# Lack of Preparation for Mainstream Teachers of English Language Learners

by

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**Abstract**

This capstone aims to resolve the issue of lack of preparation in mainstream teachers in regard to English Language Learners (ELLs). Through research, three main themes were identified as contributing factors to the issue; current legislation that affects ELL education, deficits in mainstream teacher preparation programs, and deficits in ELL professional development. These issues, when in combination, have effects on teachers' abilities to meet the specific needs of ELLs in a mainstream classroom setting. Additionally, research has shown that when there is a deficit in pre-service training and professional development there can be potential effects on teachers' attitudes towards ELLs and ELL education. This capstone presents and supports the argument that all teachers, not just those with TESOL certification, should be provided with various forms of training to support the needs of ELLs. Training should be provided in pre-service teacher preparation programs as well as in professional development for continuing education of current teachers. Solutions to this problem are presented in the form of a professional development product titled "Supporting ELLs in Content Areas." This product works to provide teachers training in regard to ELL theory and practice. This product also provides schools with a survey to identify deficits within a school's faculty in regard to ELL training. Additionally, this capstone makes recommendations to further research in relation to this problem. There is a need for additional work focused on the academic and social effects of this issue.

*Keywords*: English Language Learners (ELLs), mainstream teachers, TESOL

## Chapter 1: Introduction

In looking at issues of the current state of education in regard to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), one of the most prominent factors that affects this field is the supply of educated professionals who can properly teach English Language Learners (ELLs). English learners in schools across the United States need to be in classrooms where there are teachers who have an understanding and have training to meet their academic and social needs. Therefore, all teachers, not just those with TESOL certification, should be provided with various forms of training to support the needs of ELLs. There are essential understandings of second language learning that teachers need to recognize and practice in order to be linguistically responsive teachers (Lucas et al., 2008). Indeed, without training, teachers may not be able to provide adequate differentiation tailored to the specific needs of students, especially ELLs (Baker, 2017; Kumasi & Hughes-Hassell, 2017). Considering this, preparing all teachers to work effectively with ELLs is a crucial educational need.

The necessity for highly educated teachers increases due to population statistics across the country. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), in 2017 ELLs accounted for 10.1% of a total of approximately 50.7 million students in public school enrollment in prekindergarten through grade 12. However, there continues to be a deficit of teachers trained to teach these students. In 2017, 32 states in the U.S. reported not having enough English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers for ELL students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017) while also reporting that their public schools included students who speak over 200 languages (Vespa, 2018). Consequently, given the increase in ELL populations and the quantity of languages spoken in U.S. public schools, it is likely that most mainstream classroom teachers will be teaching ELL students. Educational scholars have identified a lack of effective

preparation for mainstream classroom teachers to plan and implement instruction tailored to meet the needs of ELLs while they are in a general education classroom (Diarrassouba, 2017).

Thus, the purpose of this paper is twofold: the first is to explore the contributing factors to the issue of lack of preparation of mainstream teachers in ELL education. In the next Chapter, I will review the literature on these contributing factors including current legislation that affects ELL education, deficits in mainstream teacher preparation programs, and deficits in ELL professional development. I will also explore the effects of these factors on teachers' attitudes toward ELLs and ELL education. This research will then be utilized to develop "The Product" titled "Supporting ELLs in Content Areas," which I will describe in Chapter 3. The Product will be a model for professional development for current teachers without ELL training. Finally, I will conclude with implications for teacher training and preparation to better support ELL students.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the lack of preparation for mainstream teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs). The issue of lack of teacher preparation has major components that contribute to the significance of the problem; current legislation that affects ELL education, deficits in mainstream teacher preparation programs, and deficits in ELL professional development. These issues, when in combination, have negative effects on mainstream teachers' abilities to educate ELLs in their classrooms. These issues can cause mainstream teachers to be unprepared as well as hold negative attitudes towards ELL education and teaching ELLs. Before reviewing research on these issues, I will first discuss theories that support this capstone will focus on theories that support the argument that mainstream teachers need training to be better prepared to teach diverse students, specifically ELLs.

Theories of the ELL education and the field of TESOL are pertinent to this paper. Cummins (1984) identifies the difference between two different kinds of language proficiency; basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Failure to understand the difference between these two, and consider their implications, can lead to low academic achievement for ELL students. Cummins states that just because students may appear to be able to hold conversations in English, there should not be an assumption that students are English proficient and thus ready to thrive in an all English classroom. BICS is referred to as the "surface" skills of listening and speaking, which are typically acquired quickly by many students who interact with native speakers in their day to day lives. Many children develop BICS within two years of immersion in the target language (Cummins, 1984; Sepe, 2018). On the other hand, CALP is referred to as the basis for a child's

ability to cope with the academic demands from various subjects. It takes five to seven years for a child to be working on a level with native speakers in regard to academic language (Cummins, 1984; Sepe, 2018). Considering these theories, students need proper support in all subject areas, over the course of several years, to attain the academic language required of various content areas. Teachers who know these differences understand why ELLs in their classes might need support to complete academic tasks, even when they appear to be fluent speakers of English (Villegas et al., 2018). Consequently, students learning a second language need the appropriate time and the support of trained teachers in their mainstream classroom as well as ELL specialists to develop their English skills.

In support of Cummins's (1984) constructs is Gibbons (2015) who found that fact that many emergent students see a decrease in support after they pass through the initial stages of language development. While these students show BICS, they have not developed CALP and will not develop these skills as quickly as their native language speaking peers (Gibbons, 2015). Accordingly, Gibbons outlines the need for mainstream classroom teachers to provide this additional support to students. This literature review will discuss research that mainstream teachers are not adequately prepared for this task and highlight the need for education and training for all teachers. These constructs support the argument that all teachers, not just ELL specialists, need training in preparation to teach English learners in classrooms.

Moreover, there are essential understandings of second language learning that all teachers need to understand and practice in order to be linguistically responsive teachers (Lucas et al., 2008). The inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classes creates multiple complexities requiring linguistically, socio-culturally, and developmentally appropriate instructional decision-making and accommodations made by teachers (Polat, 2010). Considering this, preparing all teachers to

work effectively with ELLs is a crucial educational need. Feiman-Nemser (2018) states that given the increase in ELL populations in public schools and a favored mainstream classroom approach, it is likely that most regular classroom teachers will be teaching ELL students and will do so without training. Feiman-Nemser (2018) identifies the need for developing pedagogical knowledge and skills to meet the needs of diverse students:

> Prospective teachers need to develop a beginning repertoire in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Beginning teachers need to learn to enact an instructional repertoire that is purposeful and responsive to students and context. Inservice teachers need to refine and extend their curricular and pedagogical repertoire to meet the needs of all their students. (p. 230)

These understandings include knowledge about the differences in development of conversational and academic language in the classroom, and the roles these developments play in students' learning. Lucas et al. (2008) states that all teachers need:

> Pedagogical expertise in familiarity with the students' linguistic and academic backgrounds; an understanding of the language demands inherent in the learning tasks that students are expected to carry out in class; and skills for using appropriate scaffolding so that ELLs can participate successfully in those tasks. (p. 366)

Lack of teacher training in regard to the unique needs of ELLs can cause mainstream teachers to be unprepared to meet the needs of students. Additionally, changes in ELL educational policies have caused shifts in the roles of mainstream teachers. Current legislation does not favor requirements for ELL training of mainstream teachers.

**Legislation in Regard to Mainstream Teachers and ELLs**

Over the past 50 years, legislation in regard to ELLs has shaped policies in regard ELL

education. Changes in policies in ELL education have caused an increased need for ELL training in mainstream teachers. In 1974, Lau. V. Nichols a landmark Supreme Court decision changed common practices in regard to ELL education. The decision in the 1974 Lau v. Nichols case ruled that offering students of limited English proficiency the same teachers, textbooks, and curriculum as their English-proficient peers violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This was because it denied them access to a comprehensible education. From this ruling it became common practice in the United States to place ELLs in specific programs such as bilingual programs or ESL programs to be taught primarily by certified ESL or bilingual teacher (Villegas, 2018). Students would stay in these programs until they developed sufficient proficiency in English to handle instruction in a mainstream classroom setting. A shift occurred in the 1990s when the growing ELL population outpaced the capacity of many bilingual and ESL programs (Evans, 2005). The shift also occurred due to political backlash and lack of bilingual education support that led to English-only educational practices in various states such as California, Arizona, and Massachusetts (California Proposition 227, Arizona Proposition 203, Massachusetts Question 2).

