

**EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES OF ENL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR
YOUNG ENGLISH LANGUAGE-LEARNERS**

by

Aparna Mangalathu

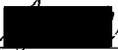
A Master's Project
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership
State University of New York at Fredonia
Fredonia, New York

May 2017

State University of New York at Fredonia
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES OF ENL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR YOUNG ENGLISH LANGUAGE-LEARNERS by APARNA MANGALATHU, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.


Sovicheth Boun, Ph.D.
Master's Capstone Advisor
EDU 690 Course Instructor
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

05/04/2017
Date


Cindy Bird, Ph.D.
Department Chair
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

May 23, 2017
Date


Dean Christine Givner, Ph.D.
College of Education
State University of New York at Fredonia

May 24, 2017
Date

EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES OF ENL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES OF ENL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR YOUNG ENGLISH LANGUAGE-LEARNERS.

ABSTRACT

In 2016, it was estimated by National Center for Education Statistics that there are about 4.5 million English language learners (ELLs) attending the U.S. schools. Improving the education of these students is a national educational priority. These students face many challenges when they have to learn a new language as a part of the academic requirements and policy. Seldom are teachers, who work with these students, invited to share their concerns and challenges with the decision-makers of the education policies. It is imperative to ascertain the perspectives of teachers who are such important figures in the educational lives of English language learners. This study examined the teachers' views on the effectiveness and challenges of instructional practices of ESL instruction in a school district in Chautauqua County and about the practices they employ to overcome those challenges. Seven teachers, that teach ELLs at different grade levels, were interviewed in person at the school district. In addition, the researcher also observed a few ESL (English as Second Language) classes and related assessments at the school district. The collective results in this study elaborate on the effectiveness, various challenges (social, academic, cultural, linguistic) that the teachers face while working with ELLs and how they try to overcome those challenges.

Keywords: ESL, Teacher perspectives, ELLs, Bilingual education

EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES OF ENL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Problem	1
Purpose	2
Significance.....	3
Literature Review.....	5
ELLs in the U.S.....	6
Screening and classifying ELLS.....	6
Bilingual Education.....	7
Types of ESL programs.....	8
Teacher Attitudes toward ELLs.....	10
Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity.....	11
Teacher Preparation Inadequacy.....	12
Professional Development.....	13
Language Barriers for Teachers.....	14
School and District Factors.....	15

EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES OF ENL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Communication Barriers with Parents.....	16
Challenges with Hispanic Students.....	17
Speech Language Pathologists’ Role with Emergent Bilinguals.....	19
Social-Emotional Difficulties Experienced by ELLs.....	20
Methodology.....	22
Setting.....	22
Participants.....	23
Procedure	24
Instruments.....	25
Data Analysis	26
Validity Considerations	27
Results.....	28
Effectiveness.....	30
Challenges.....	31
Overcoming challenges.....	34
Discussion.....	36
Implications.....	38

EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES OF ENL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Limitations.....	38
Recommendations for Future Research.....	39
References	40
Appendix A	44
Appendix B	45
Appendix C	46
Appendix D	48
Appendix E	49

Introduction

Problem

English Language Learners (ELLs), students whose second language is English and who are developing their proficiency in English, make up the fastest growing part of the K–12 student population. According to U.S. government estimates, by 2015, as many as one in four students in the United States, will come from a home where English is not the primary language. Due to the fact that several of these students under-perform in school, teachers are expected to use research-based practices and intervention regularly to improve their language as well as academic performance. Although most schools make instructional decisions for English Language-Learners in an era of high stakes testing and district-wide reform, there is a lot of uncertainty about best practices and the effectiveness of current programs (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010). This study seeks to explore the effectiveness of language instructional programs, the challenges school professionals face while planning, implementing and measuring the outcomes of these programs for young ELLs, and how they overcome those challenges.

The pertinent issue of instruction and communication has been a concern for the teachers of young ELL students for decades. A 2004 survey of California teachers found “poor communication among students, teachers, parents, and the community” to be a huge issue (p. 12). Other challenges listed were lack of resources to teach bilingual students as well as appropriate assessments to evaluate student needs and measure the outcomes. According to the National Education Association (2008), teachers were also found to be frustrated over the wide range of content and language levels and the fact that they received little professional development or in-service training on how to teach ELLs. As the number of ELLs grows, more

educators will be faced with the challenge of effective second language (English) instruction. This study will investigate how effectively the current teaching practices meet the language needs of English language learners, the challenges the school professionals face in achieving student outcomes and how they overcome those challenges.

Purpose

Language instruction in content area for ELLs mostly includes language activities designed to make sure that students understand the content being taught in an academic context. This is receptive language. However, ELL students also need to be taught expressive language so that they can answer questions, participate in discussions, and be successful at showing what they know on assessments (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). An explicit language program acknowledges that both receptive and expressive language dimension of the English domain requires further elaboration for those students with oral language difficulties, or gaps in language knowledge, skills and practice (State of Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2013). All teachers, coordinators and language aides need to be aware of the concepts underpinning the areas of academic as well as social language development, as well as the teaching and learning strategies that can be used to support ELLs. The effectiveness of these programs depends on the school professionals and the challenges they face in implementing these programs. ELL students typically come from diverse backgrounds and have to face many challenges in their new environment/classroom. To make things worse, teachers often lack practical, research-based resources and strategies required to facilitate learning, evaluate, and nurture ELLs. Meeting the unique learning needs of these bilingual students is not an easy job. It requires collaboration and coordination throughout the school system. Because of all these factors, it is important to get information from teachers about their biggest challenges in regard to educating ELLs, and to

look into how these challenges differ according to factors such as student need, teacher experience, training and to discover the types of support available to them—and the need to effectively teach the students.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the perspectives of teachers, who work with ELLs in Kent School District (middle and high school), on the effectiveness of the ESL instruction?
- 2) What are the challenges they face in terms of working with ELLs?
- 3) How do the teachers overcome these challenges?

Significance

In Western New York (WNY), the change in the number of ELLs in public schools is as pronounced as anywhere in the country. In many WNY communities, there has been a marked increase in the amount of ELLs and ESL services offered in schools (New York State Education Department, 2014). Language learning is not a passive process; it is facilitated through production and interaction, and therefore, depends heavily on the ability to practice and produce language, especially in academic settings. A significant factor in developing sophisticated language skills is time on task producing academic language in interactive educational settings where there is opportunity for repeated exposure to and use of words, and opportunity for feedback. This is especially true for ELLs. Although it is important for students to practice their language in informal settings, it is more important that there are structured opportunities in educational settings with supports in place. Hence, it is important to look into the perspectives of school professionals who work with ELLs such as classroom teachers, ENL teachers, literacy specialists, Speech-language pathologists etc., about how effective their instructions are, what

challenges they face in doing so, and how they overcome those challenges with ELLs. There are still many unknown and unresolved issues about how to accomplish the goal of improving language (both social and academic) in the case of ELLs in Western New York due to many factors.

The longer it takes to figure out and find a solution to the challenges faced by school professionals that work with ELLs, the longer it takes for these teachers and students to achieve positive outcomes with their respective work. This includes teachers that speak their students' mother tongue and those that do not, teachers with exclusive ESL training and those without, teachers that have many years of experience and those who have just started out their teaching career. Seldom are teachers invited to share their concerns and challenges with the decision-makers of the education policies. It is imperative to ascertain the perspectives of teachers who are such important figures in the educational lives of English language learners. Thus, it is important to look into their perspectives and challenges as educators working with ELLs in school districts (Albers et al., 2009). This study intends to add to existing literature concerning outcomes and challenges faced by para-professionals and teachers so that we may approach language minority students' education with a more complete understanding of the opinions of the people most involved in their education.

