phenomenology should start with curiosity about what it is like for a person to have a particular experience" (p. 41). The first question was used to "drive the investigation and help the researcher to stay focused" (Wilson, 2015, p. 41). Questions 2–4 were designed to gain a perspective of the participants' style of teaching and level of formal training with ELL students. At the secondary level, content teachers are challenged with delivering content and literacy instruction to students who present with a variety of reading skills and cognitive abilities (Wexler et al., 2017). Professional development and training opportunities can serve to better prepare secondary content teachers of ELLs, and although the research indicates improved teacher practice, there are no significant gains in student

achievement (Fischer et al., 2018). Further professional development should focus not solely on developing a teacher's pedagogical knowledge but improving relationships with students to better understand student needs (Fischer et al., 2018).

Questions 5–7 focused on the learning environment to understand the teacher's lived experience and factors contributing to successful learning outcomes. The learning environment is a broad term that includes the physical, social, and cultural factors that impact the learning process (Brydon-Miller, 2018). There is much evidence to support the relationship between social-emotional health and increased motivation leading to academic achievement that reinforces the concept of building a strong positive learning environment (Albrecht & Brunner, 2019). When the learning environment reflects the importance of one's everyday lived experiences, students become more engaged in learning and more willing to take risks (Haggis, 2017). Positive teacher-student relationships relate to a shared responsibility in the learning process and develop a culture that fosters student strength while promoting student achievement (Haggis, 2017). Question 8 focused on creating a positive learning environment that encourages meaningful peer socialization (Brydon-Miller, 2018).

Questions 9–13 were designed to explore the teachers' perceptions of delivering content to a language and culturally diverse group of learners. Many secondary content teachers do not assume the responsibility of integrating literacy instruction in their content delivery and believe this is the responsibility of the language arts content teacher. For ELL students in a secondary content class, literacy instruction is critical to the development of content acquisition (Wexler et al., 2017). A teacher's attitudes and beliefs about instructing ELLs can impact learning outcomes (Yough, 2019). Many secondary content teachers do not feel adequately prepared to instruct ELL students and that can lead to less equitable learning outcomes and negative

teachers' perceptions (Fischer et al., 2018). It is important for teachers to have the knowledge and experience of the cultural, racial, and ethnic and language diversity of their students to develop a higher sense of self-efficacy when instructing ELLs (Zeynep et al., 2017).

Questions 14 and 15 elicited responses about second language acquisition in a content class. The purpose of these questions was to explore the teacher's understanding of language acquisition as it relates to Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition.

Focus Group

The second method of data collection for this study was a total of three focus group interview sessions. I offered two different dates for the focus group sessions and allowed the participants the opportunity to choose one that worked best for them, but due to schedule changes in Smith County due to COVID-19 student in-class and online enrollment, some of the participants requested a different date. The first focus group session had three participants, the second session had five participants, and the third session had four participants. Just like the one-on-one interviews, the focus group sessions were conducted online through Google Meets to make the participants comfortable.

Focus group interviews offer participants the opportunity to answer questions in a more active way and take the discussion more in-depth (Colucci, 2007). The eight questions for the focus group interview sessions were open-ended to elicit participant responses to construct a more focused understanding of the central phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2013). Although the focus group questions are similar to the one-on-one interview questions, fewer questions were used to give the participants time to share and compare their responses (Morgan, Ataie, Carder, & Hoffman, 2013). Actively engaging in discussion of the topic allows each participant the opportunity to elaborate on others' ideas. As participants share, the researcher can observe

the similarities and differences discussed in the group (Morgan et al., 2013). Focus group

questions (see Appendix H) for this phenomenological study are listed below:

Standardized Focus Group Interview Questions:

1. What is it like to be a teacher of ELL students?

2. What type of professional development and/or training has prepared you to effectively instruct ELL students?

3. What additional professional development and/or training do you feel would better prepare you to effectively instruct ELL students?

4. Tell us about your ELL students. What assets do they bring to the learning environment?

5. What challenges do your ELL students bring to the learning environment?

6. How have you been able to connect with the ELL students in your secondary content class?

7. How do you encourage collaboration between your native English-speaking and ELL students to acquire content knowledge?

8. Think about your content. Tell me how you plan, deliver, and assess content knowledge with your ELL students.

Question 1 was asked to gather general information about common lived experiences of secondary content teachers of ELLs and set the stage for further discussion. Wilson (2015) shared, "Research using phenomenology should start with curiosity about what it is like for a person to have a particular experience" (p. 41). The first question was also used to "drive the investigation and help the researcher to stay focused" (Wilson, 2015, p. 41).

Questions 2 and 3 relate to a teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness when instructing ELL students in the content class and allow for reflection of what the teacher

deems necessary to be prepared (Kelly, 2018; Yough, 2019). Questions 4 and 5 were designed

to elicit responses concerning attitudes and perceptions of teachers who instruct ELLs in their

content class and provide opportunities to consider positive and negative aspects of ELL students

in the mainstream content area class (Rizzuto, 2017). Question 6 asked participants to think

about how they make connections with their ELL learners that can lead to a positive learning

environment. Haggis (2017) underscored the key role that a positive teacher-student relationship

has on class culture and fostering student achievement. A positive learning environment has

been shown to improve academic outcomes for students (Albrecht & Brunner, 2019). Question 7

investigated a positive learning environment further by asking teachers to examine strategies

used to promote collaboration and a culture of respect in their classroom (Przymus, 2016).

Question 8 focused on content to allow teachers a chance to reflect on processes used to plan for

instruction of ELL students. Because many secondary teachers report that they do not feel

adequately prepared to instruct ELLs, this question can allow for deeper teacher reflection on

what resources and supports would most benefit them in preparing to teach content to ELL

students (Murphy et al., 2019; Zhang, 2017).

Participant Journals

The third method of data collection for this study was participant journaling with all the

research participants. Participant journaling allowed the phenomenon to be revealed through the

teachers' self-reflection and responses without restraints and manipulation of outsiders (Marshall

& Rossman, 2016). I requested that each of the research participants complete an online journal,

located in a private Google Document, of their daily lived experiences teaching ELL students for

a total of five school days. The research participants were asked to write a minimum of three

complete sentence responses to three prompts that I provided to them, and because I encouraged

them to write more, some of the participants did write additional comments. To ensure the confidentiality of participants, this private Google Document was only available to me and each individual research participant, and each document had a pseudonym that corresponded to the participants' name. The journals were downloaded and saved on a password-protected external hard drive that is stored in a locked safe in my home.

Data collected through participant journals offered a "subjective account of the event from the point of view of the writer and displays the worldview of a single writer" (James, Milenkiewicz, & Bucknam, 2008, p. 70). Jacelon and Imperio (2005) shared that participant journaling can be a valuable source of data for qualitative research because this encourages the research participant to focus on daily activities and reflections that he or she values. Participant journal prompts (see Appendix I) for this phenomenological study are listed below:

Participant Journal Prompts:

1. While planning your lessons this week, what challenges did you face while differentiating the content for your ELL students? Why?

2. What other experiences would you like to share regarding the instruction of ELL students that were not covered in the other interview questions? Why?

3. What have been the most and least effective methods when building relationships with ELL students? Why?

Question 1 is an open-ended question designed to elicit details about the thought processes utilized when planning to instruct ELL students. Although the ELL population has been increasing rapidly over the past few years, effective planning practices linger behind (Brown & Endo, 2017). Research has indicated that careful analysis of teachers' lesson plans often reveals that the lesson says "accommodations for ELLs" as a generic statement; however,

there is rarely any detail of how the plan will be differentiated (Brown & Endo, 2017, p. 372).

Some teachers hold a deficit view of ELL students' abilities to learn and often conflate an ELL's

characteristics with a learning disability (García, 2015). Question 2 offered the participant the

opportunity to explore other experiences not already addressed in the interview questions,

therefore providing opportunities for the participants to share and make connections. Teachers'

perceptions about students are developed through personal experiences, values, and personal

beliefs. A teacher's positive perceptions about students will impact student achievement (Nieto,

2013). Question 3 related to how teachers make connections with their ELL students. When

students feel that they belong to a group, are valued as intellectual participants, and confident,

student achievement goals can be realized (Lumbrears & Rupley, 2019). There has been a long-

standing implication of the role that teachers' perceptions and attitudes have on student success.

Because teachers begin to consider feelings, interactions, proficiency levels, and what is best for

students, the impacts can be lifelong for a student (Lumbrears & Rupley, 2019).

Data Analysis

Before beginning the data analysis, I transcribed all the one-on-one interviews, focus

group interviews, and participant journals. The participants were then asked to review their one-

on-one interview transcripts as well as their part in the focus group interviews for accuracy, a

process known as member checking (Creswell, 2013). Next, I followed Moustakas's (1994)

organization and analysis of data that is also a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method

(Moustakas, 1994). During the first step of data analysis, I practiced *epoché* by setting aside any

prejudgments and biases in my researcher reflexive journal (Appendix J) and looked at the

phenomenon with a fresh eye. Additionally, I eliminated any preconceived ideas by describing

my own experiences so that my focus would be on the participants in the study (Creswell, 2013).

The second step in this process was to develop a list of significant statements to use in the coding process to identify themes. Saldaña (2013) stated that "a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). Utilizing the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method, I read through the transcripts and created a list of statements that were significant to the topic. This is also known as known as horizonalization of the data, and I treated each statement as having equal value (Moustakas, 1994).

The third step in the data analysis process was to take the participants' statements and group them into larger units of information called "meaning or meaning units" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96). Creswell (2013) referred to these "meaning units" as themes that "are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p. 186). During this part of the data analysis process, I described the participants' lived experiences during the phenomenon that is known as "textural description of the experience" and included the participants' verbatim examples (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96). Next, I wrote a description of how the experience happened, known as the "structural description" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96). During this step of the data analysis, I "reflected on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced" (Creswell, 2013, p. 193). Finally, I wrote a description of the phenomenon incorporating both textural and structural descriptions to "represent the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 194). This explains the "what" and "how" of the research participants' experience during the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Trustworthiness

Research procedures must have protocols for establishing credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study utilized one-on-one

interviews, focus group interview sessions, and participant journaling to provide multiple sources

of data collection. By utilizing these three forms of data collection, also known as data

triangulation or cross-checking data, multiple sources were used to provide a rich account of the

phenomenon being studied and offered differing points of view among the participants

(Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Researchers must include measures of credibility in their study to provide value and truth

(Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Tobin and Begley (2004) stated, "Credibility (comparable with

internal validity) addresses the issue of fit between respondents' views and the researcher's

representation of them" (p. 391). For this study, I used the method form of triangulation as a

means to gather in-depth, detailed accounts of lived experiences from the participants' one-on-

one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journals. Through the research process, I

offered member checking as a means to provide opportunities for participants to review their

transcripts and work with me to confirm trends and emerging themes from the data. Using

triangulation and member checking reinforces the credibility of the study (Yin, 2016).

Dependability and Confirmability

For research to be deemed dependable, it must be able to be replicated and corroborated

by researchers outside of the current study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For this study, I

described details about the location of the study and the research participants while maintaining

confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms. My procedures during the study, designs,

participants' responses, and analyses of themes are documented to ensure accountability.

Additionally, the use of a researcher reflexive journal (Appendix J) will "provide a set of notes

on decisions made during the research process, reflexive thoughts, research materials adopted,

emergence of the findings, and information about the data management enabling the auditor to study the transparency of the research path" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122).

Confirmability utilizes the researcher reflexive journal and the practice of *epoché* to ensure that my own bias and preconceptions were excluded from the study. Also called reflexive notes, Connelly (2016) shared that keeping a journal of perceptions during the interview process can allow for further analysis of the data. Creswell (2013) stated that maintaining a researcher journal is effective in capturing bias to exclude it from a study. Moustakas (1994) shared that "the *epoché* challenges us to be transparent to ourselves, to allow whatever is before us in consciousness to disclose itself so that we may see with new eyes in a naïve and completely open manner" (p. 74).

Transferability

Transferability means that the research can be replicated by another researcher using similar procedures and data collection methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data collected in this study included participant interviews, focus groups, and participant journaling to explore the experiences of teachers. Participant characteristics and demographics were shared through the documented lived experiences providing a rich, thick description of each participant (Creswell, 2013). I developed a researcher's reflexive journal (Appendix J) where I recorded personal decisions made during the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In analyzing the data, participant transcriptions provided descriptive characteristics of the teachers, classroom models, and instructional protocols. Using these descriptions and my research reflexive journal, other researchers may replicate a similar study or identify another phenomenon to further investigate.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration in this study included approval of the Liberty University IRB, permission from the Smith County School System (pseudonym), and consent from the participants to conduct research. All participants' names and the names of their schools were given pseudonyms (Yin, 2014). All participants were also asked to sign a letter of consent (Appendix F) which explained the purpose of this phenomenological research, how the participants or others could benefit from this research, how the participants' personal information would be protected, and a timeline for those teachers who volunteered to participate in the research.

During the collection of data, I conducted all one-on-one and focus group interviews and maintained confidentiality through careful documentation of participant responses through Google Meets and transcribed these data to ensure accuracy and clarification of responses. Participants were then offered the opportunity to participate in member checking by reviewing their transcripts and work with me to confirm trends and emerging themes from the data. I did not ask leading questions or make any additions or omissions to the participants' responses. As data were collected, I secured all recorded transcripts, participant journals, and all other research information collected for this phenomenological study in a locked safe in my home. All digital records were saved on an external hard drive with password protection, and this is also stored in a locked safe in my home. Upon completion of the study, all written documents were scanned into a PDF file and all copies of the written documents were shredded by a professional company. All PDF files were added to the password-protected external hard drive already holding the digital audio recordings and secured in a locked safe in my home. This password-protected external hard drive will be stored in my home for three years and after the conclusion

date of the research, all data will be deleted. I will be the only individual to have access to the research data. This study was conducted with fidelity to ensure that all protocols for confidentiality were included and that any of my own personal biases and judgments were analyzed throughout the study.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the methods and procedures for data selection, data collection, and data analysis. A phenomenological research approach was used to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. Included are a rationale and description of participant criteria and setting to offer a background context for the study. Participant interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journaling were the methods of collecting data, and each are explained in detail and all interview questions and journal prompts are included. My role as the researcher was identified and discussed to demonstrate the relationship with participants and to ensure that my biases were made transparent to alleviate influential factors on data analysis. Data analysis is described in detail. Concluding this chapter, issues of trustworthiness were defined and discussed to establish credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability of the research study. Using triangulation of data, member checking, and researcher reflexive journaling, this study met the criteria for trustworthiness. Finally, ethical considerations were described to ensure that all data related to the study were organized and stored in a secure location to avoid potential compromise of confidentiality of participants and research data.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. Secondary content teachers for this study were chosen from three of the four high schools in Smith County. Twelve participants were selected who met the researcher's criteria and, to ensure confidentiality, all were given pseudonyms.

Chapter Four provides the results of the data analysis for this study. This chapter begins with an overview of each participant followed by the results from the study. Themes developed from the data analysis are clustered together to provide a description of the participants' experiences to demonstrate the essence of the phenomenon of instructing English language learners (ELLs) in the content at the secondary level. The results from this study are described using a narrative form and organized by theme. Participant quotes are verbatim to provide a voice for each and demonstrate some characteristics of the participants. Additionally, this chapter analyzes how the collected data answer the research questions.

Participants

I selected 12 participants who met the criteria for the study which included secondary teachers from a variety of content areas to best describe the phenomenon of instructing ELLs. All 12 participants, who were from three of the four schools I solicited, completed the one-on-one interviews, participated in one of three focus group sessions, and completed the participant journal for five consecutive days of instruction.

The participants in the study freely shared their experiences of the phenomenon of instructing ELLs in the secondary content class and were forthcoming with their responses.

Although most have taught for several years, each had different events that helped shape their

perspectives. The experiences, training, support, and relationships of each participant gave

further insight into the study. Table 1 displays the participants' demographic information.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Participant Pseudonym	Content Area	Ethnicity	Gender
Angela	U.S. History	Caucasian	Female
Bonnie	English Language Arts	African American	Female
Christine	Science	Caucasian	Female
David	Economics	Caucasian	Male
Evan	Math	African American	Male
Fran	Technology	Caucasian	Female
Gary	Business	Caucasian	Male
Heather	Biology	Caucasian	Female
Ivy	Math	African American	Female
Julie	English Language Arts	Caucasian	Female
Kevin	Math	Caucasian	Male
Larry	World History	Caucasian	Male

Angela

Angela is a Caucasian female with several years of experience teaching social studies.

She has been teaching U.S. history at the secondary level for the past seven years. Angela

explained that she enjoys teaching social studies because she believes that learning from the past

can help individuals make better decisions in the future. Also, she said that learning about

others' cultures and traditions has always interested her and that is why she initially wanted to

teach. Before coming to the high school, Angela taught social studies at the middle school level.

When discussing her English learners, she said, "It's so much fun to get to know them, it's

challenging at times, but I love it" (Angela, Focus Group, October 17, 2020).

Bonnie

Bonnie is an African American female teacher with many years of teaching experience.

Bonnie said she is getting close to retirement and with things the way they are now, she

considers retiring soon. She said she loves teaching but she is just getting tired. She has a

daughter at home with some severe behavioral issues and before COVID, Bonnie would have to

leave her job many times to deal with her daughter. Now, as the daughter is getting older, she is

much more difficult, and Bonnie said she might need to stay home with her full-time. In the

focus group, Bonnie talked about her experiences with ELL students and stated that she has

always loved having them in her classes. At first she admitted that she had no clue how to teach

them, but then she was lucky enough to have a co-teacher in her classes to support her and the

students.

Christine

Christine is a Caucasian female who has been teaching for 18 years. Christine mentioned

that over the past several years she has changed the way she teaches. When she first started

teaching she said everyone she knew used to teach by the old way of lecturing and taking notes.

Over the years, she has seen many changes in schools and how teachers are doing things

differently. Christine admitted that "change has been difficult but necessary" (Christine, Focus

Group, October 2, 2020).

David

David is a Caucasian male who teaches economics. David has been teaching for over 10 years and enjoys his job. He spoke positively about his ELLs and the challenges and assets they bring to the learning environment. David believes that several of his students arrive with some knowledge of their country and how economic factors impact a nation. David feels that "this prior knowledge helps students learn our system of economics quicker" (David, Interview, August 27, 2020). David believes that students would fare better if they were more proficient in English.

Evan

Evan is an African American math teacher with eight years of teaching experience. He discussed how his administrators have helped him with the many challenges of instructing his ELLs. He discussed various ways that he tries to communicate with his ELLs. He asks them about their language and has learned some basic words and phrases to communicate in the classroom. During his one-on-one interview, Evan said that once he learned how to say "do you need any help" in Spanish that his new Hispanic student started talking to him in class. "I believe just little things like that can make my ELLs feel more comfortable in class" (Evan, Interview, September 8, 2020).

Fran

Fran is a young Caucasian female who teaches technology in her school. Fran is fairly new to teaching and has a positive attitude towards her chosen profession. She works with others in her school to implement various technologies to support teachers in their content and also make it more attainable for students. She loves teaching technology and believes that "it

levels the playing field for students to acquire content knowledge, especially for English learners" (Fran, Interview, September 7, 2020).

Gary

Gary is an older Caucasian male who has been teaching for several years. He came to education from a business background and entered teaching through an alternative route. He enjoys sharing his business knowledge with students and shared in his participant journal that he likes to "give them options to consider for career paths" (Gary, Participant Journal, September 25, 2020).

Heather

Heather is a Caucasian female who teaches biology and has been teaching at her current location for over five years. Heather commented several times about her concerns with her content and how challenging it is because of the complexity of the terminology, text, and abstract concepts. However, she loves it when her students "get it and really understand the concepts" (Heather, Participant Journal, October 2, 2020). For her ELLs, Heather was positive in her experiences teaching her students and is concerned for their success.

Ivy

Ivy is an African American female who has been teaching math for several years. Ivy came to Smith County from another school district in this southern state and enjoys her current position. Ivy has a positive outlook on her role as a teacher and mentor for her students. Several of her Hispanic students have to work to help their families and miss a lot of school. Ivy works with them after school hours or early mornings to support them so they can continue with school. "I have had to be flexible in working with these students to allow them to have extended

deadlines and meet with them at various times outside the class schedule to accommodate them"

(Ivy, Focus Group, October 17, 2020).

