

MISCONCEPTIONS THAT MAINSTREAM TEACHERS IN WESTERN NEW YORK MAY
HAVE ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

By

Jennifer E. Lancaster

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

December 2012

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

CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled MISCONCEPTIONS THAT
MAINSTREAM TEACHERS MAY HAVE ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
by Jennifer E. Lancaster, 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.


Master's Project Advisor
Dr. Kate Mahoney
Department of Language, Learning, & Leadership

12-21-12
Date


Department Chair
Dr. Anna Thibodeau
Department of Language, Learning, & Leadership

1-2-13
Date


Dean Christine Givner
College of Education
At SUNY Fredonia

1/7/13
Date

Abstract

With more English language learners (ELLs) entering schools, schools may not be prepared to service the unique needs of ELLs. This research examines the possible misconceptions teachers may have about ELLs in their schools. Twenty-eight teachers of varying ages, gender, and in-service years in nine different schools in western New York were surveyed regarding myths about ELLs. Teachers were asked whether or not they agreed with statements regarding myths they read or not. Fortunately for ELL students, many of the teachers surveyed stated that they did not believe many of the myths that were in the survey. This can mean several things for ELLs and the teachers. One conclusion may be that teachers are not feeling much added pressure from the ELL students but there may also not be many ELL students in the classrooms where the surveyed teachers are teaching. The use of a survey with a Likert scale, teachers were questioned about their feelings in regards to working with ELLs. With such a relative small sample of teachers, the results of this survey are not conclusive for the whole western New York area.

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Problem.....	1
Purpose.....	2
Significance.....	3
English Language Learners in the United States.....	4
ELLs in Rural Areas.....	7
ELLs in Chautauqua County, NY.....	9
Ideologies and Myths.....	10
Ideologies about the English Language.....	10
Myths about Behavior.....	13
Myths about Academics.....	13
Myths about Motivation.....	15
Myths about Assimilation.....	16
Myths about Family Life.....	18
Myths about Teaching ELLs.....	19
ELLs in the Classroom.....	19
Attitudes about ELLs.....	21
Methodology.....	27

Sampling.....	30
Participants.....	31
Design of Study.....	31
Data Collection.....	33
Procedure.....	33
Data Analysis.....	34
Results.....	34
Limitations of Study.....	59
Discussion.....	60
Findings concerning coursework.....	60
Findings concerning parents.....	61
Findings concerning ELA.....	61
Conclusion.....	62
References.....	63
Appendix A: HSR Application.....	68
Appendix B: Email to School Administrators.....	74
Appendix C: Email to teachers.....	75
Appendix D: Survey.....	77

List of Tables

	Page
Table 1: Questions used in the survey given to teachers.....	27
Table 2: Demographics of the schools who participated in the school.....	30
Table 3: Themes of the questions on the survey.....	32
Table 4: Real teaching/learning for English Language Learners (ELLs) happens in the English as a Second Language (ELL) classroom.....	35
Table 5: It is the responsibility of the ELLs to adapt to the American culture and school life....	36
Table 6: Teachers should lower their expectation of the ELLs to accommodate their language barrier.....	37
Table 7: My school openly welcomes ELLs and embraces their native cultures and language.....	38
Table 8: I feel I am adequately trained to work with ELLs.....	39
Table 9: ELLs are poor academic learners who burden teachers with extra responsibility.....	40
Table 10: ELLs should be fluent in English after two years of ELL training.....	41
Table 11: ELLs should only use English so they can learn the English language more quickly.....	42
Table 12: ELLs generally come to the U.S. from countries with inferior educational systems....	43
Table 13: ELLs have more behavior problems than non-ELLs.....	44
Table 14: ELL parents are less involved in their children’s education than non-ELL parents....	45
Table 15: Many of the ELLs in the U.S. are in our country illegally.....	46

Table 16: ELLs take up more of my time in the classroom than non-ELLs do.....47

Table 17: The inclusion of ELLs in the classroom creates a more positive atmosphere.....48

Table 18: It is a good idea to assign less coursework to ELLs.....49

Table 19: ELL students in the general education classroom setting slow down the progress
of other students in the classroom.....50

Table 20: Immigrant parents do not even try to learn English.....51

Table 21: Inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom is good in theory,
but does not work in real life.....52

Table 22: The inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom benefits all students.....53

Table 23: Mainstream teachers do not have time to deal with the needs of ELLs in their
classroom.....54

Table 24: ELLs should stay in the separate ELL classroom until they are able to speak the
English language proficiently.....55

Table 25: I would be interested in receiving more training in working with ELL students.....56

Table 26: The best way to learn English would be to just put them in the mainstream classroom.
The more they are surrounded by the language, the more quickly they will learn.....57

Table 27: This is America so the ELL students and parents should only be speaking
English.....58

Table 28: I enjoy having ELL students in my classroom.....59

Introduction

The population of English language learners (ELLs) in schools all across the country has been steadily increasing. As a result of this growth, teachers across the nation are experiencing greater numbers of ELLs in their mainstream classrooms (O'Brian, 2011). This means that teachers have a different population that they will be working with, but unfortunately, many of the teachers just are not ready. There are many teachers in the schools who have never had any exposure to ELL students at all before getting into the classroom. In 2002, only 11 percent of the ELL teachers are certified in bilingual education and 18 percent in English as a Second Language (ELL) (Walker, Shafer, and Liams, 2004). On average, teachers across the country have received just four hours of in-service training to serve ELLs in the past five years (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). With the population of ELLs continuously increasing, teachers need to be given more training and education working with this diverse population.

There is a connection between the training teachers have received and certain attitudes they may have about mainstreaming ELL students (Hansen-Thomas & Cavagnetto, 2010). With this connection, teachers need to ensure that they are getting the training they need so that they can learn to have a more positive attitude about the students they teach. A teacher's attitude is important because it affects the student (Linguistic Diversity, 2012).

Problem

As the population of ELL students increases in the classroom, teachers need to find a starting point for understanding the needs of ELLs in their classrooms (Carrier, 2005). A model of six categories of possible predictors of attitudes of mainstream teachers, the mainstream teacher's (a) general educational experiences, (b) specific ELL training, (c) personal contact with diverse cultures, (d) prior contact with ELL students, (e) demographic characteristics, and (f)

personality (Youngs & Youngs, Jr., 2001). Many of the mainstream teachers in the classrooms have never had the training to work with ELLs so they do not know the needs that ELLs have. This can cause some teachers to see ELLs as an inconvenience in the classroom rather than an asset.

Educating teachers on the needs of ELLs can do much more than teach them how to work with ELL students. It can also help prevent the spread of misinformation and misnomers about ELL education and second language acquisition which are common throughout the US society (Tse, 2001). Unfortunately, there are many teachers who have not had the proper education to work with ELLs and therefore some of them may believe the misinformation that is being passed around.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to look at some of the myths that mainstream teachers may have heard and see which ones teachers in a western New York county believed. There are many studies (Walker et al., 2004; O'Brian, 2011; Reeves, 2006; Yoon, 2007; Batt, 2008; Pappamihiel, 2007; Hansen-Thomas & Cavagnetto, 2010; Carrier, 2005; Youngs & Youngs, Jr, 2001; de Jong, 2004) that have been completed by researchers to explore how teachers in the mainstream classroom feel about teaching ELLs. This study specifically looked at several schools across Chautauqua County to see how teachers in this area felt about working with ELLs. The researcher wanted to look at several different myths that were prevalent across the many research studies done by the researchers above to determine which ones were believed in this specific county.

Significance

In 2001, an estimated 4.5 million ELL students were enrolled in K-12 public schools in the United States (Reeves, 2006). With the high numbers of ELLs in the schools today, it is important that teachers understand the culture and language of all of the students they are teaching. Like Garcia-Nevarez et al. (2005) says, “Many people throughout this country hold negative attitudes toward languages other than English, but these attitudes are especially damaging when they are held by teacher.” Unfortunately, many teachers may not even realize that their attitude is negative and affecting the ELLs.

This study is similar to a study done by Reeves (2006) and O’Brian (2011) which looked at the attitudes of mainstream teachers towards ELLs in the classroom. In the study done by O’Brian (2011), the researcher highlighted the importance of effective training and a teacher’s perception of support at the school level. Using this information, school districts were able to use the data to reevaluate training to help the school staff. It is the hope of the researcher that with the information gained in this study, schools that participated in the survey can address any of the misconceptions that teachers may believe to be true. Teachers need training to understand the many different students they teach. Teachers having greater exposure to diversity training appear to hold a more positive outlook towards language diversity students (Flores & Smith, 2008).

English Language Learners in the United States

The population in the United States is always changing. According to U.S. Census data, children of immigrants account for 20% of the population in the U.S. schools (Fix & Passel, 2003). The use of the word *immigrant* is used to describe people who have come to the United States, but were born in another country, and who may not speak English as a first language. While not all immigrants are English language learners (ELLs) and not all ELLs are immigrants, the ones that are being referred to in this research are the immigrants who are also ELLs. Harper and de Jong (2004) tell us that students who speak a language other than English at home and whose proficiency in English is limited are the fastest growing group of K-12 students in the United States. Between the years 1995-2005, the number of ELLs increased by 95% in the nation's schools (Carrier, 2005). This is a large increase in a short amount of time that schools may not be prepared for. Reeves (2006) and Carrier (2005) estimated that there are between 4.5 and 4.7 million limited English proficient (LEP), students in K-12 public schools in the United States. Crawford and Krashen (2007) tell us that the meaning of the labels LEP and ELL mean roughly the same thing. All the labels refer to students who face a formidable challenge: learning academic skills and knowledge while acquiring a second language at the same time.

While many people see the terms LEP and ELL as being interchangeable, not everyone uses these terms the same way. There are times with the term LEP is used in a deficit way, as in there is something wrong with the students. Rather than realizing that the student who speaks another language as an asset, there are people who only focus on the fact that the student may not

be able to speak English very well. In reality, the student who is learning English has another language and maybe another culture that they can teach others.

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL, 2004), most of the recent immigrants to the United States are from Latin America and Mexico. This would stand to reason that the primary language, besides English, that is being spoken in the United States is Spanish. The second most prevalent language is Chinese; the other top eight being French, German, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Italian, Korean, Russian, and Polish (CAL, 2007). The types of language spoken in this country have not changed much in the past few decades, even as the flow of immigration has changed. With so many different languages spoken, it may be more difficult for teachers and schools to accommodate so many different students. To educate the students in their native language would be very difficult. While it may be a little more difficult, when done properly, it is such an asset to the teachers and other students in the classroom. The teacher and other students in the classroom can learn so much in return from an ELL student.