This study will shed some light on the different challenges faced by English language learners and their teachers in U.S. schools (Western New York, in specific), what the teachers think about their instructional practices and how they overcome the challenges involved in the language instruction and education of the ELLs. This study will allow the policy-makers and researchers to have information on the teacher perspectives and beliefs about what instructional

policies work with ELLs, what do not, and therefore, what changes to make in the education and policies for ELLs.

Literature Review

ELLs in the U.S

The United States is an immigrant nation and hence, English language learners have always had a place in the country. Although ELLs are increasingly scattered across the nation, they are not equally distributed in schools in most states. Seventy percent of the nation's ELL students attend only 10% of the nation's schools (De Cohen, Deterding, & Clewell, 2005). These schools typically are in the urban areas with high concentrations of minority students from low socio-economic backgrounds. English language learners thus tend to be highly segregated from English-speaking students, attending schools that have very high percentages of students like themselves, with minimal opportunity to hear good models of English and interact with native English-speakers.

Graduating high school has become an even more daunting task for ELLs in recent years with the advent of state-level exams. Twenty three states within the U.S require students to pass exams in order to graduate high school (Cech, 2009). These high-stakes exams pose as an obstacle for ELLs who have successfully completed the required high school coursework, but cannot pass the English-only test, for getting a diploma. Although some states allow students to take content area exams in their native languages, they still have to take English Language Arts exam, which cannot be provided in any other language. This creates an achievement gap between ELLs and other students.

Screening and Classifying ELLs

Some ELLs can communicate in English and convey the message using simple, social language. However, to succeed in core subjects and content areas in schools, this is not enough.

They need strong academic language to understand and express their knowledge. All teachers would agree that ELLs develop social language way before academic language. All states have developed tests for measuring English language proficiency and progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as per the requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act. These assessments are used as screening tests in every state to help determine whether or not a student should receive ESL services or not. However, using the state's language assessment cut-off score as the sole criterion to decide program placement can be challenging, as there are many other factors the school teachers and administrators should consider before they decide the English proficiency level of the students (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

Bilingual Education

The term bilingualism is a complex one that carries with it many different understandings of what it means to educate students through the utilization of two languages. While there is no consensus on the precise definition for all that it entails, it can be generalized that it is an approach to teaching language minority students in their native languages (L1) as well as English (L2) through a variety of different program models with different end goals (Ovando et al., 2006). The concept of educating students with two languages has been popular in the U.S for many decades. Throughout the course of American history, there have been people who have supported and utilized this method to teach language minority students effectively, yet there have also been many critics who have aimed to dismantle and remove this method of teaching in the U.S schools (Brisk, 1998; Cashman, 2006; Crawford, 2000, 2004; Del Valle, 2003; García, 2009; Haas, 2014; Johnson, 2008; Ovando, 2003; Ovando et al., 2006). Although it has been a rare method of teaching after WWI, over the past 50 years, educating students bilingually has become more or less popular in many schools in the U.S and a hot topic/issue with the public at large.

The use of students' home languages as medium of instruction has been associated with better social skills and students' well-being in schools (Chang et al., 2007). Also, a bilingual setting defines students' cultural and linguistic resources as "assets" (Michael, Andrade, & Barlett, 2007, p. 169), and makes them feel that their language is valued at school. There are different types of bilingual programs in the U.S.

Types of ESL Programs

Dual Language programs are very popular in the U.S. In this program, both the native English-speaking students and the ELLs are taught academic content in both languages for an extended period of time. Both groups develop academic proficiency in both languages. In a Transitional Bilingual Program, the ELLs receive academic instruction in their first language for part of the day. For the other half of the day, they receive ESL taught traditionally, with the focus on language proficiency. As English proficiency increases, instruction through the first language reduces. In ESL pullout, ELLs attend mainstream classes and also get 1-2 hours of ESL instruction daily with an ESL instructor who focuses on language development. In Sheltered English Instruction, ELLs are taught academic content in English by a content teacher. However, the English language used for instruction is scaffolded to the proficiency level of the students. While the instruction focuses on content, sheltered English instruction also promotes English language development. Structured English Immersion is a program where ELLs are taught subjects in English by a content teacher who is also licensed in ESL or bilingual education.

. Heritage Language is a program where ELLs are taught to read and write in their native language, and/or ancestral language. This could be an indigenous language or an immigrant language. The intent is to provide literacy skills that can then transfer to English language

acquisition. There is another language model called SDAIE – Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English. It is a program of instruction in a subject area.

. Some schools prefer one type of program while the others prefer a combination of approaches in their schools and it is entirely dependent on the school district. Most schools employ the ‘pull-out’ program where the ELL students are taken out of their mainstream classroom to teach English. In the ‘push-in’ program, the ESL teacher co-teaches with the general education teacher or the content area teacher. The transition model programs focus on ‘mainstreaming’ ELLs into regular classrooms after they have achieved a satisfactory level of proficiency in English.

Another program that has been popular in the United States is called two-way immersion. This type can also be referred to as bilingual immersion, two-way bilingual and two-way dual immersion bilingual. Two-way immersion programs “integrate language minority students and language majority students in the same classroom with the goal of academic excellence and bilingual proficiency for both student groups” (Christian, 1997). Comparing the different models or types of instruction, there is no model that is the best or most effective for all English language learners. Every student is different in terms of their home language (L1), culture, abilities and expectations. Some studies suggest that two-way bilingual education programs are most effective for attaining academic success and that a "comprehensive" approach works best (August and Hakuta, 1997; Calderon et al., 1998).

The bilingual programs in the U.S have grown but do not come close to serving the approximately 6 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 whose home language is other than English (U.S. Census, 1990.). Presently, about one out of four children in the United States

are from a family of immigrants, and most often, these children speak or learn English as their second language.

Teacher Attitudes toward ELLs

Teachers' attitudes and performances are very important to the instruction and achievement of their students (Garcia-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). Depending on the school districts, administrators and experiences, these beliefs and attitudes can become ingrained early in their career and/or vary considerably. Pajares (1992) states that "the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom" (p. 307). Their attitudes and beliefs can significantly affect their teaching practices, their perceptions of the students they teach as well as students' attitudes and achievement in their classrooms (Flores, 2001; Flores & Smith, 2008; Hansen-Thomas & Cavagnetto, 2010; Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Pajares, 1992).

Regarding bilingual education and language minority students in general, there are several factors that can contribute to teacher attitudes and beliefs. Some of these factors include mainstream American beliefs towards language minorities, previously held beliefs regarding education, teacher background, geographical location, preparedness and training, and exposure to language minority students (Byrnes, Kiger & Manning, 1997; Garcia-Nevarez et al., 2005; Pajares, 1992). It is common for many teachers in the mainstream classrooms to have ambivalent and negative attitudes towards ELLs. Owing to these contributing factors, teacher attitudes and beliefs regarding bilingual education and language minority students tend to vary. There are also studies done showing evidence of subject-area teachers having attitudes and perceptions of ELLs, including a reluctance to work with low-proficiency ELLs (Platt et al.), misconceptions

about the processes of second-language acquisition (Olsen, 1997; Reeves, 2004; Walqui, 2000), and assumptions (positive and negative) about the race and ethnicity of ELLs (Harklau, 2000; Valdes, 2001; Vollmer, 2000).

Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity

English language learners usually face a multitude of challenges in their transition from home culture to school because a vast majority of them are from culturally different backgrounds. Experiences at school should build a strong foundation on the social, cultural, and historical experiences of all students. Differences in culture often affect ELL students' performance and classroom participation in many ways. Teachers must have an understanding and working knowledge of the role of background/culture in language acquisition and academic success. The expected norms for communication, behavior and interactions that ELL students use in their homes often do not correspond with the norms that are enforced at school by the school professionals. One way this plays out is with the cultural conventions that children learn at home about body language, or attributing work to an individual versus working in a group, which may not be exactly what the teacher expects in the classroom. This will result in confusion or misunderstanding for the student. Teachers' appreciation and understanding of these differences will help them respond in ways that help to create a reciprocal learning environment (Ballantyne & Sanderman, 2007).

