

**Shortage of Bilingual/TESOL Certified Teachers**

by

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July 24, 2023

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A master's thesis capstone project submitted to the Department of Education and Human  
Development of SUNY Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in Education in TESOL

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### **Abstract**

This capstone aims to support teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) as well as ELLs themselves. A growing number of ELLs in the Patchogue Medford School District are impacted by the lack of bilingual teachers, which may result in strained interpersonal connections, linguistic inadequacies, and the replacement of experienced teachers. The issue of teacher retention will be explored, along with solutions such as college courses and professional development sessions, in an effort to lessen it. A professional development program is designed for all elementary teachers within the Patchogue Medford School District to attend called *Patchogue Medford Bilingual/TESOL Superheroes*. The teachers in this professional development learn more about the background of the school community with ELLs, strategies to help them with reading, and ideas to promote inclusivity in the district. Recommendations include incorporating additional events for teachers in the school district such as workshops, training, and meetings on ways to support ELLs in the classroom. Furthermore, programs recently established such as the *Patchogue Medford Bilingual/TESOL Superheroes* professional development, should be received and modified to assist with any necessary changes for greater improvement.

*Keywords:* English Language Learners, shortage, bilingual/TESOL, professional development

## Chapter 1 Introduction

Educators and teachers are the key components to a child's education, especially in Dual Language. The majority of dual language programs start in kindergarten or the first grade and last at least five years, though many continue throughout middle and high school. By encouraging high levels of bilingualism, preserving and developing emergent bilinguals' heritage languages, and addressing academic disparities, dual language bilingual education (DLBE), a special kind of bilingual education, has the potential to change the educational circumstances and educational outcomes of emergent bilinguals (Morita et al., 2020). Dual language programs are amazing because students get to learn in two languages throughout their schooling, which can lead to long term effects on the student.

It is advantageous to use the children's native languages as a resource in dual language programs, couple talks with group activities, co-participate in activities, work in small groups, and acknowledge the efforts of the children. When a teacher does not speak the child's first language, they can communicate effectively by actively listening and using gestures (Hansel, 2019). Lastly, it's important to remember that both native and nonnative speakers can benefit from DLBE and it helps to immerse into these programs at a young age.

However, many teachers are burned out after a couple of years and do not want to continue to work in this setting due to the workload. In fact, the shortages in DLBE teachers have been a topic of national conversation for many years (Amanti, 2019; Kennedy, 2020). To Feistritzer and Haar (2008), teacher shortage is a situation where there is a mismatch between the low supply of teachers in a specific subject or geographic area and the high demand for those teachers, leading to unfilled teaching positions (as cited in Kennedy, 2020).

The shortage of bilingual teachers can be explained in terms of the relationship between two fundamental factors: (a) supply, or the pool of people who are available and qualified for district hiring as fully qualified (e.g., appropriately trained and certified) bilingual teachers; and (b) demand, or the need to hire fully qualified (e.g., appropriately trained and certified) bilingual teachers. We can claim that there is a shortage of bilingual teachers when there is a greater demand for them than there are qualified candidates available on the job market (Kennedy, 2020, p. 339). In many school districts, teachers get hired and are not given contract salary pay, since this is just a replacement). These students are then being given an educator who could potentially not be giving it their all due to the fact they just got hired and are inexperienced. For me, I just got hired this year as a first grade dual language teacher mid year. The old teacher quit and resigned mid year leaving a classroom behind of wonderful six year old. Thankfully, my district was able to hire me, being that I was already a sub in the district, got me on tenure track, probationary position, and contract salary. If all districts could do this, this would make the new, young, inexperienced teachers more confident and stable in their career.

The goal of this paper is to find out why dual language teachers are leaving the program after a couple of years as well as why teachers aren't stepping up and receiving their certifications in order to teach our English Language Learners.

This problem has been rising due to the fact that the number of ELLs in each school are also increasing. For instance, from 2006–07 to 2016–17, the proportion of English learners (ELs) in Texas public schools increased by 38.1% (Kennedy, 2020). Most teachers are not certified to teach ELL students unless they have a TESOL or bilingual certification. Newer teachers are coming to realize how important it is to have that TESOL certification where it makes them more marketable to work with these multilingual learners. In my school, I am a first grade dual

language teacher and have many ELL students in my classes. The numbers have also increased this year compared to last year and they are looking for more teachers to work with and support these students next year. As an educator, a question I have is why teachers are not willing to work with these students, and would rather just stick with a stand alone general education classroom.

While focusing on teachers, it's important to consider what factors are causing teachers to leave the field. Numerous stressors affect bilingual teachers, some of which are connected to working in high-poverty schools. These stressors include difficult academic content, pressure to raise test scores, social isolation, and conflict between accountability rules and policies that prioritize English proficiency over biliteracy development (Aguirre-Muñoz et al., 2023). In addition, stressors can also be caused by negative and unsupportive work environments. According to Ingersoll et al. (2018), teachers who feel like they have more administrative assistance are more likely to think they can have a good impact on their students' education. The children are more likely to perform well in the classroom when the teachers get the proper support and backing from their administration.

Thus, the goal of this paper is to find out why dual language teachers are leaving the program after a couple of years as well as why teachers are not stepping up and receiving their certifications in order to teach our English Language Learners. I will create a professional development (PD) program to show teachers that there are resources, classes, training, and workshops available for teachers to be educated on ways to work with ELLs. As an educator, it is important to model how these students feel during school and realizing how much we can help them with differentiating strategies and resources for them. The anticipated outcome of this PD is that more teachers will be willing to take the steps to work with ELL students due to the rise in

population of these students. It will benefit the teacher, the student, and the entire community of the school.

We can see that there is a shortage of bilingual/TESOL certified teachers to work with this diverse group of students. The goal of this paper and PD is to show teachers that there are resources, classes, training, and workshops available for teachers to be educated on ways to work with ELLs. The professional development will be delivered through a PowerPoint slideshow that the participants will receive after as well. They will be invited to attend workshops, training, and watch videos that help teach them how to properly support English Language Learners.