A large number of ELLs have entered the country in the past few decades (Capps et al. 2004). In the 1990s, there were between 700,000 and 900,000 legal immigrants and between 300,000 and 500,000 undocumented immigrants that arrived in the United States each year (Capps et al. 2004). While the total number of immigrants that have come to the country is between 100,000 and 140,000, it is unknown how many of these immigrants that have come into the United States are ELLs who have come looking for education. Many of these immigrants were Hispanic who did not speak proficient English, but many of them were from many other countries around the world, bringing a variety of languages with them. With the heavy flow of immigrants the school system throughout the country had an average growth in enrollment from

22% in 1972 to 42.4% in 2005; Hispanic children accounted for a large portion (17%) of that total (Bustos Flores & Smith, 2008). With such a large number of ELL students in the schools, it is not a surprise there are a large number of families that also do not speak English or are bilingual, speaking their native language and English. Currently approximately 18% of the US population speaks a language other than English at home (Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004).

Not all non-English speakers are immigrants though. There are many second and third generation students in school that have been raised speaking languages other than English (Harper & de Jong, 2004). So, while they were born in the United States, the children may not have learned the English language so they are still considered an ELL in school. When children grow up in homes where another language besides English is spoken all of the time, which is the language they will learn, so when they enter school they will be unable to speak English. Hensen-Thomas & Cavagnetto (2010) have found that the majority (57%) of the 6-12th grade ELL students in the United States are native-born, second or third generation immigrants.

The location of the flow of immigration has also changed in recent years. According to CAL (2004) in the year 2000, sixty-eight percent of the nations' English language learning population lived in six of the nation's states. The highest number of immigrants lived in California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. With the highest number of immigrants settled in those areas, those areas also have the highest levels of ELLs. In recent years, there has been a shift to where the immigrants have found themselves settling. They are now settling into North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee, as well as states across the Midwest and up into the Pacific Midwest (Capps, Passel, Perez-Lopez, & Fix, 2004). Many of these ELLs are settling in more rural portions of these states to work in agricultural areas (Jensen, 2006).

ELLs in Rural Areas

It used to be when immigrants came to the U.S., they settled into large cities in their own little neighborhoods (Jensen, 2006). This is how Little China, Germantown, and other ethnic places got started. They chose to be together with people who spoke the same language and understood their culture. Now, according to Berube (2002), it is estimated that 44% of ELLs in the United States are currently living in rural communities. With the movement of immigrants from urban areas to rural areas, there was also a shift of ELLs moving from the larger cities to rural areas. There are 22 states that before 1990 had relatively low immigrant levels. After 1990, these states saw their foreign-born populations grow by over 90 percent during the decade of the 1990s; most of these are rural states such as North Carolina, Colorado, Kentucky, and Utah (Capps et al., 2004). This means that the ELLs are spread out more around the country and the need for teachers to educate the ELLs has risen. Now, there is a demand for certified teachers with Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) licensure that continues to intensify due to the significant rise in the number of linguistically and culturally diverse students nationally and particularly in rural settings within the United States (Rodríguez, Manner, & Darcy, 2010). In larger cities, there are many ELLs in each school. In rural schools, there may be one or two ELLs in each school, but an ELL teacher is still needed in each of those schools. With so many ELLs spread around in the rural schools, the need for ELL teachers will continue to grow.

In rural areas, approximately one-half of all recent non-English speaking adults who have arrived into the United States have not completed high school (Jensen, 2006). Many immigrants who come to the United States have non-English speaking children who will be entering the

schools in those rural towns. Unfortunately, there is not enough educational funding to provide the programs needed to support these new educational demands that are put on the school systems (Jensen, 2006). Another problem is that teachers are worried they will also not be able to communicate with the non-English speaking parents as easily about their children, which may cause frustration to both the teachers and the parents Harper & de Jong, 2004). Parents who have not completed high school may not have the academic language skills to help their children with schoolwork. This can cause added stress to the ELLs, their parents, and the mainstream classroom teachers, especially since rural teachers may not be accustomed to the diversity that bigger cities are used to. It has been shown that these kinds of stressors can cause teachers to have negative feelings about ELLs (Linguistic Diversity, 2007).

As stated previously, the majority of ELLs entering the United States have been Hispanic (CAL, 2012). A quick snapshot from Jensen (2006) confirms that rural ELLs are more likely to be Hispanic (and of Mexican origin in particular). This group tends to be less educated; they are more likely to be very poor, but while they are poor, they are less likely to receive food stamps; they are more likely to be married; more likely to be working, but also underemployed; more likely to own their own home; and they may be in better health and more likely to have access to health insurance (Jensen, 2006).

ELLs in Chautauqua County, NY.

In Chautauqua County, New York, the number of foreign born ELLs has actually declined between 2000 and 2006, from 2,643 to 2,428, an 8.1% decrease, according to the Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (2006). This is actually a trend that has been happening throughout the country in recent years. The same group has found that the number of foreign born ELLs that are not citizens went from 978 in 2000 to 747 in 2006. These numbers are not very surprising since according to the 2010 US Census Bureau, the overall population of foreign born immigrants in Chautauqua County specifically has decreased 3.5% from 2000 to 2010. While the number of foreign born ELLs has decreased, the number of native born ELLs has increased slightly over the same span of years (US Census Bureau, 2010). These native born ELLs would be considered the second or third generation ELLs. Therefore, in Chautauqua County, most ELLs are United States citizens.

A large percentage of the non-English speakers in Chautauqua County, over 6.1% of the population, are of Hispanic or Latino origin. Compared to the bigger cities, the diversity of population is much less in Chautauqua County. According to Goldweber (2005), Mexican immigrants, many who speak little to no English, now make up 95% of the workforce on New York's fruit and vegetable farms. This is very noticeable in Chautauqua County where there are many grape farms. Oftentimes, immigrants and non-immigrants can be seen tying, trimming, and picking the grapes throughout the year. It is due to these types of agricultural jobs that the ELLs have come to live in Chautauqua County.

In Chautauqua County, over 7.1% of the families spoke a language other than English at home (US Census Bureau, 2010). This number has not changed much since a census done in

2000 by the Cultural Diversity program, where the percentage of the population that spoke a language other than English was 7.2%. Both of these censuses only included children and adults over the age of five. The District Profiles from several schools that were surveyed coincide with this percentage. While looking at the data of the district profiles for all of the schools in Chautauqua County, the schools had an average of 6.6% of LEP students. Obviously, a bigger percentage of LEP students were seen in schools found in bigger cities.

Ideologies and Myths

According to the dictionary.com website, the definition of ideology is meaningful belief system: a set of beliefs, values, and opinions that shapes the way a person or a group such as a social class thinks, acts, and understands the world. Myths are based on ideological beliefs. Since the beginning of time there have been ideological beliefs that have born myths or misnomers about different ethnic groups.

Ideologies about the English Language

Misinformation and misnomers about ELLs, ELL education and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) are common throughout the United States' society (Tse, 2001). There are many ideas that are pervasive in the country that are just not true. One of the more common myths is that English in the United States' official language. Crawford (1989) found in a survey that nearly two-thirds of respondents thought that English was already officially recognized as the official language in the United States Constitution. Actually, the Founding Fathers decided not to have an official language due to the diversity, even back in their time. That is just one of

the many myths that people believe. Many of these myths and misnomers are not new, though they may have been about different ethnic groups at different times.

Laws mandating English have caused harm to many non-English speaking groups of people. Beginning in 1879, Indian children were placed in boarding schools far from their reservations with the goal of eradicating their culture; they were forced to use English at all times (Crawford, 1989). Back in the late 1880's, states began to pass laws mandating English as the sole language of instruction (Crawford, 1989). Fortunately, several years later these laws mandating English the sole language of instruction were ruled to be unconstitutional. Today, ELL and/or bilingual programs can be found in many schools throughout the country, however many states (California, Arizona, Massachusetts) still practice English-only laws within the school setting.

In research done by Pappamihel (2007), it was noted that some teachers had the belief that most of the immigrants are in our country are here illegally, using up all of our resources, and they are lazy and do not want to learn English. There are many teachers that have the idea that certain minority groups, most notably Latinos, are inferior and not deserving of instructional accommodations (Pappamihel, 2007). There have always been minority groups that have been singled out as being inferior. Back in 1879, it was the Native American children who were thought to be inferior. Crawford (1989) writes that these Native American children were actually placed in boarding schools far from their reservations in the hopes of forcing these students to become *Americanized* so we could pacify the Natives and bestow on them the 'blessings' of Anglo-American culture and language. Many people have the idea that if others do not do things (speak, dress, celebrate, etc.) the same way we do, that they are inferior or wrong.

Teachers play an essential role in the education achievement of their students. If a teacher has a negative view towards an ELL, it can affect the student's achievement (Garcia-Nevarez et al., 2012). In a study done by Rodriguez et al., (2010) the teachers were asked approximately what percentage of ELL students did they believe would complete high school; the average percentage that the teacher said was that only 56.88% of the ELLs would complete high school. If teachers do not think that a student will graduate, it may cause some teachers to not want to spend as much time and effort on the ELL students because they may find it to be a waste of time. In reality, according to the National High School Center (2005), the number of ELL students who drop out of school is closer to 36%. Educating teachers about ELLs can make a difference in the education of all students.

Cultural racism, according to Walker et al. (2004), is a way of thinking, speaking, and responding that becomes so pervasive in the mainstream culture that it is almost invisible to the masses in the mainstream culture. Often times, people do not even realize that they have cultural racism. Even teachers are 'guilty' of this type of racism without even realizing it. Teachers seem to base their notions of successful students and families on a construct of a 'standard' family and a particular notion that achievement that does not reflect the reality of many immigrant families (Exposito & Favela, 2003). The idea of a 'standard' family is based on a White, middle class family and do not take into consideration differences in culture. Teachers' values on how people should live, what they should aspire to, and the methods that they need to use in order to get there are also mainstream ideology (Exposito & Favela, 2003). Obviously, ELLs do not generally fall into this mainstream ideology. Teachers must understand their own personal

beliefs, where they come from and the effect they may have on the students they teach (Exposito & Favela, 2003).

Myths about Behavior.

Teachers often complain that ELLs require additional classroom resources in the form of more instructional attention or time required for teachers to resolve conflicts between ELLs and non-ELLs (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). Potential issues can arise due to cultural or language differences or even racial issues on either side. In a study done by Capps et al. (2004), the researchers found that ELL children fare as well as or better than children of native English speakers on measures of school engagement, including the extent in which they do their homework, the degree to which they care about school, and the frequency with which they are suspended or expelled. Therefore, behavior issues are not as much of a problem as some teachers may think.

Myths about Academics.

According to the study conducted by Walker (2004), only 18% of all the teachers felt that ELLs performed well academically in school. This means that 82% of the teachers surveyed in this study felt that ELLs do not perform well in school. This is a very high percentage of teachers who do not believe in the ELL students when it comes to their academic success. It is unclear how long these students that are being referred to have been in the classroom to make teachers feel that way. Why do teachers not believe in this population? Is it due to prior experience with ELLs? Have these teachers not had the training to understand the population? Are they basing it solely on the myths and misnomers they have heard? What teachers may not understand is that it

takes five to seven years for non-English speakers to develop academic language; the language that is needed for reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the content area (Carrier, 2005).

