Barriers of Reclassified Former ELLs: Strategies for Success in the Mainstream

Classroom

by
Lyndsay Corey
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Abstract

Teachers receiving ELLs in their mainstream classroom need help integrating this population into the classroom. I propose that research-based strategies will support ELLs academic growth in literacy. Information for this capstone project was gathered through professional experiences, an observation, and a case study in an elementary mainstream reading classroom. This research aims to gather information about linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges former ELLs face in mainstream classrooms. As a result, I set out to find research-based strategies for success in this setting. I created a two-day professional development with the goal of helping general education practitioners support former English language students. Materials include various research-based strategies to implement in the classroom. Altogether, the findings highlight the imperative need for teachers to provide additional accommodations to former ELLs as they transition from a sheltered program into mainstream classes in order to maximize academic success.

Keywords: former English language learners (ELLs), reclassification, mainstream, English language proficiency (ELP), culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD)

Chapter 1

Overview of School District and Problem

  A major issue in the field of education is servicing English Language Learners (ELLs) once they exit English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. In the school district where I work as a teacher, ELLs attend three of nine elementary schools. Only in those sites are elementary age students identified as ELLs receiving ESL services. ELLs are bussed to these three schools from all over the district. This given school district has approximately 7,200 students and roughly 250, 3.6% of students are identified as English Language Learners. ELLs in this district speak over one hundred different languages. However, there are only five certified TESOL teachers who know how to best support the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student population while simultaneously supporting mainstream teachers. Moreover, the five teachers service these three elementary schools in addition to 12 other schools in the district. Servicing and training staff in a district with over 1,000 employees is challenging. Unfortunately, the problem escalates for ELL students that gain proficiency in English and exit ESL sheltered programs. Since, ELLs return to their home schools without proper supports in place for them or the mainstream teacher. Therefore, it is imperative that all mainstream teachers in my school district be trained on services and best practices when working with former ELL students.

  The school district where I work as a teacher uses the pull-out instruction method at the elementary level, meaning that ELLs are pulled out of mainstream classrooms to receive special instruction in ESL. The services prove to be extremely effective through

NYSESLAT scores. The district's NYSESLAT scores indicate rapid growth of English language acquisition, thus resulting in a minimal number of years in sheltered programs. However, the problem comes when students exit ESL services and are sent back to their home schools. ELLs that transition to their home schools face two challenges. First, they enter mainstream content areas classes with content area teachers who may or may not possess the necessary strategies to assist students in gaining content knowledge and improving academic growth. The second issue ELLs face is social integration. Although ELLs may live near their classmates, they have been experiencing school with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Now they may be the only linguistically and culturally diverse student in the mainstream class. Therefore, following their exit from ESL services, former ELLs at their home school face linguistic challenges, socio-cultural challenges, in addition to difficulties of the assessments and evaluations given to these students.

Significance of the Problem

As the district is becomingly increasingly more culturally and linguistically diverse, as well as with the 2015 adoption of the United States' Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the school is looking for ways to educate and train all staff. The district officials anticipate that regular education teachers will be teaching more and more ELLs in the near future. Therefore, there is an immediate need to train all educators to work effectively with former ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Emphasis is being placed on how to best support, monitor, and assess these students in literacy instruction, continuing on after exiting ESL services.

There are four problems that I have identified to address in this Capstone Project. First, regular classroom teachers need research-based strategies to modify lessons for literacy. Second, regular classroom teachers need ways to make their curriculum more culturally responsive or inclusive. Third, teachers need methods to assess the progress of ELLs, including outcomes and expectations for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Finally, regular classroom teachers need assistance transitioning ELLs into the mainstream classroom in a manner that will not result in ELLs facing socio-emotional issues and a feeling of isolation.

The importance of the first issue centers around the fact that teachers receiving ELLs at their home schools need help integrating this population into the classroom and assistance with research-based strategies that will support ELLs academic growth in literacy. Moreover, mainstream teachers need training at home schools where there are no ESL services or staff available.

The importance of the second issue I have identified is that reclassified ELLs struggle with academic vocabulary and content when reading texts with little to no prior background knowledge or experience. Specifically, commanding level ELL students in my mainstream reading classroom struggle in reading as they find themselves culturally and linguistically isolated from teachers and many of their peers. However, ELLs struggle less with texts that builds on their background knowledge and lived experiences. As evident in the study by Johnson and Johnson (2016), motivation heightens by integrating students' background knowledge and interests into a literacy lesson. The reason being that meaningful activities result in higher academic achievement. With this

being said, teachers would benefit from learning strategies to make their curriculum more culturally responsive and inclusive.

The above notion furthers the need of methods for teachers to assess the progress of ELLs, including outcomes and expectations for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Improvement in motivation also ties into assessments and evaluations of former ELL students. It is difficult to truly assess and evaluate ELL students due to the fact that errors in reading are often due to their linguistic challenges and lack of background knowledge. As stated by The National Research Council in their 2000 report, "A test cannot provide valid information about a student's knowledge or skills if a language barrier prevents the students from demonstrating what they know and can do" (Martiniello, 2008, p. 334). New York State also recognizes challenges ELLs face when taking state assessments. Under the New York State Department of Education, Commissioner's Regulation (CR Part 154, 2018) requires districts to provide former ELLs with testing accommodations for up to two years after exiting ELL status. This requirement was mandated in order to "provide former ELLs an opportunity to demonstrate their content knowledge by leveling the playing field while they continue to develop their linguistic and academic skills" (NYSED, 2019). This adopted amendment reinforces the fact that ELLs, although exited from ESL programs, still need additional support in the mainstream classroom. Nonetheless, ELL students are expected to meet the same academic standards as their peers, however struggle to achieve a 3 out of a 4 maximum points on their ELA state assessments. More often than not students score a minimum score of a 1 or 2 on this

high-stake assessment. Therefore, general education practitioners would benefit from methods to assess former ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Finally, the importance of my final identified problem centers around the fact that the background knowledge and experiences of many ELL students differ from their native English peers. Once ELLs return to their home school, they find that many of their peers have been classmates Kindergarten. Therefore, ELLs face two issues as they are mainstreamed with their cohort. First, ELLs often do not share the same cultural experiences as native English students. Second, the ELA curriculum is not multicultural, as it does not reflect diverse cultures. When considering these two circumstances, ELLs find themselves struggling in socio-cultural contexts. In addition, culturally and linguistically diverse ELLs attend a new school with new peers following their exit of ESL services. For instance, in the school where I work as a teacher, ELLs that transition into mainstream classrooms in their home schools spend time with other ELLs or by themselves rather than with English dominant peers. In addition, in the classroom ELLs prefer working alone rather than in pairs or groups.

The academic and social needs of former ELLs transitioning in to mainstream classrooms leads us directly to the issue of teacher training. General practitioners must be trained to work with the ELL population. This training is imperative as former ELLs continue to need help with linguistic, socio-cultural, and academic success as they transition from a sheltered program into mainstream classes in their home schools.

My goal of this Capstone Project is to build an argument for better teacher training for transitioning the ELL population in mainstream classrooms. As experienced

firsthand in the classroom as well as through various research, it is evident that all teachers need to be trained on services and best practices when working with former ELL students.

 In chapter 2, I present research regarding best practices for regular education teachers working with students that exit ESL services. This research includes laws in which effect the education of ELLs as well as effective strategies to minimize challenges in which former ELLs face in the mainstream classroom.

 Then in chapter 3, I present and discuss a professional development I created in order to help teachers working with students that have exited ESL programs and entered the mainstream classroom. The goal of this professional development is to educate mainstream teachers on how to best support ELLs by: incorporating strategies to modify lessons for literacy; including strategies to make the curriculum more culturally responsive or inclusive; assessing progress of outcomes and expectations for ELLs in mainstream classes; and overall guidance for smoothly transitioning ELLs into the mainstream classroom in a way that minimizes isolation.

 In chapter 4, I address implications for teaching former ELLs as well as future research that needs to be done in terms of training teachers to work ELLs that have exited sheltered ESL programs. Finally, I include professional development products and supplementary materials I created along with a detailed agenda, case study, references, and appendices.

Chapter 2

Federal and State Laws Educating ELLs

In order for all teachers to properly support English language learners (ELLs) in literacy while monitoring and assessing their progress in the mainstream classroom, teachers must first gain an understanding of the federal and state laws for educating ELLs. States and local school districts are required under federal and state laws to identify ELLs and provide appropriate language support services to assist students who classify as ELLs. The initial classification of students is based on their scores on a statewide English language proficiency assessment called the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). The NYSITELL is given upon enrollment in schools. The results of this high-stake test indicate whether or not students are identified as an ELL and are eligible to receive bilingual and/or ESL support services (NYSED, 2014). Moreover, the results, as indicated in New York State Education Department's *Guide to the NYSITELL*, will also help teachers "inform instruction by determining a student's relative strengths in each modality (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking)" (p. 5).