A shift occurred in ELL policies in 2001 when No Child Left Behind mandated that ELLs be included in states testing programs and their scores be reported. This shift caused many school programs to switch to teaching ELL students in a mainstream setting. Mainstream teachers, a group that historically has received no preparation for teaching ELLs, are now seeing ELL students grown numbers in their classes (García et al., 2010). This fact supports the argument that mainstream teachers, with ELL students in their classrooms, should be trained to support their students' unique educational needs. With policy shifts in education and the shift to mainstream classrooms for students, teachers should be trained to meet these new educational

challenges.

Currently, The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in December 2015, is the nation's main education law for all public schools and governs K–12 public education policy. The law holds schools accountable for how students learn and achieve. Its main purpose is to ensure that schools provide equitable educational services for all students, including those with diverse needs such as special education students and ELLs (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). ESSA requires all schools to begin reporting ELL students' progress on both their English proficiency and core tested subjects, and substantially increases the funding targeted toward this group. While ESSA works to provide equity for students including ELLs, no new federal policies have prioritized teacher training for ELs, either pre-service or in-service (Quintero & Hansen, 2017). In "Promoting Education Success of Children and Youth Learning English," a report analyzing ELL policy, practice and research, authors discuss needed improvements in ESSA in their conclusions. One conclusion from their research and review of ESSA policies is uncertainty in schools and teachers' roles. The National Academies of Sciences (2017) concludes:

> Districts are expected to provide supports to schools in need of assistance and are the policy unit in which much of the improvement work will be carried out. Uncertainty exists as to the capacity of districts to play support roles, whether the state accountability system will provide the required information on English learners' educational progress, and how states and intermediary agencies will help build and ensure district capacity. (p. 57)

States and districts have considerable flexibility in determining accommodations for students who are not proficient in English. More than half of U.S. states do not require ESOL training for

general teacher candidates. According to the Education Commission of the States (2014) only six states across the U.S. require teachers to receive ESOL endorsement. Only twelve additional states include coursework, training or reference to English learner needs and best practices in regard to academic achievement. The United States Government Accountability Office (GOA) in a 2009 report, recommends that the Secretary of Education "develop and implement a mechanism to ensure more systematic coordination among program offices that oversee assistance that can help general classroom teachers to instruct these student subgroups" (p. i). Moreover, without legislation directed towards mainstream teacher preparation of ELLs, this problem will still persist in schools across the country. When shifts in educational policy occur, subsequent training should be required to meet the changing needs of students. Consequently, issues in ELL educational legislation have led to deficits in mainstream teacher preparation.

**Deficits in ELL Training in Teacher Preparation Programs**

There is a current deficit in the training of pre-service teachers to meet the specific needs of ELL students. Without training, mainstream teachers may not be able to provide adequate differentiation tailored to the specific needs of ELL students. In 2009, the GAO conducted a nationally representative survey of teacher preparation programs. The purpose of the survey was to collect information in regard to teacher preparation for instructing students with disabilities and ELLs. In the results from the survey that were relevant to the field of TESOL, researchers found that no more than 20 % of pre-service programs required at least one course entirely focused on ELLs. In the findings, the major reason programs gave for not including required courses with content on ELLs or field experiences was that their state standards did not require them. Of the programs that required coursework in teaching ELLs, only 56 % included curriculum on English language acquisition or development. This opposes the theories of

Gibbons (2015), including the need for mainstream classroom teachers to provide additional support to students in their process of language acquisition. Additionally, the survey indicated that only 22 % of the programs reviewed required students to have field experiences in which they worked with ELL students. Beyond quantitative data collection, the survey compiled mainstream teacher responses in regard to teaching ELLs. The general consensus from the results indicate that many issues teachers face stem from lack of adequate education and training with ELLs (Government Accountability Office, 2009). Teachers in schools surveyed identified the need for instructional strategies to address unique challenges that were barriers to students' success. These included assessing each student's ability to understand content and adjusting instruction to meet the varying proficiency levels of students. These are unique needs that are specific to ELLs, and without proper training pre-service teachers may not be prepared to teach these students (Government Accountability Office, 2009). Additionally, Villegas et al. (2018) completed a systematic review of empirical, peer-reviewed studies on the preparation of pre-service mainstream teachers. Villegas et al. (2018) looked exclusively at studies conducted in the U.S. from 2000 to 2016 due to the trend toward mainstreaming ELLs that caused changes in the makeup of classrooms and the roles of mainstream teachers. Twenty-one studies of teacher preparation programs were chosen in the review conducted. The review found that the majority of the preparation programs that did include ELL training focused primarily on teacher candidates' beliefs rather than focusing on training teachers with specific tools for student learning (Villegas et al, 2018). Of the 21 studies, only eight preparation programs demonstrated that teacher candidates learned about actual strategies for teaching ELLs in their preparation coursework. The remaining 13 programs focused on including curriculum geared towards teacher candidates' openness towards diversity and the subsequent inclusion of ELLs in

mainstream classrooms. These programs did not include specific ELL strategies for practical use in the classroom. These findings demonstrate a deficit in the pre-service training of mainstream teachers in specific pedagogical practices to meet the needs of ELLs in their classrooms.

A more recent study conducted by Giles and Yazan (2020) supports the claim that there is a current deficit in the training of pre-service mainstream classroom teachers. Giles and Yazan (2020) conducted a case study over the course of a five-month time span to collect data in regard to content teachers and their approaches to planning for and teaching ELL students. Data were collected from a middle school ELL teacher and an English Language Arts teacher in a southeastern state of the U.S. The content area teacher reported that she did not have any pre-service training in her preparation program for planning ELL lessons or teaching ELL students, nor did she have previous experience working with ELLs prior to her current position. During data collection in the form of a recorded teaching observations and interviews, the English Language Arts content area teacher and the ELL teacher reflected on effective teaching practices in regard to ELL students. The English Language Arts content teacher admitted that she did not know how to design lessons to specifically support her ELLs. She did not know strategies for creating appropriate language strategies, lesson scaffolds, student groupings, or alternative assignments. In the ELL teacher's reflection, she remarked that the content area teacher was designing lessons that were actually exclusionary of ELLs. Not only did she not support ELL student learning, the lessons that were observed did not give students access to content in forms that they could understand. These findings demonstrate that without pre-service training in regard to ELLs educational needs, teachers could struggle to adequately provide for their students. If pre-service teachers lack adequate training, then the current population of teachers in the U.S could also show a deficit in the ability to use appropriate strategies to support ELLs.

**Deficit in ELL Training and Professional Development**

Deficits in preparing mainstream teachers at the pre-service level have led to an increased need for the training of current mainstream teachers of ELLs. Newman et al. (2010) reviewed training programs in the state of Ohio to develop a program for current secondary teachers with ELL students. Newman et al., reviewed professional development models for teacher learning, collaboration, and partnership to understand issues in ESL teacher professional development. The research was conducted through a survey of 138 content area high school teachers in the subjects of math, science, social studies, music, business, health and physical education, special education, foreign languages, language arts, arts, history, and computer/technology. The analysis of the survey showed that 96% of the content teachers had ELLs in their classrooms, with 56% reporting between 1–10 students and 19% reporting between 11–20 students. However, only 26% of all teachers in the survey had ever taken a specific college course that addressed teaching ELLs, and only 45% reported ever having participated in an in-service on ELLs. These findings demonstrate a lack of formal education in the specific educational needs of ELL students. Teachers in the study expressed the need and importance for more professional development to better support their students in their academic achievement of specific content areas. Additionally, Rubinstein-Avila and Lee (2014) conducted a study to identify issues in the lack of teacher training and professional development to support ELLs in mainstream classrooms. The survey conducted included 28 public high schools across school districts in a Great Plains state. In the findings 87% of teachers surveyed had never received professional development in working with ELLs. The results from the survey identified a critical lack of awareness about the academic needs of ELLs among the general classroom teachers who had no formal training to work with ELLs in either pre-service programs or professional development

(Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014). One teacher's response to the survey was that they "often feel overwhelmed when an ELL is first placed in their classroom" (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014, p. 142). Another teacher's response to working with ELLs was that she held a "common sense ideology" (p. 145). This teacher's notion contrasts researchers that call for the development of specific pedagogical knowledge and skills to understand and teach to the multiple complexities that ELL students face in a mainstream classroom (Feiman-Nemser, 2018). Lack of training and continued professional development, as demonstrated in these findings, could lead to deficits in mainstream teachers' abilities to provide tailored instruction for ELLs that goes beyond general mainstream teaching knowledge.