While teachers may hear these students speaking to their friends in English and think they know the language well enough, teachers should be aware the academic language is much more difficult to learn. According to Harper and Jong (2004), ELL students need explicit opportunities to practice using the 'academic' language to negotiate meaning in an interactive setting. ELLs will learn when they have enough exposure to the information through comprehensible input, or language in which students can understand. Teachers need to provide as much time for these opportunities as possible.

Another issue is that teachers believe that the ELLs are not willing to work as hard, or have a weaker work ethic in school than the non-ELLs. In a study done by Yoon (2008) there were many teachers that commented on the fact that the ELLs were not willing to work as hard as the other students throughout the semester. This may be due to the fact that teachers do not expect much from the ELL students. Many times, the mainstream teachers expect less of students who use nonstandard English (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Teachers need to expect the same effort and work ethic from all of their students. ELLs, like any student, will generally work as hard as they are expected to work.

Reeves (2006) found two main misconceptions about acquisition of the English language in her study. One was that ELLs should be able to acquire English within two years and the other being that ELLs should avoid using their native language as they learned English. Karabenick and Noda (2004) and Pappamihel (2007) found that more than half of the teachers believe that ELL students take up more of their classroom time than non-ELLs. They seemed to feel that they

would have to spend more time explaining vocabulary and other processes that they may not already know due to the language barrier and education from another country. Especially since, in a study done by Walker (2004), the authors found that 16% of the teachers think that ELLs came from countries with inferior educational systems. While teachers may have to take a bit more time on certain concepts, including vocabulary, it may be beneficial to all students to hear more in depth information, not just ELLs. Also, building vocabulary right into the lesson does not take a lot of added time and it is necessary with comprehensible input.

Mainstream teachers need to accept that they are going to have the ELLs in their classroom and learn to teach them to the best of their ability. Educators no longer have the luxury of time for students to acquire English in isolated ELL programs before they are required to perform on high stakes academic assessments (Batt, 2008). Teachers who use scaffolding skills, as well as comprehensible input will end up with successful students. Teachers who buy-in to dominant myths about ELLs will be less effective teachers of ELLs..

Myths about Motivation.

An individual student's motivation is believed to play a crucial role in the success or failure of ELLs (Hansen-Thomas & Cavagnetto, 2010). Most of the time, the students start out wanting to learn the language of the country they are in but then things may start to change. When teachers start treating ELLs differently, the ELLs may develop a negative attitude about their teacher and learning. ELLs may start getting a negative attitude when they feel they are not valued or important in a classroom. This happens when teachers seem to lower expectations and have a negative attitude towards students who speak another language. The students start feeling frustrated by the way they feel teachers are treating them. ELLs tend to get silent and feel

isolated when society, peers, and teachers make them feel powerless; this causes ELLs to not want to participate or talk among native English speakers (Yoon, 2007).

Another reason that ELLs may not seem motivated to a teacher is that they are still experiencing culture shock. Students who come from other countries may not know what to expect from the schools, teachers, or other students, are afraid, and not sure what is expected of them. Rather than attributing a student's continued lack of motivation or ability, teachers need to consider culture shock or a response to discriminatory language practice in school (Harper & Jong, 2004). Teachers need to look for other possible explanations as to why ELLs may not seem motivated before assuming the student is just being lazy.

Attitudes of teachers and students are important because they affect teachers' motivation to engage with their students which translates to motivating students to have better performance (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). A teacher, who truly values their ELL students, can create a better classroom environment, attitudes, and help students feel welcomed by honoring their language and culture and by using these assets effectively (Exposito & Favela, 2003). This way, the teacher will be helping the ELL students by honoring their differences and making the ELL feel special, but also will be teaching the non-ELL students more about different ethnicities.

Myths of Assimilation.

When ELLs come to the U.S., they experience the process of *assimilation*. For ELLs born in the United States, entering school becomes a process of assimilation in a similar way.

Assimilation is the process in which they take on the culture and other traits of another group. In a study done by Walker, et al (2004) and Pappamihiel (2007), the authors found that many of the

teachers surveyed felt it was the responsibility of the ELLs and their families to adapt to American culture and school life. This means there are a lot of teachers who feel teaching ELLs about their new surroundings is not their job. Unfortunately for the ELLs, without assistance in assimilating, it is going to be much harder for these children to learn academically.

While ELL students are trying to get used to their new country or environment, they are also trying to learn a new language and academic skills. Out of the many teachers asked in a study done by Walker (2004), seven percent of teachers felt that ELLs should be fluent in English after only one year of ELL instruction. This amount of time is unreasonable, especially when students are trying to learn so much, so quickly. In general, it takes students 2-3 years to learn social language skills and 5-7 years to learn grade level academic language. Teachers who expect ELLs to learn the language that quickly may be treating ELLs unfairly if they feel that the ELLs are not progressing as quickly as the teacher expects.

Some people, including teachers, may also have the thought that “this is America, speak English”. When a teacher maintains this English-only or English is superior ideology, they may force the student to speak English only, which could be detrimental to the ELL student and derail the efforts to assimilate. This may cause students to rebel against the English language and resent the teacher. When an ELL student feels this way, the student may choose to not learn the language at all. A strong majority of teachers surveyed (82.5%) “Would support legislation making English the official language of the United States” (Reeves, 2006). This shows how much teachers believe that English should be the primary language in the U.S., which might cause some bias from these teachers.

Myths concerning Family life.

According to Exposito and Favela (2003), it takes a great commitment on the part of the teacher to effectively work with ELL students and parents. A lot of this has to do with the lack of communication. Almost 62% of the teachers believe that parents of ELL students are not involved in the school as are parents of non-ELL students (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). In fact, the language barrier may be the reason that parents do not know about events such as open houses, parent/teachers conferences, or other school activities. This is a reason why non-English speaking parents may not be as involved in the schools as native English speaker families. The parents may feel uncomfortable not being able to speak with the teacher if they were to go into the classroom, especially if they do not know anyone to translate for them. There may also be a cultural reason why the parents do not go into the schools. In some cultures, the parents feel that school and home life are separate. In other cultures, parents feel that they have no “right” to interfere on what the teachers are doing in the classroom. There are many reasons why parents may not seem as involved in the classroom, but if the teacher understands these potential issues and works to overcome them, they will see how willing the parents and families are to work with the schools. Understanding the culture and working to overcome these barriers may help teachers see through many of the misconceptions they may have about the ELLs and their families. Once the teachers are able to overcome these barriers, the ELLs and the families can have a beneficial relationship with the school, teachers, and the other students.

Myths about Teaching ELLs.

Teachers tend to think that teaching ELL students is just like teaching non-ELL students. Unfortunately, that just is not true. While there are some similarities in teaching both groups of

students “just good teaching” does not usually work. A few misconceptions teachers have about teaching ELL students is that (1) learning a second language simply requires exposure to and interaction in that second language and (2) that all ELLs will learn English in the same way (Harper & Jong, 2004). This means that many teachers believe that by putting a non-English speaker in an English speaking classroom, they student will eventually, automatically learn to speak English. Teachers need to understand that, despite many similarities, learning their first language and learning English (or a second language) are not an identical process (Harper & Jong, 2004). When teachers take the time to learn about cultural and linguistic differences, students will feel more welcome, instruction will be more meaningful and achievement will increase.

ELLs in the Classroom

Many mainstream teachers have the belief that real teaching/learning for ELLs only happens in the English as a Second Language (ELL) classroom. Some teachers have even voiced the opinion that ELLs should stay in a separate ELL classroom until they are able to speak the English language proficiently (Walker et al., 2004; O’Brian, 2011; Reeves, 2006; Youngs & Youngs, Jr., 2011). While other teachers have the belief the best way to learn English would be to just put ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The thought is that the more they are surrounded by the language, the more quickly they will learn; ELLs should only use English so they can learn the English language more quickly. Either way, many teachers hold the belief that ELLs should be fluent in English after two years of ELL instruction. This contradicts the research results about how long it takes to learn a language. Cummins, 2001 (as cited in Carrier, 2005), found that it takes one to three years for ELLs to develop conversational proficiency in English,

but five to seven years to develop academic English, or English needed for reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the content areas.

When ELLs come in to the mainstream classroom, many of the teachers have mixed ideas on how to educate this special group. Some teachers feel they should lower their expectation of the ELLs to accommodate their language barrier. Other teachers think that ELLs are poor academic learners who burden teachers with extra responsibility. This would be another reason why teachers would lower their expectations. Some teachers seem to believe that ELLs generally come to the U.S. from countries with inferior educational systems, which is another reason why they would be considered poor academic learners. Along with these beliefs, teachers have also stated that ELL students in the general education classroom setting slow down the progress of other students in the classroom. For this reason, some mainstream teachers feel that they do not have time to deal with the needs of ELLs in their classroom. It has been said that inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom is good in theory, but does not work in the real world (Reeves, 2006).

There is another group of teachers who feel having ELLs in their classroom would be beneficial, not only to the ELL students, but also to the non-ELL students. These are the teachers who would welcome having an ELL student in their classroom. In these classrooms, teachers and other faculty seem to embrace the ELLs culture and language differences. This is the group of teachers who may feel that they are adequately trained to work with ELLs.

Depending on the myths and misnomers that teachers have heard and believe, it will shape how the mainstream teachers feel about ELLs. It is suggested that teachers who have heard positive information or have had positive experiences with ELLs, will be more likely to be more

welcoming to ELLs. Teachers, who have heard and believe negative myths, or who have had negative experiences with ELLs anytime in the past, or have no experience and may be intimidated by ELLs, and not want to deal with them. Unfortunately, these mainstream teachers do not understand how this kind of behavior is detrimental towards some of the students in their classrooms.

Attitudes about ELLs

After learning about all of these potential myths regarding ELLs, it is obvious that many people throughout the United States hold negative attitudes towards people who speak languages other than English. These attitudes are especially damaging when they are held by teachers (Garcia-Navarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). The attitudes of teachers have been found to play an important role in their interactions with their students. The types of attitudes that mainstream teachers have towards ELL students are likely to affect what these students learn in the classroom (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). If mainstream teachers view these myths as being true, it is possible that the teachers will ignore the ELLs, not expect much from them, or even have a negative attitude towards them.

The majority of teachers do not appear to start out with negative attitudes about ELLs but tend to be vulnerable to the misinformation circulated by the media or public at large (Walker, 2004). Through newspapers, television, and even social media sites misinformation can be passed quickly and globally. Armed with this misinformation, combined with the stress teachers may feel, teachers will start believing these myths. Garcia-Navarez, et al. (2005) remind us that teachers tend to get overwhelmed by the amount of work they have to do in a day; therefore, it is very difficult for teachers to teach academic content and the English language and that can cause

frustration and burnout. There have been studies, including the one by Yoon (2008) that show that teachers just do not know how to reach the ELLs and this becomes frustrating. This frustration can cause teachers to start thinking negatively about the ELLs, especially since they have these negative ideas in their heads. Teachers may get the idea that the students do not want to learn or even that they are lazy because of their inability to reach their students and that can cause some negative attitudes on the part of the teacher and the student.