Following initial ELL placement, all ELL students enrolled in grades K-12 in New York State are annually assessed for English language proficiency (ELP) on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). There are five ELP levels that result from the NYSESLAT. Rating from least to greatest proficiency, the levels are as follows: entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding, and commanding. These levels differ from state to state. Furthermore, the level indicates the

type and amount of support each ELL will receive in order to participate in the grade-level classroom. NYSED (2017) describes indicators of each level as following: An Entering ELL greatly depends on supports and structures to advance in academic language skills. An Emerging ELL shows some independence on supports and structures to advance in academic language skills A Transitioning ELL shows some independence in advancing academic language skills. An Expanding ELL shows great independence in advancing academic language skills. Finally, a Commanding level ELL is one who has met the state standard and demonstrates proficiency. As students become more proficient in English, specifically scoring at the Commanding level as indicated on the NYSESLAT, they are eligible to exit ELL status (New York State Education Department, 2015). Under Commissioner's Regulation section 154-3.4 (2018), students are entitled to two years of former ELL services and testing accommodations on New York State assessments upon exiting ELL status. This regulation emphasizes that fact that the U.S. realizes that while ELLs may be eligible to exit ESL services, they still face additional challenges in the mainstream classroom in terms of instruction and assessments.

As explained by the United States Department of Education (2016), current federal and state monitoring systems require educators to regularly monitor, assess, and track the progress of former ELLs in both English language proficiency in all four language domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Title III of the United States federal policy No Child Left Behind Act (2002) required and funded states to annually assess ELLs in monitoring their progress towards English Language Proficiency (ELP). Additionally, educators are required to regularly monitor, assess, and track ELLs

in effectively acquiring grade-level content knowledge in English without ESL services for two years following reclassification. As discussed by Shin (2018) however, research indicates that in general, former ELLs lag behind non-ELLs in academic achievement, despite federal and state laws and regulations that require schools to provide ELLs with proper support services upon exiting ELL status.

A Call for Literacy Strategies in the Mainstream Classroom

As indicated in Chapter One, teachers receiving former ELLs at their home schools need help integrating the ELL population into the classroom and assistance with research-based strategies that will support ELLs academic growth in literacy. Perez and Holmes (2010) explain that simply immersing a student in a mainstream grade-level content area classroom does not guarantee that former ELL students will be able to engage in the curriculum. Furthermore, students may have developed enough English language proficiency to exit ESL services and enter the mainstream classroom. However, former ELLs continue to face linguistic challenges as they struggle to meet grade-level academic content. As indicated by Cummins (2000), the language needed for academic discourse is more difficult to acquire than the informal language of day-to-day interaction. Lightbown and Spada (2013) stress that students are often perceived as "fluent" in their second language due to their ability to acquire basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) within a relatively short time. Sometimes BICS is acquired in as little as a year or two. Students are placed in mainstream classrooms due to being perceived as fluent in English and exiting ELL status. Ultimately, placed with teachers who are often untrained in TESOL practices. These teachers, however, often wrongfully

assume that academic difficulties stem from a lack of motivation or a learning disability,

rather than identifying the lag as a result of limited language skills (Lightbown & Spada,

2013). These limited language skills in mainstream content area classrooms are often due

to former ELLs' lack of what Cummins (2000) defines as cognitive academic language

proficiency (CALP). However, CALP may take from five to seven years for students to

develop grade-level academic skills. With this being said, linguistic challenges former

ELLs face in the mainstream classroom significantly impact student academic

achievement. Thus, teachers need training to work with ELLs that no longer receive

services and are entered into the mainstream classroom.

Research indicates that linguistic challenges significantly impact student

achievement in the mainstream literacy classroom (Perez &Holmes, 2010). Furthermore,

Perez & Holmes (2010) explain that teachers struggle with the challenge of meeting

content curriculum standards while simultaneously addressing the literacy needs of their

ELL students. Regalla (2012) explains that former ELLs not only face a double workload

in comparison to their English-speaking peers, but that they are also often taught by

teachers who are unprepared to meet their linguistic needs. Therefore, it is imperative

classroom teachers receive in-service training that includes information on the use

research-based strategies to improve linguistic challenges for former ELLs.

It is a known fact that proficiency in a students' first language often translates to

second language acquisition. Therefore, it is beneficial for mainstream teachers to be

knowledgeable of and build on former ELLs' existing academic knowledge from their

native language. Perez and Holmes (2010) indicate that many content-specific terms have

cognates in other languages. Cognates are words that look and mean the same in multiple languages. Understanding the power of cognates can support former ELLs' comprehension of cognitive academic language in content areas. One strategy general education teachers could use in the mainstream classroom is to create a word wall with translations of words and/or cognates of words for former ELLs to aid learning. Additionally, in order to provide effective instruction of academic vocabulary that former ELLs may be lacking, regular education teachers must introduce and teach content vocabulary explicitly and in context. Moreover, the use of visual cues can be used to enhance CLD students' understanding of new vocabulary terms (Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010). Furthermore, as explained by Lightbown and Spada (2013), reading is a valuable source of new vocabulary for students, specifically for students with intermediate levels of ELP. Through reading, students are likely to encounter new content vocabulary words. This increases the likelihood that students figure out the meaning of these new words enough to remember them when they encounter these words in a new context.

Lastly is the need for both content and language objectives within lessons in the mainstream classroom. Regalla (2012) emphasizes that the language used to communicate academic content is of equal importance to ELLs as the content itself. With this being said, general education practitioners must identify and teach language objectives while simultaneously teaching academic language objectives in order to make the content comprehensible to former ELLs. However, Regalla (2012) stresses that language objectives include not only key vocabulary, but other language structures as

well. These other language structures include advanced grammar and sentence structures which are necessary for former ELLs when expressing their content knowledge orally and in writing. Furthermore, Regalla (2012) emphasizes that teachers can make academic content accessibly teaching necessary language skills during lessons and by integrating activities that help students acquire those language skills while learning the academic content. By implementing these strategies in the classroom, linguistic challenges in literacy would be minimized and the academic achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs could dwindle.

Creating a More Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Curriculum

As indicated as issue two in chapter one, teachers need strategies for making their curriculum more culturally responsive and inclusive (Gay, 2002). Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p.106). As identified in my teaching, reclassified ELLs struggle with academic vocabulary and content when reading texts with little to no prior background knowledge or experience. However, students struggle less with texts that builds on their background knowledge and lived experiences. With this being said, classroom teachers must strategically build a bridge between the lives and experiences of former ELLs and their proficient English-speaking peers so that they can engage in grade-level content together. Moreover, Gay (2002) indicates that students have higher interest in learning and are able to learn easier and more thoroughly when lessons are personally meaningful.

One way in which classroom teachers can build this bridge is by taking into consideration the sociocultural dimension. The sociocultural dimension is an aspect in which mainstream teachers must take into consideration in order to make their curriculum more culturally responsive and inclusive. Perez and Holmes (2010) define the sociocultural dimension as things in a students' life which define who he or she is as an individual. The sociocultural dimension is especially important to consider when teaching CLD former ELL students who have entered a mainstream classroom. Knowing such information allows teachers to make meaningful connections between daily instruction and students' lives. In addition, this knowledge will help students to feel welcomed, appreciated, and comfortable sharing their background with the class. In return, development of academic literacy is enhanced. In fact, students' heightened motivation results in higher academic achievement.

As Johnson and Johnson (2016) so wonderfully put it:

> By empowering ELL students as classroom leaders and honoring the
> wealth of cultural capital they bring to school every day, teachers can
> counter the hegemony of academic and linguistic standardization that
> continues to marginalize culturally diverse students and communities in
> U.S. schools. (p. 117)

Strategies depicting CLD former ELL students.

There are several effective practices for differentiation in the mainstream classroom to enhance literacy develop indicated throughout research. These practices include multicultural literature and materials that depict the culturally and linguistically

diverse students in the classroom, small group work, and one-on-one support (Herrera et al., 2010). Additionally, repeated readings, the use of visuals and audio, making connections between content and real-life, and explicit content academic vocabulary teaching are more effective practices teachers should implement in the mainstream classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 2016). In summary, research shows that regular classroom teachers can create welcoming classroom environments through the use of several strategies and instructional activities. The implementation of such strategies and activities can help to minimize sociocultural challenges former ELLs may be facing as they enter the mainstream classroom by ensuring students build relationships amongst the teacher and non-ELL peers.

Implementing Clear Outcomes and Expectations to Assess Progress

As indicated as the third identified issue in chapter one, teachers need methods to assess the progress of ELLs. This includes implementing clear outcomes and expectations in the mainstream classroom. Former ELLs face assessment challenges in the mainstream classroom on a daily basis. These challenges occur both on formative and summative classroom assessments as well as on high-stake state assessments in terms of language demands and grade-level academic content. Boals et al. (2015) explain that the educational rights of ELL students have been federally protected for over 40 years. The source of the stability derives from the landmark Supreme Court case of *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), which acknowledged language plays a central role in ensuring English language learners have equal access to academic content. A shift in educational policies followed this case, including the reauthorization of the Elementary and Education Act (ESEA)

under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the College and Career Readiness Standards. These educational policies have greatly changed the ways ELLs are assessed for progress in English proficiency and core content areas. Heightening accountability provisions for ELLs and more explicit language demands of content learning have been added to assessments for all students, ELLs and former ELLs included (Boals et al., 2015). Laws regarding the education of ELLs are set in place to ensure students are receiving adequate and fair learning conditions. Their progress in linguistic and academic development is monitored until they are no longer in need of ESL services and then may be reclassified as a former ELL. In reality, however, former ELLs still require additional support in both language and grade-level academic content development. Additional supports are especially needed on assessments in the mainstream classroom in order to make adequate progress following their exit. Furthermore, as indicated by Boals et al. (2015), assessments require sensitivity to the diverse educational, language, and cultural backgrounds of ELLs. This requirement is suggested so that every student is given the same opportunity to give his or her best regardless of students' backgrounds. This way, accurate results are received. Moreover, ELLs are less likely to produce valid measures of language and academic knowledge when assessments do not take into consideration students' backgrounds.