In the 2008-09 school year, it was estimated that approximately 45 percent of the country's students were from ethnic minority families, yet 83 percent of teachers were white (NCES, 2011). This potential cultural mismatch could contribute to teachers' lack of understanding about how to accommodate students from diverse backgrounds. This mismatch

means that it is especially important to ensure that teachers have opportunities to develop cultural competence as part of their teacher education experiences (Lucas, 2011). It is this cultural and linguistic mismatch that teachers should work and focus on, to support themselves so that they could address the learning needs of their ELLs in the best way possible.

Teacher Preparation Inadequacy

Although empirical studies are limited, we do have some knowledge on the kinds of preparation that teachers need to be successful with linguistic minority students. Syntheses of these studies find that the most successful teachers of ELL students have identifiable pedagogical and cultural skills and knowledge including the ability to communicate effectively with students and to engage their families (Garcia, 1991; Zeichner, 1996). In addition, these educators have exemplary skills in teaching the components of language and how it is used in different situations and contexts. Hence, the extent and quality of teacher preparation is critical; even if teachers could not be given all the credit or all the blame for student performances, they play an important role in their students' education (Ahmad, 2009; Greggio & Gil, 2007). This is true for learners who are especially vulnerable, such as ELLs. Research findings reveal that teachers with a good insight and knowledge about instructional strategies for ELLs; deep content knowledge; a superior education that results in better scores on teacher certification tests (Ferguson, 1990); full certification in their field; a graduate degree; and experience, make a lot of difference in ELL student achievements. Given the increased diversity of students in most of the U.S. schools and the high-proportion of English language learners accounting for the of K through 12 enrollment growth in the past decades, it is essential for all teachers to be prepared to meet the unique needs of these students (NCES, 2011). It is unfortunate that, under contemporary practices, the skills and knowledge that teachers are expected to demonstrate with respect to English language

learners, rarely correlate with the rationale and most often, do not address the needs of emergent ELLs. One of the states with high standards, New York, requires that teachers complete coursework on general language acquisition and literacy development but these courses may not specifically address the unique needs of ELLs (NYSED, 2011). Moreover, the required condition for initial certification includes courses which are focused on literacy in a broad manner. It cannot be asserted that on completion of these courses, teachers will be competent in research-based methods for working with ELLs on academic language, English proficiency and cultural integration as a part of the school program. It is a mandatory criterion that teacher candidates applying for initial certification in New York State should pass tests that assess teacher skills and knowledge, but are not necessarily specific to bilingual students. Findings show that teachers can pass these tests with certain knowledge of second language acquisition but there are minimal requirements pertaining to principles of academic language or diverse needs, suggesting that these teachers can get into jobs in schools without this understanding (Samson & Collins, 2012).

To an extent, these problems could be resolved if the teacher candidates acquire the intercultural understandings, knowledge, and skills that will support their instruction, and in turn, their ELLs. Also, in addition to cultural competence, they must be knowledgeable about language diversity i.e. about second language acquisition and other linguistic factors like even difference in dialects when preparing themselves to be teachers to ELLs.

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) is usually identified as another key factor in promoting higher achievement for ELLs. In their studies of schools with large EL populations whose achievement improved over time, Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991), Goldenberg (2004),

McDougall et al. (2007), and Saunders et al. (2009) observed a shift in teachers' beliefs and performance following implementation of practices (such as PD activities at schools, PDs at state levels, seminars, presenting at a conference, publishing an article in a credential journal etc.) that led to better achievement.

The professional development used in the study reported by Saunders et al. (2009) was highly contextualized and consisted largely of assistance provided by colleagues, administrators, and instructional specialists on an ongoing basis rather than as one or more events, workshops, or presentations. Assistance was primarily offered during grade-level or other meetings where teachers, either among themselves or with administrators, discussed how efforts to accomplish agreed-upon learning goals were faring. This type of professional development, rarely seen in schools, was designed to help teachers address the concrete issues and challenges they faced as they sought to accomplish specific and ambitious learning goals with students.

Mentoring is another form of PD approach where prospective mentors participate in structured experiences, teach strategies, monitor activities, reflect on outcomes, and harness personal strengths (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Tomlinson, 1998).

Language Barriers for Teachers

Teachers with lower proficiency in the students' native language may be more hesitant to allow students to switch between languages or use their native language during class; this was explored further by McMillan and Rivers (2011). However, it should be noted while that low proficiency may hinder teachers from using their students' native language, in an ESL context, students are expected to use the target language (English) despite a low proficiency level.

Another drawback is one that is common to many English as a Second Language classes: a diverse group of native languages. However problematic it seems, refusing to acknowledge the diverse language resources of students and their families can limit students' potential for academic achievement (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Hornberger and Link (2012) proposed the biliteracy continua as a pedagogical aid; the authors stated that the lens reminds educators of the diverse backgrounds of their students the strategic need to consider all dimensions and resources to foster biliteracy in students. The suggestions available in the literature are not explicit about the implementation or specific use; therefore, despite the articles that attempt to cover the topic, implementation or actual use of both languages to teach content (known as 'translanguaging') by teachers in ESL contexts still remains a gap. The current study attempts to examine what attitudes teachers hold towards making use of students' linguistic (L1 and L2) repertoire in the classroom and whether teacher practices reflect their attitudes towards using both L1 and L2 in class. As stated by Garcia and Flores in their article, "Translanguaging, if properly understood and suitably applied in schools, can in fact enhance cognitive, language, and literacy abilities" (Garcia & Flores, 2014, p.155). While translanguaging appears to be an extremely valuable practice, it still appears challenging for many ELL educators to suitably apply because of their lack of knowledge in their students' native languages.

School and District Factors

Improving academic success for English Language Learners is a multi-dimensional process. Many of the attributes of effective schools also support ELL achievement, according to the National Research Council. Districts should support students as well as teachers in this process by making sure the teachers are well prepared, adopting instructional strategies that provide coherent instruction across different grade levels, and fostering improvement

consistently with a focus on student success. After reviewing the literature on adolescent ELL literacy, the Center for Applied Linguistics concluded that administrators can support schoolwide commitment to ELL achievement by securing high-quality staff development and providing opportunities for collaboration among subject-area teachers, teachers of English as a Second Language, special education teachers, and literacy coaches (Short & Fitzsimons, 2007, pp. 22-26). In addition, it is also the responsibility of the school district, to a certain extent, for providing training for teachers, evaluators and administrators, on quality instructional practices for ELLs to make sure that they know what to look for when teaching, evaluating, and supporting ELLs. Numerous other school and district factors have been cited by various studies as important for promoting the achievement of English Learners. Parrish et al. (2006) and Williams et al. (2007) found that “adequate resources” to support the academic program distinguished more and less effective schools for ELLs. In the Williams et al. study, teachers and principals reported that “availability of resources” was the second most important factor (after use of assessment data) distinguishing more and less effective schools. In addition to supplying adequate resources to support the academic program, consistent and coherent school- and district-wide policies can help build an effective program for English Learners.