Julie

Julie is a Caucasian female who has been teaching for over 16 years and admits that she

sometimes feels overwhelmed with constant changes in the school system. She has been

teaching English language arts for many years and also teaches some gifted language arts

classes. She has had ELLs in both her general courses and her gifted classes. Julie likes what

she does and shared, "There is never a dull moment" (Julie, Participant Journal, October 9,

2020).

Kevin

Kevin is a young Caucasian math teacher with five years of teaching experience. He

presents as very professional and knowledgeable in his content area. He has only taught ELLs

for three years and discussed how he used to assume that his students arrived with more basic

skills. Now, he said that he does not assume anything and treats each lesson like it is the first

time his students have experienced it. He uses hands-on materials, when he can, to help support

his students learn the concepts and encourages the students to work together often to solve

problems.

Larry

Larry is a Caucasian male who has been teaching for many years. In his participant

journal, he admitted his frustration at feeling "unprepared quite often" to teach new English

language students because even though he has worked with them for a few years, he just does not

always feel prepared (Larry, Participant Journal, September 25, 2020). He discussed some

limited training experiences and that more training opportunities, he believes, would help all

teachers feel more equipped to instruct the ELLs. He appeared to be very open and honest about his struggles but also optimistic that with better training he, and other teachers, would feel more prepared.

<div align="center">**Results**</div>

From the data collected, I read through all the transcripts from the one-on-on-interviews, focus group interviews, and the participant journals and made a list of all significant statements. These statements were used to develop codes, which were then used identify themes (Moustakas, 1994). Then, using horizonalization of the data, I gave a value for each statement made from the participants (Moustakas, 1994). After several re-readings of participants' transcripts, several themes began to emerge. The following section will provide details for each theme and subtheme.

Theme Development

From the data collected from the one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and participant journals, four overarching themes and various subthemes emerged. During the research process, these themes were consistent with secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. Data were analyzed using horizonalization and four themes were created using the codes from the significant statements detailed in Appendix K.

Theme 1: The learning environment. The learning environment is a predominant recurring theme. The learning environment is a broad term that includes the physical, social, and cultural factors that impact the learning process (Brydon-Miller, 2018). All 12 participants discussed the learning environment as a key factor to student success and a shared sense of belongingness. Three subthemes that emerged from the theme Learning Environment include (a) relationships, (b) student backgrounds, and (c) cultural awareness.

Relationships. All 12 participants discussed the importance of building relationships in their classrooms between student and teacher, student groups, and families. Several of the participants said it was challenging at first to get to know many of these students due to the language barrier. Although many of the ELL students have attended a U.S. school, many of the students do not like to speak in class or participate fully. Another challenge for most participants was the disconnect with parents. Although teachers are diligent in trying to communicate with parents, many shared that it is often challenging to reach parents as their telephone numbers are incorrect and emails are outdated. As most of the parents speak a language other than English, the participants must rely on an ESOL teacher or translator service from the county to assist in making these contacts. Bonnie stated, "I have several ELLs who are failing because they are not turning in assignments and many have attendance issues" (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). Heather shared, "I have been trying to contact two parents for over a week, I cannot reach anyone, and I have trouble reaching anyone at my county office to assist with translating" (Heather, Interview, September 22, 2020). Larry believes that "many of my parents do not get involved, I think it's because of a cultural norm. I believe the parents are afraid to get involved due to immigration concerns" (Larry, Interview, October 17, 2020).

Nine participants discussed ways that they begin the school year and how they develop activities and routines to promote effective learning environments. These nine participants elaborated on establishing routines and procedures for students in the first two weeks of school to include communication between teacher, student, and families. Participants shared that they also spend time teaching procedures for completing and turning in assignments, online navigation and expectations for virtual classrooms, and appropriate discourse both face-to-face and online to ensure that discussions are respectful and meaningful. Julie emphasized, "It is

important to establish routines and expectations at the very beginning. It helps to avoid confusion and misunderstanding later on" (Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020). Several participants said that they include activities to get to know students during the first few weeks of school. Angela begins with a Google slideshow that encourages students to talk about themselves and include information about their family, cultural backgrounds, and personal interests (Angela, Interview, August 31, 2020). Bonnie, a language arts teacher, has her students write a personal essay that details students' backgrounds, interests, and future goals (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). Kevin explained:

> I use games to encourage students to work together because I want students to learn to work together, collaborate, so they will want to solve problems together. I feel that this creates a learning environment that includes everyone, and students are motivated when they believe they are part of the class, or group. (Kevin, Interview, October 13, 2020)

Ivy noted, "Connecting with my students, I believe, is the most important thing to create a positive learning environment" (Ivy, Interview, October 15, 2020). Some participants discussed the importance of continuous communication with students and their parents and how this relationship is critical to keeping students motivated and encouraged to participate in school. All 12 participants mentioned having routine communication with students and parents that included texts and emails and phone calls home to relay information about student grades, attendance, and other critical information from the school. According to Fran:

> It is important that I reach out to parents routinely about the good grades that students are receiving and positive things that students are doing. Nobody wants to have a teacher call and always relay something negative about their child. I have found that even my

student who struggles the most is motivated by these positive phone calls home. (Fran,

Interview, September 7, 2020)

David shared:

I created an online blog for my students and I to chat, discuss schoolwork, discuss what's

happening at home, or whatever, as an avenue for casual communication. The students

really like it and often open up a lot more than they would in class. Also, it encourages

my students to be more motivated to participate with their peers. (David, Interview,

August 27, 2020)

The responses that elaborate on student relationships and developing collaboration are

routine for several participants. Many participants reported that they use collaborative groups

often to have students work in smaller groups for an activity or discussion and try to partner an

ELL student with another student with similar home language within the group.   Because most

of the 2020–2021 school year has been virtual, or a combination of virtual and face-to-face,

many teachers said that the groups collaborate online through discussion boards and teacher-

prompted questions in their online Google Classroom. In her one-on-one interview Bonnie said,

"During virtual instruction, my students are separated into five groups and I pair my ELL

students with another student who speaks their language, if I can" (Bonnie, Interview, August 25,

2020). Christine has her students discuss in class, but admitted that

I have students talk about a question or collaborate, but the truth is, because of COVID

they cannot sit close together and often the talking can be distracting for others. I have

about 15 in class, face-to-face, with another 15 to 17 online with virtual instruction

simultaneously. As the teacher, I have to stay in front of my computer and try to instruct

everyone. (Christine, Interview, September 8, 2020)

Heather, a biology teacher, shared:

> Before COVID, it was easier to have my students pair off or work in small groups to
> problem-solve, work on activities or projects, and collaborate on ideas. In science, we do
> many hands-on activities. Now, I have to stand at the front of the room and discuss, with
> no hands-on opportunities. I have had to encourage my students to add to the discussion
> platform online, but many do not participate. It's frustrating. (Heather, Interview,
> September 22, 2020)

Evan, a math teacher, noted when discussing relationships:

> I offer many videos online for my students to view and we discuss virtually. But I feel
> like my ESOL students, I have to encourage them to work with another student in class
> who understands their home language. I have one ESOL who seems to speak English
> well, but her grades continue to be low. I have tried to help her, but honestly, I don't
> know if she really understands or not. Even her partner doesn't know if she understands
> the language and the content. (Evan, Interview, September 22, 2020)

During her one-on-one interview Julie explained:

> I like to use role playing or drama activities to encourage collaboration, make the content
> interesting, and it provides valuable language practice for students, especially my ELLs
> who need opportunities to practice the language in context. For my ELLs, I try to give
> them a summary of the text already translated, if possible, so they can understand the
> text. By pairing students up to role play or present a short drama, students really enjoy
> practicing their literacy and fluency skills in a more relaxed setting. Even my students
> with very little English love reading their parts out loud and it motivates them to practice

and helps them feel like they are truly included in the learning process. (Julie, Interview,

September 22, 2020)

Angela, a history teacher, also stated that she encourages activities that promote collaboration

between student groups. She uses a strategy called jigsaw where the class is divided into groups

and given a specific task to become the expert on a topic. Each member of a group is given a

different color card. Then, the students move to the next group based on their color and each

becomes the expert of their portion of the topic. This newly formed group then shares

information to complete a task together. For ELL students, she pairs them with a learner who

can be a model of English and the pair will move together (Angela, Focus Group, October 17,

2020). Larry, another history teacher, uses a variety of grouping activities to encourage

collaboration between his students. He noted, like several other participants, that due to social

distancing, grouping students in the traditional way is not possible so he sets up virtual groups

for students to participate. For a recent task, Larry grouped his students into five different

groups in the virtual classroom. Students worked on a history project together within their

respective groups. Each member of the group was assigned a section of the task to complete and

then as a group, share their information and create a presentation to share with the class. For his

ELL students, Larry was deliberate in placing each with a peer who was given directions in how

to support the ELL student with completing the task (Larry, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). In

his business class, Gary grouped his students for a project on creating a small business plan. He

explained:

 Students are placed in groups and must choose one of three given product ideas. They

work in groups to brainstorm ideas about their chosen plan and by collaborating and

reaching a conclusion about the most important features, the group develops a final plan.

They are forced to work through the planning process, learn how to compromise, and

then develop a final project together. (Gary, Interview, August 28, 2020)

Student backgrounds. Several participants discussed student backgrounds, family

situations, and other non-academic concerns with instructing their ELL students. Julie stated:

Being a teacher of ELL students makes me even more aware of the challenges of all

students, not just my ELLs. I have had many students through the years who live in

poverty, live in broken homes, and have the responsibilities of earning money and caring

for siblings. I have learned to be more empathetic with the students and the realities they

live each day. (Julie, Focus Group, October 8, 2020)

Angela expressed her concerns with the background of all her ELL students and the impact it has

on their learning environment. She said:

The things these kids come to school with, I can't even imagine. Having learned about

some of ELL students and where they come from, the hardships and violence in their

home countries, is heartbreaking. I believe that the baggage these students bring can

create many challenges for them in the learning process. I imagine coming to school and

making it a priority is impossible for students who are worried about family members in

other countries where violence is part of their normal daily lives. Students' social and

emotional backgrounds take a toll on their ability to be successful in school. I really feel

for them. (Angela, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

Bonnie responded in the focus group:

I believe that being a teacher of ESOL students demands more planning, creativity, and

patience. I can't expect my newcomers to really understand the curriculum or even most

class activities. I teach American Literature and even students who are proficient in

English struggle with concepts in literature, so how can I expect a student with no

English to be able to understand? Also, I must think about other factors that impact, or

challenge, the English language learners. One of my students communicates with me

through Google translate and I have gotten to know her and encourage her to write about

her experiences. She is one of seven children, three of which live in the United States,

the others remain in her home country. She lives with someone she calls uncle, but he is

just a family friend who is an instructor at a local college. She misses her family,

especially her mother, and I can see how this affects her mood and motivation in the

class. Her two other siblings are living elsewhere in the United States and she doesn't

know when she will see them again. Understanding these challenges helps me to be more

mindful of her emotional needs. (Bonnie, Focus Group, October 2, 2020)

Larry noted in his focus group session that the wellbeing of students, or lack thereof, can create

barriers and challenges to learning. He emphasized:

Teachers really must be aware of the needs of their students. For the ESOL students,

specifically, it's important to understand the language barriers and factors in the home

that can support or impede the student. I have one new student from Vietnam, and he

doesn't speak or participate. I have paired him with another student who is also from

Vietnam and is more proficient in English. When I tried to get some information to call

home, the "buddy" student told me that the other student told him to please not call home.

He was so adamant about it that I didn't pursue it. My "buddy" student explained that the

other student was afraid that his parents would be very angry with him for getting a bad

grade. Evidently when the student was in Vietnam and received poor grades in school,

his parents sent him away to another school where he was separated from his family for a

year. So, I think it's so important that we know our students beyond the classroom, really know what the home situation is like and make sure students are having their needs met. I have also found that most of my ESOL students will not ask for help, especially when asked about anything they might need at home. I think they are embarrassed or might not want parents involved. (Larry, Focus Group, October 8, 2020)

Ivy, in her focus group interview, loves having ELL students in her classes and shared:

My ELL students bring so many different perspectives and energy to my class. I have had ELLs in my classes for the past five years, and it's always interesting to see how they interact and learn. I feel like I have learned some new things from them as well. It's not all about the content that I am teaching but getting to know the students gives me a different perspective on the learner. It's easy, I think for all teachers, to get in a routine or comfortable place in their teaching practice, or to the point where we just have to get through the curriculum, but we have to keep the students in mind. Several of my ELLs come from homes that focus on family needs over individual needs. So, many of my students, especially my Hispanic students, miss a lot of school because they have to work part-time or stay at home with sick siblings so the parents can work. Knowing these situations makes me take a step back from my role as teacher and instead, reflect on how I can support them, whether at school or not. The social-emotional piece is important for teachers to understand and has become a priority in my district this year due to the recent health pandemic. As far as obvious challenges, the language barrier makes it difficult for me, as a teacher, to determine just how much the students are understanding in my class. (Ivy, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

Cultural awareness. All 12 participants noted that their classrooms were diverse and that most of their ELL students were of Hispanic backgrounds and that Spanish was the home language of most of their students. When discussing the educational background, most participants said that most of their ELL students have previously been in an American school system, either in this southern state or elsewhere, so they can review the educational strengths and weaknesses for the students. However, four participants said they have ELL students that are new to the country and the participants know very little about their past educational experiences.

Eight of the participants discussed the diversity in their classrooms and specifically how cultural awareness affects the learning environment and their planning of how and what to teach. David uses the student's background experiences and knowledge to help build understanding in new concepts:

> I have learned through teaching ESOL students that if I can make some connection to what they already know about the content, then it gives me a starting point to direct them to learning the new concepts. For example, every nation has an economic structure and many of my students are already familiar with many aspects of the economic principles in their own countries and knowing this, I can use that information to have students connect the similarities and differences between our economic structures and their own. (David, Participant Journal, September 4, 2020)

Julie explained how understanding cultural and language needs are important to the planning process:

> Teaching literature is great because there are so many resources and other literature that I can use to tie in the concepts for my ELL students. Yes, it can be challenging when

planning because it takes time to find other resources to include in my lessons and

activities and consider the language levels of my students. The nice thing is that even for

my new student who doesn't know any English, I can have her work with another student

in class that is fluent in English and Spanish and the two can read and discuss together.

Understanding the student's backgrounds and language needs are important when I'm

planning for instruction and any time I can pull bilingual text, the better. (Julie, Response

Journal, October 9, 2020)

Kevin understands the need for planning his instruction to differentiate for his group of learners

and admitted:

I used to think that math was a universal language and then about three years ago I had to

change that misconception when I started teaching ESOL students in my classes. I have

found that most students at this level already understand how to work through the

problems and get the answers, especially the ones that require rote memorization of facts,

or computational skills. Now, when it comes to abstract concepts, that can be very

challenging to explain and I have to really think about how to present it to them. I use a

lot of visual aids, videos, and online tools to help model and explain concepts. I have to

think about the language barriers too. I used to take for granted basic math concepts that

I assumed students would know entering high school. Boy, was I wrong! Some

language learners come in knowing much more than others and it's challenging to figure

out cultural learning practices and determine exactly what prior knowledge these students

have. I also had to consider that many of my language learners have no knowledge of our

system of measurement, so that concept is foreign to them. I cannot assume anything

about my language learners anymore and try to treat each new concept as a first for all of

them. (Kevin, Participant Journal, September 4, 2020)

In her history classes, Angela discussed considerations she must make when planning for her

lessons with respect to culture, language, and society structures. She stated:

Our history is not reflective of everyone's history and I must consider how to ensure that

my learning environment is positive and respectful. I have to be aware of the diversity of

my students and how my lessons are received. When planning, I consider different ways

that I can present new information, vocabulary and concepts that may not exist in other

cultures. Although an ESOL student's English proficiency is always considered, I try to

create opportunities for my students to learn from each other, share ideas and cultural

connections, and learn to value one another's opinions. I believe developing this

discourse is important in developing cultural awareness and collaboration to impact

change. (Angela, Participant Journal, September 11, 2020)

In his participant journal, Larry wrote about how he differentiates for instructing his ELLs:

I think that a student-focused approach is what helps me to make connections with my

students. Because I teach history, I have found that it's easy for me to provide more real-

life scenarios and make connections with historical events in their own countries. Even

my students who have been in the country for several years and ones that were born here,

they still relate to their families and historical events in the home country. I have two

Vietnamese students this year and one has only been here for six months. I admit, I don't

know much about Vietnam, but I know how to ask questions. Students get interested in

class and motivated when I ask them questions about their culture and family traditions. I

try to provide opportunities for my students to control the learning and I like to think of

myself as their coach and guide them to understanding. Every year, I assign a project for

students where they have to research a historical figure that we're studying and discuss an

event based on the perspective of that figure. They really get into this, and in years past,

students have even dressed up as their character, tried to change their accents to reflect

the language of their character. The experiences that I have had with my ESOL students

have been exciting because I've learned as much from them as they have from me.

(Larry, Participant Journal, September 25, 2020)

Evan admitted:

Instructing ESOL students has been challenging because I don't know the language.

However, I am trying to learn some common phrases so I can relate to them in class and

encourage communication. Cultural awareness is necessary for me to make connections

with my students. (Evan, Interview, September 8, 2020)

Heather emphasized that "knowing the backgrounds, cultures, and languages of my ELLs helps

me differentiate my instruction" (Heather, Participant Journal, October 2, 2020).

Theme 2: Instructional pedagogy and practice. Teachers hold beliefs about teaching

theories and practices that shape how and what they teach. Teaching pedagogies and practices

were a recurring theme that emerged from participant responses during the interviews and

embedded in the participant journals. Three subthemes emerged that include (a) strategies,

(b) resources, and (c) differentiation.

Strategies. Secondary content teachers generally have expertise in the content in which

they teach. Most have had little to no extra training or certifications in second language learning

and must rely on various strategies to support ELLs in the content class. In describing the

instructional strategies used to instruct their ELL students, the participants in the one-on-one

interviews discussed their instructional practice and the type of instruction believed to be most effective. All of the participants mentioned some form of classroom peer or model to support the ELL student with class directions and activities. Several shared that even when there was not a peer who could support the ELL student in their home language, student peers and partners were utilized to support the ELL student. Participants believed that this strategy has been the most effective tool for supporting their ELLs in the content classroom. David noted that "without a student who can help translate for my ESOL students, I struggle" (David, Interview, August 27, 2020).

Another strategy used by the participants is multimedia to support ELLs in learning new content and abstract concepts. All the participants commented on the use of the virtual platform through Google classroom to organize and manage class assignments, videos, graphic organizers, and discussion forums. During the COVID pandemic, Smith County has moved from all virtual learning to various hybrid modalities and face-to-face instruction and participants are finding the Google classroom has become a critical component of their teaching practices. All the participants continue to rely on their Google platforms to provide lessons, virtual labs, videos of teachers' lessons, and resources for students. When grouping students, the participants shared that they use Google classroom to place students in groups for completing class activities and projects. As Kevin stated, "The online classroom is a learning curve for most of us, but it is the new norm" (Kevin, Interview, October 13, 2020). Even as students have started returning to schools for face-to-face instruction, all teachers are still responsible for groups of virtual learners during the instructional day, so the teachers are limited in their student interactions.   Heather noted that "the virtual platform is the only way to simultaneously teach my virtual learners and the students sitting in my class" (Heather, Interview, September 22, 2020). For newcomer ELL

students, teachers routinely rely on Google translate, on the phone or computer, to communicate with their students, provide directions, and even communicate with parents. Two teachers use colleagues at their work site who speak the same language as their new ELL students to help translate important information and communicate with parents. Several other teachers use bilingual dictionaries in the classroom and online to support their ELLs. Without these resources to translate for students, many teachers noted that their ELLs would be lost in the content classes and instruction would be limited.

Several participants discussed using scaffolding strategies to support their ELLs in better understanding the content and concepts. In her English language arts class, Julie uses scaffolded sentence starters and paragraph frames to help her students develop their writing skills. She uses different frames for different types of writing activities. She has a scaffolded writing example for a narrative story and a different frame for a compare and contrast essay (Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020). Bonnie, another English language arts teacher, also scaffolds notetaking strategies to support her learners in guided notetaking (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). Evan uses scaffolding on his classroom walls to provide explanations to problem solving and word clues to guide students thinking (Evan, Interview, September 8, 2020). In her science class, Heather noted that she encourages her ELLs to use vocabulary notebooks to guide their written responses and also for assessments (Heather, Interview, September 22, 2020). In his business class, Gary uses posters around his room that include directions, procedures, and key terms in English accompanied by translations in Spanish and Vietnamese to support his ELLs (Gary, Interview, August 28, 2020). In her math class, Ivy has her students keep what she calls interactive notebooks where students record the daily learning objectives, new vocabulary terms, and illustrations or examples of steps to solve problems (Ivy, Interview, October 5, 2020).

