MAINSTREAM TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF THEIR ROLE IN EDUCATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A thesis submitted by

Stephen L. Dixon, M.A., M.B.A.

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Abstract

Many mainstream teachers face the formidable challenge of concurrently teaching the English language learners (ELLs) in their classroom content in addition to language. This situation creates extra work for these teachers to plan curriculum and implement teaching practices to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The purpose of this mixed-methods sequential explanatory study is to develop a thorough understanding of how teachers at one international school in Tokyo, Japan perceive their role in teaching ELLs and why they have this perception. Constructivist learning theory forms a theoretical framework to ground this study. Through an analysis of survey results, a focus group meeting, and individual interviews with mainstream teachers from elementary and middle school/high school, this study examines mainstream teachers' expectations and perspectives regarding educating ELLs. This study's findings advocate for professional development to support professional learning communities in order to modify curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Conclusions and recommendations of this study also contribute to social change by creating better opportunities for English language learners (ELLs) to reach high academic standards.

Keywords: *English language learners, mainstream teachers, expectations, perspectives*

Certification of Thesis

This thesis is entirely the work of Stephen Dixon except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at USQ.

Dr. Shirley O'Neill

Principal Supervisor

Dr. Stewart Riddle

Associate Supervisor

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Several years ago, as a tutor of the ESL in the Mainstream Course at a school other than the setting of this study, I refereed a debate on the topic: *Who are the ESL teachers?* I asked if responsibility for teaching English to ELLs was limited to the ESL teachers or if mainstream teachers, as some research suggest (Gibbons, 2002), should also share responsibility for supporting ELLs and scaffolding instruction to enable them to develop their language skills. The debate that ensued was spirited and included views from both sides. One ESL teacher argued that the ESL teachers with ELL certification and experience should take a significant role in teaching ELLs. A physical education teacher at the school disagreed and claimed that it was the responsibility of all. The fact that this physical education teacher so passionately expressed support for ELLs in the mainstream while an ESL teacher in the group could be so insistent that this kind of intervention should be limited to the ESL teachers raised the question of who should ultimately assume responsibility for ELLs and language acquisition support. This experience ignited my interest, motivated me to take a more serious interest in ELL education and helped shape the key research question for this study - *How and why do mainstream teachers perceive their role in regard to English language learners the way they do, and what impact does this have on their expectations and instruction for these students?*

The following chapter explains how uncertainty and confusion regarding who is responsible for teaching ELL students English creates a situation where students receive little and potentially no additional support while coping with the dual demands of simultaneously learning English and content in mainstream classes.

1.1.1 Terminology

The field of teaching and learning English is filled with a myriad of terms. To avoid confusion, the term *English language learners (ELLs)* is used throughout this mixed-methods study to describe students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds and are yet to reach English proficiency. While the survey instrument used

in the study refers to these learners as *ESL* (English as a second language) students, this was to maintain terminology used in the setting that teacher participants would understand. For the remainder of the study, the preferred term used is either *English language learners* or *ELLs*. Appendix B contains a detailed definition of these and other terms used in this study.

1.1.2 Research Context

In the research literature, the term international school defies description (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Hayden, 2006). No two schools in Japan are the same (McDonald, 2007). Schools vary greatly based on their history, philosophy, size, and curriculum (MacKenzie, 2009). In the case of some schools, the term *international* may reflect "nothing more than a desire to claim a position in the market" (MacKenzie, 2009, p. 330), rather than their diversity. Such *international schools* in Japan have a native student population, Japanese teachers and follow a Japanese national curriculum.

For most of the two-dozen established international schools in Japan, however, this is not the case. The majority, such as the one described in this study, share many common traits. They belong to the Japan Council of International Schools, which was founded in 1972 and have an extremely diverse student and teacher population. They are well-resourced, have parents who are successful and hold high expectations, follow a British or American academic calendar, and with the exception of external courses such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP), have a considerable degree of autonomy regarding curriculum and assessment. These schools, according to Velliaris & Willis (2013), have the ability to model themselves on leading schools.

Top-tier international schools boast capacity to attract highly qualified and experienced teachers (Stuart, 2016) and teachers in most cases are required to hold a bachelor's degree in their subject area and have at least two years of teaching experience. Experience and training in teaching English language learners are not required but considered advantageous. These teachers are recruited locally, at job fairs in the United

Kingdom, the United States, and Asia, and in an increasing number of cases and at the setting of this study, via personal recommendation. Most professional development for teachers at these school occurs at conferences abroad (Ohms, 2016).