Negative attitudes can also emerge when unprepared teachers have issues and challenges in working with ELLs (Walker, et al, 2004 and Reeves, 2006). Teachers that do not have the training to teach ELLs in a way that is beneficial to the student, with comprehensible input, will many times become easily frustrated with teaching ELLs. Durgunoglu and Huges (2010) agree that attitudes and behaviors are related; one can predict more negative attitudes are related to lower levels of preparedness and self-efficacy. These negative attitudes do not just affect the students directly; it may also influence the teachers' evaluations of student performance and achievement (Garcia-Navarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). Teachers do not recognize how well the ELLs are really progressing but because the ELL is not at grade level, they will be regarded as not doing 'good enough'. It is not always the difficulties with the language and cultural differences that can cause negative attitudes. Unfortunately, O'Brian (2011) has found that some teachers develop negative attitudes due to the lack of support they feel they receive from ELL personnel at their schools. This includes the principal, other mainstream teachers, and even the ELL teacher. Many times, the school personnel will consider the ELLs to be the ELL teacher's 'problem' and ignore the students. When the school personnel are ignoring the ELL and the teachers are not getting the support, the mainstream teacher may begin to ignore the ELL also.

There are some aspects that can predict the attitudes of mainstream teachers towards the ELLs in their classroom. A few of them include: their past experiences, specific ELL training, personal contact with diverse cultures, prior contact with ELL students, and personality (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Newer teachers may not have had a lot of contact with ELL students; therefore they may be nervous or not know what to do with the 'different' students in their classroom. Depending on a teachers' past experience with an ELL, whether in a classroom or even personal experience, this can also help shape a teacher's attitude. A teacher who has tried learning another language him or herself will have a better understanding of the struggles an ELL may be having than a teacher who has not.

McCloskey (2002) estimates that there are as many as 45% of the nation's teachers currently have ELLs in their classrooms. Because of this increase of ELLs in the schools, teachers feel there are more demands placed on them which can cause negative teachers' attitudes. In fact, 70% of mainstream teachers were not actively interested in having ELLs in their classroom (Walker, et al, 2004). This is due to the teachers not wanting to 'deal' with the problems the teachers feel the ELLs will bring, academically and behaviorally. It was also mentioned that mainstream teachers just would not know what to do with ELLs because they have not been properly trained to work with this specific group of students. While that specific percentage in the study done by Walker, et al. (2004) seems awfully high, a survey conducted by Karabenick and Noda (2004) found that less than half (43%) of the teachers said they would want to have an ELL student in their classroom. While this number is lower than the study done by Walker, et al (2004), it is still a very high percentage considering how many ELLs there are in

the United States. More teachers need to have the training to properly work with ELLs in a way that is beneficial.

With so many mainstream teachers being weary of having ELLs in their classrooms, the question that should be asked is why? According to O'Brian (2011), the main themes around areas of challenge when working with ELLs were that teachers included difficulties with instructional accommodations, challenges in communication, lack of support necessary when ELLs are included in instruction, and negative overall teacher views of ELLs and ELL instruction. Another issue is that many teachers view second language learners from a deficit perspective (Rodriguez et al., 2010). Many teachers seem to think that the ELLs are not as 'smart' as the non-ELL students, therefore, they cannot learn as easily.

Many of the teachers that were surveyed in the studies done by Walker, et al (2004), Yoon (2007), Yoon (2008), and Reeves (2006) felt that ELLs should be the sole responsibility of the ELL teacher. Many teachers have voiced the opinion that until ELLs can speak and understand English; they should stay in contained ELL classrooms all day long. Fortunately, this is generally not how the students are being taught. In reality, the ELLs are only in the ELL classes, on average, an hour or two per day. This means that for the rest of the school day, mainstream teachers need to make sure that the ELLs are being supported in a way that they can learn properly. Like Brooks, Adams, & Moriata-Mullaney (2010) pointed out, because of the achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers, it is clear that the needs of ELLs cannot be met by licensed ELL teachers alone. ELLs need all the support they can get from ELL teachers, mainstream teachers, and school personnel to help bridge that gap. Without the support

from all of the teachers working together, ELLs will not have much of a chance of succeeding in their new environment.

While there are many teachers who feel that students should be kept in ELL classes until they know English, there are others who feel that non-English speaking students should be just placed in mainstream classes to “sink or swim”. This means that ELLs would be placed in mainstream classrooms and expected to learn the English language with very little extra support. In a study done by Hansen-Thomas & Cavagnetto (2010), one of the teachers was even completely against the whole ELL program. She commented in a survey saying:

I want ELL abolished. My father did not speak English and through total emersion (sic) he was thriving within a year. He graduated #2 from his private “prep” school. My brother in law works with Bosnian refugees. They do not participate in ELL programs and are doing well. I think we enable ELL students to their detriment (Hansen-Thomas and Cavagnetto, 2010).

This, unfortunately, is not an uncommon view among teachers or many of the general public. The idea that their family members came to the U.S. and did just fine without ELL classes is a common phrase that has been voiced often.

This may not be surprising, but has been found that only 12% of K-12 teachers nationwide have training in working with ELLs (McCloskey, 2002). In a survey done by Walker, et al (2004), as many as eighty-seven percent of the surveyed teachers have never received any type of training or professional development working with ELLs. This is a bit of a concern because teachers are supposed to be teaching all students and without the proper training, they

will not be able to teach ELLs effectively. This many explain why teachers feel so overwhelmed and frustrated when teaching ELLs; the lack of training and experience. What's even more alarming is that according to a study conducted by Walker, et al (2004), 51% of the teachers surveyed would not even be interested in getting any training to work with ELLs, even if the opportunity was available. Lack of time was one of the main reasons teachers did not have time for any extra training.

Considering that by 2020, Nieto (2002) believes that almost half of the public school population will be from families whose native language is not English, mainstream teachers will want to get ready. These ELLs will spend most of their time in mainstream classes so they teachers need to be prepared. Teachers need to carefully examine their classroom experiences that affect their practices and find ways to provide the most inclusive and nurturing environments where culturally and language diverse students will feel welcome (Exposito & Favela, 2003). They need to think about the myths and misnomers that they believe as being true and learn to overlook them. All teachers must be prepared to accept responsibility for the academic content and language development of the English Language Learners (Harper and Jong, 2004).

Research Questions

How many of the previously discussed myths do teachers agree with? What misconceptions do mainstream teachers in rural Western New York schools have about ELL students?

Methodology

There exists a lot of research that examines the impact, negative or positive, that a teacher can make on the students they teach. When teachers hear negative myths about a group of students, such as ELLs, it may impact the way teachers respond to this group of students. The current study used several different myths that were found in previous studies to see how many of these myths mainstream teachers in rural Western New York schools agree with. An online survey, using a Likert scale was used to attempt to answer the research question. The questions used in the survey are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Questions used in the survey given to teachers

Question #	Question
1	How many years have you been a public or private school teacher (including this year)?
2	Are you: Male or Female
3	Is English your native language?
4	Do you speak another language?
5	Do you currently have any ELL students in your classroom?
6	Have you ever had an ELL student in your classroom?
7	Have you ever had any training in teaching ELL students?
8	Real teaching/learning for English Language Learners (ELLs) happens in the English as a Second Language (ELL) classroom.

(Continued)

Table 1: Questions used in the survey given to teachers (Continued)

- 9 It is the responsibility of the ELLs to adapt to the American culture and school life.
- 10 Teachers should lower their expectation of the ELLs to accommodate their language barrier.
- 11 My school openly welcomes ELLs and embraces their native cultures and language.
- 12 I feel I am adequately trained to work with ELLs.
- 13 ELLs are poor academic learners who burden teachers with extra responsibility.
- 14 ELLs should be fluent in English after two years of ELL training.
- 15 ELLs should only use English so they can learn the English language more quickly.
- 16 ELLs generally come to the U.S. from countries with inferior educational systems.
- 17 ELLs have more behavior problems than non-ELLs.
- 18 ELL parents are less involved in their children's education than non-ELL parents.
- 19 Many of the ELLs in the U.S. are in our country illegally.
- 20 ELLs take up more of my time in the classroom than non-ELLs do.
- 21 The inclusion of ELLs in the classroom creates a more positive atmosphere.
- 22 It is a good idea to assign less coursework to ELLs.

(Continued)

Table 1: Questions used in the survey given to teachers (Continued)

- 23 ELL students in the general education classroom setting slow down the progress of other students in the classroom.
- 24 Immigrant parents do not even try to learn English.
- 25 Inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom is good in theory, but does not work in real life.
- 26 The inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom benefits all students.
- 27 Mainstream teachers do not have time to deal with the needs of ELLs in their classroom.
- 28 ELLs should stay in the separate ELL classroom until they are able to speak the English language proficiently.
- 29 I would be interested in receiving more training in working with ELL students.
- 30 The best way to learn English would be to just put them in the mainstream classroom. The more they are surrounded by the language, the more quickly they will learn.
- 31 This is America so the ELL students and parents should only be speaking English.
- 32 I enjoy having ELL students in my classroom.
-

Sampling

The researcher looked online at the schools located in a western New York county to see which ones had emails for their teachers listed online. Emails were then sent out to the school principals to request consent for surveys to be distributed to the teachers in their buildings (see consent form in Appendix A). For the schools in which the principals' gave consent, each teacher was sent an email with the link to the survey that was created (see Appendix B).

Several different schools responded, including both city and rural schools. Some of the schools that responded have not had many ELLs in the school, while other schools had many ELLs in the school, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographics of the schools who participated in the school

School	Population	Number of ELLs	Percentage of ELLs
A	765	0	0%
B	792	0	0%
C	1,999	256	13%
D	1,572	21	1%
E	4,963	165	3%
F	1,067	4	<1%
G	763	12	2%
H	1,451	3	<1%
I	885	0	0%
J	610	0	0%

Participants

Participation in the survey was voluntary and confidential. Twenty-eight teachers responded from eleven different schools within a western New York county. Out of the 28 responses, 78.6% of the respondents were female teachers and 21.4% were male teachers. The average teacher that responded has been teaching around 15 years in a public or private school. All of the teachers' native language in English and the majority of the respondents did not speak another language or considered themselves as having a beginning level knowledge of another language; only 10.7% spoke another language fluently. About half (53.6%) of the teachers currently had ELL students in their classroom but a large percentage (85.2%) have had at least one ELL student in their classroom at some point while teaching. When asked if the teachers had any training in teaching ELL students, over half (60.7%) responded they have had no training, while 17.9% have been to in-service workshops and 21.4% have had some college coursework.