Reclassification as a former ELL is an important milestone (Mavrogordato & White, 2017). However, this milestone comes with profound educational changes that greatly impact the lives of former ELL students. Abedi and Faltis (2015) propose the integral role high-stakes state and district assessment performance play in the instruction,

placement, and supports provided to students with diverse learning needs. For example, the process of initial identification, classification, and reclassification of ELL students is based on the results of a single English language proficiency test. This one assessment may jeopardize a student's academic path, as a student may be improperly classified and miss the opportunity to receive appropriate ESL support and services. In some instances, the placement exam may delay entering the mainstream classroom and miss the opportunity to engage with grade-level content. Therefore, it is crucial that high-stakes assessments are constructed, used, and evaluated properly and accurately (Adedi & Faltis, 2015). Moreover, Carroll and Bailey (2016), make clear that a decision that will significantly impact students should take into consideration not just scores from a single assessment. Rather, placement should include other relevant information as well, such as classroom grades, teacher reports, and parent reports to determine whether a student is eligible to exit ESL services.

Students are withdrawn from ESL services and reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) former ELLs when scoring at a commanding level of English language proficiency on the NYSESLAT exam. As I stated before, students are sent back to their home schools and placed into the mainstream classroom. In this new placement, former ELLs are expected to meet the same standards as their native English-speaking peers. Umansky and Reardon (2014), state that while students are identified as ELLs, they are provided additional supports by specially trained teachers. Teachers in turn modify content area instruction and assessments to make it more accessible and regularly monitor English language proficiency and development. However, once reclassified, students no

longer have access to these specially trained teachers and services. Former ELLs are entitled to two years of extra time for task completion and dictionaries on state exams. This population of students are now exposed to new teachers who are likely not specially trained or prepared to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse former ELLs. Therefore, these teachers are often unaware of how to assess the progress and expectations for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. In addition, in the mainstream classroom ELLs are exposed to new non-ELL peers, course content, instructional techniques and resources, and more challenging assessments.

According to Slama (2014), ELLs often do not have the adequate skills to access the mainstream curriculum following their exit of ESL services, "despite a half century of U.S. federal and state legislation spelling out ELs' access to high-quality and adequately funded language-learning programs" (p. 221). As indicated throughout Slama's article, various prior research studies examining academic outcomes following reclassification showed that a considerable amount of former ELLs lag behind mainstream peers academically after exiting language-learning programs. Furthermore, research indicates that these gaps typically widen over time following the exit. For this reason, amongst others, it is imperative that classroom teachers are trained to integrate former ELLs into the mainstream classroom in order to implement research-based strategies that will support academic growth in literacy in addition to having the knowledge of how to monitor and assess ELLs. Finally, teachers must be trained to assess whether a students' reading difficulty is related to English language proficiency or other it is a true reading problem.

As witnessed firsthand in the mainstream reading classroom, former ELLs struggle with academic vocabulary and context on assessments with little to no background knowledge or experience. As explained by DelliCarpini (2009), ELLs face the challenge of acquiring second language acquisition and grade level content-knowledge development simultaneously. The author furthers this notion by emphasizing that it is difficult to determine whether the results of ELLs' assessments inform us about their content knowledge or English language ability. One major challenge ELLs face on both classroom and high-stakes assessments brings us back to the lack of CALP (Cummins, 2000). A student may be unfamiliar with vocabulary use on assessments and lack background knowledge and experiences within questions that provide cultural contexts that ELLs may find unfamiliar. Furthermore, assessments often depict middle-class Americans (DelliCarpini, 2009).

Strategies for assessing former ELLs appropriately.

Although challenging, there are several ways ELLs can be assessed in the mainstream classroom to provide valid results. Valid assessments will both show how former ELLs are progressing in terms of English language proficiency (ELP) and content knowledge. In addition, valid assessments will determine any learning gaps which may be present. Boals et al. (2019) provide suggestions to improve the validity and broaden the uses of assessments for ELLs. These strategies include: putting learners at the forefront of test design and assessment practices to embrace ELLs' language abilities as assets; using both language and content assessment as a measure of ensuring ELLs' opportunities for learning; connecting assessments to classroom instruction; integrating

technology; broadening the use of assessments to support instruction; and providing professional development to enable educators to use assessment information appropriately and effectively. Teachers gain better understandings of their ELLs interests and abilities by connecting classroom tasks and assessments to students' lives and making them more culturally relevant and meaningful (Dellicarpini, 2009). In addition, Dellicarpini (2009) indicates that ELLs gain a deeper understanding of content knowledge with assessments connected to their skills, interests, abilities, and personal lives. Through the implementation of these research-based strategies amongst others, classroom teachers will be able to better determine expectations to monitor and assess the progress of ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

In addition, effective research-based strategy for making academic content in the mainstream classroom comprehensible to former ELLs and minimizing challenges ELLs face is a necessity. One way is the use of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP ®) model. The SIOP® model was used in my previous school district in order to enhance literacy instruction for ELLs. My experiences with this model were positive and assisted in making academic content comprehensible to former ELLs. For instance, Echevarria and Vogt (2010) emphasize that the SIOP® model is "the kind of instruction that gives English learners the best chance of achieving academically while developing English proficiency" (p. 8). While using this model, classroom teachers are able to remain teaching the regular curriculum. However, this model aids teachers in modifying academic content while promoting student growth in ELP. Also, the SIOP® model addresses social challenges students may be facing in the mainstream classroom by

providing structured interactions between former ELLs and non-ELLs within the lesson to maximize student engagement. In addition, within the SIOP® model, teachers create both language and content objectives for every lesson. By including both language and content objectives, teachers are ensuring students focus on both language and content growth in the mainstream classroom. Also, by using the SIOP® model, classroom teachers are building on students' funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). This theoretical framework requires bridging ELLs background knowledge and experiences to the lesson content. In addition, the SIOP® model includes explicit and contextualized academic vocabulary instruction embedded in meaningful contexts rather than in isolation (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010). Finally, the SIOP® model assists teachers in strategically assessing, both formally and informally, former ELLs' abilities to meet both the content and language learning targets of the lesson.

In addition to the SIOP® model, there are other methods for modifying literacy instruction in the mainstream classroom. Additional pedagogical resources general education teachers can use when working with former ELLs include CUNY Bridges, the GO TO Strategies by the Center for Applied Linguistics, WIDA, and Engage NY. Regular classroom teachers should implement a variety of strategies in the classroom when integrating the former ELL population into the classroom in order to support academic growth in literacy. By implementing the SIOP® model or a similar model in the mainstream classroom, teachers can better differentiate academic content lessons to meet the needs of diverse learners within the classroom, CLD former ELLs included.

Moreover, the SIOP model assists teachers to minimize linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges students may be facing while enhancing literacy development.

As indicated by Castañeda and Bautista (2011), the academic success of ELLs in the mainstream classroom depends on effective instruction and assessment. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers implement strategies to meet the specialized needs of former ELLs. Castañeda and Bautista emphasize four strategies to implement in the mainstream classroom in order to support students' language and content learning, including tailoring assessment to the language proficiency of ELLs, making assessment tasks accessible, documenting student growth, and diversifying ways in which ELLs can demonstrate content knowledge and understanding. Casañeda and Bautista also indicate that "modifying for ELLs does *not* mean compromising or lowering the content of the lesson of difficulty of the assessment task; it requires making the content or the task comprehensible and attainable" (p. 43). Furthermore, some strategies to accomplish this task include highlighting key vocabulary, providing a word bank or sentence strips, allowing students to use pictures rather than words, providing examples, and limiting choices. Tickets out the door are another assessment strategy to implement in order to provide direct feedback to the teacher to determine whether students have achieved the language and content targets of the lesson. Through the use of strategic classroom-based assessments, general education practitioners can make instructional decisions daily on how to best monitor and support former ELL students' language and content learning.