International schools in Japan schools are accredited by external organizations to ensure the quality of their programs but not constrained by Japanese national or prefectural standards. They are registered as *gakkohojin* or academic corporations but lie outside regulation by the Japanese government and Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) or *Mombusho*. This lack of direct accountability means that the teachers can enjoy a considerable amount of freedom, which can have both good and bad consequences.

Independent, free-thinking teachers working in South-East Asia in international schools are largely autonomous and are often more isolated than their domestic counterparts (Stuart, 2016). It is not uncommon for middle and high school teachers to be the only teacher in their subject at a specific grade level (Oms, 2016). Invariably, teachers will often bring their own *suitcase curriculum* with them based on their world view and the pedagogical approaches they have found effective (Stuart, 2016). Also, this curriculum, for better or worse can leave the school with them when they leave to take up another position (Curnett, 2016).

Established international schools in Japan primarily follow U.S. standards such as Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Teachers select textbooks and other support material to meet these standards and teach mainstream classes as if the students are native English speakers. In many respects, these classes are pedagogically similar to many classes found in most English-speaking countries.

Unlike their western counterparts, international schools in Tokyo experience a high teacher turnover. Departure rates of 20% and even higher are considered part of

international education and can mean these schools continually experience some degree of disruption to their programs.

Most parents view international schools as a path to a top-tier university abroad or a way for their child to enter an international program in Japan. In general, their goals are well-founded since students attending these schools tend to have high scores on external examinations. High academic performance, however, can lead to some international teachers questioning the need for students to reach higher levels. This can result in a "that's good enough" mindset (Stuart, 2006, p. 9) where teachers feel that their students are already doing well, and question the need to implement initiatives designed to bring about improvement. The following study directly addresses the reasons behind this mindset and argues for stronger academic support for English language learners in mainstream classes.

1.1.3 The Problem with Perception

A changing demographic and a large and increasing number of English language learners (ELLs) in this setting (Western Association of Colleges and Schools and the Council of International Schools Five-Year Report, 2013), referred herein as *the school*, challenges mainstream teachers to look for ways of supporting the language development of ELLs in their classes. Some teachers in this school may wait for English proficiency to develop before challenging and engaging ELLs in their subject curriculum. In the absence of a formal policy, an assumed teach English-first approach places ELLs at a distinct disadvantage. This practice might prevent mainstream teachers from seeing limited English proficiency (LEP) students as active members of their class until the students receive grades on a par with their peers. Having to learn English before content also denies ELLs full exposure to the curriculum studied by their English-speaking peers and may limit teachers' academic expectations for them. A report following the last school accreditation by a visiting team in 2008, highlighted the need for greater support for ELLs in the mainstream and a gap in teachers' perceptions regarding their role. According to the report: "The Visiting Team recognises the need

for the whole school to gain an understanding of the needs and strategies to support ESL students. The Visiting Team observed that not all staff recognised that they were teachers of ESL" (Section B: Curriculum B12 Student Resource, WASC/CIS Accreditation Report, 2008, p. 66).

A deeper understanding of teacher's perspectives in this setting regarding inclusion and classroom practices, understanding of language and learning, and expectations of ELLs can lead to a greater awareness of ways teachers can modify their practices to assist ELLs to reach high standards of academic achievement, measurable by standardised assessment. Also, this study identifies successful classroom practices such as pre-teaching vocabulary, simplifying and slowing the speed of instruction, using modified assignments, and employing the use of native languages to enable ELLs to learn the content of core lessons while learning English.

The school's joint 2008 Western Association for Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Council for International Schools (CIS) Accreditation Report suggested that mainstream teachers could do more to differentiate curriculum and instruction to support the language development of the school's large ELL population (Western Association of Schools and Colleges & Council for International Schools Accreditation Report, 2008). Although these recommendations provided an obvious focus for the school going forward, it did not offer any deep insight as to the reasons behind inconsistencies in teacher practice and effectiveness.

While we know little about how teachers perceive their role in teaching ELLs and approach the challenge of teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms, and relatively little empirical research is available regarding the perspectives of teachers regarding ELLs, a solution on how to best support ELLs in mainstream classrooms appears elusive.

The findings of this study on how teachers view their roles as content-only teachers or content and language teachers who teach their academic content in addition to academic language, can also provide insight into how their perspectives impact ELL

students' learning in mainstream classrooms. Research findings can also lay the foundation for discourse and development of relevant teacher training to encourage effective instructional practices for ELLs in mainstream classrooms, such as making lesson content comprehensible and engaging language learners in collaborative activities (Burke, 2013). Without this type of training, feelings of frustration and helplessness may continue to hamper the success of both teachers and students.