Overall, a shortage of bilingual/TESOL certified teachers to work with these ELLs is evident. Missed or insufficient learning opportunities result from teacher shortages. Key ideas can be completely missed and there might be a break in the flow of the lesson. These incidents restrict the educational options that kids can and should have. In Chapter 2, I will examine the research on the lack of bilingual/TESOL-certified teachers, their causes, and how it affects the students.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This Chapter outlines both learning theories and reviews the literature on the shortage of bilingual/TESOL teachers and the effect it has on students. As described in Chapter 1, there has been a shortage of bilingual/TESOL certified teachers which has major effects on students, especially in dual language settings (Morita et al., 2020). The question to unravel is in what ways do teacher vacancies hinder students' learning. In this Chapter, I will first explain the sociocultural and humanistic learning theories and how both these theories relate to the topic of the bilingual teachers. Next, I will explain an overview of the teacher shortage in bilingual education, specifically in dual language programs. This will cause many factors that will affect both students, teachers, and the school districts as a whole. Then, I will discuss the effects on students in dual language classes such as poor relationships, inexperienced teachers filling in, language deficiencies, linguistics of the problem and overall how we can resolve this issue. Finally, I will go over solutions to the teacher shortage in bilingual education, including professional development conferences and college courses for aspiring teachers.

### **Sociocultural Theory and Humanistic Learning Theories**

The significance of bilingual teachers in ELL students' educational experiences can be explained by both the sociocultural and the humanistic theory. The humanistic perspective describes motivation and learning in terms of a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), while the sociocultural perspective of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes interaction and social contexts to promote a co-construction of knowledge. These theories are interconnected and contribute to the larger topic of the value of bilingual teachers in the classrooms, which can help to place language acquisition into a context based on the learning surroundings as well as the



emotional requirements of ELLs. Bilingual teachers play an important role in a child's education and these two theories support ideas and show how crucial they are to a student's development throughout bilingual education.

### **Sociocultural Learning Theory**

According to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT), learning is a social activity that necessitates interpersonal connection among students, as well as between students and teachers. In the context of ELLs, they must socialize both at home and at school since they are creating meaning in many languages. The shared underlying proficiency model states that information that may be created between ELLs and their English-speaking classmates during the school day can be expanded upon at home using knowledge that they have in their L2. Bilingual teachers thus encourage sociocultural learning since their students can learn from them and develop a more personal relationship with them. They may feel more at ease and willing to specialize in the classroom as a result.

Furthermore, SCT emphasizes meaningful human connection as the primary motivator in human development and learning, and serves as the theoretical foundation for the practice of teaching second languages (Vygotsky, 1978). Students tended to be more involved in the learning material, according to Klem and Connell's (2004) observations, when teachers create a structured learning environment, explain classroom debates, and are sympathetic. SCT places a strong emphasis on group collaboration and social engagement. Therefore, it is crucial to provide teachers with possibilities for cooperation and knowledge exchange. During professional development programs, knowledge exchange may take place, which may assist teachers overcome difficulties by fostering a helpful learning environment.

ELL students with prior educational experience in their native tongue likely have superior study abilities than those with less impressive educational backgrounds (Coates, 2016). A good education also frequently results in kids having a greater understanding of how language functions. Coates (2016) presents sociocultural teaching methods according to how well they work for testing, use of prior knowledge, scaffolding, and word retention. The sociocultural approach may be used, for instance, to foster a collaborative learning atmosphere in a bilingual classroom. This may imply assigning students to groups with peers who are more advanced academically, or it may entail promoting group learning rather than mandating that students complete their coursework independently. In conclusion, this highlights the need of utilizing prior information to stimulate a child's intellect and foster language development.

Overall, the sociocultural theory is a theory that is used in a classroom with ELLs because it blends an educational approach with a cultural approach. There are bilingual instructors on hand to assist students and instruct them on how to converse and engage in their two languages. Sociocultural theory has aided children in their language development and connections with others in the classroom since it takes into account social contact, cultural involvement, and other aspects of the learning environment (Wold, 2011). The sociocultural structure has influenced bilingual education and made it possible for teachers to support children while they learn a second language.

### **Humanistic Learning Theory**

Early in the 20th century, James F. T. Bugental, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow developed the humanistic learning theory. Abraham Maslow established it, and Carl Rogers and James Bugental later assessed and developed it. According to the humanistic learning theory, students who are upset, depressed, or anxious are less likely to be able to focus on their studies.

This encourages teachers to create a secure, inviting environment in the classroom so that pupils may focus on their work. The humanistic learning theory is founded on a number of fundamental principles that all work toward self-actualization.

A safe learning environment is the most crucial of these, along with giving students a choice, encouraging involvement, and self-evaluation (Javadi & Tahamsbi 2020). This study discovered that teachers and material creators employ humanistic teaching theory and humanistic approach to promote resources that cater to the needs and preferences of learners and facilitate the learning process. Javadi and Tahamsbi's (2020) present work aims to apply humanistic teaching theory and an approach to education with reference to teaching and learning English as a second language. In order to promote the materials, make them better suited to the needs and preferences of the students, and hasten the learning process, the study's findings demonstrated that teachers and material developers use humanism teaching theory and humanistic approach.

Giving students choice in the classroom resonates most with bilingual education because they want the students to be motivated and engaged to learn (Javadi & Tahamsbi 2020). For example, an ELL is sitting in a classroom with a teacher who is not speaking their native language, they might end up off topic. Instead, if there is a bilingual teacher that can teach in both the student's native language as well as English, the teacher can use motivational strategies to want you to learn and be present in the classroom. Since humanistic learning stresses the complete learner (Ling et al., 2014), humanistic educators are also conscious of the need to create a safe environment where children can have as many of their needs met as possible. They must feel safe physically, cognitively, and emotionally in order to focus on learning. Humanistic educators are therefore fervently committed to helping pupils meet as many of their needs as

they can. All of this falls under the teacher's responsibility in bilingual education. With bilingual teachers in the school, the students will feel safe, which will aid in their overall development.