Design of Survey

The survey used in this study included seven demographic questions (see appendix D, items 1-6) to describe the sample. These questions included the participant's age, sex, and number of years the teacher has been teaching in a public or private school. These questions also asked about the participants' first language and if they are able to speak another language. This helps the researcher to further understand the amount of experience the participant has with second language acquisition. There is another question (item 7, appendix D) that about what kind of training, if any, the participant has had in teaching ELL students. The choices that teachers had concerning training were: in-service training, none, college coursework, and other, which asked them to specify what the other training could have been.

Table 3

Themes of the questions on the survey

Theme	Questions
Type of environment ELL should be taught	8, 23
Attitude towards ELL students	11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 33
Knowledge of ELA	14, 29, 31
Attitude towards parents/first culture	16, 19, 20, 25, 32
Expectations of ELLs	9, 10, 24
Professional Development	12, 30

Note. ELA stands for English Language Acquisition or how the English language is learned.

The next 25 questions covered several themes, such as (1) in what type environment in which ELLs should be taught, (2) attitudes of mainstream teachers towards ELL students, (3) knowledge of ELLs, and other themes. The questions are categorized in Table 3 by theme. The survey questions used in this research came from many other sources. Many of the questions, #10, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, and 33 came from a survey that was conducted by Reeves (2006) in her research involving the attitudes of secondary teachers towards ELLs. This research was initially conducted because of the lack of previous research concentrating on a teacher's attitude toward inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. She constructed the survey instrument herself using research findings and suggestions for further research found in relevant literature. Over 306 teachers were surveyed in her study but only 281 surveys were returned. These questions were also used in research conducted by O'Brian (2011). The participants in this

study were high school social studies teachers who had ELLs in their mainstream classroom. This study was conducted because of the increase of ELLs that were settling in Florida. O'Brian wanted to look at the attitudes that the teachers had about the training they received to teach ELLs in their classrooms. Questions 8 and 31 were borrowed from research done by Yoon (2008). This case study examined the teacher's beliefs about her role in teaching ELLs. For questions 9, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 30, the article "Not in My Classroom" by Walker et al., (2004) was used. In this research, Walker et al. explored the attitude of mainstream teachers toward ELLs, the factors that contribute to the attitudes, and how teacher attitudes vary by community demographics. Pappamihel's (2007) investigation into attitudes and beliefs of pre-service teachers lent the researcher questions 13 and 18. The article concerning linguistic diversity in ECE is where question 16 was pulled from. This article focused on why the attitude of teachers toward ELLs is important. The idea for questions 19 and 20 came from two sources: Capps et al (2004) and Flores and Smith (2008). Both of these articles discussed the movement of immigrants into different U.S. communities. "How prepared are the U.S. preservice teachers to teach ELLs" by Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) is where questions 24, 25, and 32 came from. In this study, the issue of perceived preparedness of teachers was discussed. Many of the questions used in the survey had similar themes that ran through much of the previous research.

Data Collection

Procedure. To determine the participants in this study, the researcher looked online to see which rural western New York school websites listed email addresses for the principal and teachers. Once the study was approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee at SUNY Fredonia (appendix A), emails were sent out to the principals in all of the schools in a western New York county. Eleven principals responded back to the researcher giving permission for the

teachers to be contacted. Once permission was granted by the principal, the researcher sent out an email explaining the research and included a link to the survey from www.surveymonkey.com. The email also provided teachers with information regarding how confidentiality of subjects and their data would be maintained and a statement that participation in the study is voluntary and that teachers may withdraw at any time. The survey was sent out to 517 teachers in eleven different schools. By clicking on the link to the survey, teachers verified their consent to participate.

If they opted to participate, the teachers were given one week to complete the twenty-seven question survey and send it back to the researcher electronically through the website SurveyMonkey.com. The website Survey Monkey was used to ensure that all of the survey information has been kept completely confidential. The results were destroyed 60 days after they are received back to the researcher. The survey was deleted on the surveymonkey.com website and any survey results that were printed out were shredded.

Data Analysis

Returned surveys have been reviewed and each statement was evaluated to see which misconceptions are found to be believed by the most teachers in rural Western New York. The results were analyzed descriptively. Univariate analyses, a visual interpretation, of the survey questions helped identify the teachers' attitude concerning the myth or misconception in question. The response given by each teacher told the researcher whether or not they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Using the terms strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, and strongly agree helped the researcher know how strongly the teachers felt about a particular statement.

Results

A cover letter and link to the online survey was emailed to 517 teachers in eleven schools in a county in Western New York. Of the 517 teachers to whom the survey link was sent, 28 individuals submitted responses on www.surveymonkey.com. This amounted to a response rate of 5.42%. For many of the questions, an average of 5 teachers skipped the questions, resulting in only 82.17% of the teachers who responded. Using the demographic information, the researcher found that slightly over half (53.6%) of the teachers currently had ELL students in their classroom but a large percentage (85.2%) have had at least one ELL student in their classroom at some point while teaching.

The question of where real learning/teaching happens for ELLs has not been very widely discussed (Yoon, 2007). With the population of ELLs in the classroom increasing, it is a question that should be addressed. The question as to where real teaching/learning for ELLs happens was an area that the teachers surveyed in this research were unsure of. As can be seen by Table 4, the responses were spread out amongst the answers, which show that some of these teachers do not seem to understand their role in teaching the ELLs. As Yoon (2007) found in her study, the mainstream teacher's role is very significant in supporting the ELL's learning. Teachers need to understand that real teaching/learning happens in both the ELL and mainstream classrooms.

Table 4

Real teaching/learning for English Language Learners (ELLs) happens in the English as a Second Language (ELL) Classroom.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	21.7%	5
Agree	30.4%	7
Unsure	13.0%	3
Disagree	26.1%	6
Strongly Disagree	8.7%	2
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		5

When ELLs come from another country to the United States, they may experience some culture shock. Culture shock is the disorientation they may feel when coming to a new country and an unfamiliar way of life. Some pre-service teachers have a belief that the responsibility for learning and adapting to new cultural patterns rests solely on the ELL and his or her family (Pappamihiel, 2007). While some of the teachers disagreed (34.8%) that it is the responsibility of the ELL to adapt to the American culture and school life, the majority (60.8%) agreed with this statement (see Table 5) with only 4.3% unsure.

Table 5

It is the responsibility of the ELLs to adapt to the American culture and school life.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	4.3%	1
Agree	56.5%	13
Unsure	4.3%	1
Disagree	34.8%	8
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		5

While it is true that ELLs need some modifications to understand the vocabulary while they are learning the language, ELLs still need to learn the content material. Watering down curriculum for ELLs has a negative effect on students as they are promoted through the grades without the basic foundational knowledge they need (Carrier, 2005). Lowering the expectations will only make ELLs get further and further behind as they get into higher grades. Fortunately, according to Table 6, the majority of teachers (73.9%) in this survey seemed to understand the importance of this. With further education, the teachers who agreed or were unsure about this statement will understand this too.

Table 6

Teachers should lower their expectation of the ELLs to accommodate their language barrier.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	13.0%	3
Unsure	13.0%	3
Disagree	52.2%	12
Strongly Disagree	21.7%	5
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		5

With the growing number of ELLs all across the country, schools need to be more open to different cultures and languages to provide a welcoming environment for all children. According to Table 7, the teachers surveyed felt that the schools in this county openly welcomed ELLs. Garcia-Nevarez et al. (2005) has found that teachers and schools who understand the student's language and culture are those who are sensitive to the needs of their students. While some of the teachers were not sure, none of the teachers felt that their school did not openly welcome ELLs, their native cultures and languages.

Table 7

My school openly welcomes ELLs and embraces their native cultures and language.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	13.6%	3
Agree	68.2%	15
Unsure	18.2%	4
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
answered question		22
skipped question		6

There is a high need for teachers who are appropriately trained to teach ELLs (Walker et al, 2004). Unfortunately, there does not seem to be many teachers who are completely prepared to teach them. In 1999, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that while more than half of U.S. teachers (54%) taught ELLs, only 20% felt very well prepared to teach ELLs, and of these teachers, 17% felt not at all prepared to teach ELLs (as cited in Hansen-Thomas & Cavagnetto, 2010). The teachers in this county seemed to agree, as 65.2% didn't feel adequately trained to work with ELLs (see Table 8). Hopefully, more and more schools will begin to add ELL instruction for the teachers so they do feel better trained.

Table 8

I feel I am adequately trained to work with ELLs

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	8.7%	2
Agree	17.4%	4
Unsure	8.7%	2
Disagree	60.9%	14
Strongly Disagree	4.3%	1
answered question		23
skipped question		5

Thoughts that ELLs are poor academic learners can be harmful to an ELL in a mainstream classroom. Educational deficit beliefs about ELLs can lead to negative teacher attitudes that in turn result in inferior educational services (Walker, et al, 2004). If teachers believe in all of their students, the students will be more successful. The teachers surveyed felt that ELLs are not poor academic learners and did not feel they were a burden to the teachers (see Table 9). These results were very similar to the responses that were received when asked if teachers felt that their schools openly welcomed ELLs (see Table 7).

Table 9

ELLs are poor academic learners who burden teachers with extra responsibility.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	0.0%	0
Unsure	4.3%	1
Disagree	43.5%	10
Strongly Disagree	52.2%	12
answered question		23
skipped question		5

Teachers, who work with ELLs in any capacity, should understand the basics about English language acquisition. While it takes one to three years for ELLs to develop conversational proficiency in English, they need five to seven years to develop academic English, or English needed for reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the content areas (Cummins, 2001 as cited in Carrier, 2005). This seems to be a topic which teachers in the western New York County should discuss. While just under 50% (45.4%) of the teachers disagreed with this statement (see Table 10), over 50% agreed or were unsure that ELLs should be fluent in the English language after two years of ELL instruction. This is a basic fact that teachers should know when teaching ELLs.

Table 10

ELLs should be fluent in English after two years of ELL instruction.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	4.5%	1
Agree	18.2%	4
Unsure	31.8%	7
Disagree	31.8%	7
Strongly Disagree	13.6%	3
answered question		22
skipped question		6

Teachers and schools may openly welcome ELLs, but not all of the teachers agreed with them using their native language, according to this survey questions. 21.7% of the teachers surveyed thought that students should only speak English to help them learn (see Table 11) and 56.5% disagree. This is similar in response to a study done by Reeves (2006), where 58.4% of her respondents also disagreed with a similar statement “ELL students should avoid using their native language while at school”.

Table 11

ELLs should only use English so they can learn the English language more quickly.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	4.3%	1
Agree	17.4%	4
Unsure	8.7%	2
Disagree	56.5%	13
Strongly Disagree	13.0%	3
answered question		23
skipped question		5

The results reported in Table 12 agree with a study done by Diaz-Rico & Weed (2006) as cited on the wikidot website (ecelinguisticdiversity.wikidot.com), similarly found that 16% of the teachers surveyed believed that ELLs came from countries with inferior educational systems. It is unclear as to where the teachers are assuming the ELLs come from, so depending on what region or country, these responses could change.