Further research supports deficits in ELL professional development of current mainstream teachers. In a study conducted by Hansen-Thomas and Cavagnetto (2010), survey data was collected from 118 teachers in three middle schools in Texas, New York and Pennsylvania. These states were chosen due to their ELL student populations. Texas and New York are considered to be in the top five states in the nation with the largest numbers of ELL students. Pennsylvania has shown 100-200% growth in its ELL population over the last decade. Teachers in the study included content-area teachers, elective and physical education teachers, and special education teachers. Initial data collected in the survey revealed that for New York, Pennsylvania and Texas 76%, 86.5% and 89% of teachers respectively had no ELL pre-service training. In regard to professional development provided by their school district the values were 12%, 2.7% and 5.5 % respectively. After collecting ELL training data, the questionnaire moved to questions that elicited teachers' responses in regard to how they felt they could improve their support of their student's language acquisition and content area development. In response to a question about how to better support ELLs, participants indicated responses such as "techniques

on how to teach content to ESL students," "facilitation of better communication between ESL and mainstream teachers," and "information about cultures and/or languages represented by ESL students." These responses illustrate teachers' desire to better understand how ELLs learn and the corresponding pedagogy needed to teach their students. Additionally, Hansen-Thomas and Cavagnetto asked participants to remark on their role in the education experience of students. Participants indicated responses such as "support for the students," "support for the ESL teacher," and "I'm not sure at all anymore." These responses suggest that mainstream teachers need support and continuing education in the form of professional development to feel competent in teaching their ELLs and knowing their role in their students' learning. Lack of training can also lead to teachers' negative feelings in regard to self-competency.

**Mainstream Teacher Attitudes in Regard to ELLs and ELL Education**

Mainstream teachers have varying attitudes in regard to ELLs and ELL inclusion in mainstream classrooms. This could be a potential effect of their lack of training or lack or access to professional development. Reeves (2006) surveyed 279 content area teachers, a majority of whom, 90%, had received no training to work with language-minority or ELL students. The purpose of Reeves' research was to gather information in regard to teacher attitudes toward ELL inclusion as well as towards the modification of coursework for ELLs. The study also focused on teachers' perception of the time demands placed on educators when ELLs enrolled in their courses. In regard to ELL inclusion, findings demonstrated several negative attitudes that were found in the teachers surveyed. Forty percent of respondents did not believe that all students, ELLs and general education students, benefited from the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. In addition, findings demonstrated negative attitudes toward specific types of coursework modification for ELLs. Fifty-four percent of respondents disagreed with modifying

coursework for ELLs. Furthermore, approximately 70% of the teachers reported that they did "not have enough time to deal with the needs of ESL students" (p. 136). The teachers in the study reported a slightly negative attitude toward ELL inclusion in mainstream classrooms and dedicating time to differentiate instruction for ELLs as well.

Teacher's attitudes towards ELLs could have an impact on the instruction that ELL students receive. Rizzuto (2017) conducted a mixed-methodology study to examine how early childhood teachers' attitudes shaped their pedagogical practices. Questionnaires, interviews, and observations were used to collect information from 10 teachers in elementary classrooms, pre-K to third grade. The qualitative data collected showed that several teachers in this study held negative views regarding teaching ELL students including the use of students' native language in the classrooms and the teachers' lack in understanding second language acquisition. For example, a teacher in the study had an English-only rule that was instated in the classroom. This particular teacher never used students' first language in any lessons over the course of an 8-week period and didn't allow bilingual students in the classroom to translate during instruction or classroom time. In an interview with this teacher about ELL professional development, the teacher remarked:

> I have been teaching for decades—it is not me, it's the kids and their parents and their lack of literacy—good teaching is good teaching, I don't need to change how I teach for these kids. I don't need any more professional development. (p. 192)

Six of the eight teachers in the study reflected similar attitudes as the previous teacher and showed ambivalence to receiving professional development. The responses from these teachers reflected the notion that ESL support was to be provided by exclusively the ESL teacher. These results contradict the notion that support in a students' first language can help them in the second

language acquisition (Garcia, 2015). These findings demonstrate that the teacher's attitudes toward ELL education affected their pedagogical practices in working with ELL students.

This chapter has discussed the contributing factors to the issue of lack of preparation in mainstream teachers with ELL students. These contributing factors include current legislation that affects ELL education, deficits in mainstream teacher preparation programs, and deficits in ELL professional development. These issues have the potential negative effects on mainstream teachers' abilities as well as their attitudes towards ELLs and ELL education. The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (2017) report argues that all teacher preparation programs must include curriculum to ensure that teachers are trained to work with a diverse student population. The report argues that educators need deeper understanding of how to address the education and social-emotional needs English learners. Turkan et al. (2014) use the term "disciplinary linguistic knowledge" to discuss the role and importance of language in effectively teaching content to ELLs. They define "disciplinary linguistic knowledge" as:

> The specialized knowledge base for teaching content to ELLs . . . teachers' knowledge of the academic discourse of a discipline or content area . . . [and the] knowledge base that all teachers of ELLs need to facilitate students' understanding of oral and written discourse within a discipline and their use of language in ways that allow them to actively participate in the disciplinary discourse. (p. 9)

Turkan et al. definition highlights the need for content area teachers and general classroom teachers to have knowledge of and facilitate the learning process for ELL students. Knowledge related to the sociolinguistic and cultural aspects of ELL pedagogy is also considered important in various frameworks outlining ELL teachers' expertise (Lucas et al., 2013). These factors have an effect on teacher preparedness for students with diverse needs in mainstream classroom

setting.

Indeed, many ELLs struggle because they have limited access to quality instruction tailored to their specific needs. Many children enter the classroom without proficiency in the language of instruction and many content area teachers enter the classroom feeling unprepared to teach language learners (McGraner & Saenz, 2009). This gap between ELL education and mainstream classroom teachers requires addressing. English learners in schools need to be in classrooms where there are teachers who have an understanding and have training to meet their academic and social needs. That is, teacher preparation programs must include education to prepare pre-service teachers and school districts must provide continuous training to current teachers of ELLs through professional development opportunities. According to Mitchell (2017):

> If we expect mainstream teachers to create inclusive classrooms where ELLs receive the instructional support they need and deserve, however, then some targeted intervention is needed to transform these limiting beliefs and help mainstream teachers come to see ELLs as capable learners and themselves as responsible for their learning. (p. 16)

Through the research conducted in this chapter, implications and potential solutions were suggested to better meet the needs of ELLs. There are implications for future practice at various levels: teacher preparation programs, school district support, and mainstream classroom teaching. Mitchell (2017) argues that teacher and principal preparation programs must adapt their curricula and training to ensure that all educators, present and future, are ready to work with an ever-diversifying student population. To meet current needs, school districts must also evaluate the needs of current teachers in supporting ELL students. To meet future needs, teacher preparation programs must prepare students for the projected ELL populations. Mitchell (2017) proposes that the most effective manner to do this would be by national coordination of these

efforts to prepare both pre-service teachers and those currently in classroom placements. This proposal is supported by research done by Rubinstein-Avila and Lee (2014), who argue for greater collaboration between university teacher-preparation programs and local school districts in order to support new and seasoned secondary teachers' effectiveness in teaching ELLs. As stated by Rubinstein-Avila and Lee (2014), teacher preparation, teacher's attitudes, teaching practice, and student achievement are all interrelated. Rubinstein-Avila and Lee (2014) studied two various programs in the U.S. and reported their findings of successful initiatives to support mainstream teachers of ELLs.