The following study used an explanatory mixed-methods approach with research conducted in two distinct phases. The quantitative phase of this study uses a Likert-type survey to examine the perspectives of mainstream, content area teachers of English language learners (ELLs) from different grade levels regarding their role and expectations in teaching these students. In the second phase of this research, a qualitative investigation explores extreme outliers to gain insight into why some mainstream teachers openly embrace the role of teaching English in addition to content, while others view their role as content-only teachers. This additional level of investigation provides an opportunity to drill down below the data and uncover the origin of perceptions of teachers regarding English language learners at the school.

1.1.4 Definition of the Problem

This study addresses a set of issues related to educating linguistically and culturally diverse learners at an international school in Tokyo, Japan. One major issue affecting English language learners (ELLs) in mainstream classrooms is that teachers may see their limited language proficiency as a problem that the school should address before engaging these students in the curriculum. Furthermore, they may see this lack of English proficiency as a problem but not *their* problem and therefore not something they need to address. As a result, mainstream teachers may send ELL students to an ESL class for additional support. Alternatively, mainstream teachers may allow these students to remain in their classroom without providing adequate support for them to learn English and lesson content concurrently. The latter, according to August, Hakuta, Pompa, & National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (1995), results in ELLs receiving inferior instruction compared to their English-speaking peers. It also creates

"a two-tiered system of education, with a challenging curriculum for some and mediocrity for the rest" (p. 5).

Khong & Saito (2014) suggest that despite an urgent need for educational opportunities, paradoxically ELLs experience significantly less opportunity for enrichment than their English-speaking peers. Also, Fillmore (2014) states that "ELLs can handle higher standards and expectations" and "more complex materials are in fact precisely what they need" (p. 624) to meet and exceed U.S. Common Core State Standards. Considering these beliefs, the purpose of this study is to explore why some teachers might not modify their instruction or academic expectations for ELLs while other teachers work to structure and differentiate their instruction to challenge and support them, enabling ELLs to have the same access to curriculum content as other students in mainstream classes.

1.2 Rationale

1.2.1 Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Although the school's intention is to adequately prepare students for college, a gap appears to exist between the best practices for teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms and reality. Some ELLs, despite having spent 6-8 years at this school still require extensive language support. Over the past five years, the population of ELLs and limited English proficiency (LEP) students in the school has also grown significantly. Despite this gap between ELL needs and support and this changing demographic, the curriculum, which is designed to prepare students for universities in English speaking countries, remains unchanged. Clearly, a problem exists that, based on current trends, will only grow. The need for accommodations to support ELLs in regular, mainstream classes is more critical than before.

In recent years, the number of ELLs applying to enter the school has exceeded the number of native English speakers. The school in response to this changing demographic and to support mainstream teachers of ELLs offered several professional development opportunities. One was the *ESL in the Mainstream Teacher Development Course* (South Australian Department of Education) held at the school in the winter of

2008 and again in the winter of 2009, however, only one participant from both courses was a mainstream, content area teacher. The course was offered again in 2010 but canceled when few teachers expressed an interest in enrolling. Also, in January 2014, a weekend workshop was held at the school and run by an internationally recognized expert on teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Although 20 teachers from the school attended this free seminar, all but one was a teacher of English.

In addition to in-house professional development opportunities, the school provides all full-time teachers with funding for attending workshops, courses, and conferences in Japan and abroad. Here too, attendance reports suggest that teachers who have attended ESL and language acquisition training were predominately elementary teachers seeking to improve their skills in teaching English to ELLs. Other mainstream teachers, in contrast, chose to limit their participation in professional development to their content area or other topics of interest.

A lack of participation and under-representation in ELL and language acquisition training tends to indicate that many mainstream teachers in the school may not see their role as one of teaching language in addition to content. This also suggests that a key emphasis for this research study should be to further investigate the reasons behind core teachers neglecting the opportunity to develop skills to meet the needs of ELL students. Without adequate support, there is very little that can prevent ELL students from falling behind in mainstream subjects (Harklau, 1994). Limited support may also result in ELLs becoming Long-term language learners (LTELLs) who will continue to find it difficult to acquire English and will require support for many years (Echevarría, Frey, & Fisher, 2015; Kim & Garcia, 2014), and silently languish in high school as they struggle to reach proficiency (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2011).