### **Teacher Shortages in Bilingual and Dual Education Programs**

Finding qualified multilingual teachers has proven to be difficult with the implementation of new testing requirements and tests in 2010 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The bilingual education applicant must possess advanced high degrees of speaking and writing language proficiency to practice his or her vocation. For instance, Guerrero (2000) conducted an earlier study on the impact of Texas language policy on bilingual education teachers, testing requirements, and state certification exam passing rates and found that there have been vacancies in teacher shortages and both teachers and students are being affected by this situation. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education has been monitoring teacher shortages for the past 25 years in a number of academic fields and subject areas, and their data reveal a severe shortage of bilingual education instructors. Along with the nation's expanding Hispanic population, there is an increasing need for instructors who are highly qualified, bilingual, and biliterate.

According to projections, Hispanics will comprise 50% of all Americans by 2050, making them the nation's largest ethnic minority (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Arizona had the highest populations of Spanish-speakers. Texas continues to have the second-largest population of people of Hispanic heritage in the nation, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), and 29.8% of people who are 5 years old and older speak Spanish at home. Today, this number has almost doubled, necessitating the hiring of more teachers to meet the educational needs of these pupils. Many New York schools now provide dual language and bilingual programs so that children can use their first language to aid in the acquisition of a second one. Although this is positive news, there must be a sufficient number of

bilingual and TESOL-certified teachers who are willing and able to work with these students and types of programs. The primary argument presented here covers the background information on teacher shortages in bilingual education and illustrates how the population will be affected in the future.

### **Effects of Bilingual Teacher Shortage on Students and Schools**

Students, teachers, and administrators all experience the effects of a teacher shortage on the public school system as a whole. Lack of qualified teachers threatens students' ability to learn, while staff instability reduces teachers' effectiveness. Previous research has demonstrated that teacher shortages have a negative impact on schools and students. Schools commonly respond to teacher shortages by hiring inexperienced or underqualified instructors, increasing class sizes, or decreasing the number of available classes—all actions that have a negative impact on student learning (Cramer & Ryan, 2023). Since both teacher inexperience and turnover rates have a detrimental effect on student learning, students at schools with high turnover and few experienced instructors are clearly at a disadvantage in terms of their educational opportunities (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Turnover affects the academic performance of all students in a school, not just those with a new teacher. It could be challenging for teachers to collaborate and enhance instruction if there is a lot of staff turnover. Additionally, the expense of replacing teachers rises, with estimates for each teacher leaving an urban district reaching \$20,000 or more (Morita et al., 2020). Instructors and students experience difficulties when teachers must quit their jobs, leaving students without a qualified teacher to provide help.

According to an empirical study by Kennedy (2020), information was gathered over the summer and teachers were given one-on-one interviews to learn more about the impacts of

bilingual education on teachers. Findings showed that teachers are more likely to leave schools where there are higher numbers of low-income and minority students, lower salary, and poor working conditions. These disorders typically coexist with one another. Turnover rates can be twice as high in schools with a majority of low-income and pupils of color than they are in schools with a greater proportion of White students and less low-income children (Sada & Ward, 2022). These schools end up with teachers who have less training and, frequently, less experience in the classroom (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Lack of administrative assistance, the maximum district wages, school size, and the percentage of children of race are other variables that statistically controlled models have found to be significantly predictive of teacher turnover (Kennedy, 2020). The likelihood of a teacher quitting their job or teaching entirely is lowest in districts with the highest pay scales, best preparation, and strongest leadership.

### **Poor Relationships**

Students are losing the relationship they would have had with their teacher as a result of teacher turnover. For instance, if a teacher leaves in the middle of the school year, the children are left with a long-term replacement or leave replacement. They now need to establish new bonds while getting used to the routine and organizational style of a new teacher. The student also suffers as a result of this. High staff turnover rates can result in staff instability, which can hinder collaboration, professional growth, and relationships with students and other teachers. After nearly two years of interrupted learning, each of these elements is required to build the supporting environments that children require (Learning Policy Institute, 2022). As a result of having to become used to working and collaborating with a new person, the teachers and coworkers who are still employed in the school may also be impacted.

However, ELL students are discouraged from joining organizations and electives due to a shortage of bilingual teachers (Morita et al., 2020). Their growth is hampered since they are unable to interact with their teachers and peers through these activities. This is yet another factor that makes interactions with potential bilingual teachers difficult. Missing out on clubs and extracurricular activities is particularly harmful for kids, but it can also be bad for teacher-parent relationships because it can be challenging for instructors to communicate with parents (Amanti, 2019). Teachers should establish ties with parents in order to help the students in their classes. In order to create systemic policies that embrace immigrant and ELL families, educators must work closely with their administrators (Young, 2018). It is obvious how poor connections impact bilingual students in the classroom, but with the right instructor and motivation, this might lead to an environment where everyone feels at ease, welcomed, and successful—including the teacher, student, and family. Parental engagement with the classroom could help students succeed in learning English as a second language and foster better relationships between them and their peers and teachers.

### **Inexperienced Teachers**

While teacher shortages are on the rise, school administrations often seek instant educators to fulfill their slot. These can be short term substitutes, long term substitutes, leave replacements, or even teachers right out of college. Researchers refer to any teacher hiring process that has been modified in some way to assist school systems in filling open teaching jobs generally as an "alternative route" (Chudgar & Razzaque, 2014). Alternative hiring practices for teachers frequently lead to a parallel teacher labor market where teaching employment may either be "position-based", where job advancement and tenure are not assured, or "career-based", where work positions, promotions, and procedures are well-established and permanent.

A lack of teachers affects everyone, including pupils, teachers, and the public education system as a whole. While a shortage of qualified teachers endangers children's ability to learn and diminishes teachers' effectiveness, a high teacher turnover drains financial resources that could be employed elsewhere. It is more difficult to establish a solid reputation for it and to professionalize it due to the teacher shortage, which makes it even more difficult to find (Kennedy, 2020). The distribution of scarce resources among students from varied socioeconomic origins furthers the challenge to the American educational system's goal of providing all children with an equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education. One of the best ways to encourage new instructors is to put them on teams with people who have varied degrees of expertise and specialties, so they can each contribute in a different way (Chudgar & Razzaque, 2014). These rookie instructors can be mentored and helped succeed by more experienced colleagues and educators. Collaboration among team members, especially new teachers, is essential to a successful academic year. Besides, by working together, the teachers will not only benefit, but their students will also see their teamwork and gain insight from it.