Table 12

ELLs generally come to the U.S. from countries with inferior educational systems.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	17.4%	4
Unsure	13.0%	3
Disagree	60.9%	14
Strongly Disagree	8.7%	2
answered question		23
skipped question		5

According to the teachers that were surveyed, ELLs were not believed to have a behavior problem in schools anymore than non-ELLs (see Table 13). Capps et al. (2004) tells us that ELLs fare as well as or better than non-ELLs on measures of school engagement, including the extent to which they do their homework, care about school, and the frequency with which they were suspended or expelled.

Table 13

ELLs have more behavior problems than non-ELLs.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	0.0%	0
Unsure	18.2%	4
Disagree	59.1%	13
Strongly Disagree	22.7%	5
answered question		22
skipped question		6

ELLs almost always have parents that do not speak English. Going into the school can be a frustrating and scary activity for parents. This may account for part of the reason parents may not seem as involved in their children's education. If there is an issue with parents not being involved, sending notes home in their native language and inviting parents in to teach them about their culture can be a way to get ELL parents involved. According to Table 14, the teachers that were surveyed did not feel that ELL parents were less involved, as 77.3% disagreed with that statement.

Table 14

ELL parents are less involved in their children's education than non-ELL parents.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	9.1%	2
Unsure	13.6%	3
Disagree	59.1%	13
Strongly Disagree	18.2%	4
answered question		22
skipped question		6

Estimates based on the data from Census 2000, indicate that during the average year in the 1990s, the following numbers of immigrants entered the United States: 700,000-900,000 legal permanent residents and 300,000-500,000 or more undocumented immigrants (Capps et al., 2004). With the coverage in the news of the laws in Arizona and other states' problems with illegal immigrants, this is a topic of discussion all over the country. In the area that was surveyed, only 9.1% thought that the ELLs they were teaching are in the U.S. illegally (see Table 15).

Table 15

Many of the ELLs in the U.S. are in our country illegally.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	As Carrier (2005)
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0	tells us, when
Agree	9.1%	2	existing
Unsure	22.7%	5	lessons are
Disagree	54.5%	12	used to
Strongly Disagree	13.6%	3	address our
answered question		22	ELLs'
skipped question		6	language
			needs, their

needs are integrated into the classroom and curriculum, instead of having to create a separate and often less rigorous curriculum for them. Table 16 shows us that teachers felt pretty divided on whether ELLs take up more time than non-ELLs do. Making changes to lesson plans and stopping to explain vocabulary were two of the main reasons teachers in the research by Carrier used as to why ELLs take more time in the classroom.

Table 16

ELLs take up more of my time in the classroom than non-ELLs do.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	8.7%	2
Agree	30.4%	7
Unsure	4.3%	1
Disagree	56.5%	13
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
answered question		23
skipped question		5

The inclusion of ELLs in a classroom can be a positive or negative atmosphere, depending on the teacher. Teachers who value the ELLs can create a classroom environment that helps children feel welcome by honoring their language and culture, and by using these assets in a positive way (Exposito & Favela, 2003). A vast majority of teachers in this survey agreed (see Table 17).

Table 17

The inclusion of ELLs in the classroom creates a more positive atmosphere.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	13.0%	3
Agree	52.2%	12
Unsure	34.8%	8
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
answered question		23
skipped question		5

This statement ran along the same lines as lowering expectations for ELLs and the results were similar (see Table 18 and Table 6). Neither of these ideas is helpful for these students. ELLs are doing two jobs at the same time: learning a new language while learning new academic content (Carrier, 2005). This means that teachers should be assigning at least the same amount of coursework, but with some modifications, for ELLs to make it more comprehensible.

Table 18

It is a good idea to assign less coursework to ELLs.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	17.4%	4
Unsure	21.7%	5
Disagree	39.1%	9
Strongly Disagree	21.7%	5
answered question		23
skipped question		5

There appeared to be a general consensus with teachers in a Walker et al. (2004) study, that teaching ELLs in a mainstream classroom added a lot of pressure due to teachers feeling overwhelmed to prepare their students for state-wide assessments. The teachers that were surveyed here did not seem to feel the same way (see Table 19). In fact, the majority (87%) of the teachers disagreed or was unsure about this statement.

Table 19

ELL students in the general education classroom setting slow down the progress of other students in the classroom.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	13.0%	3
Unsure	17.4%	4
Disagree	56.5%	13
Strongly Disagree	13.0%	3
answered question		23
skipped question		5

The sample surveyed did not agree with the statement that immigrant parents do not try to learn English (see Table 20). There are now many programs for adult ELLs to take, more than ever, so that they can become proficient in English. Data from the census 2000 Supplementary Survey (C2SS) show that 60 percent of immigrants who arrived during the 1990's were considered Limited English Proficient in 2000 (Capps et al., 2004). This shows that parents are attempting to learn the language.

Table 20

Immigrant parents do not even try to learn English.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	0.0%	0
Unsure	43.5%	10
Disagree	43.5%	10
Strongly Disagree	13.0%	3
answered question		23
skipped question		5

Including ELLs into the classroom may cause some stress for teachers for a variety of reason, but it can also be an asset. Reeves (2006) suggests that while some teachers may think that mainstreaming is good in theory, but the knowledge of being accountable for the learning of all students, the inclusion of ELLs can create a situation in which teachers' attention is torn between the needs of ELLs and non-ELLs. When teachers are torn, they may feel some stress and be overwhelmed. Table 21 shows that many of the teachers in this specific county, feel that including ELLs in the mainstream classroom does work in the real world.

Table 21

Inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom is good in theory, but does not work in the real world.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	13.0%	3
Unsure	21.7%	5
Disagree	47.8%	11
Strongly Disagree	17.4%	4
answered question		23
skipped question		5

Including ELLs in the mainstream classroom can be a huge benefit for all of the students in the classroom. Like Garcia-Nevarez et al. (2005) said, effective teacher behavior involves being sensitive to the needs of ELLs, including multiple strategies in teaching, and encouraging students regarding their academic skills. The use of multiple strategies can help all students, especially the students with different learning styles. The agreement of this statement from the majority of the teachers surveyed (see Table 22) shows how ELLs can be an asset to the classroom.

Table 22

The inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom benefits all students.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	13.6%	3
Agree	54.5%	12
Unsure	27.3%	6
Disagree	4.5%	1
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
answered question		22
skipped question		6

There are several teachers that agreed with the statement that teachers do not have time to deal with the ELLs in their classroom (see Table 23). Many mainstream teachers who responded negatively about teaching ELLs, in a survey done by Walker et al. (2004), provided the rationale that they were already too many demands placed on their time. This may be true for the teachers that responded to this survey also. There are many ways that teachers can modify lesson plans to help all of the students in the classroom, that will also benefit the ELLs.

Table 23

Mainstream teachers do not have time to deal with the needs of ELLs in their classroom.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	22.7%	5
Unsure	9.1%	2
Disagree	59.1%	13
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2
answered question		22
skipped question		6

The problem with ELLs staying in a separate ELL classroom until they are able to speak the English language proficiently is that, as Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) mention, ELL classrooms focus mostly on teaching vocabulary. ELL classrooms and mainstream classroom content was generally not coordinated. The problem with this is that ELLs will miss too much from the content classes and get further and further behind the longer they stay in the separate ELL classroom. As can be seen from Table 24, these teachers strongly agreed that being in a separate classroom would not be beneficial for the ELLs.

Table 24

ELLs should stay in the separate ELL classroom until they are able to speak the English language proficiently.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	0.0%	0
Unsure	13.0%	3
Disagree	69.6%	16
Strongly Disagree	17.4%	4
answered question		23
skipped question		5

The majority of the teachers surveyed were interested in receiving more training (see Table 25). While limited training will not totally prepare teachers to work with ELLs, it appears that it will at least increase teachers' sensitivity to the needs of their linguistically diverse students (Walker et al., 2004). Even though these specific teachers responded favorable with having ELLs in their classroom, Garcia-Nevarez et al. (2005) reminds us that more formal training is associated with positive language attitudes.

Table 25

I would be interested in receiving more training in working with ELL students.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	18.2%	4
Agree	36.4%	8
Unsure	36.4%	8
Disagree	4.5%	1
Strongly Disagree	4.5%	1
answered question		22
skipped question		6

Surrounding ELLs with the English language is not a bad idea, but like Harper & de Jong (2004) mention, ELLs need to be exposed to comprehensible English and provided with meaningful opportunities to interact in English. If students do not understand what is being taught to them, they will not really learn the information. So while these teachers' responses indicate that they are unsure whether this statement is true or not, teachers need to realize that by just surrounding the ELLs with the language is not enough to help them learn.

Table 26

The best way to learn English would be to just put them in the mainstream classroom. The more they are surrounded by the language, the more quickly they will learn.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	4.3%	1
Agree	30.4%	7
Unsure	26.1%	6
Disagree	34.8%	8
Strongly Disagree	4.3%	1
answered question		23
skipped question		5

In a national survey, nearly two-thirds of the people that answered the survey assumed that English was already the official language of the United States (Crawford, 1989). In truth, the United States does not have an official language. Therefore, teachers should not pressure students to speak English. In this survey, many of the respondents agreed that ELL students and parents do not need to speak only English (see Table 27).

Table 27

This is America so the ELL students and parents should only be speaking English.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	0.0%	0
Agree	4.3%	1
Unsure	4.3%	1
Disagree	78.3%	18
Strongly Disagree	13.0%	3
answered question		23
skipped question		5

This is one of the most important statements asked in the survey. Almost all teachers agreed or were unsure about enjoying having an ELL student in their classroom (see Table 28). Teacher's attitudes toward children's language and culture are important factors in the teaching and learning process (Garcia-Nevarez et al. 2005). Understanding these factors should increase the enjoyment of having ELL students in their classroom.

Table 28

I enjoy having ELL students in my classroom.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	17.4%	4
Agree	60.9%	14
Unsure	17.4%	4
Disagree	4.3%	1
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
answered question		23
skipped question		5

Limitations of Study

A limitation of this study is that only a very small sample of teachers responded to the survey and therefore is not representative of the population of teachers. While these are the opinions of this small group, it is not the opinion of all of the teachers in Western NY; therefore results should not be generalized to Western New York. Also, on several questions, there were a few teachers who did not respond to that particular question; it makes the results even more limited but it also makes one wonder as to why they were non-responsive. Sample sizes to each question are reported in the results section. To report accurately the opinions of the teachers in western New York, the sample size would need to be much larger and stratified.