Teacher perceptions and training are important considerations in this study, since they can influence teaching practices and how mainstream teachers might support the linguistic needs of the ELLs in their classes. Allen (2010), however, reported that little is known about the pedagogical beliefs and teaching practices of the teachers in international schools to support the needs of learners.

Effective teaching practices for meeting the needs of the school's ELLs in regular mainstream classrooms in this setting are also yet to be identified and there is no system in place to ensure that the best practices are used consistently throughout the school (Western Association of Schools and Colleges and Council of International Schools Accreditation Report, 2008). A third accreditation agency (International Baccalaureate Organization, Five Year Report, May 2008) stated that there is a need for additional support for second language learners of English and recommended that the school extend the current ESL program for grades 10 through 12. While the program was not changed at the high school level the following school year, a learning support coordinator was hired in the 2011-2012 school year to assist students struggling academically, and a high school ESL teacher was hired for the 2015-2016 school year to work with mainstream teachers to support ELLs.

The school aims to provide academic programs that are rigorous and challenging and states that students are expected to meet high expectations and that the school will provide support to enable students to achieve their personal best (Schoolwide Curriculum Philosophy, 2015). However, there is a lack of evidence to suggest that this is true for ELLs. Research suggests that while learning experiences are often challenging for native speakers, the expectations of mainstream teachers for English language learners in many schools are much lower (Echevarría, Frey, & Fisher, 2015; Solano-Flores, & Li, 2008; Waitoller, Artiles, & Cheney, 2009). The gap in academic achievement between ELLs and native speakers implies that this school is no exception.

A clear understanding of how mainstream teachers at this international school view their role in teaching the English language learners in their classroom is needed and is the main focus of this mixed-methods study. Teacher perspectives and perceived roles can have a major influence on curriculum decisions and instructional practices for ELLs in mainstream classes (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Reeves, 2006; Rose, McDonnell, & Ellis, 2007). These findings of how teachers view their role as a content only or content and language teacher can help explain the impact on the education of English language learners.

1.2.2 Evidence of the Problem from Professional Literature

Teaching a large number of ELLs in regular classes presents some significant difficulties for content area teachers who find that language issues hamper student achievement. Changing demographics in the United States have created a Herculean challenge for mainstream teachers who strive to deal with a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). According to Gray and Fleischman (2005) if we "Cut through the fog of competing claims researchers and policymakers about effective approaches for meeting the needs of English language learners (ELLs) and one fact remains: Educators daily face the challenge of teaching this large and growing population" (p. 84).

International schools alike often subscribe to a U.S. curriculum and teachers continue to receive thousands of students each year and are faced with the daunting task of teaching a growing number of ELLs (Allen, 2010), who are placed in mainstream classes, dealing with a double demand (Baker, Kameenui, & Simmons, 2002), and double the work (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007), concurrently trying to master both literacy and content (Rance-Rone, 2009; Richardson Bruna & Gomez, 2009). Also, most mainstream teachers have not received specific training in teaching ELLs in regular classes (Espinola Mesa, 2007; Griffin, 2008) or as part of their preservice training (Barwell, 2005; Richardson Bruna, Vann, & Escudero, 2007). As a result, they are likely to be unfamiliar with proven research-based instructional approaches for teaching the ELLs in their classroom (Mansour, 2009; Tan, 2011). Also, many ELLs in international settings, as a result of frequent movement between schools and gaps in their learning, often fail to achieve good academic results (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Researchers suggest that some practical approaches to teaching ELLs include: understanding the need of long-term ELL students (LTELLs) for additional modeling and scaffolding (Gibbons, 2002; Soto, 2014). Also, ELL students need collaborative activities, lessons, and coherent content, clear instructions and at an appropriate pace, and an alignment of teaching practices and expectations to the stages of language acquisition (Burke, 2013).

Another way to address the problem is grade retention. Unfortunately, grade retention, which may be a side effect of instruction not meeting the needs of ELLs, often fails to deliver any significant benefits (Belot & Vandenberghe, 2010; Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011). Moreover, according to a Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, both the policy of grade retention and the practice of transferring students to other schools is costly for parents, does not improve academic performance, and is not associated with equitable learning opportunities (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011). These findings suggest that further research and alternative approaches are needed to address the problem of students who are failing mainstream subjects and still require more time to reach academic proficiency in English in the setting of this study.