### **Language Deficiencies**

Due to these inexperienced teachers, it's possible that these teachers won't be able to interact with these children in an effective way. Students' learning may be hampered by substitutes or leave replacements who lack the necessary credentials or authorization to speak multiple languages. In order to get experience while obtaining their certification, many teachers in dual language or bilingual programs are occasionally employed early (Arroyo-Romano, 2016). While this is fantastic, in situations like these it may deter kids from trying to study Spanish in a dual language program if they are English-proficient students or from learning English if they are English-language learners. Furthermore, some educators oppose bilingual instruction because



they believe it would undermine the English language's dominance as the nation's primary tongue (Crawford 2000). Immigrants may no longer feel the need to study English if bilingualism is encouraged, which would relegate English to a secondary role.

However, non-English programs and bilingual education have been around in America since the 19th century, largely as a result of Native Americans, and they teach languages other than English. English kept its position as the dominant language in the U.S. despite the influx of foreign languages from all over the world, even achieving the status of a global language (Cramer & Ryan, 2023). Last but not least, regardless of home language, the lack of home-language development in schools leads to home-language loss and English predominance (Guerrero, 2000). Lack of multilingual teachers in school systems across the United States is causing students to lose their language skills. Bilingual educators are needed in this position to not only support language development but also to reinforce it at home in order to promote linguistic collaboration and put an end to this problem.

### **How Can We Retain Teachers?**

The capacity to recruit and retain outstanding teachers is one of the most important components in a system that must prepare diverse children with complex requirements to participate in today's knowledge-driven economy. Because of this, administrators, especially principals, sometimes find the summer break to be one of the most difficult times of the year. At the end of the school year, many teachers quit their jobs or retire, while others seek to switch to teaching a different grade level or subject. To replace the vacancies created by individuals leaving, educational authorities must strive to hire the best instructors available before the new school year starts (Amanti, 2019). It goes without saying that teachers should be assigned to the subjects and grade levels in which they would excel and perform at their best, most times, it does

not work in their favor. Principals and other school administrators frequently struggle with this choice, and for good reason. Data show that teacher shortages have a disproportionately negative impact on student outcomes in inner-city and rural schools (Wold, 2011). This has an impact on both teachers' colleagues and students.

Furthermore, surveys are an excellent way for administrators to assess the performance of the staff at the school. Teachers may communicate their suggestions, criticisms, and worries, and the leaders around them can put those ideas into practice and foster a supportive learning environment. These questionnaires can be completed anonymously, quickly, simply, and even online. One possible inquiry is: (1) How do you feel about your work? (2) Do you have anything to say regarding how you're feeling or the state of your work? (3) What tools or resources might make your job easier? Administrators and support personnel can use this information to determine whether the school district has a gap or is deficient in anything. As a result, teachers can learn about a wide range of websites and resources online to show how critical the need for multilingual educators is (Aguirre-Muoz et al., 2023). These websites also assist bilingual educators who are already employed by giving them suggestions, resources, and tools so they may keep working with students.

### **Linguistic Choices**

Administrators in schools, districts, and dioceses must make a number of decisions when choosing an educational model and teaching strategies. The use of language in teaching and learning is one possibility. While most schools teach students to code flip between social and academic language during instruction (Ballinger et al., 2017), few actually accomplish this. Translanguaging is the ability to use the students' entire linguistic repertoire in the language(s) they know during education. Translanguaging, on the other hand, is an effective method for

assisting bilingual and multilingual students to develop metalinguistic skills, which in turn encourages literacy, cognitive development, and the assertion of one's cultural and linguistic identity.

In addition to the many benefits already mentioned, research has indicated that using students' first languages in the classroom can aid in their better development of their second languages, such as English and their LOTE or home language (Lindholm-Leary, 2012). By encouraging their pupils to use their mother tongue to improve their academic success and by serving as role models for intercultural competency and wellbeing, Hispanic educators play crucial roles in helping their students represent their identities. To attract and retain Hispanic professors, schools must provide welcoming environments that respect the identities of those educators (Howard et al. 2018). Since research has shown that doing so can help students acquire their new language, teachers should generally encourage students to talk in their original dialect in class.

### **College Courses for Students**

The problem of a shortage of bilingual teachers can also be addressed through the use of initiatives like seminars, professional development talks, and student-focused college courses. Enrolling in college classes will help students succeed and avoid this issue in the future if they are interested in a career in this field. To obtain a head start in this kind of environment, learners could engage in bilingual education classes at their university during their undergraduate years. English language learners are the student population in US schools that is expanding the quickest, in line with information from the National Center for Education Statistics (2023). They now account for more than 10% of pupils attending public schools. English language learners make up, on average, nearly 15% of the student body in metropolitan public schools. The

percentage of US citizens who speak a language other than English at home has nearly tripled since 1980, according to research from the Center for Immigration Studies.

However, there is a gap between these students' test results and graduation rates. According to data from the U.S Department of Education (2023), ELLs have some of the lowest test scores in the nation. Additionally, the graduation rate of ELLs is 18% lower than that of non-English language learners (U.S Department of Education, 2023). In order to bridge the achievement gap, several educational leaders are advocating for the creation of more bilingual classrooms (Porter et al., 2023). Information shows that there is a clear need for more bilingual teachers and students should start in the field as early as possible to gain experience and have exposure in these types of classrooms. To close achievement gaps and meet the expanding demand for multilingual education, bilingual teachers are crucial to students' development.