All the teachers mentioned some form of advance organizer or beginning lessons with connections to background knowledge and all referred to using PowerPoint presentations and videos routinely in their daily instruction. Three teachers shared that they use visuals, videos, and PowerPoint presentations daily as an advance organizer to give students a preview of the upcoming lesson. Bonnie uses pictures found on the Internet or some she scans and uploads to display for students to provide more visuals as advance organizers for introducing new text to her classes and uses the visuals to further discuss concepts like setting of a story, mood or tone of the author, and demonstrate events that might be easily misunderstood without a visual representation (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). David uses visual diagrams either on the computer or posters in his class to model and provide information before the lesson and also has students created posters in the room to give visuals of key concepts, such as a circular flow diagram to demonstrate the flow of good resources and money. David's ELL students are paired with English peers or another ELL student with higher language proficiency, and the pairs create the posters and include translations (David, Interview, August 27, 2020).

Modeling, realia, and visual representations were discussed as routine strategies used before and during instruction to help students make connections, understand vocabulary and concepts, and to help demonstrate abstract concepts. Most of the teachers use technology, anchor charts, diagrams, illustrations, or other forms of visual aids to help model new concepts and terms. In her history class, Angela has picture libraries that she has collected and stored for her different units and can use these to show real life events and people in history. She has also collected several websites, including the Smithsonian website, where she has access to photos of original documents, primary sources, and newspaper clippings as well as photos and videos of significant events and artifacts. Although students cannot actually touch these items, she uses

these resources as supports for the students to have access to these images in one location for her

units. Angela said, "These have been very effective strategies to support content learning for my

students" (Angela, Focus Group, October 17, 2020). In her biology class, Heather has

collections of various plants and leaves that she has collected, and students can explore them

when the class discusses diversity in plant species. The resources have been pressed in a book

that she continues to add to, and each year she has students bring her unique leaves that they

find, and they identify and add to the class book. She includes several activities through the year

where students are required to make models of cellular reproduction and cell structures and she

collects exemplary projects each year to use for future classes as models (Heather, Focus Group,

October 8, 2020). In her language arts class, Bonnie identifies unfamiliar vocabulary in her

lesson and finds illustrations or short video clips that she uses to help students better understand

difficult vocabulary and concepts (Bonnie, Participant Journal, September 11, 2020). Two of the

participants shared that they use math manipulatives for struggling students and their ELL

students to better demonstrate difficult or confusing concepts. Kevin uses online math

manipulatives to support students, and students use this resource in class or at home to provide

interactive visual manipulatives (Kevin, Participant Journal, September 4, 2020). He also uses

hands-on realia, or manipulatives, in class to model math concepts like fractions and percent.

Kevin stated, "I have seen the effectiveness of using these manipulatives and the students can

quickly make connections" (Kevin, Focus Group, October 17, 2020).

All participants mentioned using some form of graphic organizer to support content

learning for ELLs. Julie uses graphic organizers to help her students read, analyze, and

comprehend various texts. She provides her ELLs with framed graphic organizers, depending on

their language proficiency level, that includes some key concepts already included (Julie,

Interview, September 22, 2020). Ivy uses graphic organizers that students keep in their

interactive notebooks to provide extra visual organization for solving different types of

problems; some include formulas and key vocabulary and step-by-step directions for solving

problems. Ivy shared, "I have observed many students, not only my ELLs, utilizing this class

resource when they are working on class assignments" (Ivy, Interview, October 5, 2020).

Heather uses graphic organizers that she posts in the classroom to provide a visual for concepts

like cell structures and energy flow between organisms. She also mentioned using KWL charts

with her students (Heather, Interview, September 22, 2020). KWL charts, also mentioned by

three other participants, are a type of visual graphic organizer that is used first as an advance

organizer to access background knowledge. KWL is an acronym: K is where students record

what they already know about a topic. Then, students record any questions that arise based on

what they recorded as background knowledge, which is recorded as W (what students want to

know). After a lesson, students return to the KWL and record what new information they

learned for L. Larry explained, "The KWL chart is an effective tool for teaching students to

really think about a concept or topic, develop questions, and set a purpose for the new lesson"

(Larry, Interview, October 17, 2020). Venn diagrams were another graphic organizer mentioned

by several teachers. Julie uses Venn diagrams to represent similarities and differences between

characters in a story and in her writing instruction to model compare and contrast essays (Julie,

Interview, September 22, 2020). Two participants shared that they use Venn diagrams in their

classes to model relationships between numerical sets, and Angela uses Venn diagrams to

compare and contrast historical figures and events. Angela also encourages her students to use

Venn diagrams to represent relationships between historical times to help students better

visualize the significance of different events in history during a particular time (Angela,

Interview, August 31, 2020). David shared that he utilizes Venn diagrams as a graphic organizer to show relationships among the concepts of mixed economies (David, Interview, August 27, 2020).

Secondary content can be challenging for ELLs due to complexity of the text, technical terminology, and nuances of various words. Several participants mentioned using some type of Word Wall in their content classes, either in the physical classroom or in their virtual Google classrooms and include academic vocabulary and content-related words. David organizes his Word Wall for each concept and posts charts on the wall of his classroom. He has his students keep unit notebooks and has students record the Word Walls in the unit notebooks. He also uses graphic organizers with these Word Walls to show relationships between the concepts to add a visual component (David, Interview, August 27, 2020). Kevin has created a virtual Word Wall in his Google classroom where students have immediate access and new words get added as new lessons are taught (Kevin, Interview, October 13, 2020). Julie has her students create her Word Wall for each unit of study and includes academic terms such as analyze and summarize along with new vocabulary in the text (Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020). Angela also enlists her students in creating her Word Wall and has her ELL students add a translation of the word or concept and all words are posted for class use (Angela, Interview, August 31, 2020). In Bonnie's classes, she has her Word Wall posted on giant Post-it paper and has students include a picture and synonym/antonym for each word to further develop reading comprehension skills. Bonnie shared, "My kids really get engaged with the Word Wall because they have pretty much taken over adding the pictures and I have one ELL, she speaks Spanish, she will add the translations for me" (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020).

Some other strategies discussed were having students use highlighters and chunking the text to support reading of content text. For her new ELLs, Julie uses this strategy and chunks the text for them and gives students a graphic organizer to take each chunked section and work with partners to put in their own words (Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020). Bonnie uses a similar technique, but she has the students work together with highlighters to chunk the text and then follow with rewriting it in their own words (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). Chunking text can be done with a group of words, phrases, or longer paragraphs. The purpose is to break down a text into more manageable pieces for students to work with. David has his student groups work with sections of a long text and each group is responsible for a section. After the groups read and determine or summarize what the text is about, then the groups present to the class (David, Interview, August 27, 2020).

In describing the instructional strategies used to instruct their ELL students, the participants in the one-on-one and focus group interviews discussed the type of instruction believed to be the least effective. Several participants noted that class lectures and relying on teacher-led lessons can be ineffective due to some language barriers. Larry noted, "After some time, I notice when the kids just kind of zone out and that's my cue that I have been talking too much" (Larry, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). Heather mentioned that giving multiple steps to ELLs can be challenging and she has split up some steps and that has been more effective for them in completing a task (Heather, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). Two participants discussed the complexity of the reading materials and how it is not effective to just assign the reading, but give advance organizers or other tools for making it more manageable. Other participants discussed their beliefs in student collaboration for learning content and how the traditional teacher lectures are ineffective.

Resources. Several participants mentioned bilingual materials in their classrooms as other ways to support their ELL learners. Two participants discussed using related stories and themes in literature class that depict the cultures of their students. Three participants reported adding various leveled reading materials to their class libraries. Additionally, all three participants have several bilingual books in their classrooms that they have purchased through the years or that others have given them that encourage their ELL students to read and make connections with the content. Angela has found several books related to her content that are written in Spanish and her students use them alongside the English versions (Angela, Interview, August 31, 2020).

Christine has been building her classroom library and noted:

> Having resources that help students better understand the difficult concepts is necessary for them to be successful. I have found that even my English-speaking students always struggle with the complex textbook and many of the concepts seem foreign to them. The textbooks have so much information, technical terms, and vocabulary, and too many concepts that it can be very daunting for the kids to really make sense of it. Several years ago, I started looking for science trade books and online resources to support them. A friend who retired had a science leveled reader set that was easier language to process and many students use them to reinforce a concept. They also provide many more illustrations than the grade level text. When planning, I find online videos and clips that can also provide a different medium for the content. (Christine, Interview, September 8, 2020)

Larry commented on the value of resources:

> You can never have enough resources at your disposal. All the students can benefit from
> a variety of reading materials, visuals, videos, online libraries, and tools. I know the
> focus is for ELLs, but many of the students are not reading at grade level and the content
> is so dependent on the student's ability to read a lot of informational text. Giving
> students other resources at different reading levels is important for expanding their
> learning opportunities. (Larry, Interview, October 17, 2020)

Nine participants mentioned technology as a resource commonly used for their classes, especially for their ELLs. Teachers and students routinely use computers, iPads, and cell phones to translate, communicate, research, enhance the lessons, and complete most assignments and assessments. Fran explained that technology is a powerful resource:

> I think technology has leveled the playing field for students because whatever they are
> learning, they can find it online. I love teaching technology basics and sharing what I
> know with the students and then they can go explore on their own. I have been working
> with a friend on campus to help her harness the many ways that she can use technology in
> her classes. Giving her ideas and options for her students to become fluent with online
> learning and all the tools available to them. For language learners, it really allows them
> to fully participate with the content and it provides them with language supports. (Fran,
> Interview, September 7, 2020)

Bonnie discussed the overuse of technology and how some teachers rely too much on devices to teach students. She stated:

> Technology and all the programs to teach and remediate are great, but they are not
> effective if our common teaching method is to just have students log on to a program and

spend time. We must recognize that these are tools to support learning, but they are not intended to take over the teacher's role of instructing. I have seen it time and again. The school district purchases a new program and teachers are mandated to use it and, after a while, the technology piece takes over for actual instruction. Also, the routine becomes mundane for students and it becomes less and less effective. (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020)

Differentiation. Differentiation was a strategy mentioned by all participants in their interviews, focus groups, and a few journals. Some used this terminology while others reported various ways they adapt, modify, or use a variety of strategies to make the content more accessible for their ELLs, students with disabilities, and other struggling students. Participants used differentiation and a combination of other strategies to deliver lessons, change the ways in which students access the information, vary ways that students respond and show mastery. All participants use various methods of grouping students for differentiation based on student needs, strengths, interest, and language levels. Six of the participants believed that the type depended on the circumstances. Four participants mentioned that they prefer direct instruction when delivering new vocabulary, new concepts, or procedures. In his math class, Evan uses direct instruction to model the new skill or concept and then students rotate among differentiated workstations (Evan, Interview, September 8, 2020). Heather stated, "I believe there has to be a balance of the type of instruction provided" (Heather, Interview, September 22, 2020). Two participants discussed their preference of direct instruction for most of their class because they believe it to be most effective with such a range of abilities in their classes. When planning for instruction, Gary explained:

I look ahead at the end product and plan how to get there. I consider my students

strengths and needs, especially language needs of my ELLs, and organize my lessons

accordingly. Also, I review any terminology or new concepts that I might need to further

explain using visual aids to help students better understand new concepts. I also think

about the different ways that students can demonstrate what they have learned and have

materials prepared ahead of time. When I deliver lessons, I routinely ask questions to

check for their understanding of the concepts or instructions. (Gary, Interview, August

28, 2020)

Bonnie stated:

Planning takes a little time to consider what concepts I will focus on and how I will

deliver them, like what resources or materials I might need to adapt for my ELLs. For

example, for an extended writing task, I use features in the Google platform to have my

new ELL learner record, write, and edit written responses which can later be translated

into English so I can check the students comprehension and mastery of taught skills in

their writing. (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020)

Larry utilizes choice boards for his students to give them several options for demonstrating

knowledge. Larry explained, "The students enjoy using them and they feel, I think, empowered

when using them because it allows each to tap into their individual learning styles" (Larry,

Interview, October 17, 2020). With her newcomers, Angela has her students use a bilingual

dictionary, online websites, online translators, and also the tools in Google platform to create

their written responses by using illustrations from online or student-created drawings with labels

to help her ELLs demonstrate content concepts and knowledge (Angela, Interview, August 31,

2020). Christine uses technology to help her students demonstrate their learning in different

ways and responded:

> When I am planning for instruction, I always think about what resources I will need, what
>
> language supports I might need to provide, and any other tools or accommodations that
>
> my students might need in order to be successful. Science lends itself to hands-on
>
> projects and activities; however, with restrictions on social distancing, most of my
>
> students create Google slides, which are PowerPoint slides, Google eBooks, and some
>
> have created videos and music raps to demonstrate a concept. Also, in a traditional
>
> science class, they would have several hands-on activities and projects throughout a
>
> semester and now much of the class activities are online. (Christine, Interview,
>
> September 8, 2020)

Ivy uses a variety of ways to have her ELLs demonstrate mastery:

> I understand that some of my ELLs need options when showing what they know. I allow
>
> all students to use their interactive notebooks for quizzes and exams because most have
>
> been using them in class. The notebooks provide not only notes, but illustrations to help
>
> them understand the concepts. Students can draw pictures to demonstrate the processes
>
> used and some can orally explain it to me. (Ivy, Interview, October 5, 2020)

Julie noted that assessments should be differentiated just like class activities and stated:

> We can't expect students to demonstrate their understanding the same as everyone else
>
> and please don't get me started on standardized assessments. Teachers must differentiate
>
> how we deliver lessons and how students are assessed. I give my students options in how
>
> they show what they have learned. I have students with disabilities that do better when
>
> they can orally respond and are not limited to the reading task and writing. I can't expect

my ELLs, especially the newcomers, to have the words and language they need to form a

written response or understand lengthy texts in English. I have had to be creative, but let

these students draw pictures, explain to a more fluent peer who can translate, orally

respond, complete a presentation, or numerous other activities to demonstrate knowledge.

(Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020)

The participants discussed various challenges when planning for differentiating

instruction. An obvious challenge for most participants was language proficiency of their ELLs.

Several admitted that although most of their ELLs appear to be high or proficient in English,

they are unsure of how much they can comprehend reading materials or what they know. Bonnie

has several years of experience with ELLs and understands that she cannot rely on an ELL's

spoken language to indicate their comprehension or cognitive abilities with the language

(Bonnie, Participant Journal, September 11, 2020). Julie also discussed concerns for language

proficiency for her ELLs in her weekly planning and how this can take a lot of time in her

planning process (Julie, Participant Journal, October 9, 2020). Christine believes that when

planning for instruction, she considers what extra resources and materials she will need to

prepare for her ELLs based on their language levels (Christine, Participant Journal, October 9,

2020). Understanding the language levels of their ELLs and the additional preparation of

materials was mentioned by nine of the participants as the overall challenges to differentiate and

plan effectively.

The participants considered the primary obstacles encountered by ELL students when

attempting to learn content. The participants discussed the complexity of language, exceptions

to the rules in English, and unfamiliar words and multiple meaning words as obstacles, or

challenges, for ELL students in the content classes. In their classes, two participants noted that

word problems are more difficult for their ELL students for obvious reasons. Ivy noted, "My ELLs do fairly well with problem solving but they cannot articulate or justify how they arrived at their answers. I don't know if this is because of the language or lack of critical thinking skills" (Ivy, Interview, October 5, 2020). Four participants mentioned the challenge with critical thinking and higher order thinking skills among their ELLs. Christine emphasized, "The students, especially my ELLs, just want to write a quick response and rarely provide reflection or deeper analysis in their writing" (Christine, Interview, September 8, 2020). Several participants also mentioned that their ELLs may lack the background knowledge, conceptual knowledge, or ability to draw conclusions on their own. During her English language arts instruction, Julie has noticed significant challenges for many of her ELLs in prior knowledge of certain genres, like fairy tales and myths and that concepts such as theme and symbolism are extremely difficult for her students to understand (Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020). Nine teachers responded that unfamiliar vocabulary words and multiple-step processes are difficult for many of their ELLs. Bonnie stated, "I do what I can to help students learn new vocabulary, both academic and content-related, but I feel like so many terms aren't really understood by my ELLs" (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). Heather admitted, "To be honest, the textbooks are heavy with complex content-related vocabulary, complex sentences, and too many different concepts for students to be able to gather a deep understanding. Even my English students struggle" (Heather, Interview, September 22, 2020). Three participants also mentioned the challenges of content material being very challenging due to the extensive reading, technical terminology, and so many concepts to learn for students can be overwhelming, especially for their ELLs. David believes, "My ELL students would be more successful in my class if they were more proficient in English prior to taking my class" (David, Interview, August 27, 2020).

Other obstacles for ELL students included lack of participation, difficulties with the writing process and expressing their opinions, which three teachers noted could be a result of cultural norms or prior experiences. Although most of her ELLs have been in an American school for five or more years, Bonnie pointed out that her students have trouble with the writing process and continue to make grammatical errors (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). Julie mentioned similar issues with her students' writing and that, although not new to school, her ELLs still have difficulties making the connection between topic sentences and supporting details (Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020). Five other participants discussed a lack of participation and completing assignments as an obstacle for their ELLs to be successful in class. When considering lack of participation, these participants also noted that students may not understand English or may be shy or uncomfortable speaking in class and talking with their peers. Also, limited English can be the reason these students are not completing assignments because students cannot read the English or understand it even when they translate it. David stated:

> I get frustrated with myself as much as I do with students for not completing any work and try to understand that these students probably just don't understand how or what to do because of their limited English. I'm frustrated because I cannot help them, not sure how to help them. (David, Interview, August 27, 2020)

In her math class, Ivy noticed that "the kids just play with the math manipulatives, throw them around. They act like they have never been in a classroom setting before, even though I know they have" (Ivy, Interview, October 5, 2020).

Theme 3: Teacher supports. Teachers need to feel adequately prepared to instruct ELL learners and the frequency and relevance of these supports can impact a teacher's perceptions

and self-confidence. Three subthemes emerged that include (a) professional development, (b) administrative support, and (c) relevance.

Professional development. Ten of the participants in the one-on-one interviews and all participants in the focus group spoke specifically about professional training and learning to prepare to instruct ELLs. Smith County has few ESOL-certified teachers and relies heavily on professional development opportunities and supports within the individual schools. David discussed that he has learned mostly from trial and error:

> I remember the year when I started receiving ELLs in my classes. Suddenly, I had students who didn't speak English. I also had some students that were ELLs, but I had no idea because they spoke English so well. Luckily, I had other students who understood and informed me that these kids didn't know English. I spoke with other colleagues in my department to get some ideas and I just kind of learned from trial and error. Since then, I have attended mandatory meetings with an ESOL teacher who has explained some of the things I can do in class for my ELLs, like give them extra time to complete their work, find other students to pair them with and online translation tools. However, I don't really feel confident in instructing them and trying to find other resources to help me help them. Honestly, it's very challenging to teach them content if they don't understand English. Uh, I think we all need more training to help us better understand what and how to teach the ELLs, some different strategies, and things we can use in the class. (David, Focus Group, October 8, 2020)

Bonnie spent several years in another school district that had a higher percentage of ELLs and gained much of her experience working with ELL students prior to coming to Smith County. She discussed the prior experiences and the difference in training now:

In my previous county, we had a huge population of ELLs, around 210 in just my high

school alone. We also had five ESOL teachers in the building to provide supports and

resources for us. I remember each year around the same time we would meet with the

ESOL teachers to discuss our students and what they needed in the classroom. Our

ESOL teachers taught small groups and some pushed-in to other classes for support. I

was one of the lucky ones and had a push-in ESOL teacher who came in for three of my

sections. She was amazing! We would plan together weekly and worked out a routine

for co-teaching. Sometimes she would deliver parts of the lesson, sometimes she would

take smaller groups out to work with them. I feel like that is the best option to support

the ELLs because they get the best of both teachers. As far as professional training, I

never had any. It was up to me to look for professional development opportunities, and

honestly, I would always attend those that were directly related to my content. Now, at

my current location, there is an ESOL teacher, but I only see her when I ask for help or if

we are working on annual meetings for accommodations for the ELLs. The county offers

many professional development workshops, but it is up to the teachers to register and

attend, it's not mandatory. I haven't attended any because I just can't find the time.