Communication Barriers with Parents

Parrish et al. (2006) and Williams et al. (2007) found that “parent and community outreach and involvement” significantly differentiated between more and less effective schools. In the Williams et al. study, however, this factor was the least important of seven factors that distinguished more and less effective schools for ELLs. A study done by Gándara et al. in 2003, that sheds light onto the challenges cited by teachers in California, centered on their difficulties to connect to, communicate with, and get to know students’ families and cultures. It is very

common that teachers are unable to speak the parents' language, and vice versa. This means that these parents are also unable to help their children with English homework in spite of their desire to do so, and due to other factors that limit families' ability to help their children with school work. Although school professionals acknowledge the importance of family and culture in the education of these young learners, many feel unequipped to call on their funds of knowledge (Garcia, 2002). Although a lot of the teachers have desire to include parents more meaningfully in school setting/community, they do not have enough support or resources to do so. Many teachers noted their district's failure to provide with resources to the training of school professionals like teachers, SLPs, aides etc., to bridge the gap with parents and/or to make policies that would serve as a guidance for teachers to communicate with families (Gándara et al., 2003).

Challenges with Hispanic Students

The majority of ELLs in the schools of the U.S come from Hispanic families. The Hispanic population is projected to grow 166%, or 28 million persons, from 2005 to 2050 (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). They will represent every 1 out of 5 students in the U.S public schools. Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress conducted in 2005 describes 73% of the English language learners as scoring below basic level in reading when compared to non-Hispanic whites (NAEP, 2005). Therefore, considering and catering to their language needs, will make a huge difference in the ESL education field. For language minority students, monitoring their progress helps make sure that they are receiving the services they need, appropriate and adequate to the educational opportunities for their learning. The results of this monitoring can be used to guide and design instruction for ELLs. Cummins' (1989) research with bilingual Latino students found that they felt ashamed for speaking Spanish and they believed that Spanish was

for "dumb kids." Flanagan, Ortiz and Alfonso (2007) emphasize that it is also important for educators to remember that individuals who are bilingual are not simply two monolinguals in one head. Being bilingual carries with it important experiences that are very different from those with monolingual experiences. Many scholars have called attention to the educational challenges and opportunities presented by the continued growth of the Latino and ELL populations in public schools—particularly in light of the increased focus on assessment and accountability (Janzen, 2008; Menken, 2010; Nieto, 2009; Wright, 2008, 2010). Educator preparation programs are thus challenged to improve preparation of preservice teachers to meet the needs of all students while also answering the calls for higher standards and more accountability in higher education (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzales, 2008; Nutta, Mokhtari, & Strebel, 2012).

Given the record-level immigration trends over the last twenty years, existing anti-immigrant sentiment, and increased workplace and residential immigration enforcement by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in predominantly Latino communities, Olivos and Mendoza (2009) sustain that immigrant Latino parents continue to be disempowered in the school context despite the historic 1982 Plyler v Doe Supreme Court decision which established that undocumented immigrant children in the U.S. cannot be denied free public education. It draws from the literature that argues that the integration and engagement of parents, family, and community are necessary components for the educational attainment and success of bicultural children (Boethel, 2003; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Yet, the integration of Latino parents is often complicated and undermined by institutional policies and practices that disempowered them prior to and during their interactions with the school system (Cline & Necochea, 2001; Olivos, 2004; Ramirez, 2003).

Schools have been either unwilling or incapable of changing the existing practices to better include the parents of Hispanic ELL students into their children's educational process (Olivos & Ochoa, 2008). The fact that an estimated one in five students (or 20 percent of all students) in the public schools is of Latino origin has created considerable demand in the functioning of the school system as educators seek ways to work with students who may come from households where English is not the dominant language, where one or both parents could be immigrants (documented or undocumented), or where parents or guardians may be working in labor-intensive jobs which preclude them from being more physically present at the schools (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). Inequitable learning opportunities become reinforced when bicultural parents are unable to participate in schools due to educators' inabilities or resistance in reaching out to them (Shannon, 1996).

Speech Language Pathologists' Role with ELLs

A major challenge facing school-based Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) is the task of appropriately evaluating culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, and differentiating between communication differences and language disorders. In addressing this challenge, SLPs are required to use an evaluation process that reliably differentiates a true language disorder "a significant discrepancy in language skills from what would be expected for a child's age or developmental level," from a language difference, "a rule-governed language style that deviates in some way from the standard usage of the mainstream culture" (Paul, 2001, p. 166). However, this task is even more difficult when, for instance, a Latino student speaks Spanish, a language not familiar to ninety-eight percent (98%) of the SLPs certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) (ASHA, 2004; Kritikos, 2003).

With an increasing caseload for SLPs, some studies have pointed out that SLPs do not possess the required competency or skills necessary to work with the ELL population (Caesar & Kohler, 2007; Cheng et al., 2001; Hammond et al. 2003; Roseberry- McKibbin et al., 2005; Roseberry-McKibbin & Eicholtz, 1994; Threats, 2010; Young & Westernoff, 1999). Speech pathologists have self-reported that they have not received adequate training from their professional training programs and several SLPs expressed interest in receiving further training if offered to them, so that they could improve their practice when working with ELLs (Caesar & Kohler, 2007; Hammond et al., 2003).

Despite attempts to implement nonbiased evaluation practices in school settings, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds continue to be misdiagnosed by professionals in special education, including SLP (Goldstein, 2004). Evaluating a student's Spanish speech and language skills requires the SLP to have Spanish fluency and knowledge of different Spanish dialects, knowledge of second language (L2) acquisition and bilingualism, or access to a professionally certified interpreter. Regarding the evaluation of phonological patterns of Latino students, Pena-Brooks and Hegde (2000) state, "Understanding the speech patterns of students who speak languages other than English is extremely important for speech-language pathologists" (p. 224).

Social-Emotional Difficulties Experienced by ELLs

The American public school records show that English language learners attain the lowest academic test scores (e.g., Abedi, 2004; Jimenez, 2004; Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2002) and among all public school students, they drop out of school at the highest rates (McCardle, Mele-McCarthy, Cutting, Leos, & D'Emilio, 2005). Moreover, some states are having difficulties

meeting their annual achievement goals for increasing the proficiency levels for their ELLs, as well as difficulties in providing support to these students to achieve proficiency in the academic areas, especially in mathematics and reading (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). These challenges have a significant role in the negative outcomes and feelings experienced by many ELL students and their immigrant families, because academic skills are considered essential to their future emotional, physical and vocational wellness (Brown-Chidsey, 2005; Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005; Centers for Disease Control, 2005). Igoa in 1995, described a period of socio-cultural adjustment or “uprooting” in which immigrant children may experience confusion or depression due to their inability to communicate and may go through a “silent stage.”

Although a multitude of risk factors affecting ELL students cannot be entirely resolved within school settings, schools and school professionals could play an important role in enhancing the emotional stability and wellness by providing services and instruction such as counseling, SLP service etc. within the school setting. To address these issues, a prerequisite is an informative, accessible, and well-designed research base which can guide practitioners regarding evidence-based approaches for working with English language Learners.

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of teachers on specific challenges and effectiveness of ESL education of English language learners. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a deeper understanding of the teacher perspectives on the education of ELLs. When conducting semi-structured interviews, the interviewer develops a 'loose' guide, with questions designed to open up conversation about a topic (Crabtree, 2006). Most often, this includes a set of follow-up questions or probes, prepared ahead of time, in order to elicit certain types of information from the participant. The flexibility of this approach, when compared to formally structured interviews, is that it allows for the elaboration or discovery of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the researcher.

Phase 1 of the research included getting consent from the school authority (principals of the respective schools) and the participants (teachers). Phase II of the interview included conducting interviews with participating teachers and other professionals like SLPs where various semi-structured interview questions were asked based off of the literature review to understand the participants' perspectives on the education of their ELLs.

Setting

The setting for this qualitative research study was in Kent School District (pseudonym) in Chautauqua County. Kent School District is an urban school that, within the 2014-2015 school year, had a total of 2001 students. Each class size differs, but there are generally 20 students per classroom. The majority of the students at this school are Hispanic, making up 49% of the population. The rest of the school consists of 7% Black or African American students, 0% Asian

or Native Hawaiian students, 39% White students, and 3% Multi-racial students. 13% of the students within the school district have limited English proficiency and are receiving ESL services.