Despite having spent many years in an English-speaking school, without adequate support, a number of ELLs fail to achieve proficiency in the language before they reach middle school (Himmele, 2009; Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 2009). Since ELL students might appear bilingual and demonstrate oral fluency, mainstream teachers can incorrectly assume that they have reached proficiency (Callahan, 2006; Himmele, 2009). This misconception stems from the fact that while students appear to have good basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), they lack cognitive, academic language proficiency (CALPS) – the academic language necessary for success in school (Cummins, 1984; 1999). Basic communication can take 1 to 2 years to develop (Ashworth, 1992), although academic language may take 4 to 7 years (Calderón, 2007; Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1984), or even up to 10 years - possibly longer (Hakuta, Butler & Witt, 2000).

1.2.3 Long-term English Language Learners

In recent years, researchers have identified a growing concern for students who exit ESL programs but have not mastered academic English (Reeves, 2006) and still experience persistent underachievement in academic subjects (Kim & Garcia, 2014; Flores, Klyen & Menken, 2015). These students referred in the literature as Long-term English language learners (LTELLs) have sometimes spent seven years or more in a

U.S. public school and have not reached English proficiency (Menken, Klyen & Chae, 2012; Olsen, 2010). Their progress has stalled (Hakuta, 2014) and many have gone through elementary and high school and are still ELLs who still struggle with academic reading and writing (Fu, 2009).

According to Short & Fitzsimmons (2007), this issue is more profound than we might think. On average, long-term ELLs have drop-out rates that are twice that of native speakers and they experience higher retention rates at all grade levels (Callahan, 2013). Many who do make it through high school fail to achieve the academic skills they need to graduate from a community college and succeed in the workforce (Jacobs, 2016). They are often blamed for their poor academic performance in writing, and reading comprehension (Reeves, 2006), and they continue on a trajectory of consistent and unrelenting failure (Kim & Garcia, 2014). Some have exited ESL classes and joined the mainstream prematurely and in doing so lose the specialized language support and guidance they need to grasp academic content (Linquanti, 2001). In the interim, these students can become *invisible students* who are hard to identify since they do not stand out due to their learned passivity, non-engagement (Olsen, 2010) and linguistic isolation (Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012).

Like limited English proficiency (LEP) students, LTELLs entered school with the same kind of background, similar ability and the same kinds of expectations (Olsen, 2010). They are motivated to learn and participated in class activities believing that their involvement would help them improve their language skills and their understanding of the content. These students anticipated that they would at some stage acquire English proficiency.

Yet, without adequate support, some ELLs can develop gaps in their understanding of concepts introduced in a language they do not understand. This according to Burke (1998) "can have a culminating effect and impede future learning" (Burke, 1998, p. 44). Years later, many of these students want to enter university but are unaware that they lack the skills to succeed and have parents who do not know that they are approaching academic jeopardy (Olsen, 2010).

Definitions and classifications for long-term ELLs vary in the literature. Some researchers suggest that the term refers to students who struggle to reach English proficiency after spending five years (Wilson, 2015) and others seven years (Menken, Kleyn, Chae, 2012) in a U.S. public school. However, the number of years spent in a school where English is the language of instruction (Olsen, 2010) and even the achievement scores on English proficiency tests are often a poor indicator of whether a student can meet the academic standards of core subject classes (Abedi & Dietel, 2004). Olsen (2010) suggests that many students need additional time to reach the English proficiency they need to succeed in the mainstream "but are making progress and will get there…. It is most useful, therefore, to think of a continuum for those long-term English learners" (p. 12). Supporting this, the Center for Public Education (2007) argue that the journey to help ELL students reach an academic level of English proficiency is a long-term endeavor and is not an "event or program with a clear end date" (p. 21).

One finding noted in the literature is the temptation for teachers to *dumb down* the curriculum for LTELLs to the point where content is best described as "often watered-down bits of information" (Fillmore, 2014, p. 625). Such practices are based on the belief that ELL students need to work on the basics of language first before going on to more advanced tasks (Marzano, 1988; Pressley, Johnson, & Symons, 1987). In reality, however, this results in classes where students experience lessons that are not interesting, have fewer opportunities to engage in self-directed projects, and few chances to participate in collaborative learning (Ellis, 1997). This limits the amount and kind of learning students are exposed to before further learning can take place and restricts opportunities to learn and advance to higher order thinking activities (Bautista, 2014).

Educators, suggests Bautista (2014), must use linguistically appropriate ways to accommodate the needs of ELL students and that it is the responsibility of these teachers "to help ELLs accomplish higher-order thinking, regardless of their language abilities teachers must commit to putting time and effort into modifying their lesson plans, so ELLs achieve the same goals as mainstream students" (p. 37). In short, the curriculum should be *watered up* (Ellis, 1997) rather than *down* and mainstream teachers need to

focus on what accommodations and additional support can be provided (Voltz, Sims, & Nelson, 2010). Mainstream teachers' expectations of ELLs and their perception of their role in teaching them, make a difference.