The first program was a secondary teacher-preparation program at Queens College, New York. The program developed a required course for all preservice teachers titled "Language, Literacy, and Culture in Education." The course centers around the principles of second-language acquisition. Students learn about the processes of second-language development, modifying instruction to meet ELLs language and academic needs, and becoming more knowledgeable about students' backgrounds. The course also focuses on raising awareness about the needs of ELLs and encouraged teachers' sensitivity toward the differences of students such as language, backgrounds, expectations, needs, roles, and values. One of the goals of the class is training teachers to be "cultural mediators" on behalf of language-minority students. "Cultural mediation as a process of planned intervention in which teachers and administrators act as cultural brokers between the mainstream culture of the United States as it exists in our schools and the minority home cultures of immigrant children" (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014, p. 29). This program demonstrates the importance of training pre-service teachers to be prepared to teach diverse groups of students.

The second program reviewed by Rubinstein-Avila & Lee (2014) was program created

by educators at Ohio State University after implementing a needs analysis survey across six public school districts in Ohio. The program encouraged teachers' participation by providing incentives such as covering the costs of tuition and textbooks and offering participants graduate-level college credit toward either a TESOL endorsement or a master's degree in foreign and second-language education. The program accepts district cohort teams and promotes collaboration between program developers and school districts, "…fostering a shared vision and responsibility among all teachers in school districts" (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014, p. 32). This program demonstrates the importance of collaboration between districts and universities to identify and meet the needs of students.

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the problem; lack of preparation of mainstream teachers in ELL education. Research was reviewed on contributing factors to the problem including current legislation that affects ELL education, deficits in mainstream teacher preparation programs, and deficits in ELL professional development. Additionally, research was reviewed on the effects of these factors in teachers' attitudes toward ELLs and ELL education. This research will be utilized to develop "The Product" titled "Supporting ELLs in Content Areas," which I will describe in Chapter 3. The product, like the programs studied by Rubinstein-Avila and Lee (2014), will work to combat the main issues presented in this research. Chapter 3 will include a detailed description of the content of a professional development for current teachers without ELL training.

# Chapter 3: The Product

This chapter will outline a description and rationale for a product informed by the Chapter 2 literature review. The product crafted for this capstone will take the form of a professional learning community (PLC) and a professional development (PD) presentation. The product will be created in response to the lack of preparation of mainstream teachers in ELL education. It is intended to assist mainstream classroom teachers in their understanding of language acquisition theories and their instruction of ELLs. The main audience of the PLC and the PD are current mainstream teachers without ELL training. As research shows, pre-service teachers lack adequate training and show a deficit in the ability to use appropriate strategies to support ELLs (Giles & Yazan, 2020; Villegas et al., 2018).

To meet the needs of both teachers and students, the content will be chosen based on research in ELL education. The rationale for this product stems from the need for mainstream teachers to support ELLs and ELL specialists in the academic progress of students. The product will be both interactive and collaborative to foster relationships with teachers and the ESL specialist(s) in a given school.

## Description of the Professional Development

The product will be utilized and presented at Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women in Rochester, NY. This school utilizes professional learning communities (PLCs) for teachers throughout the school year and culminates the year with PD presentations conducted by leaders of PLCs. This product would be included in the previously developed framework of teacher trainings developed by the school. The title of the PLC and the culminating PD will be "Supporting ELLs in Content Areas." Interested teachers at the school will be able to participate in the PLC that meets in a small group setting starting in the fall. There will be four meetings

held after school and two meetings held during designated meeting days for faculty; once in February and once in April. The length of each meeting will vary from 30 minutes to one hour depending on the previously developed schedule created by the school. Following the completion of the PLC at the end of the year, the whole faculty will attend the PD. The whole-faculty PD presentations will take part during a weeklong series of PDs after final exams. The structure of these trainings is already set in place by the school.

The purpose of having both the PLC and the PD is to give teachers the opportunity to have more in-depth training and practice with teaching and planning for ELLs. For example, the PD will introduce four effective ELL strategies, while the PLC will give teachers the opportunity and the appropriate time to collaborate and implement those four strategies in their content areas throughout the year. The PLC and the PD will utilize the same materials and follow a similar format. Both will be presented in the form of a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix A) created to guide the trainings and discussions.

The PLC and the PD will include the same three components; an initial survey, an introduction to ELL theories, and an overview of strategies that content area teachers can use to tailor their teaching of ELLs. The first component of both the PLC and the PD will include a survey of teacher ELL education and training in regard to ELLs (see Appendix B). The second and third component will be included in the PowerPoint presentation and they will be informative in nature, including theory and educational practices including ELL strategies. The purpose of including ELL theory is to facilitate teachers' connections from theory to practice. The main theories include from the literature review will be Cummins (1984) and Vygotsky (1980). From theory, the content of the presentation will move into educational practice and ELL strategies. The second portion of the PD will include differentiation strategies for ELLs informed

by research discussed in later sections of this chapter. Each component of the PLC and PD will be discussed in greater depth including a description, rationale for its use, and how it works resolve the deficit of preparation of mainstream teachers. Information included in this chapter will show relevance in respect to literature reviewed from Chapter 2.

**Initial Survey of Faculty**

A survey of teachers will be conducted through a Google Form (see Appendix B). The intent of the survey is to gain information from mainstream teachers about their current understanding and need for training to work with ELLs. The survey will seek to gain information from teachers under three categories including their pre-service training, professional development training, and the strategies that they currently use to differentiate instruction for ELLs.

The rationale of the survey is for the school's ELL teacher and the school itself, along with administrators, to gain a better understanding of the teaching needs in the school. Due to legislation shifts in ELL policy, no current federal policies have prioritized teacher training for ELs (Quintero & Hansen, 2017). This has caused teachers to have varied experiences in pre-service training and professional development in regard to ELLs (Giles and Yazan, 2020; Government Accountability Office, 2009; Hansen-Thomas, 2010; Newman et al., 2010; Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014; Villegas et al., 2018). This information works to resolve the problem of deficits in mainstream teacher training. The information gained from the survey could be vital in evaluating the school and how prepared its mainstream teachers are in their education of ELLs. The data informed by the survey could serve additional purposes for the school as it could also be used as a tool to secure more training for teachers. Following the survey, the PLC and the PD will then move into the informative portions of the trainings.

**ELL Theory**

The second portion of the PLC and PD will include relevant theories in regard to ELL education and the field of TESOL. This focus will be on the work of Cummins (1984) and Vygotsky (1980). In regard to Cummins, information will be presented on the difference between the two different kinds of language proficiency; basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). The purpose of including this information is for teachers to understand the need for proper language acquisition support for students in all subject areas, over the course of several years, to assist them in understanding the academic language required of various content areas. Teachers need to assist students in their proficiency even after they have gained BICS and move into further language acquisition through CALP (Cummins, 1984).

Education theories developed by Vygotsky (1980) will also be included. The main focus will be Vygotsky's work on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The purpose of including this information is for teachers to understand that students can successfully complete tasks when they are designed for their appropriate levels of understanding and designed with appropriate challenge and subsequent support. When lessons and tasks are adjusted to the learner's level and appropriate support and scaffolding are utilized, mastery of content and language acquisition is more likely (Vygotsky, 1980). This information will support several of the strategies incorporated into the third portion of the PLC and PD.

Including educational theory in this product works to resolve the problem because understanding theory provides a basis for teachers to better understand their students as well as the education practices that are necessary to support specific subgroups of students, including ELLs. According to Furman Shaharabani and Yarden (2019), the gap between theory and

teachers' practice is a barrier to education improvement. In order for teachers to understand education practice and its rationale, the need to understand theories used to develop differentiated strategies.

## Differentiation Strategies for the Mainstream Classroom

The beginning portions of the PLC and PD lay groundwork for the school and teachers to have better understanding for the need for ELL training. The purpose of the last portion of the training is to provide teachers with tools they can use to support the success of ELLs in content area classes. The portion will include an introduction to four strategies that mainstream classroom teachers can use to design their lessons to better assist their ELLs. The four strategies that will be incorporated into the product will include 1) a student background survey, 2) use of students' first languages (L1s), 3) scaffolding, and 4) vocabulary support. The product takes a practical approach to the problem by providing specific strategies for teachers that they can use in their own classrooms. The followings sections will detail the four strategies that will be incorporated into the third portion of the PLC and professional development. Background will be given for each strategy as well as support from research for the rationale of including this strategy in a professional development to assist ELLs.