There are about 261 English language learners enrolled in Kent School District, the majority of which are Latino, specifically of Puerto Rican descent. This district, in the past several years, has seen a gradual increase in the number of Latino ELLs enrolled in the schools. This increase is seen at all sub-school levels (elementary, middle, and high) of the district. Currently, there are many (more monolingual than bilingual) ENL teachers who are employed in the school district to teach these English learners through push-in and pull-out programs. Participants include ESL teachers, general education teachers, classroom teachers and Speech language pathologists from middle and high school within Kent School District.

Participants

Convenience sampling was used to select participants from a pool of teachers working with English language learners within Kent City Schools. There were seven participants (females) in this study and they all were teachers from Kent School District in Chautauqua County. They are ESL teachers, general education teachers, classroom teachers and Speech language pathologists who are all certified in NYS in their respective fields. Teachers from different grade levels (middle as well as high school) were chosen for this study because this would give the researcher teachers' perspectives from different grade levels. These teachers/participants were between the age 22 and 55.

Procedure

The research study was qualitative in nature and used convenience sampling method to select participants from a pool of teachers working with English language learners because of their convenient accessibility and willingness to participate in the interview/study. To begin with, school principals of (middle and high school) Kent School district were contacted via email with an intention of getting their approval to conduct the interview with school professionals (teachers and SLP) within their schools (see Appendix A). Subsequently, the potential participants were emailed/ contacted in person for their approval to participate in the interview. The email has a brief information about the purpose of the study, confidentiality aspects of the participants and the data collected, and that participation in the study would be completely voluntary and that the subjects could withdraw from the study at any time during the course of the research without any penalty.

After the researcher gained approval from the principals and participants, the researcher scheduled times to interview each teacher. The investigator interviewed the teachers and SLP individually and in-person, for approximately 20-30 minutes each. The responses were recorded in a secure location (the school building). Consent from participants (Appendix B) were obtained to digitally record their responses. The responses were audiotaped for accuracy of the data so that the researcher could transcribe them into written responses later. These audiotapes were destroyed after transcription. In addition, to support the teachers' perspectives, some classroom observations and/or reviewing some school documents and policies were also carried out to improve the validity of the study.

Instruments

Interview. The interview included semi-structured questions (approximately 11) to get the perspectives and thoughts of teachers, who work with ELLs, on the various parameters of effectiveness and challenges of ESL programs within their schools and from their experiences.

The instruments used in this study are semi-structured interview questions and/or classroom observations and reviewing school documents and policies. The initial questions of the direct interview were tailored to build rapport with the educators and to get to know about their professional and educational background. As the interview progressed, the topic or the theme of the questions were directly related to the ELLs they are working with, what aspects of ESL programs within their scope of practice are effective, what are not effective, what are the challenges of working with ELLs, what get(s) in the way of helping their ELLs make progress academically etc.

Observation. The researcher observed ESL as well as content area classes to understand and to make notes of lesson delivery, student-teacher interactions, student participation and challenging situations (for either the student or teacher or both), if any. This added to credibility of data from the interviews. The observed sessions had the same teachers (participants) that gave their consent for the interviews. Three of the classes observed were stand-alone ESL sessions and two others were content area classes where the content teacher co-taught with the ESL teacher.

Table 1

Semi-structured Interview Questions Grouped by Theme

Category/theme	Source	Question
Assessment protocol	Abedi 2009; Klingner & Harry, 2006; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008; Yzquierdo et al., 2004	8 a, h.
Bilingual practices	Fernandez & Inserra, 2013; MacSwan & Rolstad, 2006; Ortiz et al., 2011; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008	8 b, d, h
Culturally relevant pedagogy in instruction	Gay, G. (2010)	8 c
Professional development	Fernandez & Inserra, 2013; Klingner & Harry, 2006; Ortiz et al., 2011	8 d, f

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed in terms of themes (effectiveness, and the challenges faced by the teachers). The Likert scale played an important role in rating the teacher responses ranging from ‘very frequent’ to ‘infrequent’ (Appendix C). When scores were totaled, a high score of 1 (very frequent), for example, will signify that those challenges are very frequently encountered. And if they choose a 5 (infrequent), it means that the participants think that the ELL education is designed well at their school and that there are not as many challenges.

As with the other open-ended questions, content thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews were carried out. Coding was used to identify potential themes constructed by the participants based on the literature review. The researcher also highlighted the responses corresponding to the literature review and made note of any patterns that emerged during the semi-structured interview.

Validity Considerations

The researcher created semi-structured interview questions based off of previously published survey from Roseberry-McKibbin et al. (2005) to ensure instrument validity about the teacher-related factors that influence the ESL education of English language learners in the U.S.

The fact that some of the teachers selected for the interview are known to the researcher might help with the validity of the data as the participants are less likely to feel apprehensive about opening up during the open-ended questions/discussions. Also, that a lot of the teacher responses are subjective is another validity consideration. However, this was validated with classroom observations.

Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the teachers' views on the effectiveness and challenges in the English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for students who speak a language other than English as their home language. The seven participants (six teachers and a Speech language pathologist) from Kent (pseudonym) middle and high school were interviewed on this topic. In addition to their perspectives on the effectiveness and challenges, the other purpose of this study was to examine how these educators overcome the challenges they face in terms of working with ELLs. This study was guided by the following questions: What are the perspectives of teachers, who work with ELLs in Kent School District (middle and high school), on the 1) effectiveness and 2) challenges of the ESL instruction? 3) What steps do they take to overcome these challenges?

The interviews were carried out in the month of March in 2017. There were seven interviews and the researcher transcribed all of the interviews. She transferred the recordings on to her laptop and listened to them a few times during transcribing to get an accurate understanding of the responses. All of the answers were transcribed although not word-by-word.

The other instrument used in this study was observation. Stand-alone ESL as well as content area classes were observed with prior permission and consent from the teachers. These observations were carried out to validate the claims and opinions the teachers provided during their interview. Observations were made for student- teacher interactions, student participation and challenging situations (for either the student or teacher or both), if any. Since the observations were done after the interviews, the researcher could relate to the perspectives and beliefs the teachers had provided and could validate their input.

All participants in this study have been given code numbers (teacher-1, teacher-2 etc.). The researcher did not use any identifying information during or after the interviews, so that the participants would feel more comfortable with responding to the interview questions and to protect the confidentiality of the subjects who agreed to do the interviews.

In total, four English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, two content area teachers, and a Speech language pathologist were contacted for the participation in the research study. Three teachers were from the high school and four were from the middle school. Table 1 indicates the participants' demographics as reported by them.

First, all participants were asked to sign the consent form prior to the interview. After that, the participants were asked to provide information on their teaching background and professional experiences. Although all seven teachers had different experiences with English language learners in their classrooms over the years, overall every one of them has had at least one year experience working with English language learners. For one of the teachers, this was her first year teaching English as a Second Language in the school district, although she has had some teaching experience prior to this. All of the teachers that participated in the interview have a master's degree in their respective fields. Three out of the four ESL teachers are bilingual. All the other four teachers are monolingual and speak only English.

Table 2

Participants' Demographic Information

Teacher	Gender	Ethnicity	Certification Area	Grade Level
1	Female	White	ESOL	High school
2	Female	White	ESOL	Middle school

3	Female	White	ESOL	Middle school
4	Female	White	ESOL	Middle school
5	Female	White	Science	High school
6	Female	White	ELA	High school
7	Female	White	Speech Language Pathology	

The results were finalized from the semi-structured interviews after an analysis of each participant's statements. Once the data was transcribed and categorized, direct quotes and summaries were used from the interviews to support the results. The categories were developed based on the common themes or topics that emerged during the various interview sessions.