(Bonnie, Focus Group, October 2, 2020)

Three participants had similar comments and could not remember any professional training

offered to them specifically for instructing ELLs. Julie noted, "The professional development I

usually attend are related to my 9th grade literature courses or writing. I have never seen one for

just ELLs" (Julie, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). Larry talked about his college experiences

that provided a background on different cultures and emphasized respect and general

understanding:

So, in college, I had the option to take a cultural awareness course as an elective. It was

an interesting class, and it was like an overview, I guess, of different cultural norms and a

general sense of creating a class that respects diversity. But it certainly did not prepare

me to teach students that come with a different language. The first year I had a student

who spoke no English, I had to reach out for help. We have an ESOL teacher in the

building, so I approached her first. She was great and gave me some strategies and ideas

that I could use to support my ELL. As far as professional development goes, I would

really like to see more trainings specifically geared to teaching ELLs. I think the county

offers some, but those are targeted for the ESOL teachers and the regular teachers really

need more training opportunities so we can support these students in class. (Larry, Focus

Group, October 8, 2020)

Administrative support. In the responses to professional development, the subtheme of

administrative support emerged. Seven participants discussed the importance of school climate

and supports from their administration with regards to professional development and training

opportunities. Evan stated:

My administrators have an open-door policy and encourage us to pursue opportunities for

growth. On several occasions, when specifically discussing the challenges with my ELL

students and other struggling students, my administrator has offered resources and

scheduled training for me to attend. My administrator routinely attends these trainings

and that is motivating for teachers. I believe if the administration puts training as a

priority, then teachers will too. (Evan, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

Julie reinforced the important role that administrators play in shaping attitudes and motivation:

I have been in several different schools during my career and experienced different types

of leadership. I can tell you from personal experience that how the administration

behaves directly impacts the overall morale of teachers. My administration now is ever

present and always eager to provide us with supports. If I need help, I know that I can go

to any of them and will get the support I need. As far as professional development, my

administrators believe in the value of extended opportunities and encourage the faculty

and staff to participate in more than our content workshops. I think when administrators

demonstrate a strong conviction to growth and training, then the teachers will buy in and

be more motivated to attend. (Julie, Focus Group, October 8, 2020)

In his school, Kevin appreciates the leadership and their hands-off approach. Kevin likes his

autonomy but said, "There are times I wish that administrators would step in and take over.

Then, they could really understand the challenges of trying to teach students with limited

English" (Kevin, Focus Group, October 17, 2020). Larry discussed his belief that

"administrators should take a more active role in professional development. Many times, during

training, they are not really engaged or on their cell phones and that sends the wrong message"

(Larry, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). Gary said, "I think administrators should be required to

attend the same professional developments that I do. Maybe, then, they would understand that

they don't provide any realistic solutions to our students" (Gary, Focus Group, October 8, 2020).

Two participants felt that most of the professional development and training opportunities were

interesting, but that their administration really did not enforce it, so many teachers just do not

attend. Fran admitted, "I will go if it is mandatory training, otherwise, I don't attend because I

am not expected to" (Fran, Focus Group, October 2, 2020).

Relevance. Ten participants discussed professional development and how it is often not

relevant, or useful, to their needs in the classroom. Ivy elaborated in her focus group interview

how she felt that most professional developments she attended were focused on her curriculum

and really nothing new for her. She stated, "I can't recall any professional training that

explained how to help support ELL students" (Ivy, Focus Group, October 17, 2020). Bonnie

noted, "I haven't noticed any training opportunities specifically for instructing ELLs" (Bonnie,

Focus Group, October 2, 2020). David stated, "I think we need more training available that is

focused on how to teach the ELLS in our particular content. That would be helpful" (David,

Focus Group, October 8, 2020). Christine believes that professional development should be

more relevant and stated:

> Hmmm, how about some training on what to do with new ELL students who have no
>
> English. I have relied too much on peer tutors and there should be a better plan in place.
>
> Also, I think we need several learning opportunities that are more relevant to what we
>
> face in our classes. At high school, the ELLs are expected to learn a new language and
>
> the advanced content and graduate on time. I really feel for these students. I don't think
>
> I could do what they do and be successful. (Christine, Focus Group, October 2, 2020)

Larry underscored the importance of cultural awareness and the need for better developed plans

for professional learning and stated:

> Talking with colleagues who also instruct ELLs in my school, I believe we all are feeling
>
> the frustration of not really knowing what works best for these students. We try the
>
> recommended strategies from the ESOL teacher and advice from others, but often we feel
>
> unprepared. I know I do and most of my colleagues have expressed that too. The
>
> training we have encountered is limited with basic information about the ELL population,

but nothing that can really support the students in our classes. Maybe I am looking for a

magic answer that works for all of them, I don't know. I don't think that most of us, in

my part of the world at least, have any real experience with other cultural or ethnic

groups. We teach in a county that is predominantly White middle to upper class

professionals and country folk. Most of us, I believe, would admit that we know very

little about the educational practices, learning styles or customs of any other cultural

group. In my opinion, with our ELL group growing, I believe that our county should

develop more meaningful training opportunities geared towards cultural awareness of

various groups and knowledge of how to effectively teach these students. (Larry, Focus

Group, October 8, 2020)

Heather noted that professional development should be relevant to what the needs are in her

classes (Heather, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). Ivy stated, "I have been to one or two

trainings that were supposed to be focused on ELLs; however, I didn't feel like either one gave

me any useful, practical tools that I could use in my classes" (Ivy, Focus Group, October 17,

2020).

> **Theme 4: Teacher perceptions.** Teachers perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge about

their learners can impact the learning environment. Understanding the learning and language

needs of students can help teachers better prepare for instruction. Often misconceptions about a

student's abilities can lead to negative teacher perceptions. A teacher's sense of preparedness

and self-confidence develops as one becomes more knowledgeable of the students ethnic,

cultural, and linguistic needs. Two subthemes emerged that include (a) second language

acquisition and (b) assets and challenges.

Second language knowledge. Understanding how one learns a second language is important for secondary content teachers. Participants communicated their knowledge of the process of second language learning. Larry elaborated:

> Individuals learn a second language much like they do their native language, through experiences. I have two children and when they were learning how to talk, they started by mimicking what we said or pointed at things and said a word they knew. Even before they could say the words for something, we knew what they wanted because they would make gestures to relay their wants and needs. As parents, you learn to read their signals and understand the sounds they make and relate it to what they want. Later, they form words and phrases and then complete sentences. I think picking up a second language is the same. First you try to communicate with a few words, and it develops from more experiences, especially those who speak the language, and then you begin to understand more. Working with the ESOL teacher in my building, I have learned that when students are learning a new language, there is some time where they are silent and just processing the new information. So, I don't ever force a student to speak. They need to feel ready and not pushed to talk if not comfortable. (Larry, Interview, October 17, 2020)

Julie believes that learning a second language follows developmental stages. She said:

> I believe individuals learn a second language in certain developmental processes, like we teach young children. Learners need to understand the alphabet and sounds before they can build words and sentences. Language learning is about conveying messages and it is a very complex process. One must learn to speak, listen, write, and read by understanding how words form meaning and then making meaning from those words and phrases to communicate thoughts and ideas. I remember when I learned Spanish in high

school. My first experiences with the language was learning the alphabet and sounds,
then vocabulary words, and then grammar. We learned short phrases and practiced a lot
with our peers. I think foundational skills are necessary and follow a pattern and should
be taught that way. (Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020)

Heather explained her understanding by sharing, "When students are working together on a task,
they are forced to communicate and solve problems together. I think students learn and retain
the language quicker being placed in these situations where they use the language in a real
scenario" (Heather, Interview, September 22, 2020). Two participants have similar
understandings of learning a second language. David believes that "people learn a second
language like they do their first language, through listening and observing those around them"
(David, Interview, August 27, 2020). Kevin said, "Observing others and learning words to relay
meanings to others and practicing with those who speak the language is how individuals learn
the second language" (Kevin, Interview, October 13, 2020). Fran believes that "being exposed
to the second language helps learners acquire it quicker than learning from a textbook in English
class" (Fran, Interview, September 7, 2020). Ivy discussed her understanding as a process that
takes time:

Working with ELLs has taught me that there is no set time limit for how long it takes one
to learn a new language. As a teacher, I have had to realize that all students have
individual learning styles and abilities and language needs. I think it is important, as a
teacher, to understand that learning a second language can be intimidating and stressful
for students. When I was in high school, I took French classes and I can tell you, I was
not comfortable speaking out loud in class. The teacher was patient with me and
encouraged me to practice in class with partners, but I was not confident. I remember

that first year learning all the sounds of the letters, grammar structures, vocabulary words, and listening to songs in French, that was fun. I enjoyed the class, but looking back, I had trouble willing myself to speak in front of others. So, as a teacher, I understand that it takes time and patience to help learners feel comfortable using the second language and they will learn at their own pace. Most will not speak up until they are ready, and teachers need to understand that there is a silent period where learners are building up their knowledge before speaking. (Ivy, Interview, October 5, 2020)

Participants shared several ways to support the language acquisition for their ELL students in the content class. All participants discussed using visual aids, translating devices, peer supports and bilingual resources to support the language acquisition for their ELLs. When probed further in the interview, six participants provided more insight to the question. Christine stated:

I provide many strategies to support my ELLs in the classroom. I give them extra time to complete assignments, if they need it, and try to pair them with other students for collaborative work. And of course, I use a lot of visuals and models to help me deliver the concepts. As far as actually teaching them English, uh, no. That is the job of the English teachers. Ha, I have all I can do to ensure that they are learning the science concepts in class. I have to make sure the entire class learns the content to prepare them for EOCT [End of the Couse Tests] exams because my evaluations depend on how these students do on the exams. I work with my ELLs and support them however I can, but I cannot be responsible for teaching them English, too. (Christine, Interview, September 8, 2020)

Bonnie said:

> Well, I work with my ELLs to help them develop their skills in reading and writing. I know they are still learning the language, so I give them supports through framed writing organizers and also have them work with partners for writing tasks. I don't deduct points for grammatical errors and spelling errors unless it is a skill that I have specifically taught. I think it more important to allow each student to express themselves openly without being penalized for something they haven't learned yet. For my new ELLs, I encourage them to first write their thoughts in their language and then work to translate it. That way, they can freely share their thoughts and ideas with me. (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020)

Ivy supports language development of her ELLs through class anchor charts, interactive notebooks, and other visuals. She explained:

> Providing visuals in the classroom, I believe, helps support their language development because they can see the words and how they are used in the content. All of my students have been taught how to use their interactive notebooks. These notebooks give students a place to take notes, draw pictures, write down examples, and vocabulary words that they can later refer to when working through a problem. The more these notebooks are used, students can make connections between the concepts that they are writing down. I use anchor charts in my classroom that include math terms and concepts and include examples, illustrations, and often I have students include translations. Having these tools visible encourages students to look for these resources and they provide constant visual reminders. (Ivy, Interview, October 5, 2020)

David asserted, "Yeah, I use a lot of charts and graphs for the students to help them understand the concepts. As far as teaching them how to read the text, etc., I would have to say no. I teach econ. for a reason" (David, Interview, August 27, 2020). Angela also supports her ELLs with bilingual trade books, leveled content readers, and visual aids. She believes that these tools help her learners grasp the concepts and improve their understanding. She also uses class charts, word walls, etc., to support vocabulary and content ideas. When asked specifically about supporting students with developing English, she stated, "Providing an environment rich in resources, I believe, supports their language. However, no, I don't teach English or reading skills, per se" (Angela, Interview, August 31, 2020). When asked about going beyond the teaching strategies and a focus on developing English language skills in reading and writing, three participants described how they support their students, but that teaching English was the responsibility of the English language arts teachers. Gary responded, "Trust me, you don't want me teaching English, leave that to the experts" (Gary, Interview, August 28, 2020). Kevin stated, "I teach math concepts and that is difficult enough. The English teachers support them with their language skills" (Kevin, Interview, October 13, 2020).

Assets and challenges. During the focus groups, participants discussed how their ELLs are considered assets to the learning environment. Angela stated:

My ELL students definitely bring assets to the classroom environment that include diversity and a variety of cultural experiences as well as different personalities. A diverse classroom reflects the world in which we live and provides wonderful learning moments. More often than not, my lessons extend to rich conversations among the student groups that allow them to share their ideas, learn from one another, think about another's viewpoint, and really have opportunities to think critically about things that

impact them. I have several ELLs who speak Spanish as their home language; however, each one is unique in their viewpoints, heritage, and traditions. At the beginning of the year, I use an activity to compare and contrast our backgrounds using a tic-tac-toe board. Students must find others in the room with similar backgrounds through a variety of questions. For example, one question is about family traditions, one is about home language, another about favorite activities, etc., to get them talking to one another. This activity is great in finding out about shared interests, learning styles, and backgrounds. (Angela, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

David explained:

I think that my ELLs have assets they bring to the learning environment. I believe that because they already have some knowledge and understanding of economic basics, they can then make some connections to what I'm teaching. I have two of my Hispanic ELLs who have very strong knowledge of the economies in their home countries and because they both speak English really well, I have had them work with others to help explain some challenging concepts. I was actually surprised at how much they knew. Most kids in the U.S. have little experience with our economic system, but these two boys know their stuff. (David, Focus Group, October 8, 2020)

According to Bonnie, "My ELLs are usually the best behaved in class and not really any issues, other than some excessive talking with friends. I like the diversity in my classes and feel that the ELLs bring cultural and language diversity to my classes" (Bonnie, Focus Group, October 2, 2020). Ivy shared:

I think my ELLs add a different layer of diversity in the learning environment. Not only do they speak a different language, but they come from different places and have

different experiences. I have two this year from Vietnam, and because their English is so

good, I am able to learn more about them. One student shared some differences in their

schools and that once he finished seventh grade, his family had to start saving money for

him to continue with school. They ended up moving to the U.S. the following year and

stay with family members so he can attend school. The other young man told me that his

school was very formal, strict dress codes, and even stricter teachers. He said if he was

late to class his parents would be called and he would have to leave school. Then his

parents would have to report to the school to explain why he was late to see if he could

return. These experiences are assets for me, as the teacher, to really gain a better

understanding of my students and what they are accustomed to in the learning

environment. Even something as simple as raising the hand to ask questions may not be

the norm or even acceptable in different cultures. I believe that I have become a better

teacher because I have had ELLs in my courses. (Ivy, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

Christine emphasized, "Yes, my ELL students bring assets to the learning environment. They

come with their own experiences and ideas. They generally want to learn, although sometimes

challenging, but they seem eager to learn" (Christine, Focus Group, October 12, 2020). Kevin

shared:

The ELLs bring with them all previous learning and training. It is often tricky to know

just how much or to what extent some students have learned in math, some much more

than others. But the same could be said for any student. (Kevin, Focus Group, October

17, 2020)

During the focus group, all participants discussed the obvious challenges that different

languages present to the learning environment. Many noted these challenges when planning for

instruction and differentiation strategies. Planning takes more time and consideration in how the content objectives will be delivered, what resources are needed, what types of adaptations or accommodations are required for students, and how students will demonstrate mastery of the concepts. Four others described some behavior challenges presented in the learning environment that could be a result of cultural differences and expectations. Kevin and Heather also mentioned some minor behaviors among their Hispanic students. Kevin mentioned:

> Some of my ELLs, specifically the Hispanic boys, play too much in class. They like to move about the room, change seats, and seem distracted with other things. I have mentioned this to some of my colleagues who have similar experiences. My Vietnamese ELLs never act like this, so, I don't know if this is due to their previous classroom experiences, cultural things, or what. But it can be frustrating and distracting. I ask them to return to their seats, almost on a daily basis, and they comply but it takes some time.
>
> (Kevin, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

Heather noted, "Some of my Hispanic ELLs love to talk, in Spanish, during class time. It can be distracting, at times, and because I have no idea what they are discussing, I don't know if they need support or if they are goofing off" (Heather, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). Angela discussed different observations of her ELLs and said:

> I have definitely noticed some behavioral differences among the ELLs who have been here for a while versus the new ones. I think that the new ones are getting used to so many things, it is like culture shock for them. The new ELLs are very quiet, reserved, and shy when spoken to and make attempts to complete the work. My ELLs that have been here for a while, I have noticed, have become extremely comfortable, chatty, and often not performing as well as the new students. I have had a few behavior concerns

with excessive talking, especially in their home language, and some defiance and lack of

participation. It has become a challenge to have students put away their cell phones.

Even though the school has a strict policy for cell phone use, the students have them out

constantly. (Angela, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

Several of the participants discussed how language barriers can make it difficult to know if an

ELL's lack of progress is due to language proficiency or possible learning difficulties. At the

secondary level, students who receive special educational services have already been identified

and the services continue in high school. However, if an ELL is new, it can be impossible to

identify learning needs and have time to implement before the student graduates and others fall

through the cracks. Julie discussed, "As a teacher, you do your best to help all the students and it

can be challenging and frustrating when you can't. You never know with some if there are

learning gaps, learning disabilities, or something else going on" (Julie, Focus Group, October 8,

2020). David and Heather had similar concerns. David said, "I'm no expert, but I think a few of

my ELLs either have some learning problems or maybe they have no experience with the

concepts from their previous education" (David, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). Heather

believes that one or two of her ELLs may have some type of learning disability, but she said, "I

have no way of really knowing. It could be the language" (Heather, Focus Group, October 8,

2020).

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of

secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. The research questions that elicited

responses about the overall experiences instructing ELLs further shaped this study. Participants

gave detailed accounts in their one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journals. Responses to these questions are explained in detail below.

Central Research Question. The central research question asked: What are the experiences of secondary content teachers instructing English language learners?

The participants shared their experiences with their English learners that included positive and negative aspects of teaching. Participants expressed concerns with language barriers and how it impacts communication with the students and their families. This difficulty in understanding the language creates anxiety and frustration for teachers, students, and parents. Building relationships was discussed by teachers as critical to student success in the classroom. Strong relationships between teachers, students, and their families create a positive learning environment where students feel a sense of belongingness, are willing to take risks, and develop their strengths and weaknesses.

Sub-question 1. The first sub-question asked: How do secondary content teachers describe the instructional strategies used to instruct English language learners?

Participants described various strategies used to communicate with their students and provide instruction. Modeling, realia, and visual representations were discussed as routine strategies used before and during instruction to help students make connections, understand vocabulary and concepts, and to help demonstrate abstract concepts. Most of the participants use technology, anchor charts, diagrams, illustrations, or other forms of visual aids to help model new concepts and terms. Scaffolding and differentiation were discussed as strategies used to support language learners. David explained, "These strategies are necessary and critical to an ELL student acquiring the content" (David, Interview, August 27, 2020). Technology was mentioned by many teachers as a means to relay messages, information, concepts, and directions

for students that include translation applications on the computer or cell phone. Fran stated, "I think technology has leveled the playing field for students because whatever they are learning, they can find it online" (Fran, Interview, September 7, 2020). In her history class, Angela has picture libraries that she has collected and stored for her different units and can use to show real life events (Angela, Interview, August 31, 2020). Visual aids were discussed as necessary tools and strategies for delivering content and concepts to students. Three participants rely on diagrams, posters, anchor charts, graphs and other visual aids to help model, discuss, and deliver content to their students. Bonnie uses visuals from scanned pictures from the Internet or online photos to discuss difficult concepts like an author's tone and mood in a text (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). Two participants discussed the importance of using visual strategies that include anchor charts, posters, and graphic organizers to support student learning. Three participants use visuals, videos, and PowerPoint presentations daily as an advance organizer to give students a preview of the upcoming lesson. Ivy supports language development of her ELLs through class anchor charts, interactive notebooks, and other visuals and shared, "Providing visuals in the classroom, I believe, helps support their language development because they can see the words and how they are used in the content" (Ivy, Participant Journal, September 25, 2020). Several participants discussed using resources like bilingual dictionaries and bilingual or translated trade books to support content acquisition and learning. Three participants reported adding various leveled reading materials to their class libraries that include bilingual books to support their English learners. Scaffolding routines included student guided notes, class anchor charts, and using translations. Julie uses scaffolded sentence starters and paragraph frames to help her students develop their writing skills. She uses different frames for different types of writing activities (Julie, Interview, September 22, 2020). Bonnie scaffolds

class guided notes for her students and Evan uses classroom charts to scaffold problem-solving

strategies and word clues. Heather scaffolds vocabulary and notetaking by utilizing interactive

notebooks and shared:

> My ELL students, especially the newcomers, keep a vocabulary notebook where they
>
> record new vocabulary terms in English, and also include the term in their language, and
>
> a drawing or other type of representation for the terms. Students can then refer to this
>
> notebook when writing about various concepts they learned. (Heather, Participant
>
> Journal, October 2, 2020)

Differentiation was discussed in planning, delivering, and assessing as a strategy to best support

student learning of content. All participants use various methods of grouping students for

differentiation based on student needs, strengths, interest, and language levels. Evan

differentiates by using workstations for students and explained, "These stations provide practice,

remediation and extension math activities and then I can move around the room, work with small

groups, monitor progress, and facilitate their learning" (Evan, Participant Journal, September 11,

2020). Heather differentiates student collaborative groups to complete science activities and

stated, "The kids need time to work together to solve problems and explore the concepts"

(Heather, Focus Group, October 8, 2020). When planning for instruction, Gary explained, "I

also think about the different ways that students can demonstrate what they have learned and

have materials prepared ahead of time" (Gary, Participant Journal, September 25, 2020). Bonnie

discussed, "Planning takes a little time to consider what concepts I will focus on and how I will

deliver them, like what resources or materials I might need to adapt for my ELLs" (Bonnie,

Participant Journal, September 11, 2020). Fran explained, "I utilize a variety of technologies in

my classes and give my students freedom to explore various ways to demonstrate their knowledge" (Fran, Participant Journal, September 4, 2020).