Transitioning ELLs into the Mainstream Classroom to Minimize Isolation

Finally, as indicated as the fourth and final identified issue in chapter one, regular classroom teachers need assistance transitioning ELLs into the mainstream classroom in a manner that will not result in ELLs facing socio-emotional issues and a feeling of isolation. In addition to linguistic and assessment challenges, former ELLs simultaneously face socio-cultural challenges in the mainstream classroom. ELLs that have exited contained programs enter their home schools without knowing teachers and students. As one could imagine, entering a new educational setting with new peers and teachers could be quite challenging and intimidating. Often time, this results in isolation as they may not be in class with other ELLs. Cho, Wang, and Christ (2019) describe the critical impact teachers' evaluations of ELL students' social-emotional competencies have. The authors explain that if a teacher has a deficit view on ELLs, it will likely affect pedagogical choices and the relationships teachers build with students. As a result, this population of students could likely feel marginalized.

As discussed by Islam and Park (2015), teachers often lack cultural understanding and knowledge of high-quality instruction for former ELLs. Moreover, without cultural understanding and knowledge, general education practitioners are not using purposeful and meaningful tasks that link students' backgrounds and experiences to the text. Schools throughout the U.S. are continuously increasing in cultural and linguistical diversity. Therefore, it is imperative regular teachers familiarize themselves with skills to be responsive to the needs of this population following their exit of ESL services. Furthermore, all teachers must know how to effectively plan and deliver differentiated

literacy instruction to best help ELLs overcome cultural and linguistic challenges they may face in school. In addition, both content and language objectives must be addressed in each lesson. Additionally, regular classroom teachers must have an understanding of first and second language and literacy acquisition.

Research-based strategies for improving sociocultural challenges.

In order to facilitate integration, teachers of ELLs should create classrooms in which there is respect for former ELLs. In order to create a welcoming environment, general education teachers should integrate students' funds of knowledge into the curriculum. Funds of knowledge are "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005, p. 73-74). In addition, general education teachers should have age-appropriate culturally relevant texts, materials, and activities that reflect the culturally and linguistic diversity of students. With this being said, Cho et al. (2019) explain the need for teachers to shift their attention towards identifying students' strengths, such as their experiences, knowledge, and interests and integrating these into their teaching practices. By focusing on students' strengths rather than focusing on skills ELLs lack in comparison to their native English-speaking peers, students could achieve more in the classroom.

Eun (2016) discusses the need for a sociocultural approach and perspective to teaching ELLs, specifically by including cultural and linguistic diversity into the classroom as a rich resource for all learners. The idea of sociocultural development originates from Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet Russian developmental and educational

psychologist. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) sociocultural theory "emphasizes the co-construction of development between the individual and his/her social world" (Eun, 2016, p. 124). This emphasized the need for interacting with and learning from other people and their diverse cultural and linguistic norms and values. Vygostky's sociocultural theory goes hand in hand with Krashen's comprehensible input theory (1981). Both theories argue that in that in order for effective ESL instruction that promotes both content and English Language Proficiency (ELP), students should engage in communicative interactions with proficient speakers of English through mixed-ability grouping. However, entering a classroom with all new peers can be quite intimidating. Former ELLs especially, as this population is given the challenge of needing to be proficient enough in ELP to communicate in social contexts as well as grade-level content with native English-speaking peers. Vygostky's theory, however, suggests learners can gain access to new knowledge when they have support from an interlocutor (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Researchers Johnson and Johnson (2016) propose extra consideration be taken into account when designing linguistically appropriate lessons for students who do not speak English as a first language. Teachers must consider intrinsic motivation, by building relationships with students and employing personalized learning that draws on social, emotional, and intellectual dimensions to guide classroom activities. As evident in Johnson and Johnson's study, that by integrating students' background knowledge and interests into a literacy lesson, the activities become meaningful. With the

implementation of these strategies in the mainstream literacy classroom, ELLs will transition easier into the mainstream classroom despite socio-cultural differences.

Summary of Literature Regarding Former ELLs

As clearly indicated throughout research, although exited from ESL services, the needs of ELLs differ from general education students in the mainstream classroom. As former ELLs continue to face challenges in the mainstream classroom, regular classroom teachers must differentiate instruction to meet the needs of these students. Research clearly indicates that former ELLs need special attention to overcome linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges. Additionally, teachers must work to minimize these challenges in productive and meaningful ways through the implementation of research-based strategies that continue to develop students' linguistic and academic grade-level content growth.

In chapter 3, I explain a professional development and its supplementary materials I created. The goal of this professional development is to mitigate the problem of general education practitioners being unprepared to assist former ELLs in overcoming linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges in the mainstream classroom. In addition, this professional development provides teachers with research-based strategies for modifying lessons for literacy instruction for former ELLs. Furthermore, this professional development includes strategies for making the curriculum more culturally responsive or inclusive, strategies for assessing the progress of ELLs, and strategies for easing the transition of reclassified ELLs into the mainstream classroom to minimize the feeling of isolation.

Chapter 3

In this chapter I will present and discuss a professional development and its products designed for regular classroom teachers working with students that exit ESL services. The purpose of this PD is to address the problem identified in chapter one, as former ELL students continue to need help with linguistic, socio-cultural, and academic success as they transition from a sheltered program into mainstream classes in their home schools. Therefore, this PD is intended to educate general education practitioners working with students that have exited ESL programs on how to best support former ELLs by: incorporating strategies to modify lessons for literacy; including strategies to make the curriculum more culturally responsive or inclusive; assessing progress of outcomes and expectations for ELLs in mainstream classes; and overall guidance for smoothly transitioning ELLs into the mainstream classroom in a way that minimizes isolation.

As evident through my practicum case study (see Appendix B), former ELL students struggle immensely in terms of linguistic challenges, socio-cultural contexts, and the complexity of assessments and evaluations when they are taught by untrained regular classroom teachers. Furthermore, untrained teachers are often unfamiliar with and unprepared to incorporate students' funds of knowledge into daily lessons (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) and modify content area instruction in order to meet the needs of these diverse students. Often challenges former ELLs are facing may not be identified as such and the appropriate mediations in the classroom continue broadening academic gaps. With this being said, this professional development aims to connect practice and theory for

mainstream practitioners in order to help find ways to address linguistic challenges, socio-cultural challenges, as well as assessment challenges. The professional development I created is a two-day session.

Day One

During the first day, teachers will learn important information about ELLs through a PowerPoint presentation I created. This day begins with introductions of myself as a future certified TESOL practitioner as well as a run through of the day's agenda along with learning targets for the session (see Appendix A, Figure 1). Teachers then begin with a word splash (see Appendix A, Figure 2). The purpose of this word splash is to activate any background knowledge teachers may have by asking them to write a paragraph using common terms associated with educating former ELLs. Teachers will then be asked to share paragraphs with one another at the table. Additionally, volunteers will be asked to share their paragraphs aloud with everyone attending the PD.

Throughout the PowerPoint, mainstream teachers first learn a definition for ELLs and former ELLs, the population of ELLs in the United States, and common languages spoken among ELLs in the U.S. Additionally, teachers learn about United States and New York State laws for educating ELLs. The purpose behind this is to ensure mainstream teachers are educated on and aware of the laws and regulations to ensure all students are receiving an equal education with appropriate accommodations on classroom assignments and assessments.

Next, teachers will do a turn and talk at their tables. During this turn and talk, colleagues are asked to discuss amongst one another if they've every taught a former

ELL in their mainstream classroom. If so, teachers are asked to discuss successes and challenges from their experiences. Following, teachers will receive information on the various barriers former ELLs face in the mainstream classroom. The purpose of teaching this is to ensure all teachers realize that although ELLs may have exited ESL services, this population still struggles and requires additional support in the mainstream classroom. Next, I present and discuss two common misconceptions mainstream teachers have in terms of former ELLs. We then discuss the three main challenges former ELLs face, including: linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges. I will present the information within the slideshow to the audience. Teachers will fill out a graphic organizer (see Appendix A, Figure 3) to take notes on the information presented and then discuss such information with table partners.

  Following this discussion, explanations of a supplementary material I created is presented. This supplementary material is a pamphlet (see Appendix A, Figure 4) that all attendees will receive during this time. This pamphlet includes important information for teaching former ELLs. Some this information includes strategies for incorporating students' funds of knowledge; incorporating multicultural materials that represent the diversity of students; strategies/modifications for differentiating instruction and material to make is accessible for students; various tips for forms of assessments for ELLs; and tips for monitoring ELLs following their exit of services. I include this material as a summary of the PowerPoint information for non-ENL teachers to use as a quick reference in the mainstream classroom in order to best meet the needs of former ELLs.

Next, teachers will read an excerpt from my case study (see Appendix A, Figure 5) which includes information and challenges a former ELL faced in the mainstream elementary classroom. Teachers will answer a guiding question to promote discussion amongst table partners. From here, teachers split into three stations to learn more specifics about each of these three challenges in the mainstream classroom. In addition, teachers will plan additional supports and accommodations using research-based strategies to alleviate these challenges the sample student from the excerpt is facing. Each station will be thirty minutes, and all attendees will have a turn at each of the three stations. The three stations will be run by myself as well as the other trained and certified ENL teachers in the district who will support the general education practitioners. The purpose of breaking teachers into stations where they learn about and plan strategies is to ensure they have knowledge of these challenges and exposure to research-based strategies so that they can effectively implement these strategies and accommodations as they witness former ELLs struggling. In addition, teachers will be encouraged to use the pamphlets (Appendix A, Figure 4) handed out prior to this portion of the PD, as these brochures are full of lists research-based strategies to minimize linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges former ELLs face in the mainstream classroom.