Effectiveness

Proficiency level. Most teachers think that they can work better with beginners and advanced level students than intermediate students. Teacher-2 said "I prefer the two opposite ends of the spectrum because beginner students are usually very excited to learn the new language and with advanced students, you can teach them using more in-depth materials and topics. When you work with intermediate ELLs, these factors are missing making it the most challenging group to work with". The two teachers that teach content areas expressed their concern working with beginner and low-intermediate ELLs and rated beginner level as the most challenging to work with in their classrooms.

Student motivation. All teachers reported that student motivation is a big factor in the progress of ELLs. Teacher-1 said "Some students, irrespective of their proficiency level, try and

work hard. Others, not so much. The students that work hard usually make progress because they are motivated to learn English that they know is important to succeed in school and college in the future.”

Motivation fluctuates, therefore it is challenging to keep the English language learners' motivation at a high level all the time irrespective of the subject area. Motivation depends on different factors and it is challenging for these teachers to make progress with their instruction when ELLs are not motivated to learn.

Challenges

Lack of multiculturalism. All ESL teachers that work with ELLs expressed their concern with lack of multiculturalism in their school district. Teacher-4 said “In this school district, all of the ELLs are from Puerto Rico. In the previous district that I worked at, there were students from many countries making my classroom multicultural. There, students from one country get to know students from other countries and share their stories. In general, it makes them better human beings. If kids are isolated in terms of one culture/country, it does not make them open-minded or flexible.” Other teachers also reported that lack of multiculturalism makes students, especially ELLs, think that their way is the only way.

Lack of certified bilingual staff. This school district was supposed to start a bilingual program but they have not been able to successfully execute the program due to lack of certified bilingual staff. Almost all teachers and the Speech language pathologist mentioned this and that one of the schools also does not have enough certified ESL teachers. The ESL teachers think that it is challenging because they have a bigger caseload than they can accommodate and this affects their quality of teaching. Teacher -2 said “There are not enough bilingual teachers that can

speak, read and write Spanish with proficiency. Some bilingual staff can merely communicate their instructions and ideas in Spanish but are not effective when it comes to academic language in Spanish” .

State assessments. Both the ESL as well as the content area teachers think that there is a lack of appropriate (less-biased) assessments for ELLs (not just in this school, but state-wide). They think it is affecting the performance of their ELLs by testing them inappropriately and without any accommodations. Teacher-4 said “Except the NYSESLAT, all other tests that these ELLs have to take, are way above their level. They get a lot of support and scaffolds in their classes to understand the content and just after one year of arrival in the U.S., they have to take the state exams without any support.” ELA is very abstract at middle school and high school level and the ELLs are not prepared to take these tests with just one year of learning English. A lot of ELLs that perform well in ESL classes fail in state tests and that makes them very discouraged to learn thereafter.

Co-teaching. Content area teachers said that they find the co-teaching with ESL teachers effective because they know that it is the ESL teachers that are experts in providing the language support for the ELLs in their classes. However, the ESL teachers were quite frustrated with the way co-teaching works due the lack of planning ahead of time. Teacher-3 said “I know how to support the ELLs in ELA or social studies class but if I don’t have enough co-planning time with the content area teachers, how can I scaffold or translate a 25-pages abstract reading material and make it comprehensible to my ELLs?”

Lack of knowledge about the culture of the student. The impact of having educators having the ability to motivate and challenge diverse student populations can dramatically

improve student outcomes. "If teachers are to increase learning opportunities for all students, they must be knowledgeable about the social and cultural contexts of teaching and learning" (Banks et al., 2001). All of the ESL teachers who participated in this study think that most other (content area, general education) teachers lack the knowledge about the culture of the students that speak a language other than English. One of the content area teachers, Teacher-6 said "A lot of times, I do not know if the ELLs in my class are behaving in a certain way because they are not following the norms or because it is their culture. That makes me very frustrated." When teachers who work with ELLs are not culturally competent, that affects the student achievement making the environment more challenging and stressful for the teacher.

Behaviour expectations. Although all teachers know that behaviour expectations are different in different cultures, some of them talked about how they are not sure what to expect and about establishing behaviour norms for students coming from a different culture. For example, Teacher-4 said "Students from Puerto Rico do not understand why they have to take quiz and tests regularly in class because in Puerto Rico, they get only one test at the end of the academic year to determine if they should go to the next grade. So some students get frustrated with ongoing formative assessments that we do here." A lot of students misbehave in school because they do not know what the behaviour expectations are in the U.S. Teacher-4 also thinks that there should be a newcomer program for all students that come from a different culture where they learn to ask for things, what not to do etc. before they have to be in a classroom with native students and teachers.

Lack of teacher training/PD. All the teachers but the ESL teachers agree that the teacher training that they get is sufficient. All four ESL teachers think that they do not get adequate and appropriate training or professional development. Teacher-2 said "We do have a lot

of training and in-service days but they are not enough especially for new teachers because someone like me can still manage a lot of things because I have years of experience working in different districts with diverse students. However, that's not the case with a new teacher who has to hone his/her skills." One teacher said "We get training but most often it's redundant and does not cover new topics that new teachers like me ought to know."

Lack of home support. Teachers reported that parents of many ELLs do not provide adequate academic or language support for their children due to time constraints. Teacher-3 said "Most of these parents work multiple shifts to provide for their family-so they do not get as much time to spend with their kids at home. Also, most of these parents do not speak English so they are unable to provide language support. We have tried to bring together some of the parents at school to discuss how they can support their children at home using their L1 (Spanish) but it has been difficult to even have them come to school." For those ELLs that are literate in their home language, it would be beneficial if their parents could support them with academic language in Spanish at home so that they feel included in the education of their children. As reported by the ESL teachers, it is challenging to collaborate with parents of the ELLs.

Overcoming challenges

Challenges are part of any job and the teachers that participated in this study reported using different ways to overcome the challenges while working with ELLs. One of the ways the monolingual teachers (and also due to the shortage of certified bilingual staff) convey their instructions to the beginner and low-intermediate ELLs are through iPads and other software that translate from English to Spanish and vice-versa. Almost every teacher rely on translation apps and visuals. The Speech language pathologist mentioned that she sometimes pairs an advanced

student with a newcomer so that the advanced student helps out with translation and supports the newcomer. This is not the perfect way to work with students but sometimes that is the best one can do in the given situation.

Not having enough bilingual teachers is a challenge. However, the ESL teachers try their best to provide the ELLs with as many language opportunities as possible for listening, speaking, reading and writing. They try to scaffold the content materials and differentiate for different proficiency levels. It may not always work especially in integrated classrooms because native English-speaking peers are ahead of the ELLs so the general education teachers may not wait for ELLs to catch up with others. Since the state requires that all students take the test after one year of arriving in the country, the ESL teachers try their best to make the content comprehensible for ELLs to prepare them for these tests. They also try to fit time into their schedule to co-plan with other teachers for the upcoming lessons and tests.

Discussion

English language learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing group of students in the United States today (Spellings, 2005). Teacher perceptions and expectations today are far greater than they have ever been. But are teachers that work with ELLs adequately prepared to teach and interact with this linguistically and culturally diverse population? This study elaborates on the effectiveness of ESL instruction and the challenges school professionals face while planning, implementing and measuring the outcomes of instruction for young ELLs in Kent School District in Western New York. In addition, this study was also designed to determine how the teachers that participated in the study overcome the challenges they face in terms of working with English Language Learners.

The analysis of the teacher responses sheds light on various types of challenges that the ESL teachers face on a regular basis. Although this research study poses questions on both the effectiveness and challenges, most teachers focused and elaborated on the challenges. While some teachers did mention a few strengths of the ESL program, most others only talked about the challenges (in spite of the clear indication during the interview) because according to them, challenges were more than strengths.