Sub-question 2. The second sub-question asked: What are teacher concerns with instructing English language learners in the secondary content class?

Participants discussed concerns with feeling prepared and adequately trained to support ELLs in their content classes. Beyond the concern for language barriers, most participants reported limited preparation specifically targeted for their content in supporting language learners. Secondary teachers are certified in their content area and often are working towards student mastery of the content, and most training received is specific to content being taught. Bonnie recalled, "As far as professional training, I never had any. It was up to me to look for professional development opportunities, and honestly, I would always attend those that were directly related to my content" (Bonnie, Focus Group, October 2, 2020). David shared that he has learned mostly from trial and error and said, "I think we need more training available that is focused on how to teach the ELLS in our particular content. That would be helpful" (David, Participant Journal, September 4, 2020). Three participants had similar comments and could not remember any professional training offered to them specifically for instructing ELLs. Angela stated, "I think they offered some last year, but it appeared to be for ESOL teachers, so I didn't attend" (Angela, Interview, August 31, 2020). Participants felt the need for professional development to be more relevant to what they are actually facing in the classroom. Evan replied, "I believe that more relevant training on how and what specifically to teach the ELLs would be more useful than a tool kit of strategies that could work for everyone" (Evan, Focus Group, October 17, 2020).

Sub-question 3. The third sub-question asked: How does understanding second language acquisition affect a secondary content teacher's instruction of their English language learners?

Participants talked about their understanding of how individuals learn a second language, and some believed that it is similar to learning one's first language, through immersion, experiences, practice, and developmental steps with grammar and sentence structures. Heather explained her understanding with how an individual learns a second language:

> When learning a second language, I believe that immersion in the second language is important and easier to learn rather than being taught the language separately. Learners need to have opportunities to use and practice the new language in context with what they are doing in the classroom. (Heather, Interview, September 22, 2020)

Participants discussed how understanding the needs of their language learners affects instructional practice as more time and planning are required to meet the needs of their learners. The participants reiterated several teaching strategies used to support the language needs of their ELL students and considerations made when planning for instruction. When probed further about instructional practices to promote English development, most participants expressed limited responsibility. Some of the participants described how they support their students but that teaching English was the responsibility of the English language arts teachers. Evan said, "I teach math, not English. I understand the ELLs need help, but I am not an English teacher" (Evan, Interview, September 8, 2020). Several teachers verbalized the importance of language development but expressed that they have to teach their content and prepare all students for mastery. Time is limited in the content classes and most felt that teaching English was the responsibility of the language arts and ESOL teachers.

Summary

Chapter Four described the results of the data analysis for this study with an overview of each participant followed by the results from the study. This chapter discussed how the data collected from one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journals were analyzed and organized into themes and sub-themes. Themes were developed from the data analysis and were clustered together to provide a description of the experiences of the participants to demonstrate the essence of the phenomenon of instructing ELLs in the content at the secondary level. As a result, four themes emerged: the learning environment, instructional pedagogy and practice, teacher supports, and teacher perceptions. The results from this study are described using a narrative form and organized by theme. Participant quotes are verbatim to provide a voice for each and demonstrate some characteristics of the participants.

The chapter analyzed how the data collected answered the central research question and three sub-questions. Participants detailed their experiences with instructing ELLs overall as being very positive and rewarding. Participants routinely discussed the importance of relationship building, cultural awareness, and understanding the needs of their learners as necessary factors to effectively instruct. Although most participants lacked any formal training to instruct ELLs or provide language development, all teachers used a variety of best practice strategies and resources to support language development and content learning. Additional training specific to instructing ELLs was discussed by participants and future training should be relevant to the needs of teachers. Overall, all participants expressed enjoyment in instructing ELLs and found language and cultural diversity an asset to the learning environment.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct English language learner (ELL) students. This chapter includes a summary of findings in this study, a discussion of how these findings relate to empirical and theoretical research, and an implications section to discuss the empirical, theoretical, and practical implications. Following are descriptions of delimitations and limitations to the study and recommendations for future research. Chapter Five concludes with a summary.

Summary of Findings

This study used a phenomenological research design to lay the framework and provide the essence of the phenomenon as experienced by the secondary content teachers who instruct ELLs in their content classes. To examine the research questions, 12 secondary content teachers participated in this study. Data were gathered using one-on-one interviews, participant focus group interviews, and participant journaling. The data were analyzed using Moustakas' methods for horizonalization of the data and creating values for each participant statement (Moustakas, 1994). From this analysis and coding, the following four themes emerged: (a) the learning environment, (b) instructional pedagogy and practice, (c) teacher supports, and (d) teacher perceptions.

In answering the central research question ("What are the experiences of secondary content teachers instructing English language learners?"), the 12 participants provided details that enhanced their descriptions and experiences with instructing ELLs. All participants described the importance of building relationships with students and their families and how this

helps create a positive classroom environment. Learning about their students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and strengths was important to all 12 participants. Many expressed concerns with lack of parental communication due to language barriers and difficulty obtaining translating support. Nine of the 12 participants expressed positive feelings with regard to diversity in their classes and the importance of students' social-emotional needs.

In answer to the first research sub-question ("How do secondary content teachers describe the instructional strategies used to instruct English language learners?"), all participants shared a variety of instructional strategies to support their ELLs. Some participants went into great detail about the strategies they implement to support their ELLs that include scaffolding techniques, providing bilingual resources, and translated anchor charts. All 12 participants discussed using technology, peer support, PowerPoint presentations, visuals, modeling, and realistic items to support content learning. Seven of the 12 participants rely on either a peer or an adult in the building as translators to support their ELLs. Nine participants discussed the necessity for having additional resources to complement their content, including bilingual reading materials, bilingual dictionaries, technology to translate, and lower-leveled reading materials.

In answer to the second research sub-question ("What are teacher concerns with instructing English language learners in the secondary content class?"), the overall concern of all 12 participants was the language barrier. Eleven of the 12 participants noted the challenges of planning instruction for students with a range of language needs, from those with limited English proficiency to those who knew no English. This is most concerning with planning for instruction. Due to this challenge, most participants expressed feelings of being overwhelmed with the responsibility of teaching content and supporting non-English speakers while

maintaining the rigor and momentum of the curriculum expectations. Many participants talked about how much extra time they spend on planning for instruction as they must consider how to differentiate lessons or adapt any materials for students, consider language proficiency, how students will be assessed, where to find resources, and how to scaffold or break down the content. Kevin stated that he does not differentiate assessments because all students are required to take the same assessments at the end of the year, so he tries to prepare all students for the demands of standardized tests (Interview, October 13, 2020). Several participants shared concerns related to feeling unprepared to instruct ELLs. Professional development opportunities and prior training were discussed and most expressed that little to no previous training prepared them to instruct ELLs in the content class. Four participants stated that they have never seen any professional development opportunities to support their ELL students in the content class, and nine of the 12 participants talked about professional development not being relevant to their content. Most of the participants felt that their administrators were supportive; however, professional development was not mandatory, so many participants do not attend.

In answer to the third research sub-question ("How does understanding second language acquisition affect a secondary content teacher's instruction of their English language learners?"), participants talked about their knowledge and understanding of language as similar to learning one's own first language: through immersion, learning the basics, and much practice. All 12 participants felt that learning a new language is similar to learning the first language through a process of learning foundational skills like the alphabet and sounds, then grammatical structures and patterns, and then short phrases of meaning. Deeper learning and higher order skills come later, once an individual learns more of the language. Eight of the 12 participants felt strongly that teaching English is the responsibility of the English teacher as their primary focus is

teaching the content. Some participants expressed concerns with the levels of English

proficiency for some students in their classes and believed that students should have a higher

level of English before they can be expected to be successful.

Discussion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived

experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. A transcendental

phenomenological design was chosen for this research because it relies more on the lived

experiences of the participants and less on the viewpoint of the researcher (Creswell, 2013). The

following four themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) the learning environment,

(b) instructional pedagogy and practice, (c) teacher supports, and (d) teacher perceptions. This

section provides an analysis of the correlation between the study findings and the empirical and

theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter Two and provides further information that can

contribute to the education of ELLs in the secondary content class.

Empirical Discussion

From this research study, four themes were identified that related to the empirical

research found in the review of literature. The themes that emerged were: (a) the learning

environment, (b) instructional pedagogy and practice, (c) teacher supports, and (d) teacher

perceptions. The supporting data for these themes and the relationships with empirical research

are described below.

The learning environment. The learning environment refers to the physical, social, and

cultural factors that impact the learning process (Brydon-Miller, 2018) and also includes the

physical, social, and emotional interactions between the teacher and the student (Park et al.,

2017). Current literature reaffirmed the importance that the learning environment has on student

motivation and achievement. A welcoming environment that respects cultural diversity, ethnic and linguistic differences, and diverse backgrounds creates a sense of belonging and security (Flint et al., 2019). Teachers who consider cultural and linguistic diversity as positive attributes and value individual contributions develop learning environments that promote equity (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Additionally, there is strong evidence in the literature to suggest a direct relationship between a positive learning environment and how it promotes social-emotional health and student achievement (Albrecht & Brunner, 2019).

All participants talked about factors that contributed to the learning environment: building relationships with students, getting to know students and their backgrounds, and understanding cultural differences and the diverse needs of the students. Participants in this study shared various ways that they build and develop relationships with their students and encourage collaboration among their student groups. Developing these relationships was important to the participants and was directly related to current findings in the literature that developing strong relationships with students and their families is critical to relevant and effective learning experiences (Abacioglu, Volman, & Fischer, 2019). Several participants discussed activities to get to know their students. Participants use games and activities to learn about their students and provide opportunities for students to get to know one another. Collaborative grouping was discussed between several participants as a strategy for students to work together, problem solve, extend learning, and share experiences. Evan observed, "I have seen several of my students, especially my language learners, really improve their understanding by working together and talking about the problems and how to solve them" (Evan, Focus Group, October 17, 2020).

Cultural awareness and understanding student backgrounds were factors that participants discussed as necessary in developing relationships with their students. Student diversity was viewed by participants as positive and valuable in the learning environment. This is related to current literature that showed that when the learning environment promotes cultural awareness and respect, there is a stronger connection between peers and teachers and a culture that encourages fairness and approachability (Johnson & Chang, 2012) and can lead to tolerance, acceptance, respect, and affirmation (Abacioglu, Isvoranu, et al., 2019).

Instructional pedagogy and practice. Secondary content teachers must possess expertise in content knowledge while providing rigorous, engaging quality interactions and also maintaining a focus on language development (Gandara et al., 2005). Language acquisition can be improved by encouraging meaningful interactions and conversations between the teacher and students and the students with their peers (Aukerman, 2007). Participants' responses echoed this research as all discussed using some form of grouping strategies to encourage collaboration and conversation among their student groups. In addition to developing relationships, grouping strategies are used by most participants to support language acquisition, develop critical thinking skills, deepen academic vocabulary, and build on concepts. Fran talked about how she uses peer grouping in her technology class:

> I like to mix things up in class and encourage different groups of students to work with others that they haven't been with before. It takes a little more planning now because I have some students at home learning and some physically in class during the week so it can be challenging. I have put groups of two to four together to work on class projects and discussions and for some others, I pair them to work with someone who can act as a tutor as needed, for those who are struggling with a concept. It's great because I can't

always be around the room giving one-on-one support and the students often have

different ways to demonstrate the skill that we're working on. Once I have taught the

lesson and split the students up, I ask them to try to solve their problems first in their

group and then if they need more help to come to me. This has really helped me in class

as I am one person trying to help the groups online at the same time as I am working with

the ones sitting in class. (Fran, Focus Group, October 2, 2020)

Another practice that most participants shared was using scaffolding strategies to deliver lessons

which relates to literature that reports scaffolding as an effective way to provide rigorous,

meaningful content, and language learning (Walqui, 2006). Scaffolding provides initial supports

to learners and then gradually provides fewer supports until the learner no longer needs them. In

this study, participants used technology to provide translated directions and supports for ELLs

and also anchor charts, Word Walls, student-created classroom posters, and interactive

notebooks that provided some translated words and concepts to support language learners.

Identifying resources to supplement content learning was expressed in the data by

participants as time-consuming but very necessary for ELLs. Several participants discussed

strategies and scaffolding techniques they use that also require additional resources for

instruction. Four participants have built small class libraries that have some bilingual books and

trade books along with multi-leveled readers for content support. Many participants have

bilingual dictionaries for students to use. Bonnie discussed in her focus group interview that

"finding the right resources for the right lesson is often time-consuming and difficult" (Bonnie,

Focus Group, October 2, 2020). Two participants discussed the complex text in their content and

how they try to make it more manageable for students by providing pictures, illustrations, and

hands-on activities. Evan shared that "using the math manipulatives helps make the concepts more concrete and tangible" (Evan, Interview, September 8, 2020).

In the one-on-one and focus group interviews, participants discussed processes used for planning instruction and assessments. Differentiation was mentioned by most participants as part of the planning process. Understanding the needs of their students is necessary, and developing meaningful, relevant learning experiences takes teacher knowledge, resources, and time. Most participants agreed that using grouping strategies, appropriate resources, scaffolding techniques, and modeling were important ways to differentiate the learning of content. Finding different ways to instruct a diverse group of learners was discussed by participants as challenging, time-consuming, frustrating, and often overwhelming. Angela noted in her focus group interview:

> We know we have to differentiate because our students are on so many different reading levels, language levels, and academic levels. That's why I spend a little extra time planning ahead for collaborative student groups and finding the resources I will need so that when it comes time to instruct, the students can work together and take some of the pressure off me. (Angela, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

David noted in his one-on-interview, "When I plan, I first outline what standards and concepts to cover then I review it to figure out what resources or other reading materials I can have to support my language students or how I will pair them up for support" (David, Interview, August 27, 2020). Teachers' pedagogy and practice are developed through individual experience, understanding the academic, linguistic, and social-emotional strengths and challenges of each learner in the classroom (Flint et al., 2019).

Teacher supports. Empirical research supports this study as it relates to teacher preparedness to instruct ELLs in secondary content. Nationwide, teachers struggle to effectively instruct students with diverse language and cultural backgrounds (Cho et al., 2019). Most states in the U.S. have a set of standards that outline considerations and respect for a student's native language but provide little information as to how to support various levels of English proficiency (Harper & de Jong, 2009). In this study, several participants shared that they have received no specific training to instruct ELLs. Two participants discussed that the ESOL teacher has collaborated with them when they sought out their support, but this is not ongoing or consistent. Eleven participants talked about the professional development opportunities within the county; several have attended these trainings, particularly if it was mandatory, but most said the training was irrelevant. Angela explained in her focus group that as far as ESOL training, it appeared to be specifically for the ESOL teachers, so she did not attend. She elaborated:

> Most of my PDs [professional developments] have been related to my content and usually at the beginning of the school year, you know, to go over procedures and sometimes new resources and materials. I have never attended a training that was geared to help me know what to do for my English learners. (Angela, Focus Group, October 17, 2020)

Other participants made similar comments that their training was content specific and they never received any formal training to support them with teaching language learners.

Administrative supports were discussed among participants, with eight of the 12 participants stating that their administrators were positive and supportive towards professional development opportunities, but only a few considered this training mandatory. Three participants mentioned that although their administrators attend professional development, rarely

are administrators fully participating in the process. Angela explained that her administration is supportive: "The school climate reflects the attitudes of the administrators as much as the teachers. Training opportunities, especially when diversity and cultural awareness is a priority, can send a positive message to the faculty and set the tone for a more positive school climate" (Angela, Focus Group, October 17, 2020). Bonnie noted, "I think more teachers would attend if administrators encouraged it" (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020).

In addition to concerns with professional development and training, most participants agreed that training needs to be relevant to what they are dealing with in their classes. Diverse groups of learners with various academic needs and language proficiencies need teachers adequately prepared to meet their needs. Research indicated that teachers will explore training opportunities if it is perceived to be beneficial and relevant to their instructional needs; otherwise, it is disregarded (Sachs, 2016).

Teacher perceptions. For this study, participants were asked about their understanding of how one learns a second language and also ways that they support language development in their content. The researcher did not explicitly ask questions about Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition or Cummins' (1980) theory of language development. The researcher wanted participants to share their current knowledge about second language learning for the purpose of collecting data and better understanding the experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELLs who may or may not have special training. In explaining how individuals learn a second language, all participants referred to individuals learning the basics to include words and phrases, alphabet, sounds of letters, and processes used to learn their first language. Four participants explained that learning a second language is similar to learning the first language through developmental processes, observing others, listening and sending

messages, and practicing with those who speak the language trying to be learned. Fran shared

that "being exposed to the second language helps learners acquire it quicker than learning from a

textbook in English class" (Fran, Interview, September 7, 2020). The data from this study relate

to current literature on misconceptions that teachers have about the process of learning a second

language. Although listening, observing, and providing opportunities for students to work

together may create opportunities for ELLs to hear the language, these activities alone do not

support learning of the second language and are often limited to brief social exchanges

(Przymus, 2016). Rather, planned activities that require more language models and have

structured language practice for ELLs would promote language negotiations in the classroom

(Case, 2015).

In developing and supporting their ELL students with language acquisition, participants

in this study explained various strategies used to support their ELLs, including translated

communications, directions and procedures, Word Walls, anchor charts, and student notebooks.

Several participants use scaffolding techniques to deliver difficult content concepts and new

vocabulary terms. Other strategies included PowerPoint presentations, visual aids, videos, online

tutorials and demonstrations, teacher modeling, peer tutors, and collaborative student groups.

Although these are good strategies, simply exposing ELLs to the content using collaborative

student groups or visual aids does little to support their English learning and does not aid in

comprehending the content or abstract concepts (Harper & de Jong, 2009). Participants

discussed thoughtful planning and ways to differentiate their content to support the various needs

and language proficiencies in the content, and some discussed differentiating ways to assess

student knowledge. Christine explained, "I give some of my lower ELLs [i.e. those with lower

English proficiency] a different assessment that includes more pictures and diagrams for them to

refer to" (Christine, Participant Journal, October 9, 2020). All participants in this study had a positive attitude toward instructing their ELLs and include a variety of best practices in the strategies, tools, resources, and differentiation they use. However, research indicated that these are great strategies in making the content comprehensible and aiding ELLs in navigating text and language, but when teachers rely on these alone and do not use tools to develop language, it can lead to student failure (Harper et al., 2008).