### *Student Background Survey*

Student background surveys allow teachers to better understand students as individuals with unique language and cultural backgrounds. Understanding a student's background is an essential element to effective teaching of ELLs. According to Mellom et al. (2018), increasing knowledge of students through surveys in the beginning of the school year allows teachers are to utilize student backgrounds and interests for "increased student talk time" (p.104). Increasing communication between teachers and students, and also facilitating communication between

students, can assist students in the communication proficiency as well as academic proficiency. Mellom et al. (2018) states that understanding student backgrounds is necessary for contextualizing lessons so that they become meaningful to student lives:

> By learning more about the students' lives, the teacher can more effectively embed lessons in contexts that are relevant to the students, thereby facilitating their learning. We interpret the primary ideological impact of teachers getting to know their students better as being the ability of teachers to more fully humanize their students and see them as whole individuals. (p.104)

A sample of a student survey is provided in Handout A of the PLC and PD, found in Appendix C. This survey begins by asking students about previous school experiences as well as experiences with specific classes. The questions ask students about preferred classes, challenging classes, and self-reflection of proficiency skills including reading, writing, speaking and listening. Student surveys can be designed based on the specific content area of the teacher as well. Surveys can include questions in regard to culture and families. These questions give teachers a better understanding of students and can assist teachers in providing connections for students during their learning and language acquisition process.

### *Use of Students' 1st Languages*

Use of a student's first language (L1) can provide benefits to students in a mainstream classroom setting. Use of a first language can provide benefits to both students and teachers including building rapport, explaining and clarifying instructions, and supporting vocabulary development (Mora Pablo et al., 2011). Teachers can build rapport by learning greetings and phrases in a students' first language. This can help teachers and students to begin the process of early communication in the classroom. In addition, use of the L1 is a tool that teachers can use to

provide directions and clarify content for students. A content area teacher in Mora Pablo et al. (2011) states:

> For me it's much easier to return to Spanish. Students were asking me about the 's' ending…and I explain it in Spanish because it would take me hours to explain it in English! L1 is used for certain words or expressions in order to keep the moment going of an activity, it really depends on the circumstances of when I use it [L1]. I think it is essential in some cases to explain some things in Spanish, because even if you give examples or do pantomime there are certain grammatical points that are very difficult for students to understand in spite of similarities between the languages. (p. 118)

This example demonstrates how use of an L1 can provide a foundation for students to understand a concept in their second language (L2). While not all teachers can provide instructions verbally in the various languages of students, they can provide written instructions in the students' L1s. In addition to instructions teachers can also support students learning by providing vocabulary or content area glossaries in a student's first language to support their understanding of a subject (Mora Pablo, 2011). A summary of this information is provided in Handout B of the PLC and PD, found in Appendix D. Including this information in the PD provides teachers with rationales for including students' first languages in the classroom and the benefit for both students and teachers.

### *Scaffolding*

According to Vygotsky (1980) scaffolding in teaching creates supportive environments for students to learn and acquire skills. Scaffolding relates to Vygotsky's theories in zone of proximal development because scaffolding is intended to assist students in challenging tasks with the appropriate support. Scaffolding is the inclusion of supports during instruction or an activity

to help students to better understand the material or complete the task at hand (Pawan, 2008). According to Pawan (2008) scaffolds can be sorted into two categories:

> Soft scaffolds involve teachers constantly monitoring and providing timely support to students and thus are generally more associated with intensive, individualized and ongoing attention from teachers. Hard scaffolds, on the other hand, are supports that can be embedded ahead of time in instructional materials. (p.1459)

Both soft and hard scaffolds will be included in the professional development. According to Brush and Saye (2002), soft scaffolds could include but are not limited to feedback, instructing, explaining, modeling, and questioning. Hard scaffolds could include but are not limited to prior vocabulary development, graphic organizers, templates, and student guides. Inclusion of these strategies give teachers a better understanding. Mellom (2018) states that scaffolding is an effective way for teachers to better supports ELLs in both language acquisition and content area language development. A summary of this information is provided in Handout C of the PLC and PD, found in Appendix E.

***Vocabulary Development for ELLs***

According to Roberts and Truxaw (2013), vocabulary development is an essential component to ELL success in content areas. Definitions are filled with technical vocabulary and teachers need to explicitly help students make sense of this new language in their specific content areas. According to Echevarria et al. (2011), the use of vocabulary strategies in content areas can make new information comprehensible to ELL students. Without vocabulary development students may not be able to progress in their understanding of content areas such as math, science, social students and English Language Arts. A summary of this information is provided in Handout D of the PLC and PD, found in Appendix F.

**Intents and Outcomes of the Product**

This product is not a solution to the all parts of the problem, but it is a beginning step to facilitate training of mainstream teachers in working with ELL students. The product is rooted in research and also gives teachers practical strategies for working with their ELL population. The product emphasizes that mainstream teachers need training to understand specific theories as well as training in how to put these theories into practice. There are two initial intents to the product. The first initial intent for the product is the completion of the survey to provide schools with information about teacher training in the field of ELL education. This information could be vital in evaluating schools and how prepared mainstream teachers are in their education of ELLs. The second initial intent is to provide teachers with understandings of ELL theories that inform instructional tools they can use to support academic success of ELLs. Beyond these initial intents, the additional purpose of the product is to facilitate a working dialogue for mainstream teachers and the ESL teacher(s) in a given school. For use in another school beyond Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, the product would ideally be facilitated by an ESL teacher to provide them the opportunity to use their training on a widespread scale.

# Chapter 4: Conclusion

This capstone presents and supports the argument that all teachers, not just those with TESOL certification, should be provided with various forms of training to support the needs of ELLs. Training should be provided in pre-service teacher preparation programs as well as in professional development for continuing education of current teachers. Statistics on ELL population sizes and projected growth of ELL student populations give support to this argument. English learners in schools across the United States need to be in classrooms where there are teachers who have an understanding and have training to meet their academic and social needs. There are essential understandings of second language learning that teachers need to recognize and practice in order to be assist in language acquisition for ELLs. Considering this, preparing all teachers to work effectively with ELLs is a crucial educational need.

The literature reviewed in this project identifies three issues that contribute deficits in mainstream teacher training; current legislation that affects ELL education, deficits in mainstream teacher preparation programs, and deficits in ELL professional development. These issues, when in combination, can have negative effects on mainstream teachers' abilities to educate ELLs in their classrooms. Additionally, lack of training can lead to teachers' negative attitudes in regard to ELLs and ELL education. In this chapter, I will first summarize research findings, the discuss implications. I will conclude with recommendations for future research.

## Summary

Research has documented deficits in teacher training in regard to ELLs. These deficits can be traced back to a lack of federal policies that have prioritized teacher training for ELLs, both for pre-service and in-service teachers (Evans, 2005; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). States and districts have considerable flexibility in

determining accommodations for students who are not proficient in English. Indeed, more than half of U.S. states do not require any TESOL training for general teacher candidates (Education Commission of the States, 2014). Moreover, without educational policies directed towards this issue the lack of mainstream teacher preparation will persist.

There is a current deficit in the training of pre-service teachers to meet the specific needs of ELL students. Without training, pre-service teachers may not be able to provide adequate differentiation tailored to the specific needs of ELL students (Giles & Yazan, 2020; Villegas et al, 2018). Researchers cited lack of coursework in teacher preparation programs in addition to lack of field experiences that included practical work with ELL students (Government Accountability Office, 2009). These findings demonstrate a deficit in the pre-service training of mainstream teachers in specific pedagogical practices to meet the needs of ELLs in their classrooms. Additionally, deficits were found in ELL training and professional development offered to current mainstream teachers of ELLs. Researchers reported low percentages of teachers participating in in-service trainings to support ELL students (Newman et al, 2010; Rubinstein-Avila, 2014). Lack of training and continued professional development, as demonstrated in these findings, could lead to deficits in mainstream teachers' abilities to provide tailored instruction for ELLs that goes beyond general mainstream teaching knowledge.