1.2.4 Teachers' Perspectives of Role

Teachers' perspectives have a pervasive effect on the performance of students, largely because of how they speak to their students (Davies & Harré, 1998) and the kinds of opportunities and learning activities to which the students are exposed (Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson, & Dixon, 2010; Yoon, 2008). Teachers who have low academic expectations of ELL students tend to avoid exposing ELLs to challenging tasks and deprive them of opportunities to grow academically (August, Beck, Calderón, Francis, Lesaux & Shanahan, 2008; Newmann, Marks, & Gamoran, 1996; Tan, 2011). These teachers may also avoid calling on ELLs when asking questions (De Jong & Harper, 2005; Verpaetse, 2000) or if they do, may only ask these students lower-order thinking questions (Assuah, 2010; De Jong & Derrick Mescua, 2003).

Alternatively, teachers with high academic expectations of ELLs may modify instruction so that these students receive specific language instruction (Mills & Goos, 2010; Reyes, 2007) and the kind of rigour and challenge that many researchers suggest they need, (Assuah, 2010; Sosa Quiles, 2009) and have a right to receive (Dewey, 1938; Deveney, 2007; Hudspath-Niemi, 2008).

It is unfortunate that despite their ability, many ELLs have little exposure to higher-order tasks until later when they reach a high level of language proficiency (Berliner & Casanova, 1986; Hudspath-Niemi, 2008). ELL students in this situation may be challenged to learn academic English over several years, but a lack of challenge in content areas means that they have little opportunity to go beyond their current understanding of concepts and ideas from the curriculum. In this sense, their school experience is limited to English and their learning of other subject areas remains on hold (August, et al., 1995; Gibbons, 2002) while the language ability of native speakers in the class continues to improve (Cummins, 2000). According to Burke (1998a) "...without adequate support some learners who begin primary school with minimal or no English

develop gaps in their conceptual knowledge.... Over the years this can have a cumulative effect and impede future learning" (p. 44).

The importance of rigour for English language learners frequently appears in recent research literature (Calderón, 2014; Callahan, 2015; Kim & Garcia, 2014) and some suggest that providing access to a rigorous curriculum is one of the most important factors in reducing the likelihood of remediation (Flores & Drake, 2014). Olsen (2010) insists:

> Students, who for years have been allowed to sit back and barely engage, have to be encouraged. Teachers must demand that the students do the heavy lifting of critical thinking, learning new skills, and pushing through their comfort zone - with support, encouragement, and the solid belief that they can do the work (p. 19).

In one study conducted by Flores, Fix, & Batalova (2012) in Texas, a U.S. state where ELLs represent more than 10% of students in public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015) a vast majority of students exposed to a rigorous curriculum completed ESL programs within three years and fared better in meeting basic standards for reading and mathematics. Alternatively, according to Flores, et al. (2012) students who stayed in an ESL program after a period of three years fell significantly behind and became long-term ELLs remaining behind at every grade level.

Mounting evidence suggests that teachers should cultivate English literacy proficiency among ELLs by providing them with a challenging, but developmentally appropriate academic reading and writing tasks (Fránquiz & Salinas, 2011). Providing students with difficult texts or text that is too easy is not the answer (Hakuta, 2014; Hall & Hewings, 2001), nor are reading intervention programs (Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012). ELLs reach high levels of academic literacy by engaging with interesting and engaging texts (Fillamore, 2014) they can unpack with the monitoring and scaffolding of their teachers (Soto, 2014).

Mainstream teachers tend to differ considerably from their colleagues in how they see their role in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners in their

classrooms (Tan, 2011). Research studies suggest that teachers' attitudes and expectations are influenced by several factors (Goddard, & Goddard, 2001; Kupermintz, 2003; Nespor, 1987, Pajares, 1992; Reeves, 2006; Schwarzer, & Hallum, 2008), including: level of cultural awareness (Pacheco, 2010), stereotypes (Garcia & Ying, 2009), the opinions of other teachers (Khong & Saito, 2014), teachers' experience, and parents' attitudes (Varian, 2008). Yoon (2008) also found that teachers' decisions to actively engage ELLs and challenge them in an international school setting are often closely linked to how teachers view their role.