Discussion

Findings concerning coursework

The purpose of this study was to see which of the myths and misnomers found in previous research was believed to be true in a county of western New York. Overall, it seems the teachers surveyed had a very positive attitude towards ELLs in the mainstream classroom. The findings also indicated that teachers would enjoy having an ELL in their classroom. Many encouraging findings came out of this survey, such as the fact that these teachers do not feel that ELLs should have less coursework to accommodate their language differences. Most of the teachers also felt that they should not expect less of this group of students either, which is important when working with ELLs. Teachers should be encouraged to try to do their best just as much or more than non-ELL students.

It was also encouraging to see that the majority of these teachers did not believe that English should be the only language spoken; that parents and students should be able to keep using their native language and celebrate their native culture. Respondents indicated that they believed their school openly welcomed ELLs and embraced their native cultures and language. This allows ELL students to feel like they are an important part of the school and local culture. Teachers who have a positive attitude about the students also are typically more encouraging and helpful to ELLs.

The teachers that were surveyed did not show many signs of believing several of the misnomers that were discussed in previous research. Ideas that ELLs are poor academic learners, they slow down the progress of other students in the classroom, and that they were a burden to mainstream classroom teachers were all statements that many of the teachers in the schools that

were surveyed disagreed with. This is a very encouraging sign that teachers may be becoming more educated about ELLs.

Findings concerning parents

Teachers who were surveyed were also very positive about the parents of the ELLs. The majority of the teachers felt that the parents of ELLs were just as involved with their children's education as non-ELL parents. Teachers also have a positive attitude about the ELLs and their parents trying to learn English. They also had a positive attitude, disagreeing with the statement about immigrants being in the country illegally. The fact that teachers answered positively about these specific statements is a good sign that teachers have some background knowledge about the ELLs. It is important that teachers have respect for the ELLs and their parents.

Findings concerning ELA

There were a few areas that the teachers who responded to the survey may need more professional development. An important area that needs to be taught is the amount of time that ELLs take to learn the English language. The survey indicated that some of the teachers were unsure about how long it should take for ELLs to be fluent in English. Another area that teachers need to be educated on is how to help immigrant ELLs adapt to the American culture and school life. It is the job of teachers to help the ELLs learn about the school life and culture, while teaching curriculum.

Teachers were also unsure as to where ELLs should be placed within the school, whether in the mainstream classroom or a separate classroom. Teachers were unsure if having an ELL in the classroom was a benefit to the class or if it would be a burden to have one in the mainstream classroom. With further education, teachers could learn plan lessons that will be useful for ELLs

and non-ELLs without many modifications. Teachers could also allow ELL students to teach the other students about their culture, which would be a benefit to the whole classroom.

One way to decrease belief of myths is to provide professional development to teachers. While the teachers responded favorably to many of the questions, there is always room for teachers to benefit from more education. Unfortunately, there were many teachers who were not very interested in receiving even though many of the teachers also felt that they were not adequately trained to work with ELLs.

Conclusion

Education is important for all teachers to keep current with the trends of teaching. There are constant changes with population and curriculum and teachers need to stay on top of it all. In current education programs, there is not a lot of training for pre-service teachers to work with ELLs. With the growing number of ELLs in the classroom, this may be an area that needs to be looked into further. Pre-service teachers should be required to take at least a course or two about teaching ELLs. This way, teachers would know about the language acquisition process and how long it takes for students to be fluent in the English language. For teachers to be able to work with all of their students, they need instruction on how to work with the different groups of students.

References

- Batt, E.G. (2008). Teachers' perceptions of ELL education: Potential solutions to overcome the greatest challenges. *Multicultural Education*, Spring.
- Berube, B. (2002). *Managing ELL programs in rural and small urban schools*. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL): Alexandria, VA.
- Brooks, K., Adams, S. and Morita-Mullaney, T. (2010). Creating inclusive learning communities for ELL students: Transforming school principals' perspectives. *Theory into Practice*, 49, 145-151.
- Bustos Flores, B. and Smith, H.L. (2008). Teachers' characteristics and attitudinal beliefs about linguistic and cultural diversity. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 31, 323-358.
- Capps, R., Passel, J.S., Perez-Lopez, D. and Fix, M. (2004). *A user's guide to data on immigrants in U.S. communities*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Carrier, K.A. (2005). Key issues for teaching English language learners in academic classrooms. *Middle School Journal*, November, 4-9.
- Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) (2007). *Adult Non-Native English Speakers in the United States: Part I: Background Information*. Retrieved March 26, 2012, from http://www.cal.org/caela/tools/program_development/elltoolkit/practool/14.htm
- Crawford, J. (1989). *Language freedom and restriction: A historical approach to the official language controversy*. Paper presented at the Annual International Native American Language Issues Institute, Billings, Montana, June 8-9, 1989.

Cultural Diversity – Community Health Assessment, STEPS Grant to Chautauqua County.

Cultural Diversity and Language Proficiency. Retrieved March 12, 2012, from

<http://www.fredonia.edu/org/steps/diversity/diversity.asp>.

Durgunoglu, A.Y. and Hughes, T. (2010). How prepared are the U.S. pre-service teachers to teach English Language Learners? *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in High Education*, 22(1), 32-41.

Exposito, S. and Favela, A (2003). Reflective Voices: Valuing Immigrant Students and Teaching with Ideological Clarity. *The Urban Review*, 35(1), 73-91.

Fix, M. and Passel, J. (2003). *U.S. immigration-trends & implications for schools*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Garcia-Nevarez, A., Stafford, M., and Arias, B. (2005). Arizona Elementary Teachers' Attitudes Toward English Language Learners and the Use of Spanish in Classroom Instruction. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 29(2).

Goldweber, A. (2005). *Integration is Crucial for New York's Rural Immigrants*. College of Agriculture and Life Sciences of Cornell University, Fall, 10-13.

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. *Chautauqua County NY*. Retrieved February 21, 2012, from <http://www.gcir.org/node/3259>.

Hansen-Thomas, H. and Cavagnetto (2010). What do mainstream middle school teachers think about their English Language Learners? A tri-state case study. *Bilingual Research*

Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education, 33(2), 249-266.

Harper, C. and Jong, E. (2004). Misconceptions about teaching English-language learners.

Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 48(2), 152-162.

Ideology. (n.d.). *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. Retrieved

December 15, 2012, from Dictionary.com website:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Ideology>

Jensen, L. (2006). *New immigrant settlements in rural America: Problems, prospects, and*

policies. University Park, PA: Carsey Institute.

Karabenick, S. and Noda, P. (2004). Professional Development Implications of Teachers' Beliefs

and Attitudes Toward English Language Learners. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 28(1).

Linguistic Diversity in ECE. Teacher attitudes. *EDU T&L 703.07*. Retrieved on January 27, 2012

from <http://ecelinguisticdiversity.wikidot.com/teacher-attitudes>

McCloskey, M. (2002). President's message: No child left behind. *TESOL Matters*, 12, 4.

Retrieved on February 22, 2012, from

http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/sec_document.asp?CID=193&DID=928

Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*.

Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

O'Brian, J. (2011). The system is broken and it's failing these kids: High school social studies

teachers' attitudes towards training for ELLs. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*,

35(1), 22-38.

- Pappamihiel, E. (2007). Helping preservice content-area teachers relate to English Language Learners: An investigation of attitudes and beliefs. *TELL Canada Journal*, 24(2), 42-60.
- Reeves, J.R. (2006). Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English-Language Learners in Mainstream Classrooms. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 99(3), 131-142.
- Rodriguez, D.; Manner, J.; and Darcy, S. (2010). Evolution of teacher perceptions regarding effective instruction for English Language Learners. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 9(2), 130-144.
- Tse, L. (2001). "Why don't they learn English?" *Separating fact from fallacy in the US language debate.* New York: Teachers College Press.
- US Census Bureau (2010). *Chautauqua County Quickfacts from the US Census Bureau.* Retrieved February 21, 2012 from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36013.html>.
- Walker, A., Shafer, J., and Liams, M. (2004). "Not in My Classroom": Teacher Attitudes Towards English Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 2(1), Winter.
- Yoon, B. (2007). Classroom teachers' understanding of the needs of English Language Learners and the influence on the students' identities. *The New Educator*, 3, 221-240.
- Yoon, B. (2008). Uninvited guests: The influence of Teachers' roles and pedagogies on the positioning of English Language Learners in the regular classroom. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(2), 495-522.

Youngs, C.S. and Youngs Jr., G.A. (2001). Predictors of mainstream teachers' attitudes toward ELL students. *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)*, 35(1), 97-120.

Appendix A

Human Subject Review Application



Request for Human Subjects Review

Complete both Part I and Part II of this application. Return to Human Subjects Review Committee, SUNY Fredonia, E 230 Thompson Hall. Phone: 716 673-3528; FAX 716 673-3802.

Part I

Project Name: Misconceptions that mainstream teachers may have about English language learners

Principal Investigator #1: Jennifer E. Lancaster

Check one of the following: Faculty/Staff Principal Investigator Student Principal Investigator

Signature of Principal Investigator #1

Department: TESOL Phone Number: Campus Address: Email Address:

Principal Investigator #2:

Check one of the following: Faculty/Staff Principal Investigator Student Principal Investigator

Signature of Principal Investigator #2

Department: Phone Number: Campus Address: Email Address:

(Additional Principal Investigators' information should be in the same format on an attached sheet.)

STUDENT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS MUST LIST THE SUPERVISING FACULTY MEMBER AND HAVE THE FACULTY SPONSOR SIGN THE FACULTY VERIFICATION THAT APPEARS BELOW.

Faculty Sponsor:

Faculty Verification: I have read this student's Application for Human Subjects (Part I and Part II). I accept responsibility for the manner in which this study will be carried out. I am convinced that benefits from this research outweigh any risks.

Signature of Faculty Sponsor Number of Subjects: 200-300

Type of Subjects: Male Female

Check all that apply: Adults, note the age range: 21 – 65 (Approximate age range) _____

Special subjects (Protected classes)

Pregnant women Children (<18 years of age)
 Other vulnerable group _____

Type of Procedures:

Check all that apply

Review of records Interview Hypnosis
 Observation
 Videotaping Photographs Self-disclosure
 Threats/Embarrassment Survey (mail-in, phone, in-person, in-class, on-line)
 Standardized Tests Recording of identifiable personal data
 Other (specify) _____

Where will research take place? Off campus Indicate place: Several Schools in Chautauqua County

On campus Indicate place _____

Time and Length: Date study will begin 3/5/12 _____ Date study will end 3/9/12 _____

Will subjects be compensated?

No
 Yes
If yes, specify nature and/or amount _____

Under what terms will subjects be compensated: _____

Who will obtain consent? _____ Jennifer E. Skelly _____

.....
I have completed the CITI On-Line Human Subjects Protection Training. A Certificate (or copy) is:

(Circle one)

on file in the Research Office.

Attached.

NOTE: For students, the supervising faculty member must also have completed the training.