Bilingual Education is one of the most common model(s) to instruct ELLs. This school has recently adopted bilingual program where students are taught content material in their native language (Spanish) as well as English until they have the academic English skills to study other subjects like math, social studies and science in English. However, due to shortage of certified bilingual teachers, it has been challenging to implement this program widely (across various schools under the School district) and successfully. A lot of challenges stem from this.

Cultural competency has been another common challenge for most teachers. A lot of these teachers reported frustration and uncertainty because of their lack of awareness of the culture of the students. Lustig and Koester (2003) define culture as "a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people" (p. 38). Cross-cultural competency is multifaceted and most often, the teachers only see the tip of the iceberg. The perceptions of the teachers who participated in the interview reveal the lack of this cultural awareness and that language and culture of the students do pose as a barrier between the teachers and the ELLs. This, in turn, affects the quality of the instruction and students' academic achievement.

Behavior expectations and management are part of cultural awareness. What is perceived as normal in one culture may not be accepted in another. This study reveals that at least 50% of the teachers are not sure why their students misbehave or do not follow the behavior norms in classrooms in spite of giving repetitive instructions. Therefore, they find it challenging to work with a certain group of ELLs that share a common culture.

Although the role of standardized tests is to measure the learning of students including the ELLs, the teachers think that these tests are not equivalent for ELLs and also lead to negative consequences. The ELLs who have been in the schools in the United States for more than one year, must take the English Language Arts (ELA) exam administered by New York State for grades 3-8 in addition to the NYSESLAT. The state regulations provide these students with a limited time to learn English and prepare for these high-stakes English language tests. This shows a mismatch between where they start at, and what they are expected to achieve in a limited time. This builds unnecessary stress and pressure in ELLs to perform beyond their capacity and results in negative implications in the performance and motivation of ELLs.

Lack of parent-teacher and teacher-teacher collaboration was another challenge that was reported by the teachers. The teachers that co-teach an integrated classes like ELA or science, do not have sufficient time to plan ahead of time and come up with teaching strategies for ELLs at different language levels as the district is short-staffed when it comes to certified bilingual teachers. Parent- teacher collaboration is also an issue as reported by all teachers due to parents working multiple shifts, language barrier and lack of interpreters/ translators during parent-teacher meetings. Educators benefit when family involvement is strong, as school staff gain an awareness of the ways they can build on family strengths to support students' success (Caplan, 2000).

Implications

The researcher felt that this study would be highly beneficial if further researched in depth on the topic using a mixed method research (qualitative and quantitative). This type of research would allow the researcher to investigate about challenges in length and specific, and how to overcome them. This would be useful to the current educators in the ESL teaching field, the policy-makers and the English language learners in the long run. This study can also be done as an extention to other school districts in Western New York for generalizability of data and results.

Limitations

One of the limitations to this study was that the interviews were carried out only in two schools of the school district. This study examined the perceptions of teachers from one middle school, and one high school amongst many other schools in the County that have English

language learners. To make this a stronger study, it would have been more beneficial to gather data from all grade levels from more schools that enrolls English language learners.

Another limitation to this study was that only teachers and Speech language pathologist were interviewed. Other school professionals such as special education teachers and school psychologists, may have contributed to the data collection procedure. Had there been more school personnel interviewed, it would have made the study stronger.

Another inevitable limitation was that as a graduate student, the researcher had limitations with the study in terms of time constraints and minimal prior research experience.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study only reflected a small population. Future research should investigate the viewpoints of teachers across at least an entire county or rural, suburban, and urban settings of one part of the state so that the results could be generalized to a larger population. Future research should also include beliefs and perspectives of parents and more staff such as school administrators and other teachers who work with ELLs from the time they get enrolled till they graduate.

References

- Albers, C. A., Hoffman, A. J., & Lundahl, A. A. (2009, March). Journal coverage of issues related to English language learners across student-service professions. *School Psychology Review, 38*(1)
- August, D. and Hakuta, K. (Eds.) (1997). *Improving Schooling for Language-Minority Children: A Research Agenda*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Banks, J. A., Cookson, P., Gay, G., Hawley, W. D., Irvine, J. J., Nieto, S., et al. (2001). Diversity within unity: Essential principles for teaching and learning in a multicultural society. *Phi Delta Kappa, 83*(3), 196-202.
- Batt, E. G. (2008). Teachers' perceptions of ELL education: potential solutions to overcome the greatest challenges. *Multicultural Education, 15*(3).
- Beal, H. K. O., & Rudolph, A. M. (2015). Preparing teachers to meet the needs of Latino and ell students: A case study of a federal grant. *Planning and Changing, 46*(1), 42-55.
- Caesar, L. G., & Kohler, P. D. (2007). The state of school-based bilingual assessment: Actual practice versus recommended guidelines. *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools, 38*, 190–200. doi: 10.1044/0161-1461(2007/020)
- Calderon, M, Hertz-Lazarowitz, R. and Slavin, R. E. 1998. "Effects of Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition on Students Making the Transition from Spanish to English Reading." In: *Elementary School Journal. 99* (2): 153-165.

- Caplan, J.G. (2000). Building Strong Family-School Partnerships to Support High Student Achievement. *The Informed Educator Series*. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.
- Chang, F., Crawford, G., Early, D., Bryant, D., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Barbarin, O., Clifford, R., & Pinata, R. (2007) Spanish-speaking children's social and language development in pre-kindergarten classrooms. *Early Education and Development*, 18, 243-269.
- Christian, D. (1997). *Profiles in two-way immersion education*. Washington, D.C. McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics: Delta Systems.
- Coleman, R., & Goldenberg, C. (2010). What does research say about effective practices for English learners Part IV: Models for schools and districts. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 46(4), 156-163.
- De Cohen, C.C., Deterding, N., & Clewell, B.C. (2005). *Who's left behind? Immigrant children in high and low LEP schools*. Washington, DC Urban Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.urban.org/urls.cfm?ID=411231>
- Ga'ndara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Driscoll, A. (2005). *Listening to teachers of English language learners: A survey of California teachers*. Santa Cruz, CA: Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College.
- González, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practice in households, communities, and classrooms*. Mahwah, N.J: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Hagan, E. C. (2010). Response to intervention: Implications for Spanish-speaking English language learners. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, 36(2), 24-29.

Hernandez, P. A. (2009). *School-based speech -language pathologists' reflections on their diagnostic practices with Latino students*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305016405?accountid=28748>

Hutchinson, J., & Clegg, J. (2011). Education practitioner-led intervention to facilitate language learning in young children: An effectiveness study. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 27(2), 151- 164.

Langdon, H. W. (2009). Providing optimal special education services to Hispanic children and their families. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 30(2), 83-96.

Lindholm-Leary, K. J. (2012). Success and challenges in dual language education. *Theory into Practice*, 51(4), 256-262. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2012.726053.

Lustig, M. W., and Koester, J. (2003). *Intercultural competence: Interpersonal communication across cultures*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Michael, A., Andrade, N., & Bartlett, L. (2007). Figuring “success” in a bilingual high school. *The Urban Review*, 39, 167-189.

Olsen, L. (1997). *Made in America: Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools*. New York: The New Press

Paul, R., Norbury, C. (2007). *Language disorders from infancy through adolescence: Assessment and intervention* (Third edition.). St. Louis: Elsevier Mosby.