Some teachers may see themselves as teachers of content who must differentiate instruction to make learning accessible to ELLs. They position themselves as teachers for *all* students, including ELLs (Reeves, 2009) and maintain goals and expectations that enable students to become culturally and academically strong by using their experience from school, home and abroad to achieve success. Others, however, perceive things differently. Research studies explain that many of these educators hold a *deficit view* of many ELLs, which has resulted in an over-representation of ethnic and linguistic minority students in special education (Solano-Flores, & Li, 2008; Waitoller, Artiles, & Cheney, 2009). Other studies revealed that teachers have comprehensive perspectives of student needs and differentiate instruction accordingly (Rodriguez Moux, 2010; Suh, 2011). However, in other situations, instruction for ELLs is often not differentiated since teachers lack the experience to recognize and address the needs of ELLs (Lenssen, 2006).

These observations, when applied to the setting of this study suggest that while some mainstream teachers might concurrently support ELLs learning of content and language, this may not be the case for all teachers. Amid concern for the growing number of ELLs in mainstream classes at this school, there is a need to investigate teachers' academic expectations, how mainstream teachers perceive their role in instructing them and discover how this impacts classroom practice.

1.2.5 Core Curriculum and Next Generation Science Standards

At the end of the 2014-2015 academic year, the school administration and department heads at the school reached a consensus to adopt and implement the U.S. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). With the exception of social studies for some grades, this decision has meant that all mainstream teachers were required to work to revise and align their curriculum to these newly adopted standards and document these changes in Atlas Rubicon, the school's online curriculum system. Department meetings were held in the first half of the 2015-2016 school year to discuss the implementation of the NGSS for science and CCSS for other mainstream subjects. Yet, aligning curriculum to the standards is not an easy task.

The new Common Core States Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) present a new focus for curriculum development and instruction (Hakuta, 2014), they also suggest a significant challenge for English language learners (Alonso, 2013; Gubi & Bocanegra, 2015; Knight, 2014). Complex cognitive and language demands inherent in CCSS and NGSS imply that teachers in core subjects transform their instructional practices (Knight, 2014; O'Hara, Zwiers, & Pritchard, 2012; Short, Fidelman & Louguit, 2012). As teachers make the transition to full implementation of the standards, they will need to create opportunities for students to engage in disciplinary-specific discourse where they use academic discourse and argue from evidence, and critique "the reasoning of others... analyzing and interpreting data" (Knight, 2014, p. 4). Classroom language according to Hakuta (2014), is "not just language as in parts of speech, grammar, and vocabulary, but also high levels of language embedded in the instructional actions expected in the new standards" (p. 433). Furthermore, teachers need to teach academic language explicitly since it is not naturally acquired. Even native speakers may not grasp the academic language used in their textbook and the classroom since it differs from the language used at home (Maxwell, 2013). Academic language, cannot be ignored.

The prominent focus of CCSS and NGSS on academic language is evident in the following standards from elementary, middle, and high school:

- "Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when appropriate to task and situation" (Common Core State Standards, ELA-SL5.6-ES, Literacy, 2015).
- "Students who demonstrate understanding can: Integrate qualitative scientific and technical information to support the claim that digitalized signals are a more reliable way to encode and transmit information than analog signals" (Next Generation Science Standards, MS-PS4-3, Waves and Electromagnetic Radiation, 2015).
- "Students who can demonstrate understanding can: Communicate scientific and functioning of designed materials" (Next Generation Science Standards, HS-PS2-6, Structure and Properties of Matter, 2015).

Such standards such place increased language demands on ELL students and go beyond the simple acquisition of academic language. Researchers frequently cite academic language as one of the most important drivers for academic success, and conversely, a lack of academic language is given as the reason for a growing achievement gap between English language learners and proficient speakers (Francis, Lesaux, Kieffer & Riveria, 2006). Language learners now need to define problems, reason, critique the ideas of others, ask questions, design solutions and construct explanations (Haruta, 2011). The new standards require teachers to teach and all students to master academic language skills and rigorous content (O'Hara, Pritchard, & Zwiers, 2014) - demands that require increased academic expectations and effective instructional practice.

Many school districts throughout the United States have adopted the Common Core Standards without a specific guide for how they can be used in teaching English language learners (Alonso, 2013). Also, little research exists as to how high school teachers can develop the language skills of ELLs and other students meet the Common

Core Standards (Keith, 2015). In the absence of direction, core teachers may limit their instruction of ELLs to a focus on grammar and vocabulary (Maxwell, 2013) and potentially instruction which lacks challenge and rigour. According to Fillmore (2014):

> Far too often educators assume that ELLs must either be given a brief, watered-down oral version of texts that other students are working with, or that they must have their own texts simplified versions limited to simple sentences and high-frequency vocabulary. If this continues, the promise of the Common Core will be withheld from our ELLs (p. 62).