In station one, teachers will use the excerpt from the sample student to identify challenges this former ELL student is facing in the mainstream classroom. Teachers will use the last column on their graphic organizers (Appendix A, Figure 3) from used previously in the PD where they took notes on common linguistic challenges former ELLs face in the mainstream classroom to begin to plan for strategies in which could

minimize these challenges. Through discussions with colleagues at the station as well as through discussion with the ENL teacher at this station, the group will document strategies on the graphic organizer in which would minimize these challenges.

Likewise, in station two teachers will use the excerpt from the sample study to identify socio-cultural challenges this former ELL is facing in the mainstream classroom. The teachers will again use their graphic organizers to plan for and document strategies in which could be implemented to minimize these sociocultural challenges and improve learning.

Finally, in station three teachers will use the excerpt again to identify assessment challenges this former ELL is facing in the mainstream classroom. Through discussions with colleagues and the ENL teacher, general education practitioners will plan for and document research-based strategies in which will minimize these assessment challenges.

By using the excerpt from the sample student, teachers can begin to identify challenges former ELLs face in the mainstream classroom and then plan for additional supports. Furthermore, as explained by Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla (2010), it is essential to root instruction in a research-based approach to literacy instruction when promoting reading and writing development among CLD students.

Teachers will then have a lunch break before moving into creating language objectives. In this portion of the professional development, I first explain the importance of language objectives when teaching former ELLs. Next, we begin practicing creating language objectives as a group. The PD then moves into creating daily lesson plans in the mainstream classroom to plan for the additional needs of former ELLs in the mainstream

classroom. Teachers will be provided with a lesson plan template (see Appendix A, Figure 6). for this exercise along with a Lesson Plan Checklist (see Appendix, Figure 7). This checklist will include: standards for the lesson, both content and language objectives, links to student background knowledge and experiences (funds of knowledge), culturally relevant materials, the use of audio visuals and models, opportunities for peer interaction, and assessments in which have clear expectations for outcome and which have been designed with the learners at the forefront.

The purpose of this exercise is for regular classroom teachers to begin to think about and plan lessons for their classroom. As explained by Echevarria & Vogt (2010) you want to provide "the kind of instruction that gives English learner the best chance of achieving academically while developing English proficiency" (p. 8). The purpose for including this exercise in my PD is to assist mainstream teachers in minimizing linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges former ELLs. The goal is to each the linguistic challenges in literacy development without jeopardizing the academic rigor in the lesson. Within the lesson plan template provided, teachers remain teaching the regular curriculum. However, this template ensures teachers are modifying academic content and providing appropriate scaffolding and accommodations to meet the needs of former ELLs.

I end the PD with closing remarks and expectations for the next PD. During this time, explanations of addition supplementary materials I created are presented and discussed. One supplementary material I explain is a student portfolio form I created (see Appendix A, Figure 8) for general education teachers to monitor former ELLs. Prior to ELLs exiting ESL services, the ENL teacher will fill out a form including information on

the students' background, including: name, place of birth, how long the student has lived in the United States, dates of identification and reclassification, cultural information, any areas of strength of need, including linguistic and assessment challenges, personal interests, and any additional notes that he or she thinks will be helpful for both the students and future teachers as they continue on in school outside of ESL services. This form was designed to be quick, yet effective in terms of monitoring the student before exiting and it will remain in the student's file until they graduate.

The reasoning behind this form is for mainstream teachers to gain a better understanding of who these students are and how to best meet their needs. This information will help general education teachers build relationships with students, thus minimizing sociocultural challenges that former ELLs are facing. Research suggests the sociocultural dimension includes the things that define who a culturally and linguistically diverse student is as an individual. Moreover, often times knowing this information about a student allows educators to make meaningful links to the student's lives. Knowing such information promotes the development of academic literacy (Perez & Holmes, 2010). Additionally, the focal student of my case study (see Appendix B), a former ELL, shared he feels he performs better in classes with teachers he knows and who understand him and want to help him learn (see Appendix B, Case Study, p. 67). As explained at this time, mainstream teachers must read and sign this form indicating that they have read it. Moreover, by knowing this background information on the student, teachers can then use this information to create lessons, materials, and assessments that are culturally relevant to the student by building

on their funds of knowledge. All attendees will be asked to read over and sign this form prior to the next PD session.

Finally, I explain and go over in detail the Lesson Plan Reflection Form (see Appendix A, Figure 9). This form is a form in which teachers are asked to use and fill out as they teach a lesson to former ELLs in their mainstream content area classes. The purpose of this form is to get teachers thinking about what went well in the lesson, what didn't go so well, and what could be improved. The expectation is that teachers will fill this form out prior to the next PD and include three student work samples to bring as a talking point at the next PD.

Day Two

Day two of the PD will again begin with a welcome, introductions, and morning refreshments. The day will kick off on a positive note, as all teachers will share with colleagues any successes they have experienced in the mainstream classroom while teaching former ELLs. They are encouraged to use their Lesson Plan Reflection forms along with student work samples as a guideline for what worked well within their lesson(s) and how they know it worked well. The purpose of this activity is to start the day off with positivity, but also to give teachers opportunities to hear a variety of strategies implemented by teachers in the classroom in which they too may be inspired to implement one day in the future. In addition, teachers can share tips for further success, such as how they could have improved the lesson even further. The hope is that this exercise will get teachers' minds flowing and full of great ideas to incorporate research-based strategies into the mainstream classroom to minimize challenges faced by former ELLs.

Next, teachers will share out some of the challenges they may have encountered in the mainstream classroom while teaching former ELLs. This discussion will include areas of struggle, areas which could have gone better, things to reconsider/plan for next lesson, and areas of additional support needed. The purpose of this exercise is multifaceted as well. First, the idea is that teachers will likely find that they are not alone in these challenges in which they are facing, and that colleagues are likely facing similar challenges as well. Second, the idea is that teachers will be able to assist one another and support one another in making improvements in the mainstream classroom as they reflect on their experiences working with former ELLs. Teachers are again encouraged to use the lesson plan reflection form and student work samples to guide their discussions.

Next, the PD will again break into stations in which are set up to provide additional support to teachers in order to improve the successes and/or challenges that were discussed in the previous activity. Teachers are again encouraged to use the Lesson Plan Reflection Form as guiding questions. For example, by focusing on the areas where teachers felt the lesson did not go so well and could be improved, teachers can seek further information and guidance during this time.

Within these stations, teachers will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding and implementation of research-based strategies for improving the education for struggling ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Similar to the previous PD day, myself and the district's other ENL teachers will be at the stations to provide guidance and support to the general education practitioners. Within these stations, teachers will be introduced to additional teaching strategies, resources, and websites in which contain

research-based strategies to implement. Some of these resources include CUNY Bridges and the GO TO Strategies: Scaffolding Options for Teachers of English Language Learners, K-12. My hope is that teachers will begin to identify common areas of strength and weaknesses amongst their teaching of former ELLs. In addition, teachers are exposed to several strategies in which they could implement in the classroom to improve their teaching and student learning, thus closing the achievement gaps of former ELLs.

I will end day two with closing remarks and expectations moving forward. Teachers will have a few moments to ask any questions or make additional comments during this time. In addition, for the closing activity all attendees will be asked to write out a goal relating to the education of former ELLs in their mainstream classroom. I will ask that they stick to this goal and make it a reality. There will then be an opportunity for sharing out of goals before concluding the day.

My hope for this professional development and its products as a whole is to address the challenges former ELLs face following their exit of ESL services. In order to do so, I am educating mainstream teachers on how to best support culturally and linguistically diverse students entering a mainstream classroom in a meaningful way. By creating a pamphlet with important information and tips, mainstream teachers will become familiar with how to best teacher former ELLs. The purpose of former ENL teachers filling out the online form including important background information and academic strengths as well as areas of need is for mainstream teachers to use this knowledge to plan instruction that incorporates students' funds of knowledge and meets their needs with this easily accessible information. Lastly, my hope is for mainstream teachers to ensure that proper supports and

services are set in place to close the achievement gaps of ELLs following exiting ESL

services.

Chapter 4

What did I do and what did I learn?

Throughout my work thus far in the field of TESOL education as well as through extensive research within this capstone project, several implications for teaching ELLs have arose. As a teacher of reclassified former ELLs in a mainstream reading classroom, it is evident that this population of students continue to face challenges following their exit of ESL services. Former ELLs face linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges on a daily basis. Ultimately, general education practitioners need help integrating this population into the mainstream classroom and assistance with research-based strategies that will support former ELLs' academic growth in literacy.

What are the implications for ENL teachers?