- Reeves, J. (2004). 'Like everybody else': equalizing educational opportunity for English language learners. *TESOL Quarterly* 38: 43-66.
- Roseberry-McKibbin, C., Brice, A., & O'Hanlon, L. (2005). Serving English language learners in public school settings: A national survey. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 36(1), 48-61. doi: 10.1044/0161-1461(2005/005)
- Roseberry-McKibbin, C., & Eicholtz, G. E. (1994). Serving children with limited English proficiency in the schools: A national survey. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 25(3), 156-164.
- Téllez, K., & Manthey, G. (2015). Teachers' perceptions of effective school-wide programs and strategies for English language learners. *Learning Environments Research*, 18(1), 111-127.
- Valdes, G. (2001). *Learning and Not Learning English: Latino Students in American Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Waterman, R. (2008). Communication is more than language: Adult ESL classes foster parent-school collaboration. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 31(1), 227-250.

Appendix A
Initial Email Consent for School Principal's Approval

Dear Mr./Mrs. XXX,

My name is Aparna Mangalathu, and I am currently a graduate student at SUNY Fredonia in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program, leading to NYS certification. Prior to my graduate studies, I obtained my Bachelor's Degree in Communication Disorders.

I am emailing you in hopes that I will be able to contact teachers in your building who have all worked with English language learners, including General Education, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, and the Speech language pathologist, in order to continue working on my Master's Thesis Research Project. The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of their ESL instruction, and what challenges they face in doing so.

If allowed to move forward, the General Education, ESL teachers and the SLP will receive an email from me that includes the purpose of the study, how the data would remain confidential, and that the participation in the interview is completely voluntary. The teachers would be asked 10-15 questions related to the above topic.

I am respectfully requesting permission from you to interview the General Education, ESL teachers and the SLP about their practice with regard to English language learners in your school. I would not do anything until granted full approval by SUNY Fredonia's Human Subject Review committee. For now, I am asking for conditional approval, pending the formal approval from SUNY Fredonia to conduct my research study with your school personnel. As this is my first research study, I am working closely with and being supervised by Dr. Sovicheth Boun, my research faculty sponsor and professor at SUNY Fredonia.

If you choose to allow me to proceed, please respond to me by contacting me via email at mang0968@fredonia.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the information provided below.

Sincerely,
Aparna Mangalathu,
TESOL graduate student, SUNY Fredonia.
Email: mang0968@fredonia.edu

*Appendix B***Consent Form for Participants**

Dear Educator,

My name is Aparna Mangalathu, and I am a graduate student at SUNY Fredonia working on my Masters of Science in Education in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program. I am beginning the research for my Master's Thesis, and the purpose of my study is to examine teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of their ESL instruction, and what challenges they face in doing so.

You are invited to participate in an interview with me, which will last about 60-90 minutes. The interview questions will be about you as an educator, your views on the effectiveness of the ESL instruction in your classroom(s), and your challenges, as an educator, in attaining the performance goals for your ELLs. The interview will take place at a time and place that is convenient for you.

All information will be kept confidential. I will be audio taping the interviews, but I will be transcribing the interview on paper afterwards and giving you a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity. The audiotapes will be destroyed after the interviews are transcribed.

Participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time and with no penalty from the study. At any time during the interview, you have the right to end it simply by saying so.

If you choose to take part in this interview please sign below. By signing, you are confirming that you are at least eighteen years old, are aware of the voluntary aspect of this survey, and are willing to participate.

If you prefer not to participate then you do not have to sign this.

I, _____, do hereby consent to participate in this research study and will allow the interviews to be digitally recorded. I acknowledge that I am 18 year of age or older. I understand that participation is voluntary; therefore, I have the right to withdraw at any time and with no penalty. I understand that all information gathered through the interviews will be coded, securely kept, and remain confidential.

Signature of participant

Date

Aparna Mangalathu,
TESOL graduate student,
SUNY Fredonia
Email: mang0968@fredonia.edu

Dr. Sovicheth Boun,
Visiting Assistant Professor,
SUNY Fredonia
Email: sovicheth.boun@fredonia.edu

*Appendix C***Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

- 1) Please tell me about yourself- Professional experience, teaching background etc.
- 2) What kind of a setting are you teaching in currently? Push-in/pull-out? What type of students could you teach most effectively?
- 3) Do you speak a language other than English with enough proficiency to conduct assessment and/or teach in that language? ____ yes ____ no

If you answered “yes,” what language(s) do you speak?

- 4) What current trends in public education please you? Displease you?
- 5) What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the ESL program at this school?
- 6) What are some of the challenges you face in terms of working with ELLs?
- 7) Do you believe all ELL students make progress/ how effective is the ESL instruction?
- 8) What specific problems do you encounter most frequently in assessing and working with ELLs?

Please indicate according to the following format: *This is both a thematic as well as Likert scale questionnaire.*

1 = very frequent 2 = frequent 3 = somewhat frequent 4 = somewhat infrequent 5 = infrequent

- a. ____ Lack of appropriate (less-biased) assessment instruments
 - b. ____ Do not speak the language of the student
 - c. ____ Lack of knowledge about the culture of the student (CRP)
 - d. ____ Lack of knowledge about the nature of second language acquisition
 - e. ____ Lack of collaboration among teachers/management, between school/teacher-parents etc.
 - f. ____ Lack of teacher training/professional development.
 - g. ____ Difficulty distinguishing a language difference from a language disorder
 - h. ____ Lack of interpreters who speak the necessary languages to provide services
- (This is also an open-ended question. The participants can elaborate on any of these points as required)
- 9) In addition to the above, do you face any other challenges? Or, what else get in the way of making a difference in ELLs’ academic achievement? (open-ended question)

- 10) Do ELLs perform differently in language vs. content-area classes/tests? How? Why?
(open-ended)
- 11) How do you overcome these challenges? (open-ended).

*Appendix D***CITI Completion Report**

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this [Requirements Report](#) reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• **Name:** Aparna Mangalathu (ID: 4317122)
 • **Email:** mang0968@fredonia.edu
 • **Institution Affiliation:** SUNY - College at Fredonia (ID: 273)
 • **Institution Unit:** TESOL
 • **Phone:** 7164104197

• **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
 • **Course Learner Group:** Group 1.
 • **Stage:** Stage 2 - Refresher Course

• **Report ID:** 19760085
 • **Completion Date:** 17-Dec-2016
 • **Expiration Date:** 17-Dec-2018
 • **Minimum Passing:** 80
 • **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
SBE Refresher 1 – Defining Research with Human Subjects (ID: 15029)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Privacy and Confidentiality (ID: 15035)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Assessing Risk (ID: 15034)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Children (ID: 15036)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – International Research (ID: 15028)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
Biomed Refresher 1 - Instructions (ID: 960)	17-Dec-2016	No Quiz
SBE Refresher 1 – History and Ethical Principles (ID: 936)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Federal Regulations for Protecting Research Subjects (ID: 937)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Informed Consent (ID: 938)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Prisoners (ID: 939)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Research in Educational Settings (ID: 940)	17-Dec-2016	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Instructions (ID: 943)	17-Dec-2016	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k39a80e1f-3e7b-4add-ac9e-f81a674fa5f5-19760085

CITI Program
 Email: support@citiprogram.org
 Phone: 888-529-5929
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

*Appendix E***HSR Approval**

13 February 2017

Aparna Mangalathu
c/o Sovicheth Boun, Ph.D..
Language, Learning and Leadership
College of Education
The State University of New York at Fredonia

Re: Aparna Mangalathu—Effectiveness and Challenges of ESL Instructional Practices for Young English Language-Learners

Your research project using human subjects has been determined Category 1, Exempt, under the United States Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Public Welfare, Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, 46.101, Subpart A (b) (1) and/or (2). This document is your approval and your study titled "Effectiveness and Challenges of ESL Instructional Practices for Young English Language-Learners" may proceed as described. **Your approval is valid from February 13, 2017 through March 31, 2017.**

Thank you for keeping the high standards relating to research and the protection of human subjects under the auspices of the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith M. Horowitz".

Judith M. Horowitz, Ph.D.
Associate Provost, Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs
and Faculty Development
Human Subjects Administrator