### **Professional Development Meetings for Teachers**

Professional development is the term used to describe acquiring new abilities through ongoing education and career training after entering the workforce. Teachers can increase their knowledge of their chosen field by participating in seminars or workshops, going to professional or industry conferences, or obtaining a credential (Lparsons, 2022). Participating in professional development seminars can help bilingual educators learn new skills, hone their leadership abilities, and increase their sense of self-assurance in their work (Varghese, 2004). All teachers may need to take professional development courses regardless of the number of students in their classrooms in order to help solve the bilingual education issue. Opportunities for professional development help teachers by offering resources, activities, and strategies for working with ELLs in the classroom (Scherzinger & Brahm, 2023).

A great educational program that views bilingualism as a benefit is provided by effective bilingual programs, which also raise the bar for educational programming for ELLs. According to research, the main goal of professional development sessions is to support schools in their attempts to benefit all of their children through multilingual education (Booth & Perry, 2021). In addition to learning new things about themselves, teachers will also learn how to cope with and adapt to working in a bilingual workplace. To make sure instructors are on task and informed of what is happening in the building, meetings should be scheduled with the ENL department throughout the academic year. If they are in the field, aspiring teachers can participate in these professional development sessions during their college assignments.

It would be helpful if colleagues themselves offered to deliver a session on various sorts of tactics and resources they use in their classroom to educate ELLs in addition to the professional development provided by the ENL department. Hearing this from the instructors' own peers may make them feel more connected to them and more inclined to utilize these strategies outside of the classroom. On top of that, by doing this, the other teachers in the room will feel free to speak freely and, if necessary, convey any worries they may have to their peers. Implementing a professional development program that is most pertinent to the interests and requirements of ELLs will need understanding the values and needs of your

### **Summary**

This chapter has demonstrated that several districts across the country face shortage of multilingual teachers. In fact, there is a deficit of bilingual educators in more than half of the states in the nation, with the worst shortages occurring in those states that provide bilingual education to the greatest number of English language learners. In this chapter, I discussed how this problem affects students and what happens when teachers do leave the field, as well as

strategies to retain teachers. A crucial strategy for retaining teachers is implementing professional development opportunities. Such opportunities help educators enhance their skills, stay up-to-date with research and best practices, and feel supported in their professional growth. In Chapter 3, we will be talking about a professional development opportunity for elementary teachers who work with the Spanish population within the Patchogue Medford School District.

### **Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools**

In this chapter, I will outline a professional development plan and its supporting logic with the goal of addressing the lack of bilingual/TESOL-certified teachers in the Patchogue Medford School District on Long Island, New York. Due to the high number of ELLs in this district, dual language classes, transitional bilingual education, and ENL teachers drawing in and pulling out kids during the school day are implemented to help them. Completing my student teaching, being a permanent substitute, and then landing my dream job here as a 1st grade dual language teacher has made me see the struggle of administrators trying to recruit and retain bilingual/TESOL certified teachers. Migdalia Marco, a bilingual teacher and member of the hiring committee in the district, states that it is becoming harder and harder for Patchogue Medford to hire bilingual teachers (Personal Communication, June 2023). Migdalia's statement is congruent with the literature that there is an evident shortage of bilingual teachers around the U.S school districts. Within the Patchogue Medford School District, each building has about 50% of their population classified as ELLs. This shows how diverse this school district is and how important it is to have the necessary teachers available at this school for every child's success. Thus, school districts need the right teachers to be available and teachers to work at their schools in order to avoid harming the students.

In the following sections, solutions to the teacher shortage problem within the Patchogue Medford School District will be presented. First, a description of the newly created tools for students and faculty is given, followed by an outline of the professional development strategy. Next, I will highlight the importance of bilingual teachers for communication, mandatory workshops and training for teachers, and important ELL resources to promote the need for and importance of bilingual/TESOL certified teachers. Lastly, there will be a closing activity

described where teachers at the meeting will watch a short clip and discuss takeaways from both the presentation and the video. To decrease this problem, the professional development presentation will share resources, ideas, videos and overall strategies to help teachers and students understand the roles of these teachers and how important they are in the school system.

### **Description of the Professional Development**

On August 31st, 2023, the professional development plan will be discussed at the first faculty meeting for elementary teachers of the academic year. The professional development meeting will be held at Saxton Middle School from 9 am to 12 pm in the library. The three hours will give me ample time to talk with every one of my coworkers and employees, as well as time for questions and answers. Regardless of whether they have TESOL or bilingual certification, this program is intended for all elementary instructors. Additionally, the director of ENL, Katheryne Morales and her team of three directors will be present to support this subject and will also provide specifics. Together with the dual language, transitional bilingual, and ENL teachers, the ENL department works to guarantee that we are completely prepared with the teaching methods that will benefit our students the most.

In order to facilitate the discussion, the professional development is given as a Google Slideshow together with a number of handouts and materials (see Appendix A). The *Patchogue Medford Bilingual/TESOL Superheroes* professional development program is being developed with the goal of giving teachers a venue to understand the value of having certification in these fields and how these teachers are true superheroes. Additionally, it educates teachers how to still work successfully with ELLs even if they are not qualified and offers tools and tactics they may use in the classroom. I will discuss the importance of bilingual teachers for communication, mandatory workshops for teachers throughout the school year, provide resources for teachers



working with ELLs, and talk about the students and how they will participate in clubs and activities throughout the school year to promote how being bilingual is a superpower during the professional development.

Each element is covered separately in the section that follows, accompanied with a description, the reason for employing it, how it addresses Patchogue Medford's scarcity of bilingual and TESOL-certified teachers, and its applicability in conjunction with the literature examined.

### **Importance of Bilingual Teachers for Student Communication**

As stated in Chapter 2, English Language Learners thrive in the classroom when they feel comfortable and are able to communicate effectively with their teachers. Although earlier research suggests that the absence of bilingual teachers may alter the standard of education and communication experienced by emergent bilinguals (e.g., Hopkins & Schutz, 2019), little is known about the potential effects of this scarcity on schools more generally. Because they are there to help ELLs, especially with their communication and language problems, bilingual teachers support ELLs in particular.