Multiple implications for ENL teachers are evident through my findings. While students remain classified as ELLs, it is vital ENL teachers work with this population to improve English language proficiency in all four language modalities of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In addition to developing ELP, ENL teachers must work with ELLs to develop grade-level content knowledge. Through frequent monitoring of ELLs along with annually assessing ELP, ENL teachers must make informed decisions going forward to maximize language and content learning opportunities for each individual student. Research indicates that exiting ELLs either too soon or too late can have detrimental effects on the student. The reason being that access to a mainstream classroom too soon or delayed can impede academic growth towards college and career readiness (Estrada & Wang, 2017). With this being said, ENL teachers much take into

consideration both annual NYSESLAT exams in addition to observations and classroom criteria.

Following the exiting of ESL and entering the mainstream classroom of former ELL students, ENL teachers must work in collaboration with non-ENL teachers to ensure students' strengths and needs are being met. As a trained and experienced professional in educating ELLs, it is imperative ENL teachers work alongside untrained non-ENL teachers. While working alongside one another, ENL teachers should provide general education practitioners guidance on research-based teaching strategies, resources, as well as monitoring and assessment recommendations to ensure ELLs are progressing in language proficiency in addition to complex grade-level academic content. Furthermore, ENL teachers should guide non-ENL teachers in implementing strategies to modify lessons for literacy in order to make the curriculum more culturally responsive and inclusive to all students. In addition, sharing information about students' past in terms of home life and school life with the classroom teacher prior to entering the mainstream classroom will help general education practitioners build relationships with former ELL students to minimize isolation in the mainstream classroom.

What are the implications for non-ENL teachers?

There are several implications for non-ENL teachers that emerge from this capstone project. As our nation continues to rise in cultural and linguistic diversity, it is expected that all teachers are current teachers of ELLs or will be some day in the near future. Thus, all teachers should be knowledgeable of successful strategies to implement in the mainstream classroom to teach and support culturally and linguistically diverse

students. As indicated through research and my work in the TESOL field, former ELLs face linguistic, sociocultural, and assessment challenges upon entering the mainstream classroom. Therefore, non-ENL teachers must first be able to recognize these challenges. These individuals must then incorporate techniques to alleviate these challenges for exited ELLs. For starters, non-ENL teachers must build relationships and a strong rapport with all students, former ELLs included. This includes getting to know former ELL students both inside and outside of the classroom. Getting to know students includes learning about experiences prior to moving to the U.S. and personal interests. Furthermore, non-ENL teachers should take the time to learn more about students' diverse languages and cultures. Not only will investing time getting to know your mainstreamed former ELL students help develop a better relationship with students, it will also likely increase student motivation in the classroom. For the case study I conducted (2019), one of the students indicated that he performs better in classes with teachers he knows well and who understand him and want to help him learn. This background knowledge of students' funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) should also be incorporated into daily lessons. The students lived experiences should be used to inform and modify lessons for literacy and making the curriculum more culturally responsive.

In addition, teachers should ensure that assessments are sensitive to the cultures, languages, and backgrounds of all students in the classroom. Students must have an equal opportunity to show his or her knowledge and understanding. In order to do so, teachers must take all students into consideration while designing assessments to provide valid

results. Teachers must also frequently monitor and assess former ELLs' progress in both English language proficiency and grade-level academic content both formally and informally. Teachers who find that ELLs are not making adequate progress must take necessary steps to ensure students are in the proper placement and are receiving appropriate supports to continue progressing.

In addition, non-ENL teachers must realize that although students have tested at a Commanding English Language Proficiency level on the NYSESLAT and were able to exit ESL services, they still face daily struggles that must not go unnoticed. Students entering the mainstream classroom are facing extreme changes. These challenges include a new classroom with new teachers and peers, new curriculum content, and more difficult course work and assessments. Although students may have acquired BICS, they often have not yet required CALP. In order to acquire CALP, explicit teaching of content academic vocabulary and skills is required to be successful. Acquiring CALP typically requires additional time and support. For instance, I propose the use of visuals and audio are tools to reinforce concepts and support former ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Additionally, incorporating multicultural literature and materials that depict the culturally and linguistically diverse students of the classroom is another way to enhance learning in the mainstream classroom. Finally, through the certain models, such as the SIOP Model or CUNY Bridges, teachers can ensure all necessary resources are in place to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse former ELLs.

Lastly, as undeniably evident both in my current teaching as well as in the research, regular classroom teachers are often not properly trained or prepared to teach

culturally and linguistically diverse former ELLs. Non-ENL teachers need in-service training at schools where there are no ESL services or staff. With this being said, non-ENL teachers should not hesitate to reach out to colleagues, community members, and/or the families of ELLs, both former and current. Doing so will expand their knowledge of the former ELL population and accommodate instruction to best meet the needs of the students. Teachers feeling limited in their ability to meet the needs of former and current ELLs are encouraged to reach out to others more knowledgeable in the field. Taking this step will lead to better resources and support for the ELL population. Furthermore, this teamwork will aid in closing the achievement gaps between former ELLs and non-ELL peers.

Finally, through collaboration amongst both ENL and non-ENL teachers, biliteracy should be promoted. ELLs should be provided opportunities to engage in literacy practices both in their L1 and English in the classroom. There are several strategies that can and should be implemented in the mainstream classroom to foster biliteracy. A proactive practice to promote literacy and culturally responsive pedagogy includes the use of literacy material in many languages (Delbridge & Helman, 2016). Being bilingual or multilingual is a strength and skill in which should be acknowledged, valued, and encouraged in the classroom and beyond.

What are the implications for student learning?

All students are capable of learning and achieving when provided with adequate instruction, resources, and support to meet their needs. With this being said, upon the collaboration of ENL and non-ENL teachers working together as a team to maximize

teaching, former ELLs will be successful in the mainstream classroom. Through implementation of research-based strategies for success, the achievement gap between former ELLs and non-ELLs will become smaller as students struggle less linguistically, socio culturally, and on assessments in the mainstream classroom.

What further research needs to be done?

There are various opportunities for future research on the topic of barriers and successes of reclassified former ELLs. First, I recommend more field studies be done on former ELLs who have exited ESL programs and entered the mainstream classroom. This approach would be intriguing to observe and interview a variety of culturally and linguistically diverse students both while they are identified as ELLs receiving ESL supports and following their exit of ELL status and repeating the process as they enter the mainstream classroom. This study would allow researchers to determine barriers as well as evidence of success or failure in the mainstream classroom by comparing the two different settings along with student achievement. A field study of this nature would provide specific data on progression or regression of students' English language proficiency and academic grade-level content following their exit of ESL services.

Additionally, research repeatedly mentions non-ENL teachers being untrained and unprepared to meet the needs of former ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Moreover, various research-based strategies are recommended to implement in the classroom. Future research should be done in terms of performance of former ELLs prior to professional development training of research-based strategies as well as after to determine progress of students with the use of these strategies. Overall, additional

research is necessary to determine extra training and supports needed by general

education practitioners in order to provide successful accommodations and supports to

former ELLs who continue to struggle in the mainstream classroom.

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Appendix A

Figure 1. PD Agenda

All Teachers are Teachers of ELLs: Strategies for Success in the Mainstream Classroom

Professional Development Agenda

December 20, 2019 & January 24, 2020

By: Lyndsay Corey

December 20, 2019

Learning Targets:
Teachers will be able to: • Gain a better understanding of ELLs both current and former.   • Identify common challenges former ELLs face in the mainstream classroom.   • Plan for and implement research-based strategies to minimize challenges of former ELLs.   • Explain current laws that affect education of ELLs   • Create language objectives   • Design and adapt accommodations within a lesson plan to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse former ELLs

8:00-8:30	• Welcome, Introductions, Morning Refreshments, Learning Targets • 10 Minute Ice Breaker Activity – Word Splash Activity. Complete Independently and Share out
8:30-9:30	PowerPoint Presentation • Who are ELLs? Former ELLs? • Laws for ELLs & Former ELLs • Former ELLs in the Mainstream Classroom > Common Barriers/Misconceptions • Linguistic, Sociocultural, Assessment Challenges Overview >Fill out Graphic Organizer & Share with Table Partners • Explanation of Supplementary Material (pamphlet)
9:30-10:00	Sample Student – Excerpt, discussion, directions for stations.
10:00-11:30	Split into three stations: 1. Linguistic Challenges & Research-based strategies 2. Sociocultural Challenges & Research-based strategies

	3. Assessment Challenges & Research-based strategies *30 Minutes at each station* Teachers will do a gallery walk and use a note catcher to document and add strategies
11:30-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:00	Language Objectives > Discussion of importance >Guided practice creating language objectives
1:30-2:30	Creating Daily Lesson Plans ➢ Lesson Plan Template & Lesson Plan Checklist Explanation ➢ Necessities in lesson plans when teaching former ELLs (Standards, content and language objectives, links to background knowledge, culturally relevant materials, peer interaction, etc.)\

3:00-3:30	Closing Remarks & Expectations for Next PD Explanation of supplementary materials and forms to take home ➢ Student Portfolio Form ➢ Lesson Plan Reflection Form