Teachers' perceptions and misconceptions about students can lead to bias, negative attitudes about intelligence or ability, and impact student motivation and achievement (Carjuzaa & Ruff, 2016). Participants in this study discussed diversity as an asset in their classes and had positive feelings of cultural differences, student backgrounds, empathy for student circumstances, and an overall desire to want to be effective in instructing their ELLs. Two participants elaborated on how student diversity in their classes represents the real world in which we live, adds another layer of diversity due to different languages and excitement in sharing cultural experiences. Challenges and obstacles to learning content were also examined through data collected. Recurring comments from participants included the challenges of instructing students with no English proficiency, the language barriers, and communicating with parents. All 12 participants discussed challenges with planning for different cognitive and language levels, and many of the participants stated that planning is time-consuming and difficult because it requires differentiating, finding resources, and modifying activities, assignments, and assessments.

Theoretical Discussion

This study used the theoretical frameworks of Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition and Cummins' (1980) language acquisition theory. These theories of

second language acquisition underpin the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of teachers who instruct ELL students and provide a lens to analyze participant responses. The data in this study showed a correlation between the participants' experiences and the ways that students acquire content knowledge.

Krashen's (1982) five hypotheses included the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis, and the natural order hypothesis. The first hypothesis, the acquisition-learning hypothesis, refers to language acquisition as meaningful interactions between individuals that promote communication. Participants understand that there must be communication in the classroom between teacher and students and between student groups. In their discussions of how students learn a second language, many participants believe that learning a second language begins with basics, or fundamentals, of any language but also requires meaningful interactions. Angela discussed that her ELLs "need time to practice the language with other students in a more relaxed setting, like small group discussions" (Angela, Interview, August 31, 2020). Several others talked about immersion, communicating messages, and exposure to the second language that support learning a new language.

In the monitor hypothesis, Krashen (1982) believed that as learners acquire the second language, internalizing it and learning the rules of the language, then they can consciously monitor and correct their language. Participants expressed awareness of this concept when discussing student work and assessments. Bonnie noted that she does not correct for grammatical errors unless she has specifically taught these skills (Bonnie, Interview, August 25, 2020). Other participants talked about assessing content knowledge for the big concepts or

overall meaning and understanding versus somewhat abstract ideas, nuances, or irrelevant details and not correcting errors in grammar, usage, or spelling.

During the input hypothesis, Krashen (1982) described comprehensible input as needing to be one step beyond the learner's current stage of linguistic development and that when learners understand the messages, they will acquire language. Participants in this study use a variety of strategies to plan, deliver, and assess learning. These instructional practices support the comprehensible input described by Krashen (1982), and participants discussed many as routine procedures. Participants talked about using videos, PowerPoint presentations, anchor charts, diagrams, photos, real objects, illustrations, and manipulatives to support content learning and vocabulary development.

Individual motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, and personal traits make up Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis and contribute to one's level of language acquisition and should be considered when instructing second language learners. Participants reflected on the importance of the overall wellbeing of their learners and how cultural awareness and sensitivity towards students' backgrounds and home lives are important in establishing a positive learning environment and building relationships. Christine noted, "Getting to know all my students is so important, I believe, because it helps me to talk to them and motivate them versus just me teaching" (Christine, Focus Group, October 2, 2020).

Krashen's (1982) final hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, stated that learning a second language is a natural process and that acquiring it is more important than learning it. The emphasis is that functions of language grammar are learned naturally through the content, not taught in isolation, with the goal of enhancing the message. The data gathered from this study illustrated the importance of differentiation for students with varying levels of language

proficiencies. Participants discussed knowing their students and their English proficiency levels, allowing for wait time and silent periods, and various ways to differentiate the content. Julie elaborated on her process for planning and differentiating:

> I feel that language arts teachers have the toughest job in the school because our content is more involved than most. I have to plan for reading and writing that covers complex abstract concepts and how to think critically. I have to teach different types of writing, different genres, standard English and the list goes on and on. Okay, so when I am planning, I have to determine how in the world I am going to weave all those concepts in a lesson to maximize the time and so everything ties in together, in context, and yes it can get time consuming and frustrating. Then, I have to consider what my special needs babies need and also my ELLs. So, knowing all my students is critical. (Julie, Response Journal, October 9, 2020)

Cummins' (1980) theory of second language acquisition focuses on a natural order process of acquisition. Cummins' (1980) theory provides a framework for two different stages of acquisition, basic interpersonal communication (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which have been the models used in education to provide some guidance in how teachers can instruct learners based on proficiency levels. The early phases of BICS refer to the natural process that individuals communicate messages for social communications and everyday exchanges. CALP refers to a deeper understanding of language and requires more cognitive demands of abstract concepts required for academic success. In this study, participants expressed their understanding of these processes when considering how and what to teach, what resources are needed, how to differentiate the lesson delivery and assessments, and student strengths and weaknesses. Many shared concerns with the added responsibilities of instructing

ELLs in their content classes. Additional planning time is necessary as teachers need to ensure

that the content is supported with materials that all learners can comprehend. Several

participants talked about the high demands of their content with regard to complex reading

materials, abstract concepts, too many concepts in one lesson, mandated standards and

curriculum that moves fast, and feeling overwhelmed with planning for different levels in their

classes. Nine other participants discussed the importance of knowing their students and their

language levels as an important factor when planning and that identifying resources to use can be

time consuming.

Implications

The findings from this phenomenological study revealed experiences of secondary

content teachers who instruct ELL students and can benefit teachers, administrators, and other

stakeholders. The data from this research study can inform instruction of ELLs and provide

different perspectives of the challenges and needs of teachers who instruct them that can lead to

improved instruction. This section discusses the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications

that emerged from this study.

Theoretical Implications

This study used Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition and Cummins'

(1980) theory of language development as the framework to examine how participants described

their experiences with instructing ELLs in their secondary content. For this study, the

participants were asked about their understanding of how an individual learns a second language

and ways that they support students' language acquisition and development. These questions

were intentional to elicit knowledge specific to language acquisition and development and

identify instructional strategies used to support language development in content courses. Data

gathered through the one-one-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journals were revealing and demonstrated that although participants lack specific training to instruct ELLs, all were aware that language acquisition and development is a process that differs among learners and takes time. The data showed a correlation in what the participants are doing to support their ELLs with theoretical knowledge in the ways they plan, differentiate, deliver, and assess content learning. In the acquisition-learning hypothesis, learners will acquire the new language through casual communications and through immersion into the new language (Krashen, 1982). Participants in this study routinely use student peers to support language learners during activities and lessons to translate or explain directions. Also, student groups and differentiation strategies are used to encourage students to work together, discuss conceptual knowledge, problem-solve, and negotiate meaning. Most participants understand that simply grouping students together does not equate to goals being met.

Krashen's (1982) monitor hypothesis refers to the relationship between acquisition and learning. Participants' responses indicated awareness of this process and that students are developing language through internalizing the rules of language and grammar. Three of the participants discussed student writing and how some is very limited, but they understand that the students' language proficiency is developing. These participants shared that they do not deduct for grammatical errors or other mistakes in students' responses.

Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis describes how second language learners acquire language when comprehensible input is just above the learner's current stage of language development. Data from participants related an understanding of this as demonstrated in the various strategies and practices used for instruction. Modeling, visual representations of concepts, translated directions, procedures, anchor charts, and Word Walls were used routinely

by participants to support their ELLs with limited English proficiency. Other types of comprehensible input used included PowerPoint presentations with illustrations, photos, realistic objects, and hands-on manipulatives to demonstrate concepts and new vocabulary.

The affective filter hypothesis describes the importance of an individual's self-confidence, anxiety, and personal traits that impact motivation and contributes to the level of language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Considering an ELL's background, cultural experiences, and other personal factors are important in providing a welcoming environment conducive to learning. In this study, participants shared their experiences in building relationships with their learners and better understanding of how their circumstances can impact academic achievement. Data gathered reflected empathy, sensitivity to cultural differences, and knowledge of unique differences among the participants for their ELL students. Participants shared different situations with some of their ELLs and how learning a little about their personal circumstances has caused them to consider what their students might be dealing with and how it impacts learning.

Through Krashen's (1982) natural order hypothesis, the focus is on acquiring the second language and that learning the functions of language is done through natural processes, not in isolation, through meaningful context to understand the messages. Participants in this study demonstrated knowledge of this process by providing meaningful interactions between students, realizing that English learners need time to process and think about the language, and allowing time for practice. A general consensus among participants was that learning a second language through immersion, practice, observations, and stages of foundational language skills are natural processes for individuals in learning a second language. Cummins' (1980) theory of second language acquisition provides models of language proficiency that support educators in making

informed decisions about their ELLs through the natural order process of acquisition. Two

different stages of acquisition are described that include basic interpersonal communication

(BICS), which refers to early production of the second language used to communicate messages

in social setting and are acquired in the first two years of one learning a second language, and

cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) that requires higher cognitive demands of the

second language used for learning and can take seven or more years to reach proficiency. In this

study, participants shared a variety of ways that they plan, differentiate, and deliver content

while considerations are made for students with special needs and English language proficiencies

of their ELLs. Understanding these stages of language development can better prepare teachers

for instructing ELLs because they can tailor lessons and activities to support learners at their

level of proficiency. School leaders can provide resources and training opportunities specific to

knowledge of second language acquisition for teachers who instruct ELLs to prepare more

rigorous, relevant learning opportunities that not only build content knowledge but also help

develop language for English learners.

Empirical Implications

In the United States, ELL students are the fastest growing population in public schools

(Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). Data collected in this study from one-on-one interviews,

focus group interviews, and participant journals confirm the research that classrooms today are

comprised of students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds with various linguistic and

academic needs. Knowledge of students' language needs, academic needs, and social-emotional

health was important to participants in this study, and these factors were evident in responses to

how teachers plan for instruction. The instructional practices and pedagogies demonstrate that

participants build relationships with their students and understand that strategies to differentiate

and include resources are critical for building content knowledge among their ELLs. Participants reported several strategies that included scaffolding, bilingual and leveled reading materials to support comprehension, visual aids and representations through pictures, videos, drawings, in addition to role-playing activities, modeling, and hands-on materials. Two participants discussed having text available in audio so learners can listen to the language. These instructional practices support ELLs in learning and comprehending content and abstract concepts and can be used at any academic level.

Current research indicates that teachers need more time to teach content, do not have appropriate resources and tools, and lack support from administrators (Edmonds, 2009), and some lack the finances for resources that negatively impact the quality of instruction (Contreras & Fujimoto, 2019). Data from this study related to the literature as participants had similar concerns. In this study, several discussed the challenges of additional time for planning, locating resources, modifying materials, and instruction. Most participants felt that their administrators were very supportive; however, there were concerns with limited, relevant training specific to instructing ELLs. When probed further during the focus group interviews, the general feelings among participants were that the responsibility of teaching content belongs to them and the English teachers or ESOL teachers are responsible for teaching the language of their content area and the content vocabulary. School districts could benefit from the data in this study as it demonstrates a need for professional development opportunities for teachers who instruct ELLs. Additionally, the professional development should be seen as a priority and necessary for all teachers who instruct ELLs, be relevant to the needs of teachers and students in the classroom, be specific and targeted to provide language acquisition and development, and be purposeful in its development. Secondary content teachers can benefit from this research as the data from

participants gave insight into effective strategies and ways to differentiate for learners. Based on this research, it its recommended that schools who instruct ELLs provide meaningful, purposeful training and professional development to all teachers and develop teachers' pedagogies to assume responsibility for developing an ELLs second language. It is not the sole responsibility of an English teacher or a trained ESOL teacher to support the language development of ELLs. Changing this misconception is important to improving the academic success and language proficiency of ELL students. Secondary content is taught through the language of English, and all content teachers are also language teachers. Ideally, it is recommended that preservice teachers should be required to learn about the unique language needs of ELLs and knowledge of second language acquisition to better prepare teachers to meet the academic and linguistic needs of their students.

Practical Implications

This research study has practical implications that can benefit policymakers, district personnel, administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders who are vested in the education of ELLs. For secondary content teachers, the data in this study related to the daily challenges and concerns with instructing ELLs in the content class. Through the discussions, comments, and dialogue with participants in the one-on-one and focus group interviews, secondary teachers and administrators can better understand these experiences and what has been effective for instructing ELLs. These experiences can offer insight into the realities of the classroom environment and the needs of ELLs and benefit community members and other faculty in the school setting to provide a more welcoming school environment sensitive to cultural and language differences. Discussions and comments about parent communications and involvement in the data revealed that it is often difficult, if not impossible, to openly communicate with the

parents of ELLs due to language barriers, misinformation, or resources to translate. In efforts to improve parent involvement, this study demonstrates the need for school districts to have more resources that are readily available for teachers and parent to communicate.

At the post-secondary level, the data and themes in this study can support the need for preservice teacher training in methods for instructing ELLs. Most preservice teachers are required to learn about students with special needs and how to prepare to instruct these students. However, preservice teachers receive little to no training specific to instructing ELLs. Some colleges are now offering coursework to preservice teachers to better prepare them to instruct ELLs, and this has shown promise for improving instruction of ELLs (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). It is recommended that all preservice teachers receive training in second language acquisition and how to plan content and language development opportunities simultaneously to better prepare for effective instruction. Using the results from this study, administrators can plan for more effective professional development opportunities for teachers, and secondary teachers can use the experiences shared in this research to empower them with knowledge and strategies to better support their ELL students.

Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations for this study were dependent upon the choices I made as the researcher regarding what to include and exclude from the study. Delimitations included the location and participants chosen for the study. The location for this study was the Smith County School System, a pseudonym, in a southern state and was chosen for convenience and because it has experienced a substantial growth in its ELL population. Participants were chosen from the secondary schools within this school district to be representative of teachers who instruct ELLs.

I chose a transcendental phenomenological design for this study because it relies more on the

lived experiences of the participants and less on the viewpoint of the researcher (Creswell, 2013).

The location of this study was also a limitation as it may not be representative of a larger urban

area of the United States. The location used for this research is a small urban community on the

outskirts of a major metropolitan city. Other school districts with larger numbers of ELLs could

have more professional training opportunities for its teachers, may have more resources, more

interpreters available, and more experienced teachers who instruct ELLs. Another limitation was

the number of participants willing to participate in the study. There were 12 participants who

responded and were willing to share their experiences with the researcher. The design of a

phenomenological study has its limitations as to the depth of participants' responses and how the

responses are interpreted by the researcher. Due to the small sample size and location of this

study, it is challenging to generalize the results to the experiences of all secondary content

teachers who instruct ELLs.

<center>**Recommendations for Future Research**</center>

Although this research study provided meaningful insights into the experiences of

teaching ELL students, more needs to be done to improve the educational outcomes for these

students. Understanding the perspectives of teachers is critical to breaking down barriers,

eliminating bias and misconceptions, and empowering teachers with knowledge of second

language acquisition to advance student achievement. Future research focused on secondary

content teachers' experiences in school districts with a larger population of ELLs could be

beneficial to determine if the current study is representative of all secondary teachers or only

those in the current study. Because this study analyzed teachers' experiences, future research

could explore secondary content learning from the perspective of the ELL student. This could

provide more insight into how to improve content instruction for ELLs. It is evident from this research that secondary content teachers require specific and intentional training in second language acquisition that could be provided in pre-service college coursework or through school wide professional development. Understanding how an individual learns a new language is crucial in knowing how to plan for instruction and develop best practice strategies and interventions to support language learning within the content course. These recommendations are based on the data received from this study, which indicate a need for greater teacher preparation and knowledge of second language acquisition.

Summary

This research study examined secondary content teachers' experiences with instructing ELLs in one school district in a southern state. Participants included 12 secondary content teachers in three different schools. Data were collected through one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journals and coded using Moustakas' (1994) steps to data analysis. Results from this research study support previous literature about the challenges of teaching ELLs, the importance of developing relationships, and the misconceptions surrounding instruction for ELLs. This research adds to the current literature as it provides the in-depth experiences shared among the participants that can reflect similar concerns with other educators who support ELLs in the classroom. Findings from this study revealed that participants welcome diversity, strive to meet the challenges of instructing ELLs through the strategies used to plan lessons, and are positive in their roles as educators. Future research is recommended to explore the perceptions of the ELL student in learning secondary content as this could lead to more insight into all the factors that impact student achievement. The impact of this study on the

participants can lead to learning more about second language acquisition, reflecting upon

personal bias or misconceptions about ELLs, and advocating for their ELLs.

REFERENCES

Abacioglu, C. S., Isvoranu, A., Verkuyten, M., Thijs, J., & Epskamp, S. (2019). Exploring multicultural classroom dynamics: A network analysis. *Journal of School Psychology*, *74*, 90–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.02.003

Abacioglu, C. S., Volman, M., & Fischer, A. H. (2019). Teachers' multicultural attitudes and perspective taking abilities as factors in culturally responsive teaching. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *90*(3), 736–752. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12328

Albrecht, N., & Brunner, M. (2019). How positive behavioral supports and social-emotional curriculum impact student learning. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioral Sciences*, *24*, 2789–2804. https://doi.org/10.15405/ejsbs.245

Allen, K., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., Hattie, J., & Waters, L. (2018). What schools need to know about fostering school belonging: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, *30*, 1–34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-016-9389-8

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (2017). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the national literacy panel on language-minority children and youth* (1st ed.). London, UK: Taylor and Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315094922

Aukerman, M. (2007). A culpable CALP: Rethinking the conversational/academic language proficiency distinction in early literacy instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, *60*, 626–635. https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.60.7.3

Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *4*, 359–373. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.1986.4.3.359

Banse, H., & Palacios, N. (2018). Supportive classrooms for Latino English language learners: Grit, ELL status, and the classroom context. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *111*, 645–656. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2017.1389682

Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2014). *Growing as a teacher: Goals and pathways of ongoing teacher learning*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Beuchert, L., Humlum, M. K., Nielsen, H. S., & Smith, N. (2018). The short-term effects of school consolidation on student achievement: Evidence of disruption? *Economics of Education Review*, *65*, 31–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2018.05.004

Brown, C. L., & Endo, R. (2017). The challenges of differentiating instruction for ELLs: An analysis of content-area lesson plans produced by pre-service language arts and social studies teachers. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 30, 372+.

Brydon-Miller, M. (2018). Critical learning, community, and engagement: Elements for creating positive learning environments and opportunities for positive change. *Educational Action Research*, *26*, 351–353. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2018.1469651

Cain, A. A. (2018). Seven tips for teachers of newcomer emergent bilingual students. *The Reading Teacher*, *71*, 485–490. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1648

Callahan, R., & Shifrer, D. (2016). Equitable access for secondary English learner students: Course taking as evidence of EL program effectiveness. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *52*, 463–496. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16648190

Cárdenas-Hagan, E. (2018). Cross-language connections for English learners' literacy development. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, *54*, 14–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451218762583

Carder, M. (2015). Tracing the path of ESL provision in international schools over the last four decades. part 2. *The International Schools Journal*, 34, 59.

Carjuzaa, J., & Ruff, W. G. (2016). American Indian English language learners: Misunderstood and under-served. *Cogent Education*, 3. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1229897

Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, *41*, 545–547. https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547

Case, A. F. (2015). Beyond the language barrier: Opening spaces for ELL/Non-ELL interaction. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *49*, 361–382.

Chen, D. (2017). Improving active classroom participation of ESL students: Applying culturally responsive teaching strategies. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *7*, 79. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0701.10

Cho, H., Wang, X. C., & Christ, T. (2019). Social-emotional learning of refugee English language learners in early elementary grades: Teachers' perspectives. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *33*, 40–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2018.1531449

Choi, J., & Yi, Y. (2016). Teachers' integration of multimodality into classroom practices for English language learners. *TESOL Journal*, *7*, 304–327. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.204

Coldwell, M. (2017). Exploring the influence of professional development on teacher careers: A path model approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *61*, 189–198. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.10.015

Colucci, E. (2007). "Focus groups can be fun": The use of activity-oriented questions in focus group discussions. *Qualitative Health Research*, *17*, 1422–1433. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307308129

Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Medsurg Nursing: Official Journal of the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses*, *25*, 435–436.

Contreras, F., & Fujimoto, M. O. (2019). College readiness for English language learners (ELLs) in California: Assessing equity for ELLs under the local control funding formula. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *94*, 209–225. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2019.1598121

Cook, J. E., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., & Cohen, G. L. (2012). Chronic threat and contingent belonging: Protective benefits of values affirmation on identity development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *102*, 479–496. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026312

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Crowther, D. (2017). Context makes science more accessible. *NSTA Reports, 29*, 14–15.