The goal of bilingual education is to give learners the skills necessary to communicate in a language other than their native one. In our worldwide society, bilingual education is crucial since it opens doors to opportunities in all facets of life. Bilingual teachers can effectively interact with their parents in the classroom and encourage them to become more involved in their child's education in addition to their students (Morita et al., 2020). Furthermore, the more languages one speaks, the more viewpoints one can access and understand. Additionally, being able to communicate in more than one language often improves one's interpersonal communication skills and makes it simpler to understand each speaker's cultural perspective.

In a recent study, researchers asked parents for their opinions on their home languages and modes of communication by sending a survey home with them at the start of the school year (Abbot-Smith et al., 2018). The relevance of parental feedback was shown, allowing teachers to identify the right parents to contact at the right moment. Furthermore, teachers can promote effective school-to-home communication by organizing parent-teacher conferences, providing language translators, and periodically updating parents via phone calls and newsletters. This concept will be presented during the professional development workshop through lectures and small group discussions with the present colleagues.

### **Mandatory Workshops and Trainings for Patchogue Medford**

Throughout the school year, teachers will be required to attend mandatory professional development meetings, training, and workshops to help teachers understand the importance of working with ELLs in their classroom. Some meetings will be offered virtually through zoom while others will be in person before or after school in the library. Teachers are required to do seven hours of professional development workshops throughout the school year and these mandatory ones count towards those hours. ELL workshops will be given 4 times throughout the school year, for one hour each time. Rather than the same person giving the presentation each time, different teachers within the ENL department will share their own resources and give ideas to teachers so it is not too repetitive. Department members are urged to compile a Google Slideshow or PowerPoint presentation, produce copies of relevant documents to distribute, and discuss the key ideas and benefits of the fresh knowledge. Each of the four times will focus on something different and the ENL department will collaborate to plan the most effective presentation that teachers can benefit from.

Moreover, the Microsoft Teams page for the school will also include any worksheets and resources shared there for teachers to read and print. In this approach, teachers can print off any resources they think might be useful for their students and have access to them all year long. It will also be possible for other teachers to upload and share materials and resources they uncover on their own to emphasize the significance of working with ELLs. All instructors have access to this team's website and resources which will strengthen the importance of working with ELLs.

For teachers, professional development is crucial, especially for those who did not have training in working with ELLs. As a result, it is critical to keep the conversation going and the issues relevant. It will help to keep the conversation about ELLs on the forefront by holding regular faculty meetings. Teachers and educators are free to raise questions and are certain that their inquiries will be supported by other experts. In addition, other educators and experts may be able to help people with questions. A discourse that will benefit the children they work with can be started and maintained by all professionals through internal professional development.

### **ELL Resources for Teachers**

At this professional development, teachers will be getting many resources as discussed above and will be taking part in small group discussions with colleagues. In this segment, some examples of resources will be discussed and explained how they could be utilized in the classroom. Before introducing my resources to the audience, I will ask them to give me some examples of resources, activities, and strategies that they use in their classroom. This will create a discussion and will give teachers new ideas as well even before implementation of my resources.

First, the ENL department and I will share strategies, visuals, and give handouts of reading techniques that you can use with ELLs. Using an expressive tone, reading sentences

slowly to normally, and giving kids time to process the information after each sentence or paragraph are a few strategies that can help ELLs during reading. Additionally, it would be helpful for students if teachers highlighted the text's words as they were read, as well as the related images (Michelle & Enriqueta Alvarez, 2019). I will also talk about how important it is for students to learn in their native language or to use it to improve their reading abilities. According to Morita et al. (2020), students who learn to read in their mother tongue read more fluently in English. Wherever possible, students will benefit from taking reading lessons in their home language prior to receiving training in English.

Graphic organizers are a great resource that teachers can use with their ELLs during reading as well as writing. Teachers will engage in an exercise during the workshops where they will use a graphic organizer to arrange thoughts about various math methods to utilize in the classroom and how to approach math issues in various ways. Additionally, different types of graphic organizers will be given to them such as a web (Appendix C), Venn diagram (Appendix D), and a timeline graphic to show the importance of implementing this with ELLs in the classroom. It is vital to instruct students on the usage of reading visual organizers, such as story maps. ELLs learn important vocabulary and gain a deeper comprehension of the subject matter by using visual representations of information (Michelle & Enriqueta Alvarez, 2019). Generally, graphic organizers can help with brainstorming, organizing problems and solutions, planning writing assignments, enhancing reading comprehension, comparing and contrasting concepts, illuminating cause and effect, and making things much clearer for our ELLs.

Lastly, digital resources are a great way for students to be introduced to technology and motivate them to learn in a different way. Every so often, a new methodology or approach to teaching English as a second language enters into use. The innovative techniques that colleagues

have learned about in recent years will be discussed in small groups. After some time, a representative from each group will present their ideas, which will be recorded on the front board for everyone to view and highlight. Regardless of his or her personal interests, objectives, or aspirations, most linguists today think that a modern teacher must adjust to the reality of a developing and changing digital environment (Sada & Ward, 2022). The majority of English teachers are eager to put various educational technologies to use in order to advance their academic and professional careers (Zakirova & Medvedeva 2021). One digital resource that is my favorite when working with ELLs is *ABCya.com*. Free reading and math activities from ABCya are based on elementary school grade-level requirements.

### **Closing Activity**

The purpose of the professional development is to provide elementary teachers a greater knowledge of the value of bilingual teachers in the classroom and the significance of bilingual education. After the PowerPoint presentation about the above material, a short video will be shown about the benefits of bilingual education, to close up the session. Since the professional development is called *Patchogue Medford Bilingual/TESOL Superheroes*, the video that is going to be shown is called “*Is Bilingualism a Superpower? | Other Words*” (Brozovsky, 2022). Erica Brozovksy discusses how bilingual education is so crucial to all students and this coincides with the importance of professional development. Teachers should have learned strategies including reading strategies (Appendix B) to use within ELLs and why this type of education is so popular and important in today's world.