January 24, 2020

Learning Targets: Teachers will be able to: - Share and reflect on experiences working with former ELLs in the mainstream classroom - Deepen understanding and implementation of research-based strategies for improving education for former ELLs struggling in the mainstream classroom	
8:30-8:45	• Welcome, Introductions, Morning Refreshments
8:45-9:30	• Share successes in the mainstream classroom teaching former ELLs with colleagues - What worked well? How do you know? (using the lesson plan reflection form and student work samples) • Share lists of challenges in the mainstream classroom teaching former ELLs with colleagues - What do you think could have gone better? Things to reconsider/plan for your next lesson? Areas of more support needed? ➢ Guided discussion with colleagues
9:30-11:00	• The information/discussion from above will serve as a guide as to where teachers will then head to stations set up to

	receive additional information and/or support in improving these areas based on successes and/or challenges. * Stations include teaching strategies, resources, and websites in which contain research-based strategies to implement in the classroom (CUNY Bridges, The GO TO Strategies: Scaffolding Options for Teachers of English Language Learners, K-12, etc.
11:00-11:30	• Closing Remarks. Expectations moving forward • Setting a goal & sticking to it – Sharing out

Figure 2. Day 1 Ice Breaker Activity

Word Splash

Write a paragraph that uses all of the words below:

English Language Learner (ELL)

English Language Proficiency (ELP)

Former ELL

Differentiation

ESL

Mainstream

Barriers

Reclassification

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Figure 3. Day 1 Graphic Organizer

Barriers of Former ELLs: Strategies for Success in the Mainstream Classroom

3 Main Challenges Former ELLs Face in the Mainstream Classroom:	Specific Areas in Which Former ELLs Struggle Within these 3 Challenges:	Research-Based Strategies for Success in the Mainstream Classroom to Minimize Challenges:

Figure 4. Educating Former ELLs Pamphlet

[2]**Laws and Regulations for Educating ELLs:**

According to the U.S Department of Education:
"**All** children in the United States are entitled to equal access to a public elementary and secondary education, regardless of their or their parents' actual or perceived national origin, citizenship, or immigration status" (2014).

State requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015):
- Annually assess the English language proficiency of ELLs, thus identifying and reclassifying ELLs
- Provide reasonable accommodations for ELLs on state assessments
- Develop new accountability systems for ELLs, including long-term goals and measures of progress

- CR Part 154, adopted in 2014 requires **Former ELLs**, students who were identified as ELLs and have exited ELL status within the past two school years, to monitor and support ongoing English language development and academic progress for two years following reclassification.

[6] "Overall, EL students face unique challenges but also represent a tremendous **asset** for our country if their full potential can be unlocked and harnessed"
- The U.S. Department of Education (2016)

Resources for Additional Information on Educating Former ELLs:

- https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/el-characteristics/index.html#intro
- https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/unaccompanied-children.html
- https://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/English-Language-Learners/go-to-strategies.pdf

[1] Educating Former English Language Learners

Figure 4 (continued)

3 **ELLs in the United States**

- According to the U.S. Department of Education Census Bureau, English Language Learners (ELLs) are a diverse group representing various languages, cultures, and ethnicities. ELLs are a growing part of the K-12 student population, comprised of more than 4.8 million, or 10% of the total K-12 student population as of 2014-15 and continuing to increase (2016).

- Spanish is the most commonly spoken language among ELLs in the states, however, ELLs in the U.S. speak over 400 different languages.

4 **Effective Strategies for Teaching Former ELLs in order to Improve Linguistic & Socio-Cultural Challenges they may Face in the Mainstream Classroom:**

- Incorporate students' funds of knowledge
- Get to know students' families and the community, and incorporate them in your teaching
- Integrate students' background knowledge and interests into the curriculum & daily lessons
- Have age-appropriate multi culturally relevant texts, materials, and activities that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of students
- Shift your attention to identifying students' strengths and integrating these into your teaching rather than focusing on what skills ELLs lack in comparison to their native English speaking peers (Cho, Wang, & Christ, 2019)

5 **Strategies/Modifications for Differentiating Instruction & Assessments to Make it Accessible to Former ELLs**

- Connect assessments to classroom instruction
- Use audio and visual supports
- Explicitly define & teach content vocabulary
- Provide and/or link background knowledge to new learning
- Remove unnecessary words that may district students from content
- Incorporate technology whenever applicable
- One-on-one support
- Incorporate cooperative learning strategies, such as Small group instruction & mixed ability grouping
- Define language and content objectives for each lesson
- Allow alternative types of assessment, such as: oral, written, physical, etc. to assess what the students know
- Provide examples and model work for students

Access to this document:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BdTM9SAw_MiSCnQ3idTdEsk0tXUpwKROD

UaY3oyoUHI/edit?usp=sharing

Figure 5. Case Study Excerpt

Sample Student
Adapted from 2019 Case Study

      Student A is former ELL. He was born in Syria and fled to the United States to escape war violence in 2017. He is proficient in Arabic, his first language. When he entered school in the United States, Student A scored a level one Entering English language proficiency score on the NYSITELL exam. Today, however, he demonstrates a Commanding level English language proficiency on the NYSESLAT and has exited ESL services. He is now a Former ELL receiving ESL accommodations in the classroom and on assessments. Although he earned a score of Commanding on his NYSESLAT exam and has exited ESL services, he continues to struggle in the mainstream classroom on a daily basis.

      The linguistic challenges he faces on a daily basis stem from trying to acquire English as a second language, as he is now in mainstream content area classes with English-speaking peers. His ENL teacher shared that she feels as though he does not yet have the language aptitude for content and academic vocabulary in his daily classwork and on his assessments. While he is proficient in social conversational language, or basic interpersonal communication skills (Cummins, 2001), he is not proficient in what Cummins (2001) calls cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) and this impacts his schoolwork on a daily basis.

      His sociocultural experiences are greatly affected by living in a non-Arabic community with those who have the same cultural beliefs or practices, or who celebrate the same holidays here in the United States. He shared that it is much different living in the United States, and that he enjoyed living in Syria much more. His reasoning behind enjoying living in Syria more is because he fit in with the Arabic community, whereas here he feels he does not fit in with many people in the school or community. He also shared how different holidays, specifically Ramadan, are in America than back home.

      Socially, Student A is very quiet in his mainstream classes. He keeps to himself most of the day. He interacts minimally with peers who do not speak Arabic, whereas he interacts frequently with peers who speak Arabic. He interacts well with adults, however through it is evident that he interacts more and is more engaged in lessons with teachers he has built positive relationships with. For instance, his ENL teacher, who pushes into the mainstream classroom to assist him. He shared that he feels he performs better in classes with teachers he knows and who understand him and want to help him learn.

      The complexity of assessment and evaluation are a factor which immensely impacts Student A. As discussed above, Student A has developed basic interpersonal skills (BICS), however has not yet developed cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Although he scored a Commanding Level of English language proficiency on the NYSESLAT test and exited ESL services, he continues to struggle with daily classroom assessments as well as high stakes tests such as New York State exams. While observing him in the mainstream classroom as well as through working one on one with this student, it is evident that the complex English academic language in his content area

courses is causing him to struggle. However, when he is allowed to translate the question into Arabic and when question content is simplified, he is typically able to answer questions without a problem.

Figure 6. Lesson Plan Template

Lesson Plan Template

Teacher:	Date:
Lesson Title/Topic:	Grade Level:
NYS Common Core Learning Standards:	Content Objectives:
Links to Student Background Knowledge & Experiences:	Language Objectives:
Key concepts & Vocabulary:	
Learning Materials: >Culturally Relevant Materials: >Audio, Visuals, and Models Included:	

Peer Interaction:

Describe below the instructional strategies that you will provide for your students throughout the lesson.

Timeline:	Teacher behaviors: *What will you do?*	Student behaviors: *What will students do?*
	Introductory of Lesson *How will you engage students, develop student interest, activate prior knowledge, and introduce the topic?*	
	Learning Procedures Related to the Learning Objectives *What will students do to learn the content? How will you support peer interaction as well as interaction between the subject matter and materials?*	
	Conclusion of Lesson *How will you bring this lesson to an end? How will you check for understanding? How will you clear up misconceptions students may have?*	

Assessments (including both language and content objectives)
Describe how will you will assess students to assure the objectives were met during the lesson.

Expected Outcomes:

Informal Assessments?

Formal Assessments?

Differentiation of Assessment:

Access to document: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_66oRaqr10zQqHuEaU-aebwKTlAjjVdM/view?usp=sharing

Figure 7. Lesson Plan Checklist

Lesson Plan Checklist	
NYS Common Core Standards	
Content Objectives	
Language Objectives	
Links to Student Background Knowledge & Experiences (Funds of Knowledge)	
Explicit and Contextualized Academic Vocabulary Instruction	
Culturally Relevant Materials	
Audio, Visuals, and Models included	
Assessments designed and modified by putting learners at the forefront – Expectations of Outcomes are clears	
Opportunities for peer interaction	

Figure 8. Student Portfolio Form

Student Portfolio for Monitoring Former ELLs

This form is to be filled out by an English Language Learners'(ELL) English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher prior to this student becoming reclassified and exiting ESL services.

Dear Future/Current mainstream teachers of ELLs: I have collected the information in this form on each ELL throughout my time teaching him/her as they were receiving ESL services. Please use this form to assist you in learning background information about this student, including: home life; information on their cultural and linguistic diversity; dates of ELL identification and reclassification; areas of strength and of need; personal interests; linguistic, socio-cultural, and assessment challenges; as well as any additional information I think will be beneficial in your future planning, teaching, and assessing of these students.