Cruze, A., Cota, M., & López, F. (2019). A decade after institutionalization: Educators' perspectives of structured English immersion. *Language Policy*, *18*, 431–453. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-018-9495-1

Cummins, J. (1980). The cross-lingual dimensions of language proficiency: Implications for bilingual education and the optimal age issue. *TESOL Quarterly*, *14*, 175–187. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586312

Cummins, J. (2009). Pedagogies of choice: Challenging coercive relations of power in classrooms and communities. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *12*, 261–271. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050903003751

Daniel, S. M., & Conlin, L. (2015). Shifting attention back to students within the sheltered instruction observation protocol. *TESOL Quarterly*, *49*, 169–187. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.213

Desimone, L. M. (2013). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, *38*, 181–199. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140

Dewey, D. P., Belnap, R. K., & Steffen, P. (2018). Anxiety: Stress, foreign language classroom anxiety, and enjoyment during study abroad in Amman, Jordan. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *38*, 140–161. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190518000107

Diaz, A., Cochran, K., & Karlin, N. (2016). The influence of teacher power on English language learners' self-perceptions of learner empowerment. *College Teaching*, *64*, 158–167. https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2015.1126801

Doran, P. R. (2017). Teachers' self-reported knowledge regarding English learners: Perspectives on culturally and linguistically inclusive instruction and intervention. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *21*, 557–572. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2016.1218949

Driee, J., Janssen, T., & Groenendijk, T. (2017). Improving writing in social studies through professional development: Effects on teachers' beliefs, classroom practice and students' writing. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *5*, 273–308. https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-20170009

Echevarria, J., Richards-Tutor, C., Canges, R., & Francis, D. (2011). Using the SIOP model to promote the acquisition of language and science concepts with English learners. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *34*, 334–351. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2011.623600

Edmonds, L. M. (2009). Challenges and solutions for ELLs. *The Science Teacher*, *76*, 30.

Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 (2015). Retrieved from

https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rm

Fischer, C., Fishman, B., Dede, C., Eisenkraft, A., Frumin, K., Foster, B., & McCoy, A. (2018).

Investigating relationships between school context, teacher professional development,

teaching practices, and student achievement in response to a nationwide science reform.

Teaching and Teacher Education, *72*, 107–121.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.02.011

Flint, P., Dollar, T., & Stewart, M. A. (2019). Hurdling over language barriers: Building

relationships with adolescent newcomers through literacy advancement. *Journal of

Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *62*, 509–519. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.927

Flores, S. (2014). Does English language learner (ELL) identification predict college remediation

designation? A comparison by race and ethnicity, and ELL waiver status. *The Review of

Higher Education*, *38*, 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2014.0041

Gagné, M., Janus, M., Muhajarine, N., Gadermann, A., Duku, E., Milbrath, C., & Guhn, M.

(2019). Disentangling the role of income in the academic achievement of migrant

children. *Social Science Research*, *85*, 102344.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.102344

Gallo, Y., Garcia, M., Pinuelas, L., & Youngs, I. (2008). Crisis in the southwest: Bilingual

education program inconsistencies. *Multicultural Education*, *16*, 10.

Gandara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Driscoll, A. (2005). *Listening to teachers of English language

learners: A survey of California teachers' challenges, experiences, and professional

development needs*. Santa Cruz, CA: Regents of the University of California.

García, O. (2015). Language policy. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (2nd ed., Vol. 13, pp. 353–359). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.) . New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Georgia Department of Education. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.gadoe.org/Pages/Home.aspx

Georgia Free and Reduced Lunch School Data – 2018 Qualified Schools. (2019). Bright from the start: Georgia department of early care and learning. Retrieved from http://decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/18FreeRedQualSchools.pdf

Giambo, D. A. (2017). "I will study more . and pray": Metacognition about high-stakes test preparation among culturally & linguistically diverse students. *Multicultural Education*, *24*, 26–34.

Gleeson, M., & Davison, C. (2016). A conflict between experience and professional learning: Subject teachers' beliefs about teaching English language learners. *RELC Journal*, *47*, 43–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631221

Göker, S. D. (2012). Impact of EFL teachers' collective efficacy and job stress on job satisfaction. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 2*, 1545. https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.2.8.1545-1551

Haggis, D. (2017). Influencing positive outcomes for troubled youth. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research (CIER)*, *10*, 179–184. https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v10i3.9978

Haines, D. (2015). *Learning from our past: The refugee experience in the United States*. Washington, DC: American Immigration Council.

Hansen-Thomas, H., Richins, L., Kakkar, K., & Okeyo, C. (2016). I do not feel I am properly trained to help them! Rural teachers' perceptions of challenges and needs with English language learners. *Professional Development in Education*, *42*, 308–324. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2014.973528

Harper, C. A., & de Jong, E. J. (2009). English language teacher expertise: The elephant in the room. *Language and Education*, *23*, 137–151. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500780802152788

Harper, C. A., de Jong, E. J., & Platt, E. J. (2008). Marginalizing English as a second language teacher expertise: The exclusionary consequence of no child left behind. *Language Policy*, *7*, 267–284. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-008-9102-y

Hatton, T. J. (2015). United States immigration policy: The 1965 act and its consequences. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, *117*, 347–368. https://doi.org/10.1111/sjoe.12094

Hiatt, J. E., & Fairbairn, S. B. (2018). Improving the focus of English learner professional development for in-service teachers. *NASSP Bulletin*, *102*, 228–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636518789261

Honigsfeld, A., & Dove, M. G. (2010). *Collaboration and co-teaching: Strategies for English learners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Hu, F. (2018). Migrant peers in the classroom: Is the academic performance of local students negatively affected? *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *46*, 582–597. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2017.11.001

Imms, W., & Byers, T. (2017). Impact of classroom design on teacher pedagogy and student engagement and performance in mathematics. *Learning Environments Research*, *20*, 139–152. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-016-9210-0

Inceli, Ö. (2015). The perceptions of English teachers to the SIOP® model and its impact on limited English proficiency. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, *2*, 15. https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/13

Jacelon, C. S., & Imperio, K. (2005). Participant diaries as a source of data in research with older adults. *Qualitative Health Research*, *15*, 991–997. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305278603

James, E. A., Milenkiewicz, M. T., & Bucknam, A. (2008). *Participatory action research for educational leadership: Using data-driven decision making to improve schools*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483329369

Jiménez-Castellanos, O. H., & García, D. (2017). School expenditures and academic achievement differences between high-ELL-performing and low-ELL-performing high schools. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *40*, 318–330. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2017.1342717

Johnson, C. C., Bolshakova, V. L. J., & Waldron, T. (2016). When good intentions and reality meet: Large-scale reform of science teaching in urban schools with predominantly Latino ELL students. *Urban Education*, *51*, 476–513. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914543114

Johnson, M. A., & Chang, D. (2012). Balancing act: Addressing culture and gender in ESL classrooms. *Journal of Adult Education*, *41*, 19–26.

Kanno, Y., & Gromley, J. (2013). English language learners' access to and attainment in postsecondary education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *47*, 89–121. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.49

Karam, F. J., Monaghan, C., & Yoder, P. J. (2017). 'The students do not know why they are

    here': Education decision-making for Syrian refugees. *Globalisation, Societies and*

    Education, *15*, 448–463. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2016.1222895

Kelly, L. B. (2018). Preservice teachers' developing conceptions of teaching English learners.

    TESOL Quarterly, *52*, 110–136. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.375

Khajavy, G. H., MacIntyre, P. D., & Barabadi, E. (2018). Role of the emotions and classroom

    environment in willingness to communicate: Applying doubly latent multilevel analysis

    in second language acquisition research. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *40*,

    605–624. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263117000304

Khatib, M., & Taie, M. (2016). BICS and CALP: Implications for SLA. *Journal of Language*

    Teaching and Research, *7,* 382. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0702.19

Kieran, L., & Anderson, C. (2019). Connecting universal design for learning with culturally

    responsive teaching. *Education and Urban Society*, *51*, 1202–1216.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124518785012

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: A practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4:

    Trustworthiness and publishing, *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*, 120–124.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Kozleski, E. B. (2017). The uses of qualitative research: Powerful methods to inform evidence-

    based practice in education. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*,

    42, 19–32. https://doi.org/10.1177/1540796916683710

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in secondary language acquisition*. Oxford, UK:

    Pergamon Press.

Lai, W., & Wei, L. (2019). A critical evaluation of Krashen's monitor model. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *9*, 1459–1464. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0911.13

Larson, K. E., Pas, E. T., Bradshaw, C. P., Rosenberg, M. S., & Day-Vines, N. L. (2018). Examining how proactive management and culturally responsive teaching relate to student behavior: Implications for measurement and practice. *School Psychology Review*, *47*, 153–166. https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017-0070.V47-2

Lee, O., & Buxton, C. A. (2013). Integrating science and English proficiency for English language learners. *Theory into Practice*. *52*, 36–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/07351690.2013.743772

Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Linville, H. A. (2016). ESOL teachers as advocates: An important role? *TESOL Journal*, *7*, 98–131. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.193

Lumbrears, R., Jr., & Rupley, W. H. (2019). Educational experiences of ELL educators: Searching for instructional insights to promote ELL students' learning. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, *18*, 17–38. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-017-9225-z

MacIntyre, P. D. (1999). Language anxiety: A review of the research for language teachers. In D. J. Young (Ed.), *Affect in foreign language and second language teaching: A practical guide to creating a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere* (pp. 24–45). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Maniates, H. (2016). Culturally responsive teaching and the brain. *Multicultural Perspectives* (Mahwah, NJ), *18*, 118–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2016.1159105

Mason-Williams, L., & Gagnon, J. C. (2017). An analysis of teacher sorting in secondary special education and alternative schools. *The Journal of Special Education*, *50*, 239–250. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022466916656174

Master, B., Loeb, S., Whitney, C., & Wyckoff, J. (2016). Different skills? Identifying differentially effective teachers of English language learners. *The Elementary School Journal*, *117*, 261–284. https://doi.org/10.1086/688871

Malo-Juvera, V., Correll, P., & Cantrell, S. (2018). A mixed methods investigation of teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive instruction. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *74*, 146–156. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.05.003

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2016*). Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maxwell, L. A. (2014). ESL and classroom teachers team up to teach common core. *The Education Digest, 79*, 4.

McFarland, J., Hussar, B., de Brey, C., Snyder, T., Wang, X., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., . . . Hinz, S. (2017). *The Condition of Education 2017*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017144.pdf

McIntyre, E., Kyle, D., Chen, C., Muñoz, M., & Beldon, S. (2010). Teacher learning and ELL reading achievement in sheltered instruction classrooms: Linking professional development to student development. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, *49*, 334–351. https://doi.org/10.1080/19388070903229412

Misco, T., & Castañeda, M. (2009). "Now, what should I do for English language learners?" Reconceptualizing social studies curriculum design for ELLs. *Educational Horizons*, *87*, 182–189.

Morgan, D. L., Ataie, J., Carder, P., & Hoffman, K. (2013). Introducing dyadic interviews as a method for collecting qualitative data. *Qualitative Health Research*, *23*, 1276–1284. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732313501889

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Murphy, A. F., & Haller, E. (2015). Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the literacy common core state standards for English language learners and students with disabilities. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *29*, 510–527. https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2015.1073200A

Murphy, A. F., Torff, B., & Sessions, D. (2019). Educators' beliefs about appropriate pedagogical models for Spanish-speaking ELLs who differ in home-language and English-language literacy abilities in the United States. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *22*, 402–413. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1259291

National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). English language learners in public schools. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp

National Center for English Language Acquisition. (2019). Retrieved from https://ncela.ed.gov/

Newcomer, S. N., & Collier, L. C. (2015). Agency in action: How teachers interpret and implement Arizona's 4-hour structured English immersion program. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, *9*, 159–176. https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2015.1048179

Nieto, S. (2013). *Language, culture, and teaching* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Okhremtchouk, I. S., & Sellu, G. S. (2019). Teacher readiness to work with English language
learners: Arizona context. *The Teacher Educator*, *54*, 125–144.
https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2018.1533058

Park, S., Stone, S. I., & Holloway, S. D. (2017). School-based parental involvement as a
predictor of achievement and school learning environment: An elementary school-level
analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *82*, 195–206.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.09.012

Peercy, M. M., Martin-Beltran, M., Silverman, R. D., & Nunn, S. J. (2015). "Can I ask a
question?" ESOL and mainstream teachers engaging in distributed and distributive
learning to support English language learners' text comprehension. *Teacher Education
Quarterly*, *42*, 33.

Przymus, S. D. (2016). Imagining and moving beyond the ESL bubble: Facilitating communities
of practice through the ELL ambassadors program. *Journal of Language, Identity &
Education*, *15*, 265–279. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2016.1213133

Pyle, D., Pyle, N., Lignugaris/Kraft, B., Duran, L., & Akers, J. (2017). Academic effects of peer-
mediated interventions with English language learners: A research synthesis. *Review of
Educational Research*, *87*, 103–133. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316653663

Reeves, J. R. (2006). Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English-language learners in
mainstream classrooms. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *99*, 131–143.
https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.99.3.131-143

Rizzuto, K. (2017). Teachers' perceptions of ELL students: Do their attitudes shape their

    instruction? *The Teacher Educator*, *52,* 182–202.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2017.1296912

Robutti, O., Cusi, A., Clark-Wilson, A., Jaworski, B., Chapman, O., Esteley, C., & Joubert, M.

    (2016). ICME international survey on teachers working and learning through

    collaboration. *Zdm*, *48*, 651–690. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-016-0797-5

Rolstad, K. (2017). Second language instructional competence. *International Journal of*

    Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, *20*, 497–509.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2015.1057101

Roseberry-McKibbin, C., & Brice, A. (2000). Acquiring English as a second language. *ASHA*

    Leader, *5*, 4.

Rubinstein-Avila, E., & Lee, E. (2014). Secondary teachers and English language learners

    (ELLs): Attitudes, preparation and implications. *The Clearing House: A Journal of*

    Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, *87*, 187–191.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2014.910162

Sachs, J. (2016). Teacher professionalism: Why are we still talking about it? *Teachers and*

    Teaching, *22*, 413–425. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1082732

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks,

    CA: SAGE.

Schachner, M., Noack, P., van de Vijver, F., & Eckstein, K. (2016). Cultural diversity climate

    and psychological adjustment at school—Equality and inclusion versus cultural

    pluralism. *Child Development, 87*, 1175–1191. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12536

Schrodt, P., Witt, P. L., & Turman, P. D. (2007). Reconsidering the measurement of teacher

    power use in the college classroom. *Communication Education*, *56*, 308–332.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520701256062

Shea, L. M., Sandholtz, J. H., & Shanahan, T. B. (2018). We are all talking: A whole-school

    approach to professional development for teachers of English learners. *Professional*

    Development in Education, *44*, 190–208.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2016.1274267

Shim, J. M. (2018). Involving the parents of English language learners in a rural area: Focus on

    the dynamics of teacher-parent interactions. *The Rural Educator*, *34*(3).

    https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v34i3.396

Sokolowski, R. (1999). *Introduction to phenomenology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University

    Press.

Song, K. H. (2016). Systematic professional development training and its impact on teachers'

    attitudes toward ELLs: SIOP and guided coaching. *TESOL Journal, 7*, 767–799.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.240

Steinberg, M. P., & MacDonald, J. M. (2019). The effects of closing urban schools on students'

    academic and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from Philadelphia. *Economics of Education*

    Review, *69*, 25–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2018.12.005

Stockman, J. A. (2019). Coming to America: Regulatory oversight of United States immigration

    policies. *The Pediatric Clinics of North America*, *66*, 525–536.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2019.02.002

Sugarman, J. (2017). *Beyond teaching English: Supporting high school completion by immigrant*

    and refugee students. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

Takahashi-Breines, H. (2002). The role of teacher-talk in a dual language immersion third grade classroom. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *26*, 461–483. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2002.10668721

Téllez, K., & Manthey, G. (2015). Teachers' perceptions of effective school-wide programs and strategies for English language learners. *Learning Environments Research*, *18*, 111–127. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-015-9173-6

TESOL Association. (2013, April). *Implementing the common core state standards for English learners: The changing role of the ESL teacher*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL International Association. Retrieved from https://www.tesol.org/docs/default-source/advocacy/ccss_convening_final-8-15-13.pdf?sfvrsn=8&sfvrsn=8

Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *48*, 388–396. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03207.x

Tong, F., Lara-Alecio, R., Irby, B., Mathes, P., & Kwok, O. (2008). Accelerating early academic oral English development in transitional bilingual and structured English immersion programs. *American Educational Research Journal*, *45*, 1011–1044. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208320790

Treffers-Daller, J., & Calude, A. (2015). The role of statistical learning in the acquisition of motion event construal in a second language. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *18*, 602–623. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2015.1027146

United States Census Bureau. (2018). Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/

United States Department of Education. (2020). College- and career-ready standards. Retrieved from https://www.ed.gov/k-12reforms/standards

Vagle, M. D. (2016). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315431451

Valeriu, D. (2017). Teacher training for multicultural classroom teaching. *Euromentor Journal*, *8*, 71–81.

Walqui, A. (2006). Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: A conceptual framework. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *9*, 159–180. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050608668639

Wexler, J., Mitchell, M. A., Clancy, E. E., & Silverman, R. D. (2017). An investigation of literacy practices in high school science classrooms. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *33*, 258–277. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2016.1193832

Whitehead, G. E. K., & Greenier, V. T. (2019). Beyond good teaching practices: Language teacher leadership from the learners' perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, *53*, 960–985. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.526

Wilson, A. (2015). A guide to phenomenological research. *Nursing Standard*, *29*, 38–43. https://doi.org/10.7748/ns.29.34.38.e8821

Wilson, V. (2016). Research methods: Triangulation. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, *11*, 66–68. https://doi.org/10.18438/B86S5F

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Yough, M. (2019). Tapping the sources of self-efficacy: Promoting preservice teachers' sense of efficacy for instructing English language learners. *The Teacher Educator*, *54*, 206–224. https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2018.1534031

Yuan, T., & Jiang, H. (2019). Culturally responsive teaching for children from low-income, immigrant families. *Young Exceptional Children*, *22*, 150–161. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250618756897

Zee, M., & Koomen, H. M. Y. (2016). Teacher self-efficacy and its effects on classroom processes, student academic adjustment, and teacher well-being: A synthesis of 40 years of research. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*, 981–1015. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626801

Zeynep, I., Tuba, D., Huzeyfe, C., Yasemin, C., & Seyma, I. (2017). Multidisciplinary perspectives towards the education of young low-income immigrant children. *Early Child Development and Care*, *187*(9), 1413–1432. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1173037

Zhang, Y. (2017). Walking a mile in their shoes: Developing pre-service music teachers' empathy for ELL students. *International Journal of Music Education*, 35, 425–434. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761416647191

Zhang, L., & Wang, Y. J. (2016). Culturally responsive teaching in china: Instructional strategy and teachers' attitudes. *Intercultural Education* (London, England), 27, 54–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2016.1144632

APPENDIX A: IRB Approval to Conduct Research

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 26, 2020

Wendy Bailey
Gail Collins

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY19-20-422 SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTING ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) STUDENTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Wendy Bailey, Gail Collins:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available

without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: Modified IRB Approval to Conduct Research

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 4, 2020

Wendy Bailey
Gail Collins

Re: Modification - IRB-FY19-20-422 SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTING ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) STUDENTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Wendy Bailey, Gail Collins:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has rendered the decision below for IRB-FY19-20-422 SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTING ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) STUDENTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY.

Decision: Exempt - Limited IRB

Your request to compensate your participants by providing $25 Amazon gift cards to those who complete your study procedures has been approved. Thank you for submitting your revised study documents for our review and documentation. Your revised, stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration

Thank you for complying with the IRB's requirements for making changes to your approved study. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We wish you well as you continue with your research.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX C: Recruitment Letter

SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTING ENGLISH FOR
SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) STUDENTS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY
Wendy Lane Bailey
Liberty University School of Education

Date

Mrs. Jane Doe
10th Grade Teacher
Smith County High School
123 Education Blvd
Smithville, Southern State 12345

Dear Mrs. Doe,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research
as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. The purpose my research study is
to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students, and I
am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study. If you agree to participate, I will give
you a $25 Amazon gift card upon completion.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, hold a
current southern state certification in the field they are teaching, be employed in Smith County as
a full-time teacher of the subject they are certified to teach, and teach a minimum of 5 ESL
students across all of their classes. Participants, if willing, will be asked to

1. Participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. This one-on-one interview
   session will be conducted online through a virtual meet and recorded to assist the
   researcher later when compiling all the data. This one-on-one group interview session
   should take about one hour to complete.