After viewing the video, the teachers will have to fill out an “Exit Ticket” and write down two important takeaways; one from the professional development presentation and one from the video. When finished, the teachers can turn and talk with their colleagues to share what they

found most beneficial to them in their careers. At the end, we will all come back together and have one last discussion about the importance of bilingual teachers and bilingual education as well as ELL resources to help benefit the students. Lastly, there will be a Q&A session at the end where teachers could ask specific questions or share scenarios and situations that they encounter in their classroom while working with ELLs.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

This capstone thesis examined the dearth of bilingual and TESOL-certified instructors in various school districts across the United States, including the Patchogue Medford School District. This problem could lead to strained relationships between students and teachers, the replacement of experienced teachers with less qualified individuals, and linguistic deficits. This research has also looked at strategies for retention for teachers, such as college courses for students interested in becoming bilingual teachers and staff meetings that are required for professional growth. The following questions were prepared and fit these themes well within the research: What is the background on the bilingual teacher shortage and what does the future look like? How are students and schools affected by this issue? What strategies can be put into place to resolve this issue and prevent it in the future? What will the professional development look like?

I begin this chapter by outlining the major topics that came out of the literature and professional development. I will next discuss the consequences for teaching ELLs before offering some closing remarks and suggestions for additional research.

### **Summary**

Research has revealed shortage of bilingual teachers in the U.S leads to language deficiencies (Cramer & Ryan, 2023), inexperienced teachers filling in (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019), and ineffective student-teacher interactions (Young, 2018). Drawing on this research, I was able to formulate the best approaches moving forward within the Patchogue Medford School District. In order to ensure that multilingual kids receive the best education, it is crucial to take into account the various routes that schools can pursue. It would be a good idea to look at the student body of the school, the ongoing programs and activities, and

discover what services are provided for ELLs. Each school district will run differently and have various standards, but the most crucial aspect of change is the resolve to start and finish.

### **Implications**

Based on research findings, a number of recommendations and implications for teaching and learning have been made. There are currently methods in place to help ELL students and ENL teachers succeed in the classroom. As mentioned in Chapter 3, it is important for all teachers to attend workshops and professional development meetings guided by ENL teachers to help provide strategies and resources that teachers can use in their classrooms. As for students, parents can be involved in their education which can allow students to overcome obstacles in the classroom and lean back on their parents for support. This support system can benefit both teachers and students in the classroom because learning is now a community, and they are all in this bilingual education together.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

ELLs will receive better training and education as a result of professional development seminars for elementary teachers, but this is just the beginning. There are other initiatives that are not covered in this professional development but could nonetheless help students and teachers. For instance, teachers can work together with their grade level to offer particular, specialized resources that are most effective for their ELL students in the classroom. Depending on the curriculum and the requirements of the students, each grade level is distinct. Future studies may point to the advantages of teachers working together as well as involving parents in their students' education to support English language development.

Furthermore, the New York English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), can be used as another topic for a training that could be given to elementary



teachers during the school year. Even though this is only for ELLs, there is a rising demographic that could benefit from training for all elementary teachers. Teachers can participate in an interactive workshop where they will learn how to proctor and give this test as well as talk about the advantages and possible results. To demonstrate the significance of this test and how all teachers in the school system may participate and support ELLs in succeeding, further research can be done on this subject.

Moreover, it would be advantageous for all teachers to learn about these subjects in case they qualify to join clubs and take part in extracurricular activities. Lastly, research can tie in the importance of parents' involvement in the classroom to help promote the bilingual teachers in the classroom to be successful with ELLs. Research might show how the use of parents can alleviate some of the stress that bilingual teachers are faced with. It can also show how students are more successful in the classroom when they see their parents involved in their education. Overall, future research can be done to show the effects of parents in the classroom as well as how teachers can benefit from NYSESLAT training.

### **Final Thoughts**

ELLs are becoming more prevalent every year, especially in the Patchogue Medford School District. Because there are not enough bilingual educators, students might instead receive a mediocre education from inexperienced teachers, which might lead to linguistic challenges, poor communication in general, and language barriers. Students wouldn't be able to succeed and wouldn't be inspired to attend class every day without dedicated multilingual professors. To ensure that this issue may be handled, the Patchogue Medford School District should continue to require primary teachers to attend professional development seminars and training. The superheroes of bilingual education are ultimately the bilingual instructors.



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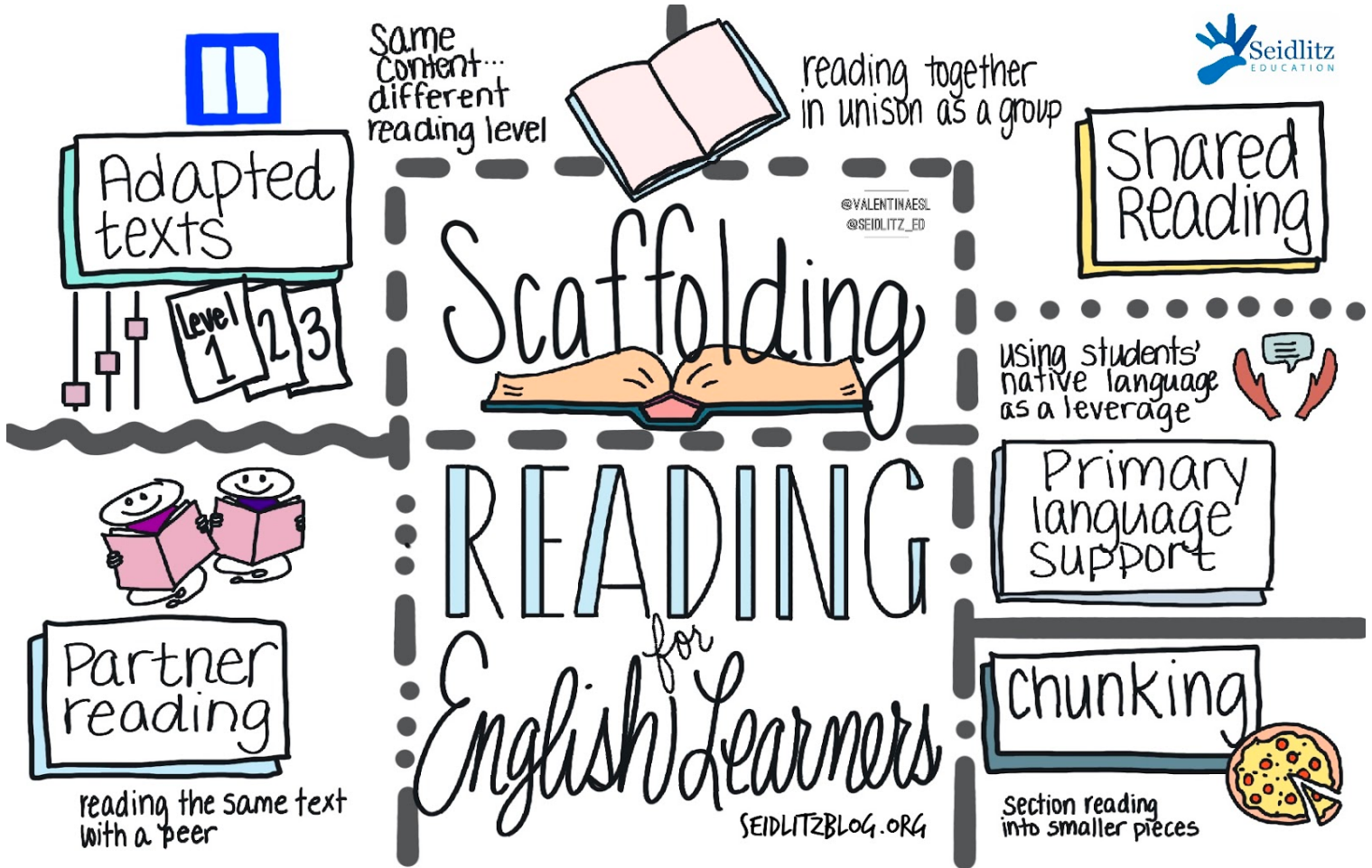
**Appendix A**