Lack of teacher training in regard to the unique needs of ELLs can cause mainstream teachers to feel unprepared to meet the needs of students. Hansen-Thomas (2010) cite findings of teachers' desire to better understand how ELLs learn and the corresponding pedagogy needed to teach their students. If mainstream teachers were provided with continuing education in the form of professional development, they could feel competent in teaching their ELLs and knowing their role in their students' learning. If teachers were trained in specific strategies for differentiation,

they could be more efficient in their work to assist the ELLs in their classrooms. Teacher training could also lead to more positive attitudes in regard to ELLs and ELL education.

Informed by research from Chapter 2, a product titled “Support for ELLs in Content Areas” was designed to resolve the issue of lack of mainstream teacher training. The product includes three components in the form of a professional development; a faculty survey, ELL theory education, and differentiation strategies for the mainstream classroom. The purpose of these components is two-fold; to evaluate a school’s teachers and their training experiences and as well support teachers who need additional training to assist ELL students in a mainstream setting.

**Implications**

In effect, understanding where deficits occur in education is vital information. Therefore, for a school to support mainstream teachers in their teaching of ELLs, they need to have data that demonstrates where training deficits occur, and which deficits are present. For schools to evaluate the problem they need this information. In response to this conclusion, the product of “Supporting ELLs in Content Areas” was designed with a faculty survey at the forefront. This includes the collection of data in three categories; including pre-service training, professional development training, and the strategies that mainstream teachers currently use to differentiate instruction for ELLs. The rationale of the survey is for the school’s ELL teacher and the school itself, along with administrators, to gain a better understanding of the teaching needs in the school. This portion of the product seeks to provide benefits for schools, teachers, and students. If deficits are found in a given school, administrators could use this information to provide additional professional development to teachers. Providing training to teachers gives them additional support and better prepares them to work with ELL students.

There is a need for teachers to understand language acquisition theories so that they can support students in their developing proficiency. Students learning English while also learning specific content areas face unique challenges, and therefore there is a need for mainstream classroom teachers to provide this additional support to students in their designated content areas (Gibbons, 2015). The product, "Supporting ELLs in Content Areas," provides teachers with training in ELL theories, including the work of Cummins (1984) in basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) and the work of Vygotsky (1980) and zone of proximal development. Including this information in the product works to benefit both teachers and students. Students learning a second language need the appropriate support to develop their English skills as well as their academic content skills. When teachers have understandings of the language acquisition process, they can better support students in content areas as well as their English language proficiency. Teachers with understandings of ELL theories can utilize appropriate strategies with students to differentiate their learning.

Teacher education and preparation could play a powerful role in changing and shaping academic achievement for ELLs. Without qualified teachers, language acquisition for students could be an inefficient process. Most students are with a mainstream teacher for the majority of the day, and with their designated ELL teacher for a smaller portion of time. If mainstream teachers are trained in ELL pedagogical practices, they could additionally support ELL teachers and students in a mainstream setting.

**Recommendation**

There is a need for additional work focused on the academic and social effects of this issue. There is a lack of research in teacher training and education in general, as well as in the

field of TESOL. From the research completed in this capstone, I recommend further research to be conducted on the effects of teacher training on students. For legislation to change, and funding to be appropriated, research in teachers' training and education and its effects on students would be a valuable asset. To elicit change and call for greater teacher training, research and data could provide motivation to work to resolve this issue.

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## Appendix A:

## PowerPoint Presentation "Supporting ELLs in Content Areas"

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1bFKdDAIbwUo8hBE_56hBa6YslO9azhgCdL_xZNSSwr4/edit?usp=sharing

**Appendix B:**

**Introduction Screen for PLC and PD Faculty Survey**

## Supporting English Language Learners in Content Areas

Introduction

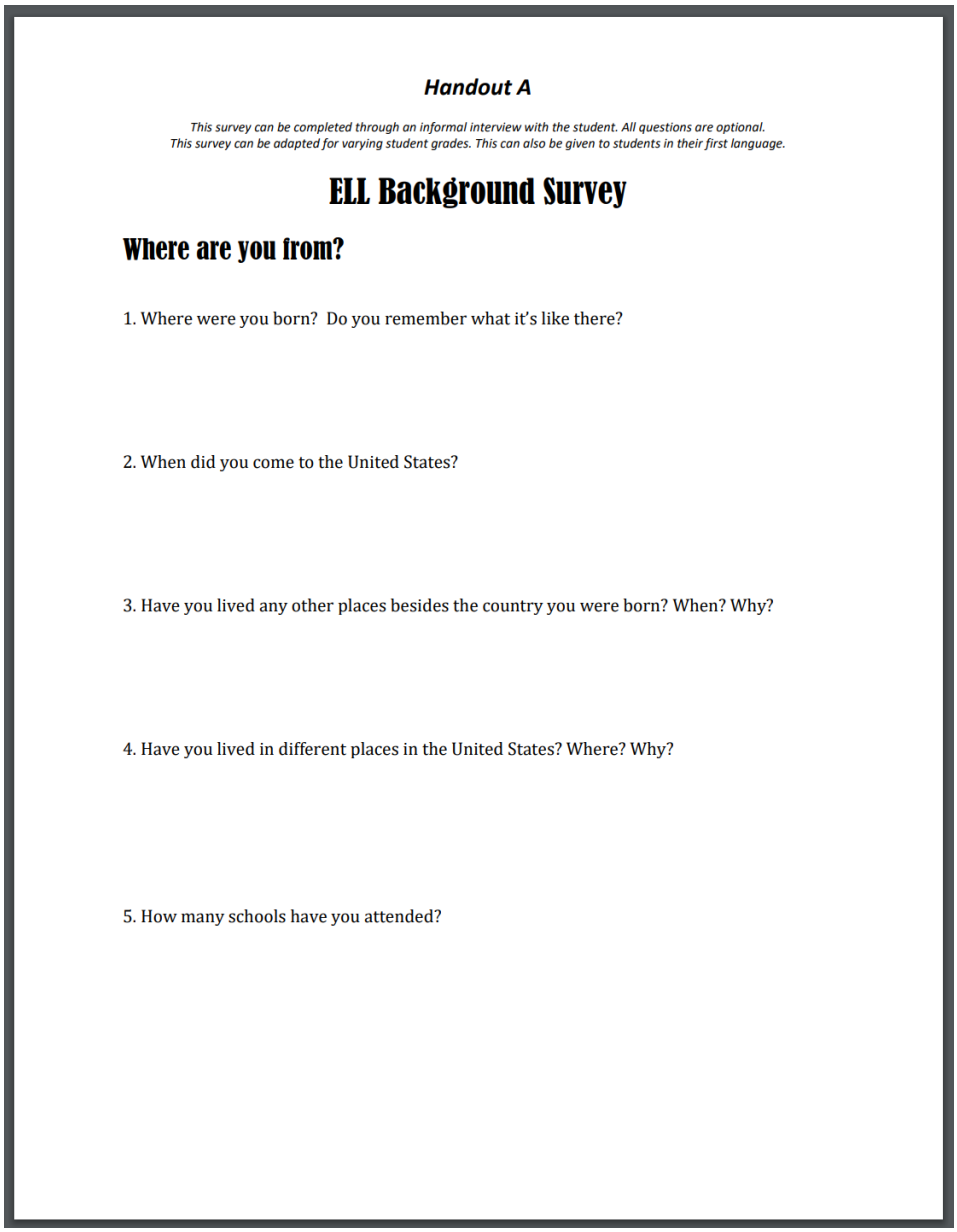
The purpose of the professional learning community (PLC) and the professional development (PD) is to assist mainstream classroom teachers in their understanding of language acquisition theories and their instruction of English language learners. Due to legislation shifts in ELL policy, no current federal policies have prioritized teacher training for ELs. This has caused teachers to have varied experiences in pre-service training and professional development in regard to ELLs. This survey works to gain understanding and resolve the problem of deficits in mainstream teacher training.