2. Participate in a focus group interview session with the researcher and other educators.
   This focus group interview session will be conducted online through a virtual meet
   and recorded to assist the researcher later when compiling all the data. This focus
   group interview session should take about one hour to complete.

3. For 10-15 minutes each day, during a 5-day work period, write in a private Google
   Document participant journal about your daily lived experiences teaching ELL
   students.

4. Review a transcript of your one-on-one interview and your part in the focus group sessions to ensure that it is accurate. This should take about 15 minutes.

Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please follow this link to the screening survey (A link to the screening survey will be added here). Once I have received and reviewed the screening surveys and selected suitable research participants, an email will be sent to those I select to inform them of their selection to participate in the study.

Wendy Lane Bailey
Teacher, Smith County School System
123-456-7890

APPENDIX D: Screening Survey

Screening Survey:

What is your name?

What is your email address?

What is the name of the high school where you teach?

Have you earned a bachelor's degree or higher?

Do you have a current southern state certification in the field you are teaching?

Are you currently serving as a secondary content teacher of at least 5 ESL students across all of

your classes?

Thank you for completing this survey. You will receive a follow up email to inform you if you

have been selected to or not to participate in this study.

APPENDIX E: Letter to Selected Participants

SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTING ENGLISH FOR
SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) STUDENTS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY
Wendy Lane Bailey
Liberty University School of Education

Date

Mrs. Jane Doe
10th Grade Teacher
Smith County High School
123 Education Blvd
Smithville, Southern State 12345

Dear Mrs. Doe,

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in my study to describe the lived experiences
of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students. I look forward to meeting you and
greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview, a focus group
interview, writing in a private online participant journal, a review of your one-on-one interview
transcript, and a review of your part of the focus group interview to check for accuracy.

A letter of consent will be mailed to you to sign and send back to me in the enclosed self-
addressed stamped envelope. I will contact you to schedule your one-on-one interview as soon
as I receive your letter of consent.

As a reminder, the one-on-one interview and focus group sessions will be conducted online
through a virtual meet and recorded to assist me later when compiling all the data.

I greatly value your participation in this research study and appreciate your enthusiasm to share
your experiences with ELL students. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

With warm regards,

Wendy Lane Bailey
Teacher, Smith County School System
123-456-7890

APPENDIX F: Consent Form

Consent Form

SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTING
ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) STUDENTS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY
Wendy Lane Bailey
Liberty University School of Education

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, hold a current southern state certification in the field they are teaching, be employed in Smith County as a full-time teacher of the subject they are certified to teach, and teach a minimum of 5 ESL students across all of your classes. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this research study is to describe the lived experiences of secondary content teachers who instruct ELL students in the content class in one southern state's school district.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. This one-on-one interview session will be recorded with an audio recording device to assist the researcher later when compiling all of the data. This one-on-one group interview session should take about one hour to complete.
2. Participate in a focus group interview session with the researcher and other educators. This focus group interview session will be recorded with an audio recording device to assist the researcher later when compiling all of the data. This focus group interview session should take about one hour to complete.
3. For 10-15 minutes each day, during a 5-day work period, write in a private Google Document participant journal about your daily lived experiences teaching ELL students.
4. Review a transcript of your one-on-one interview and your part in the focus group sessions to ensure that it is accurate. This should take about 15 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, during the focus group session, participants will have the opportunity to collaborative with other secondary content teachers who teach ELL students.

The benefits to society, specifically those in education, include gaining an understanding of the challenges and experiences of secondary content teachers when instructing ELL students and how these experiences can affect a teacher's perception of instructing ELLs. Furthermore, these teachers' perceptions about teaching ELL students in a content class can be beneficial in discovering how to improve the learning experience for ELL students and the content teacher.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. The participant's name, school name, and school district name will not be used in the research. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and will not be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted
- All digital records will be saved on an external hard drive with password protection and this will also be stored in a locked safe in my home. This material will be maintained and available for review if requested by the research participants, but they may only view their individual portion of the research. Upon completion of the study, I will scan all written documents into a PDF file and all written documents will be shredded by a professional company. I will then save and store all PDF files and digital audio recordings to a password-protected external hard drive that will be secured in a locked safe in my home. This password protected external hard drive will be stored in my home for three years and after the conclusion date of the research, all data will be deleted.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. All participants will be given a $25 Amazon gift card by the researcher. This gift card will be handed directly to each participant after all the procedures have been completed. The $25 Amazon gift card will not be pro-rated if a subject does not complete the study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Wendy Lane Bailey. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at wlbailey1@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Gail Collins at glcollins2@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____   _____
Printed Subject Name   Signature & Date

APPENDIX G: Interview Questions

1. What content do you teach?

2. Which type of instruction (direct instruction, teacher-centered, student-centered, other) do you perceive to be most effective in your secondary content class for ELLs? Why do you prefer this method?

3. What type of professional development and/or training has prepared you to effectively instruct ELL students?

4. What additional professional development and/or training do you feel would better prepare you to effectively instruct ELL students?

5. Describe the diversity among your ELL students with respect to culture, language, and formal educational background.

6. What challenges, if any, have you experienced when connecting with an ELL student?

7. How have you been able to connect with the ELL students in your secondary content class?

8. What are some activities you implement to encourage collaboration between your native English-speaking and ELL students to acquire content knowledge?

9. What are the primary obstacles encountered in learning content for ELL students? Why?

10. How would you describe the instructional strategies used to instruct ELL students in your class?

11. What has been effective when instructing ELL students in your content class? Why?

12. What has not been effective when instructing ELL students in your content class? Why?

13. What types of assessments do you utilize to ensure your ELL students have learned the content?

14. Explain your understanding of how an individual learns a second language?

15. What are some ways that you show your ELL students that you support their language

acquisition and development in your content class?

APPENDIX H: Focus Group Questions

1. What is it like to be a teacher of ELL students?

2. What type of professional development and/or training has prepared you to effectively instruct ELL students?

3. What additional professional development and/or training do you feel would better prepare you to effectively instruct ELL students?

4. Tell us about your ELL students. What assets do they bring to the learning environment?

5. What challenges do your ELL students bring to the learning environment?

6. How have you been able to connect with the ELL students in your secondary content class?

7. How do you encourage collaboration between your native English-speaking and ELL students to acquire content knowledge?

8. Think about your content. Tell me how you plan, deliver, and assess content knowledge with your ELL students.

APPENDIX I: Participant Journal Writing Prompts and Participant Examples

The research participants were asked to write a minimum of three complete sentence responses to three prompts provided by me, but they were encouraged to write more. At the conclusion of each one-on-one interview, the participants were provided a link to a private Google Document. To ensure the confidentiality of participants, this private Google Document was available to me and each individual research participant, and each document had a number that corresponded to the participant's name. The three participant writing journal prompts were as follows:

1. While planning your lessons this week, what challenges did you face while differentiating the content for your ELL students? Why?

2. What other experiences would you like to share regarding the instruction of ELL students that were not covered in the other interview questions? Why?

3. What have been the most and least effective methods when connecting with an ELL student? Why?

Sample Participant Journal: Bonnie

Participant: Bonnie

Over the next five school days please complete this journal of your daily lived experiences teaching ELL students. Please write a minimum of three complete sentence responses to each of the three prompts listed below. If possible, please provide elaboration to your responses that give more insight into your daily experiences.

1. While planning your lessons this week, what challenges did you face while differentiating the content for your ELL students? Why?

This week, like most, planning takes a little time to consider what concepts I will focus on and how I will deliver them, like what resources or materials I might need to adapt for my ELLs. There is always new vocabulary and I have to think about what vocabulary might be unfamiliar to students and look for pictures or short video clips that can help me introduce the vocabulary in a way that they will understand. I keep a little chart that I made with my lessons each week that tells what language levels my students are in and what each should be able to do at that level. I created this a few years back with the help of my ESOL co-teacher at the time. It is a quick reference for me but has been very helpful when I plan so I am aware of what types of different activities or materials I need for students. Over the years, I have learned that just because students can communicate with me and others very well does not necessarily mean that they can understand English at the level needed to really comprehend what they are reading or more challenging tasks with the language.

2. What other experiences would you like to share regarding the instruction of ELL students that were not covered in the other interview questions? Why?

I have found it interesting to teach English learners through the years because they are all different. Just like other groups of students, you cannot group language learners together, and then group the higher and lower students together. It just doesn't work that way. I know I have already talked about grouping and how I look at student levels, etc. but it is so important for me, as a teacher, to keep in mind that even when we place these kids in different groups they will have various strengths and weaknesses within those groups. As a teacher, it's tough to try to determine which students will need what for every lesson and you can drive yourself crazy trying to do so. For me, just doing the best I can to attempt to meet the needs of all my students each week is all I can do and I had to decide a while ago that I can't do it all.

3. What have been the most and least effective methods when connecting with an ELL student? Why?

I think the best way that I have found to connect with my students is by talking to them and trying to get to know them and something about their families. I believe in order for my class environment to be welcoming, I have to make everyone feel like part of the group. I think that when the students feel that I care about them enough to talk to them, ask questions about them, and really try to work with them, they are more comfortable in the class and will try to learn. As

far as the least effective method to connect, I think that teachers who don't speak to their students or run their classes with the teacher doing all the talking is probably the least effective or at least the least welcoming learning environment.

Sample Participant Journal: Evan

Participant: Evan

Over the next five school days please complete this journal of your daily lived experiences teaching ELL students. Please write a minimum of three complete sentence responses to each of the three prompts listed below. If possible, please provide elaboration to your responses that give more insight into your daily experiences.

1. While planning your lessons this week, what challenges did you face while differentiating the content for your ELL students? Why?

The beginning of the year is the most challenging for me when I plan because I really iron out all the different types of work stations I want to use during class. Of course, these have to be adjusted throughout the year, but a majority of the work is done up front. This week, I had to take some extra time to plan for which students needed what work station depending on last week's exam. Then, I had to make sure that I had all materials prepped for each group and posted online with directions. Because so many students had problems with two of the concepts last week on the exam, I have added a small group intervention this week where I will work with small groups to re-teach these concepts. This added more planning time this week for me. Having these work stations takes a lot of preparation ahead of time but it really helps me to differentiate. These stations provide practice, remediation and extension math activities and then I can move around the room, work with small groups, monitor progress, and facilitate their learning. I think the kids benefit from them too because it breaks up the lesson and I don't have to stand up front and lecture all day.

2. What other experiences would you like to share regarding the instruction of ELL students that were not covered in the other interview questions? Why?

I think that the interview questions covered most of what I am facing in the classroom. Personally, I enjoy working with the language learners in class and I think if we can just figure out what they need then we can help them learn it.

3. What have been the most and least effective methods when connecting with an ELL student? Why?

For me, connecting with my students is simply getting to know them, by either talking to them or working one-to-one to help them learn. It can be challenging because of the language barrier, but I use translation devices on the computer or I find another student who can translate and I ask questions to get to know them. Obviously, no connections can be made if you don't try to talk to them.

APPENDIX J: Researcher Reflexive Journal

Date	Entry
February 18, 2020	I believe that many secondary content teachers do not feel prepared to instruct ELL students and this can lead to negative attitudes and perceptions about this group of students. This bias exists based on my own interactions with colleagues who have verbalized their frustration with having ELL students in their content class. I have overheard teachers requesting that ELL students not be placed in their class until the student knows English. Other teachers have expressed concerns about how ELL students will negatively impact their standard scores.
July 26, 2020	Completed pilot study and through the feedback I received, I chose not to change any of my research questions. The interviews were beneficial practice, and it was a good opportunity to test out my research questions. It was recommended that I offer some type of incentive to my participants to elicit more responses. I believe that moving forward the interviews will be easier to conduct as I am more aware of pacing and allowing ample time for participants to respond.
August 25, 2020	Completed the first interview and it took longer than anticipated because I was not sure how much time was needed. I reviewed the questions beforehand and the interviewee elaborated on several questions, which was great.
August 28, 2020	Completed the third interview and everything went smoothly. This participant was very lively and enjoyed talking, and although great feedback, I had to pace the interview to remain on topic. Interviewee gave some interesting perspectives on my topic.
September 7, 2020	Fifth interview completed today. I am feeling more confident in my listening skills with interviewees and how to pace the interview. I am becoming more effective with knowing how and when to ask participant to give more insight or elaborate on what was given.
October 14, 2020	*Epoché* - I was surprised that some of the journals were very limited. This bias stems from my experience as an ESOL teacher and I have had much training and preparation and I have to view this from the participant's perspective.
October 17, 2020	Completed the focus group interviews. Once the groups were determined and set up through Google meets, the process went smoothly. Focus groups were more casual and participants opened up and shared ideas with one another which provided more information to the study.
October 17, 2020	*Epoché* - I consider students' English proficiency levels when planning for instruction and use the WIDA "can do" descriptors to detail what each learner should be able to do at that level. This bias exists because I have been fully trained on how to use these for planning and again, keep in mind, that most teachers will not have this training. I need to be open-minded and not assuming.

October 21, 2020	Finished transcribing all one-on-one and focus group interviews. This was a lengthy process to filter through each response and ensure accuracy of the participant's responses.
October 21, 2020	*Epoché* - I am feeling like several of the interviews could have produced more in-depth elaboration. My bias exists as I assume that all teachers are prepared, and if not, they should assume responsibility for knowing what and how to instruct their ELLs.
October 4 - October 26, 2020	As I completed the interviews and transcribed, I directly sent to participants to check for accuracy in an effort to receive all back in a timely manner. On October 26, I received the final member transcript returned and now I could focus on the results of the data and move forward in the process.
October 26 - November 3, 2020	I am working on coding the data and already feeling overwhelmed. A friend of mine is also working on her doctorate and we met to discuss our progress. This meeting was beneficial because she is a little further along and helped me to streamline the data and identify recurring ideas and statements. After several days, this is becoming easier and I can start to visualize how it's all going to come together.
November 3, 2020	*Epoché* - I have to be mindful of how I code the data. I don't want to base codes and themes on my own experiences and possibly develop bias towards the emerging themes. This possible bias exists because I have different experiences and training working with English language learners. I must ensure that my ideas and opinions aren't influencing how I review the data.

APPENDIX K: Theme Development

Significant Statements	Codes	Themes
I can't reach anyone at home because the numbers or emails are wrong and I have to plan ahead to find someone to translate for me.	Difficulty communicating with parents	The Learning Environment
Difficult to communicate with the parents if they don't speak English, so I can't just call them when there is an issue, it can take days to set it up.		
Many of my parents do not get involved, I think it's because of a cultural norm. I believe the parents are afraid to get involved due to immigration concerns.		
Understanding the student's backgrounds and language needs are important when I'm planning for instruction and any time I can pull bilingual text, the better.	Get to know students	
I have learned to be more empathetic with the students and the realities they live each day.		
It's not all about the content that I am teaching but getting to know the students gives me a different perspective on the learner.		
Communicating with students can take extra time because I have to have someone else translate, if another student speaks the language, or I have to find other avenues to translate for them and this can take a lot of time.	Having to rely on someone to translate	
Without a student who can help translate for my ESOL students I struggle.		
In class, I have to rely on another student to help translate or I resort to Google translate.		
It's hard to keep the pace going for lessons because some students don't speak English.	It's challenging because students don't speak English	
Class discussions can be a challenge because some don't always have a way of translating.		
The language barrier makes it difficult for me, as a teacher, to determine just how much the students are understanding.	Language barriers	
For the ESOL students, specifically, it's important to understand the language barriers and factors in the home that can support or impede the student.		

Significant Statements	Codes	Themes
Teachers must differentiate how we deliver lessons and how students are assessed.	Assessments need to be different or varied	Instructional Pedagogy and Practice
I also think about the different ways that students can demonstrate what they have learned and have materials prepared ahead of time.		
You have to change or modify the assessments to find out what concepts they have mastered.		
When planning, I find online videos and clips that can also provide a different medium for the content.	Locating resources for delivering lessons	
I use a lot of visual aids, videos, and online tools to help model and explain concepts. I have to think about the language barriers too.		
I consider my students' strengths and needs, especially language needs of my ELLs, and organize my lessons accordingly.	Planning for different levels	
Every class has different levels and needs and I have to consider these when I plan each week.		
Differentiation takes time but it's the only way to meet all the needs of students.		
Planning for so many different levels is challenging and time consuming.		
Kids really get engaged with the Word Wall because they have pretty much taken over adding the pictures and one ELL, she speaks Spanish, will add the translations.	Strategies to translate directions and reading materials	
Use of bilingual dictionary, online websites, online translators, and also the tools in Google platform to create written responses by using illustrations from online or student-created drawings with labels to help her ELL demonstrate content concepts and knowledge.		

Significant Statements	Codes	Themes
Admin is great, we have freedom to be creative, they are helpful if we need them, they will send us training opportunities throughout the year.	Administrators are supportive, but on our own for resources	Teacher Supports
My administrators have an open-door policy and encourage us to pursue opportunities for growth.		
As far as professional development, my administrators believe in the value of extended opportunities and encourage the faculty and staff to participate in more than our content workshops.		
Administrators should take a more active role in professional development.		
There's only two ESOL teachers in my building and I only see them during meetings or annual reviews, they teach their own classes.	Few designated ESOL teachers in building	
We have only one ESOL teacher, but she has been helpful.		
The professional development I usually attend are related to my 9th grade literature courses or writing. I have never seen one for just ELLs.	Professional development not relevant to needs in class	
As far as professional development goes, I would really like to see more trainings specifically geared to teaching ELLs.		
I have been to one or two trainings that were supposed to be focused on ELLs; however, I didn't feel like either one gave me any useful, practical tools that I could use in my classes.		
I think we need more training available that is focused on how to teach the ELLS in our particular content.		
As far as professional training, I never had any. It was up to me to look for professional development opportunities.	Professional development and training are limited to none	
I haven't had any professional development or past training.		
My training to teach language learners has been "nada."		

Significant Statements	Codes	Themes
A diverse classroom reflects the world in which we live and provides wonderful learning moments.	Diversity in the classroom represents the world we live in	Teacher Perceptions
I like the diversity in my classes and feel that the ELLs bring cultural and language diversity to my classes.		
I think my ELLs add a different layer of diversity in the learning environment.		
Trust me, you don't want me teaching English, leave that to the experts.	I have to teach my content, the language arts teachers should teach English	
I teach math, not English. I understand the ELLs need help, but I am not an English teacher.		
Individuals learn a second language much like they do their native language, through experiences.	Language is learned developmentally with learning the basics	
Individuals learn a second language in certain developmental processes, like we teach young children. Learners need to understand the alphabet and sounds before they can build words and sentences.		
I think foundational skills are necessary and follow a pattern and should be taught that way.		
People learn a second language like they do their first language, through listening and observing those around them.		
I teach math concepts and that is difficult enough. The English teachers support them with their language skills.	Overwhelmed with my content and trying to support them, can't also teach English	
I work with my ELLs and support them however I can, but I cannot be responsible for teaching them English, too.		
As far as teaching them how to read the text, etc., I would have to say no. I teach econ. for a reason.		
Planning takes a little time to consider what concepts I will focus on and how I will deliver them, like what resources or materials I might need to adapt for my ELLs.	Time consuming and difficult to plan	
When I am planning for instruction, I always think about what resources I will need, what language supports I might need to provide, and any other tools or accommodations that my students might need in order to be successful.		

APPENDIX L: Audit Trail

Date	Entry
April 24, 2020	Received permission from Smith County School System to conduct study.
June 24, 2020	Received IRB approval to conduct study
June 30 – July 26, 2020	Conduct Pilot Studies / Reviewed Results / Made adjustments based on feedback
July 29, 2020	Submitted modified IRB application to include adding a $25.00 Amazon gift card for recruitment of participants
August 4, 2020	Modified IRB approved
August 6 – September 15, 2020	Potential participants were emailed a recruitment letter and a link to a screening survey
August 25 – October 17, 2020	Conducted one-on-one and focus group interviews
September 14 – October 14, 2020	Collected participant journals
August 30 – October 21, 2020	Transcribed one-on-one and focus group interviews
October 4 – October 26, 2020	Completed one-on-one and focus group transcriptions and sent to participants for member checks / Received back from participants
October 26 – November 8, 2020	Completed coding and identified four themes. Completed Chapter Four and submitted to chair for review.
November 9, 2020	Begin writing Chapter 5