**Google Slides Presentation**

**<https://tinyurl.com/8ayh6f63>**

Appendix B

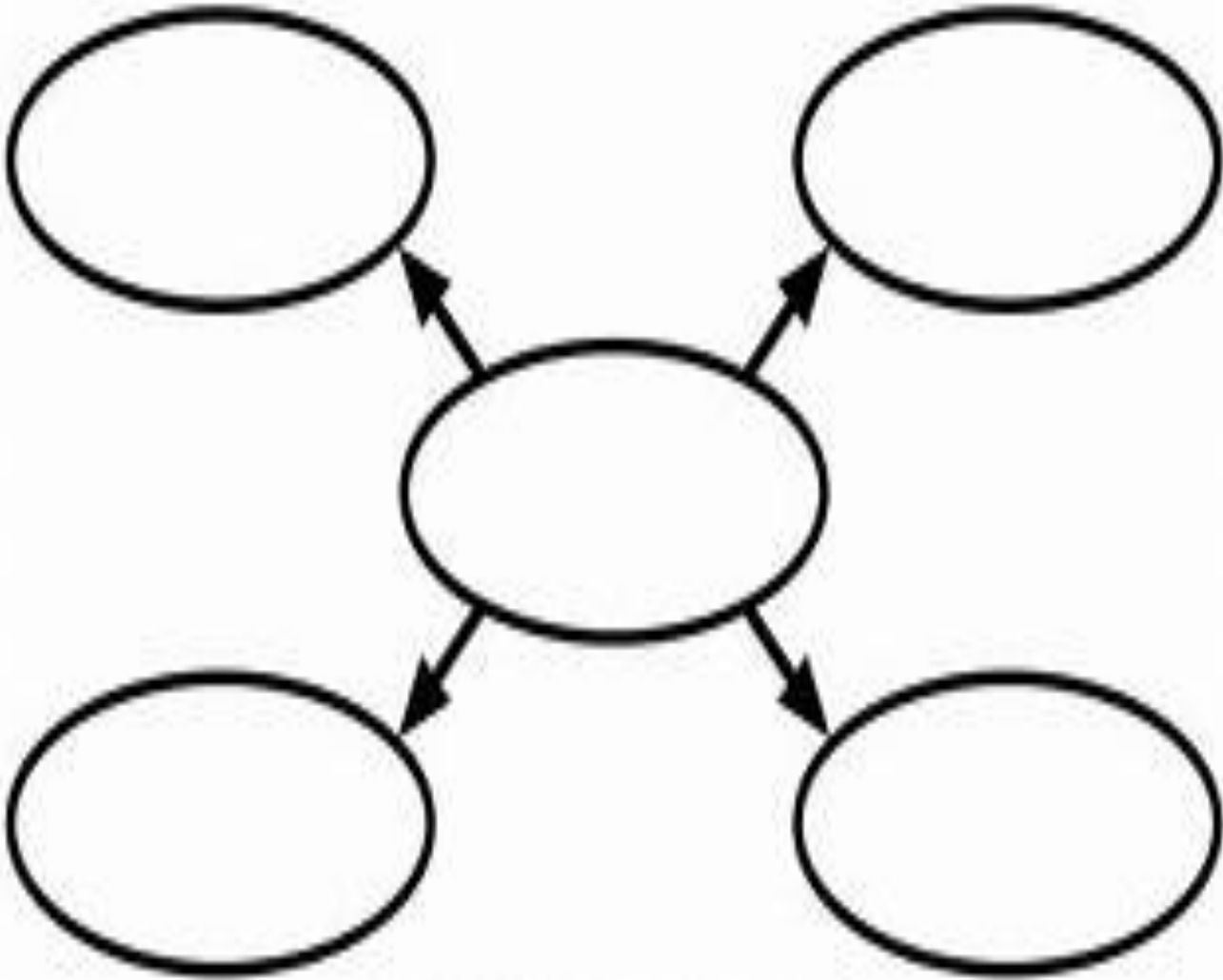
Reading Strategies





Appendix C

Web Graphic Organizer



Created by <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/JanetMuller>

**Appendix D**

**Graphic Organizers: Venn Diagram and Timeline**