Link to public copy of the survey:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1JwP2u0U2C8Vi9FQLBUuOsUsD7qIr-srGJywaNnzr8HE/edit?usp=sharing

## Appendix C:

### Handout A - Page 1 of 4 of Sample ELL Background Survey



***Handout A***

*This survey can be completed through an informal interview with the student. All questions are optional.*
*This survey can be adapted for varying student grades. This can also be given to students in their first language.*

**ELL Background Survey**

**Where are you from?**

1. Where were you born? Do you remember what it's like there?

2. When did you come to the United States?

3. Have you lived any other places besides the country you were born? When? Why?

4. Have you lived in different places in the United States? Where? Why?

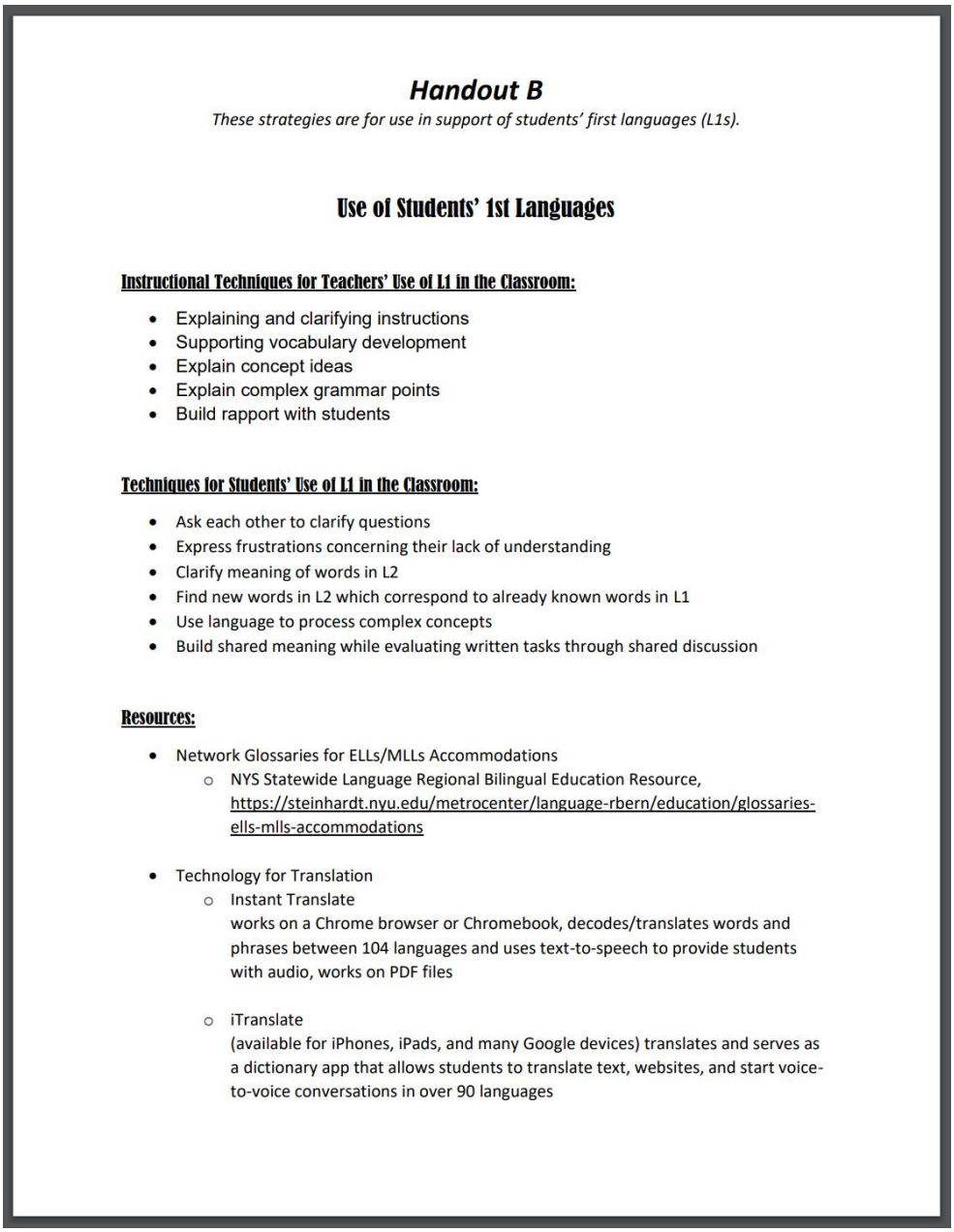
5. How many schools have you attended?

Link to public copy of document:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ui9zJOlwwqN-NjhcSen9AY2bMbO_kcl9/view?usp=sharing

# Appendix D:

## Handout B – Use of Students' 1st Languages



***Handout B***

*These strategies are for use in support of students' first languages (L1s).*

**Use of Students' 1st Languages**

**Instructional Techniques for Teachers' Use of L1 in the Classroom:**

- Explaining and clarifying instructions
- Supporting vocabulary development
- Explain concept ideas
- Explain complex grammar points
- Build rapport with students

**Techniques for Students' Use of L1 in the Classroom:**

- Ask each other to clarify questions
- Express frustrations concerning their lack of understanding
- Clarify meaning of words in L2
- Find new words in L2 which correspond to already known words in L1
- Use language to process complex concepts
- Build shared meaning while evaluating written tasks through shared discussion

**Resources:**

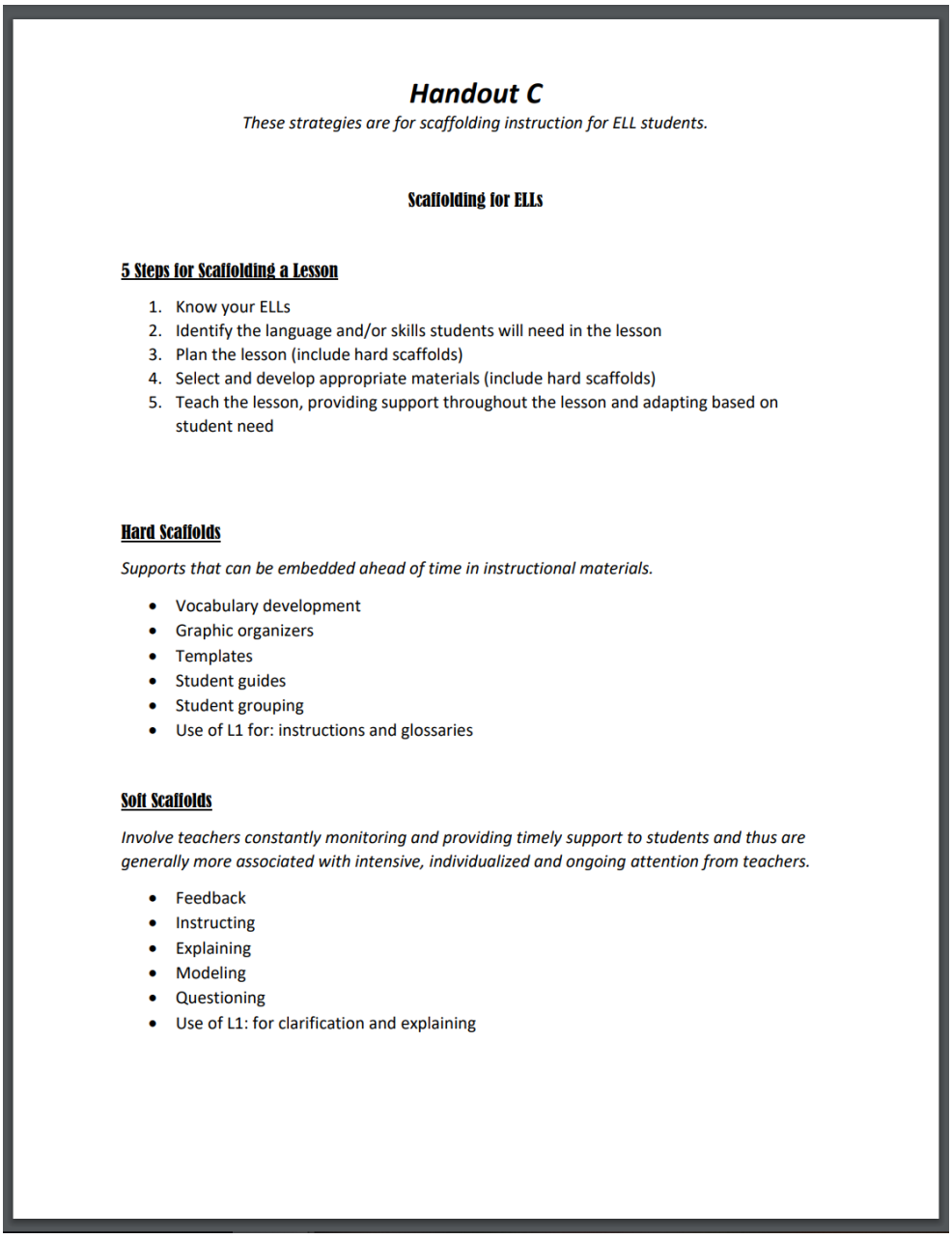
- Network Glossaries for ELLs/MLLs Accommodations
  - NYS Statewide Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource, https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/language-rbern/education/glossaries-ells-mlls-accommodations
- Technology for Translation
  - Instant Translate
    works on a Chrome browser or Chromebook, decodes/translates words and phrases between 104 languages and uses text-to-speech to provide students with audio, works on PDF files
  - iTranslate
    (available for iPhones, iPads, and many Google devices) translates and serves as a dictionary app that allows students to translate text, websites, and start voice-to-voice conversations in over 90 languages