Student Name	
Birth Place & Home Life:	
How Long the Student has Lived in the U.S.:	
Date of Identification as an ELL:	
Date of Reclassification as FEP:	
Information on Student's Culture	
Areas of Strength:	

Areas of Need:	

Figure A8 (continued)

Linguistic Challenges	
Sociocultural Challenges	
Assessment Challenges	
Additional Comments/Information	

Recommended Instructional Strategies for Differentiation:	

Teacher Signature:_____

Access to this Document: https://forms.gle/N6PeJdxpzKHZAQZx6

Figure 9. Lesson Plan Reflection Form

Teacher Name: **Grade Level:**

Date of Lesson Taught:

*Attach a copy of your lesson plan to this form & 3 student work samples

What worked well within your lesson? How do you know? (Give evidence/ examples)	
What didn't work?	

How was the speed of your lesson? (Too fast, not enough time, etc.)	
Things to reconsider/plan for your next lesson:	
Areas in which you feel you would benefit from receiving additional support?	

Additional Comments/Questions	

Figure 10. PD PowerPoint Link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k5hdnBe1jF7WFagxq5s15y86SITUhCsc/view?usp=sharing

Appendix B

Figure 1. Case Study 2019

Introduction

        Student A is a 17-year-old boy in eleventh grade attending a large inner-city school. This student was born in Syria, however he and much of his family fled Syria in 2014 as a result of the violence of the ongoing Syrian Civil War. From Syria, Student A and his remaining loved ones who survived the violent war zone moved to a refugee camp in Jordan to escape the violence. He remained a Syrian refugee at this large Jordan refugee camp for nearly two and a half years until he and his family were able to come over to the United States once the Muslim travel ban was lifted in 2017. He moved from the refugee camp to the United States in July of 2017. Here he attends a nearby public high school where he receives English as a Second Language services.

Linguistic Challenges

        Student A faces linguistic challenges on a daily basis. Arabic is this student's first language, and the only language he spoke until moving to the United States in 2017. Luckily, he was able to remain in school all throughout his life until moving to the United States in tenth grade, both in Syria and Jordan. Therefore, he is not a SIFE (student with interrupted formal education) student. He is proficient in Arabic, his first language. The linguistic challenges he faces on a daily basis stem from trying to acquire English as a second language, as he is now in mainstream eleventh grade content area classes with English-speaking peers. When he entered school in the United States, Student A scored a level one Entering English language proficiency score on the NYSITELL exam. Today,

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however, he demonstrates Commanding level English language proficiency on the NYSESLAT and has exited ESL services. Advancing five levels of English language proficiency in his two years living in the United States speaks to his intellectual and linguistic abilities.

He is now designated as a Former ELL receiving ESL accommodations in the classroom and on assessments until he graduates next school year. Although he earned a score of Commanding on his recent NYSESLAT test and has exited ESL services, he still struggles with the English language in his mainstream content area classes. His ENL teacher shared that she feels as though he does not yet have the language aptitude for content and academic vocabulary in his daily classwork and on his assessments. While he is proficient in social conversational language, or basic interpersonal communication skills (Cummins, 2001), he is not proficient in what Cummins (2001) defines as cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) and this impacts his schoolwork on a daily basis.

Socio-cultural Contexts' Impacts

Student A faces socio-cultural issues on a daily basis as well. For starters, he remains traumatized over the turmoil and violence he was exposed to during the Syrian Civil War, which destroyed everything he'd ever known, including his home and many of his loved ones. Currently, he is living here in the United States with his mom and two of his younger siblings. Unfortunately, however, his father, two older brothers, and many of his friends and extended family did not make it here. With this being said, his sociocultural experiences are greatly affected by living in a non-Arabic community with those who have the same cultural beliefs or practices, or who celebrate the same holidays

here in the United States. He shared with me that it is much different living in the United States, and that he enjoyed living in Syria and Jordan much more. His reasoning behind enjoying living in Syria and Jordan more is because he fit in with the Arabic community, whereas here he feels he does not fit in with many people in the school or community. He also shared how different holidays, specifically Ramadan, are in America than back home. He explained how in both Syria and Jordan, Ramadan was a huge celebration where everything basically shuts down to celebrate and where nearly everyone around you is also fasting. Here, however, he and his family still go to work and school during Ramadan and are surrounded by people who are not fasting or celebrating because most are not Muslim. He explained how different life is here from back home, but that he will not be able to go home because it is not safe there, although he wishes he could go back.

Socially, Student A is very quiet in his mainstream classes, as he keeps to himself most of the day. He interacts minimally with peers who do not speak Arabic, whereas he interacts frequently with peers who speak Arabic. He appears to be self-conscious about communicating with his native English-speaking peers in the classroom while still learning and acquiring the academic language. When applicable, he asks questions and converses with other Arabic speaking peers about academic content in the classroom to clarify concepts. He interacts well with adults, however through my observations it is evident that he interacts more and is highly engaged in lessons with teachers he has built positive relationships with. For instance, his ENL teacher, who pushes into the mainstream classroom to assist him. He shared with me that he feels he performs better in classes with teachers he knows and who understand him and want to help him learn.

Complexity of Assessment and Evaluation

The complexity of assessment and evaluation are a factor which immensely impacts Student A. As discussed above, Student A has developed basic interpersonal skills (BICS), however has not yet developed cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Although he scored a Commanding Level of English language proficiency on the NYSESLAT test and exited ESL services, he continues to struggle with daily classroom assessments as well as high stakes tests such as New York State Regents exams. Despite being able to pass classes, he has difficult passing New York State Regents exams with a passing score of 65. While observing him in the mainstream classroom as well as through working one on one with this student, it is evident that the complex English academic language in his content area courses is causing him to struggle. However, when he is allowed to translate the question into Arabic and when question content is simplified, he is typically able to answer questions without a problem. This is a clear indicator again, that he does not have the language aptitude for academic vocabulary and literacy-based content on high stakes assessments. For instance, he has taken the Global History and Geography NYS Regents three times. However, he has been unable to score a 65. Meanwhile, he passed the course with flying colors because he received additional support in breaking down academic vocabulary and content in the questions. Unfortunately, the complexity of assessment and evaluation on classroom assessments and high stakes tests that Student A is facing may result in this student being unable to graduate high school on time. As a result, Student A may be unable to follow

his goal of attending college and becoming a doctor if he is unable to graduate from high school due to testing.

Impact on the Student

As indicated above, Student A's life is greatly impacted on a daily basis due to linguistic and socio-cultural challenges, as well as the complexity of assessment and evaluation. For a student who tested in the Entering level and in a few years exited ESL, Student A has shown exemplary growth. However, many of his daily struggles, including socio-cultural challenges and the complexity of assessments stem from his linguistic challenges, in that he is not fully proficient to engage comfortably with native English-speaking peers. In addition, does not have mastery of academic language for complex academic language in assessments. This student's life continues to be altered daily.

Research on Strategies

There are several strategies that can help practitioners to effectively teach Student A. One way to do so is to build positive relationships with students and get to know them. One way to build trusting relationships is to include students' Funds of Knowledge in the lessons. Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) define Funds of Knowledge as " skills and knowledge that have been historically and culturally " (p. 21). By building a relationship with Student A and incorporating his Funds of Knowledge, Student A's feeling of not fitting in socially or culturally his with native English-speaking peers will improve. Another strategy is to incorporate multicultural materials into the curriculum that represent the diversity of students. Additional strategies include: allowing students to use their L1 as often as possible, Modifying and differentiating instruction, material, and

assessments to make them accessible for students, Eliminating excess wording in assessments; Finally, putting learners at the forefront of test design and assessment practices to embrace ELLs' language abilities as assets (Boals, Kenyon, Blair, Cranley, Wilmes, & Wright, 2015, p. 155). Lastly, although Student A has mastered BICS and has been placed in a mainstream classroom, he requires additional support to become proficient in academic school language, as Cummins (2001) explains it generally takes five to seven years for ELLs to become proficient. With these strategies incorporated into the classroom, Student A and other ELLs could effectively learn.

Conclusion

As described above, Student A has made tremendous achievements in his two years in the United States, however he continues to struggle on a daily basis in terms of linguistic challenges, socio-cultural challenges, and the complexity of assessments and evaluation. With this being said, there are several ways in which Student A and other ELLs with similar experiences and struggles can best be served by teachers for academic and personal success. Using what I've observed and learned about Student A, it is evident that even following a students' exiting of ESL services and entering a mainstream class continue to need additional support in acquiring cognitive academic language proficiency. It is evident that CALP greatly impacts students' language, socio-cultural, and assessment achievement. As schools throughout the United States continue to become more culturally and linguistically diverse, all teachers of language learners, including regular classroom teachers would greatly benefit from a professional development. Within this professional development, teachers will be trained to work

effectively with ELLs on how to best support, monitor, and assess ELL students in

literacy instruction, continuing on after exiting of ESL services.