- C. The way I plan on conducting this research is by doing a survey. The survey will be a Likert-scale which has questions relating to the teachers may hold about ELLs as found in the literature. There will also be an area for teachers to write comments on some of the misconceptions that are listed in this survey.
 - D. I have sent out emails to many school principals to ask for consent to allow me to send a survey out to the teachers in their buildings (see appendix A). For the ones who have allowed me to survey the teachers, I will send each teacher an email with the link to the survey I have created (see appendix B). If they opt to participate, the teachers will be given one week to complete the survey and send it back through the website SurveyMonkey.com. All of the survey information will be kept completely confidential and will be destroyed 60 days after they are received back to the researcher.
 - E. Returned surveys will be reviewed and each statement will be evaluated to see which misconceptions are found to be believed by the most teachers in rural Western New York.
3. Describe the individuals who will participate in your study, noting their age (or age ranges), gender, ethnic background, and health status (if known). Mention other characteristics that make your subjects identifiable (for example, “elderly males living in supervised living arrangements in rural Chautauqua County). There are protected classes of subjects (i.e., pregnant women, children under the age of 18 years, individuals with disabilities, prisoners, and any individual viewed as vulnerable). If your subject pool includes members of these protected classes or has the potential for inclusion of these protected classes, full Human Subjects Review Committee review will be necessary and the more complete your Request for Review, the more likely a timely approval will be issued.

-I will be working with in-service teachers, grades K-12, in several rural western NY schools. The ages of these teachers will all be above the age of 18, approximately 18-65 years old. They will be both male and female from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

4. Identify the data you hope to collect and how you will collect those data. Mention all instruments you will use and **attach a copy of these instruments to your application**. Please note that if you are using a piece of equipment, you just need to describe that equipment. Describe how you will use the information you collect; that is, to further research on your topic, to further research, to provide some form of treatment, to improve student performance, etc. Describe what will happen to the data/videotapes/audiotapes you collect upon the completion of the study.

-The data I hope to collect is how popular different misconceptions are throughout the schools in rural Western NY. I will be using a survey that I will send out through the website SurveyMonkey.com. The survey I plan on using is attached, for consideration (see appendix C). With the information that I receive back, I will evaluate the responses that are given concerning the misconceptions to see if there is a link to see if there is a link between the misconceptions and how much education the teacher has had and the amount of experience the teacher has.

5. Describe how you will recruit subjects for your study and how you will handle obtaining their informed consent for participation. Informed consent is one of the most important components of conducting research that involves living human subjects. State who will obtain consent and what information on your study will be provided to potential subjects. Federal regulations mandate that if a research study involves subjects under 18 years of age, consent must be obtained from the parent

6. or legal guardian AND the minor child. You must have two separate forms when minor children are involved in your research: a parent form and a child consent form. Here at *Fredonia*, a child's consent form must be included in research protocol involving children ages 5 to 17 years. The language used in a minor child consent form must be appropriate to the age of the child. **You must attach a copy of all consent forms to your application.**

-I have gotten consent from many different school principals (see appendix A) by sending them emails asking for their permission to send the link for my survey to all of the mainstream teachers in their buildings.

7. This component contains four parts:
 - a. Identify any potential risks: I do not anticipate any risks.
 - b. Where appropriate, state how you will ensure that your subjects receive necessary medical or professional intervention if they have adverse effects to your treatment/research protocol: I do not anticipate any adverse effects to my survey. As this is voluntary, teachers can choose to not answer any question or withdraw completely from the survey at any time.
 - c. Tell how you will maintain the safety of your subjects during your study: This survey will pose no harm to any of the survey takers.
 - d. If there are risks in your study, tell how the risks are balanced by the benefits to be gained by the subjects from their participation in your study. Also mention the relationship of the risks to the knowledge that will be gained from your study: The information I will receive can help us better inform the teachers who ELLs are and how best to work with them. I do not believe there are any risks.
8. My survey does not deal with criminal acts, sexual conduct and behavior, drug and alcohol use, sensitivity and awareness to potential risks, and/or liabilities to your subjects.
9. Mention how you will prevent any risk to violating the confidentiality of the subjects involved in your study.

-There will not be any identifiable data that teachers will be asked to fill out. By virtue of having teachers opt to click a link to get to the survey on Survey Monkey, I will now know who has completed the surveys online.

If you have questions about your research project or how this application should be completed, please feel free to contact any of the following individuals:

Maggie Bryan-Peterson, Human Subjects Administrator and Director, Office of Sponsored Programs

Phone: 673-3528; e-mail: petersmb@fredonia.edu

Barbara Mallette, Chair, Human Subjects Committee, Professor, College of Education

Phone: 673-3311; e-mail: barbara.mallette@fredonia.edu

Cheryl Drout, Member, Human Subjects Committee, Chair, Psychology Department

Phone: 673-3129; e-mail: cheryl.drout@fredonia.edu

Alan Laflamme, Member, Human Subjects Committee, Chair, Sociology Department

Phone: 673-3205; e-mail: alan.laflamme@fredonia.edu

Bridget Russell, Member, Human Subjects Committee, Associate Professor, Speech Pathology/
Audiology Phone: 673-4616; e-mail: bridget.russell@fredonia.edu

Sally Turner, Member, Human Subjects Committee, Director, Counseling Center
Phone: 673-3424; e-mail: sally.murphy@fredonia.edu

Reference:

McCloskey, M. (2002). President's message: No child left behind. *TESOL Matters*, 12, 4. Retrieved on February 13, 2012, from http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/sec_document.asp?CID=193&DID=956&rcss=print&print=yes

Appendix B

Email to Principals

Good afternoon!

My name is Jennifer Skelly and I am currently in the graduate program at Fredonia State College, studying TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language). I am working on my thesis with the topic of what mainstream teachers' understandings about English Language Learners are. I am looking for your approval to approach the teachers in your school to see if they would be interested in answering a survey of approximately 30 questions concerning their understanding of English Language Learners. The survey will be completely confidential, as it will be sent to their email through the Survey Monkey website. I will not ask for any names of the teachers and the names of any schools that assist me in my research will not be mentioned in my thesis. I would appreciate your allowing me to conduct my research at your school with your teachers. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. My email address is mich2777@fredonia.edu

Thank you,

Jennifer E. Skelly

Appendix C

Email to Teachers

To:

From: "JEM313@hotmail.com via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>

Subject: Graduate Research Survey

Body: To Whom It May Concern:

This survey is part of a graduate student's research study. The purpose of this survey is to look into gaining insight on myths or misconceptions that mainstream teachers may have about English language learners (ELLs). The goal of the researcher is to add to current research literature on this topic. The study could be beneficial for school districts in the local area.

To better assist your understanding of English language learners, some definitions have been included here. An English language learner (ELL) indicates a person who is in the process of acquiring English and has a first language other than English. English language learners are language minority students. English as a Second Language (ELL) classrooms is a classroom where ELLs go to work on building their English skill with a trained ELL teacher.

This survey is completely voluntary and confidential. If you participate, you as a participant will remain unidentifiable. You have a right to withdraw from completing this survey at any point during the study, without any penalty. In order to ensure confidentiality, no identifiable information is required on this electronic survey. Furthermore, upon completion of the study, the surveys that the researcher collects will be shredded.

The survey is a twenty-five question, five-point Likert scale, along with seven questions for demographic purposes. This should only take about five to ten minutes of your time. The survey will be conducted from the moment you got this email until Friday at 6pm (one week duration).

There are minimal risks or and/or benefits to your participation in this study. Involvement in this research project is voluntary. You may skip any question you choose not to answer, withdraw at any time without penalty, or refuse to participate entirely.

If you choose to complete this survey, please follow these steps:

1. Click on the link that will take you to the survey on Survey Monkey.
2. Read each statement carefully and answer whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure,

Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with each of the statements.
3. Answer each of the statements to the best of your ability.
4. Submit the survey. Please remember, do not make mention of your name or your school's name anywhere on the survey.

Thank you for taking the time to help me with my research!

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

Contact information for any questions:

Jennifer E. Lancaster
Graduate Student
SUNY Fredonia
Mich2777@fredonia.edu

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Maggie Bryan-Peterson
Human Subjects Administrator and Director
Office of Sponsored Programs
(716) 673 - 3528
petersmb@fredonia.edu

Appendix D

Survey for Teachers

1. How many years have you been a public or private school teacher (including this year)?

- 1 - 3 years
- 3 - 7 years
- 7 - 10 years
- 10 - 15 years
- 15 - 25 years
- 25 + years

2. Are you:

- Male
- Female

3. Is English your native language?

- Yes
- No

4. Do you speak another language?

- No
- Yes, beginner level
- Yes, Intermediate level

Yes, fluently

5. Do you currently have any ELL students in your classroom?

Yes

No

6. Have you ever had an ELL student in your classroom?

No

Yes, 1-5 students

Yes, 6-10 students

Yes, 11-15 students

Yes, 16-20 students

Yes, 21+ students

7. Have you ever had any training in teaching ELL students?

None

In-Service workshops

College coursework

Other (please specify)

A Survey for Teachers

Please read each statement and mark the answer that best describes your opinion.

8. Real teaching/learning for English Language Learners (ELLs) happens in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Classroom.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. It is the responsibility of the ELLs to adapt to the American culture and school life.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. Teachers should lower their expectation of the ELLs to accommodate their language barrier.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. My school openly welcomes ELLs and embraces their native cultures and language.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. I feel I am adequately trained to work with ELLs

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. ELLs are poor academic learners who burden teachers with extra responsibility.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. ELLs should be fluent in English after two years of ELL instruction.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. ELLs should only use English so they can learn the English language more quickly.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. ELLs generally come to the U.S. from countries with inferior educational systems.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

17. ELLs have more behavior problems than non-ELLs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

18. ELLs are poor academic learners who burden teachers with extra responsibility.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. ELL parents are less involved in their children's education than non-ELL parents.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. Many of the ELLs in the U.S. are in our country illegally.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. ELLs take up more of my time in the classroom than non-ELLs do.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. The inclusion of ELLs in the classroom creates a more positive atmosphere.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree

Strongly Disagree

23. It is a good idea to assign less coursework to ELLs.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

24. ELL students in the general education classroom setting slow down the progress of other students in the classroom.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

25. Immigrant parents do not even try to learn English.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

26. Inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom is good in theory, but does not work in the real world.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. The inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom benefits all students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28. Mainstream teachers do not have time to deal with the needs of ELLs in their classroom.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. ELLs should stay in the separate ELL classroom until they are able to speak the English language proficiently.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

30. I would be interested in receiving more training in working with ELL students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

31. The best way to learn English would be to just put them in the mainstream classroom. The more they are surrounded by the language, the more quickly they will learn.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree

Strongly Disagree

32. This is America so the ELL students and parents should only be speaking English.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

33. I enjoy having ELL students in my classroom.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Prev

Done

Powered by **SurveyMonkey**

Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!