Link to public copy of document:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rT2T-J2ktMXoltW1kS50kcGsTEPKX95Y/view?usp=sharing

# Appendix E:

## Handout C – Scaffolding for ELLs



***Handout C***

*These strategies are for scaffolding instruction for ELL students.*

**Scaffolding for ELLs**

**5 Steps for Scaffolding a Lesson**

1. Know your ELLs
2. Identify the language and/or skills students will need in the lesson
3. Plan the lesson (include hard scaffolds)
4. Select and develop appropriate materials (include hard scaffolds)
5. Teach the lesson, providing support throughout the lesson and adapting based on student need

**Hard Scaffolds**

*Supports that can be embedded ahead of time in instructional materials.*

- Vocabulary development
- Graphic organizers
- Templates
- Student guides
- Student grouping
- Use of L1 for: instructions and glossaries

**Soft Scaffolds**

*Involve teachers constantly monitoring and providing timely support to students and thus are generally more associated with intensive, individualized and ongoing attention from teachers.*

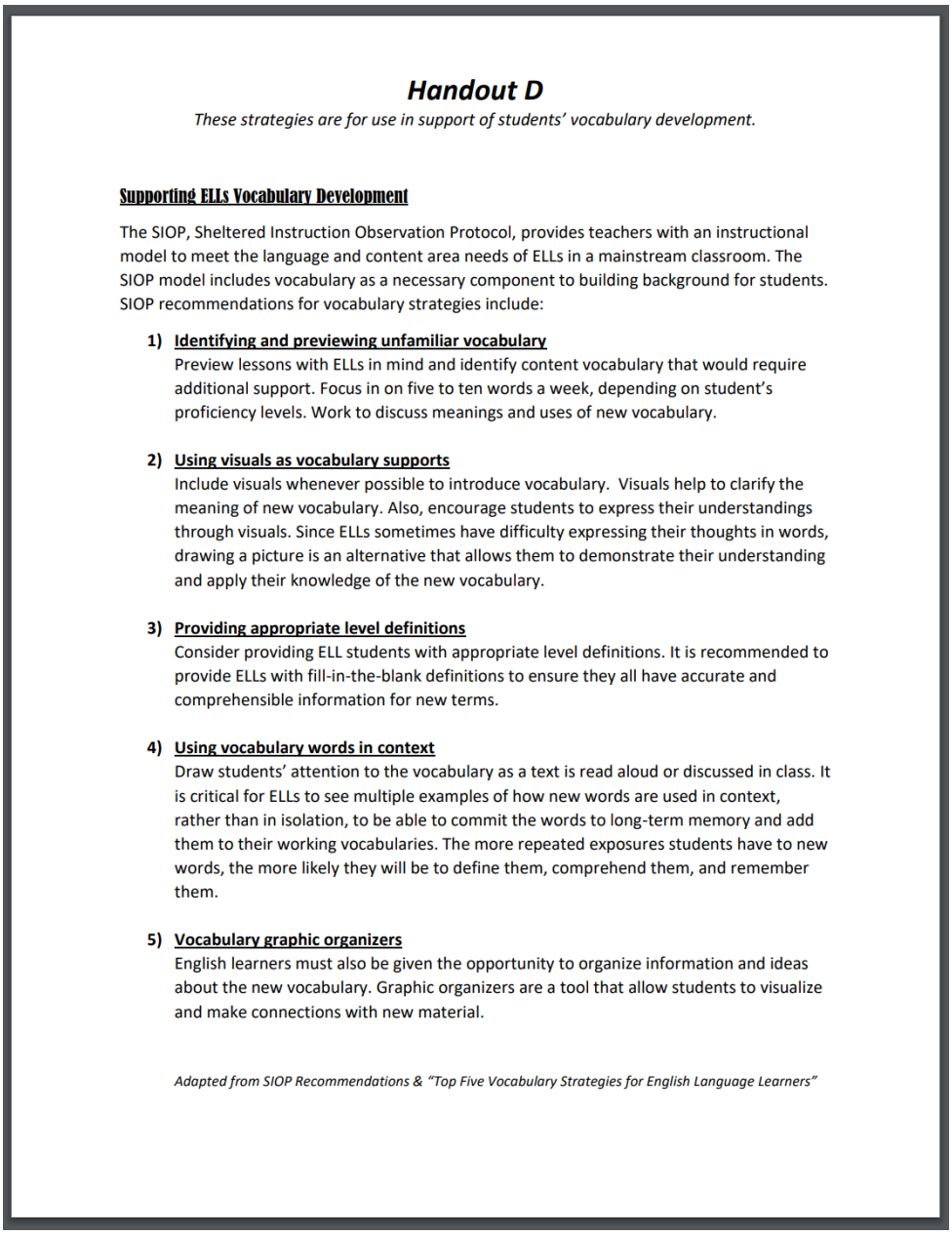
- Feedback
- Instructing
- Explaining
- Modeling
- Questioning
- Use of L1: for clarification and explaining

Link to public copy of document:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ftRLhR9zET03j_edrf0TcVuWUQ277_Y_/view?usp=sharing

## Appendix F:

## Handout D – Vocabulary Support for ELLs



***Handout D***

*These strategies are for use in support of students' vocabulary development.*

**Supporting ELLs Vocabulary Development**

The SIOP, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, provides teachers with an instructional model to meet the language and content area needs of ELLs in a mainstream classroom. The SIOP model includes vocabulary as a necessary component to building background for students. SIOP recommendations for vocabulary strategies include:

1) **Identifying and previewing unfamiliar vocabulary**
   Preview lessons with ELLs in mind and identify content vocabulary that would require additional support. Focus in on five to ten words a week, depending on student's proficiency levels. Work to discuss meanings and uses of new vocabulary.

2) **Using visuals as vocabulary supports**
   Include visuals whenever possible to introduce vocabulary. Visuals help to clarify the meaning of new vocabulary. Also, encourage students to express their understandings through visuals. Since ELLs sometimes have difficulty expressing their thoughts in words, drawing a picture is an alternative that allows them to demonstrate their understanding and apply their knowledge of the new vocabulary.

3) **Providing appropriate level definitions**
   Consider providing ELL students with appropriate level definitions. It is recommended to provide ELLs with fill-in-the-blank definitions to ensure they all have accurate and comprehensible information for new terms.

4) **Using vocabulary words in context**
   Draw students' attention to the vocabulary as a text is read aloud or discussed in class. It is critical for ELLs to see multiple examples of how new words are used in context, rather than in isolation, to be able to commit the words to long-term memory and add them to their working vocabularies. The more repeated exposures students have to new words, the more likely they will be to define them, comprehend them, and remember them.

5) **Vocabulary graphic organizers**
   English learners must also be given the opportunity to organize information and ideas about the new vocabulary. Graphic organizers are a tool that allow students to visualize and make connections with new material.

*Adapted from SIOP Recommendations & "Top Five Vocabulary Strategies for English Language Learners"*

Link to public copy of document:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TxzUHM6Q4P1dDo8pcc1u6xhsZVBV4kak/view?usp=sharing