The new Common Core Standards have the potential to influence instructional practices (Short, Fidelman & Louguit, 2012) that support and challenge English learners in this setting. Yet, neither the Common Core State Standards nor the Next Generation Science Standards are a curriculum in themselves and do not prescribe strategies (Hakata, 2014). How mainstream teachers will translate these goals into practice is unknown. There is also no way to tell whether they will hold English language learners to the same set of expectations as their native speaking peers.

1.3 Significance

Very little is known at many international schools about teacher pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices to support the needs of all learners (Allen, 2010). The same based on informal discussions with faculty, appears true for the setting of this mixed-methods study. In addition to a very linguistically and culturally diverse student body of approximately 860 students (K-12) from over 50 different countries (2014-2015 school year), the school also employs close to 80 teachers of varying nationalities and backgrounds. A diverse faculty means that students are often exposed not only to a broad range of instructional methods but also, as it appears from discussion with mainstream teachers - different academic expectations related to things such as the importance of homework, the value of specific letter grades and how teachers formulate grades. Some researchers also suggest that the international nature of these schools has implications on teaching practice since many teachers and parents may not share the same cultural values (McNiff, 2013).

This study examines the perspectives of teachers in this setting regarding their role and academic expectations for the ELLs in their mainstream classes. It endeavors to explain the reasons why some teachers may support inclusion and differentiated instruction for these learners while others do not. Without a clear understanding of teacher perspectives, particularly related to student expectations, it's hard to determine whether or not the school addresses the academic needs of all students (Lee, Luykx, Buxton, & Shaver, 2007; Polat, 2010; Sunal, 2010). Several studies suggest that how teachers in a school perceive their role regarding ELLs can have a significant impact on intervention strategies, student expectations, academic achievement (Lee et al., 2007; Polat, 2010; Sunal, 2010). In a reciprocal way, evidence of these strategies can provide a window through which to see how teachers respond to the challenge of meeting diverse learning needs in the mainstream classroom (Tan, 2011).

A joint accreditation report of this school setting by two accreditation agencies (Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Council for International Schools) in May 2008 cited a lack of differentiated instruction in the school. The report stated that during observations, differentiation of instruction was rarely seen in mainstream classrooms to cater for the needs of those children with identified learning support difficulties and "those requiring ESL support within the mainstream programme" (p. 83). The report also suggested that the school needed a specific program for gifted and talented students within the school (Western Association of Colleges and Schools and the Council of International Schools Accreditation Report, 2008).

Following the financial crisis in Japan in 2008 (Naudé, 2009), the Great East Japan Earthquake in March, 2011, and the tsunami that followed, school enrollment fell 9.3%. Although student numbers have since improved, they were still more than 10% below enrolment in 2011 (WASC and the CIS Five-Year Report, 2013; School Website, 2014). According to a 5-Year Report joint report by the Western Association of Colleges and Schools and the Council of International Schools (2013):

> The downturn in the Japanese economy and the calamitous effects of last year's earthquake/tsunami has led to a decline in (school name deleted) enrolment as foreign companies have moved employees to other Asian cities. Consequently, the non-native speaking enrolment has increased, putting strains on those areas (ESL, special services) most affected (p. 68).

This falling enrollment has resulted in a consolidation of classes and a reduction in the number of classes at many elementary grade levels from four to three. Competition for students, particularly native speakers, has increased in recent years among international schools in Japan (WASC & CIS 5-Year Report, 2013). At the same time, the number of ELL students and demands for the support for these students have increased and required the addition of one ESL teacher each for the kindergarten and the high school in 2015.

Whether or not changing demographics also bring an increase in the number of students with learning difficulties is unknown. While tightening the admissions policy of the school appears unlikely, mainstream teachers in the school have a responsibility to accept all students that enter their classes regardless of their background and employ strategies that will help them. To this end, classrooms should be inclusive, providing all students with equal access to the curriculum and the necessary accommodations and adaptations to differentiate instruction (Scott & Spencer, 2006). Within such a culturally inclusive school, teachers must have high expectations for all students they teach and believe that all students have the capacity to learn (Banks, 2008: Sailor, 2009).

The use of research-based practices and an inclusive curriculum can have an impact on the success of second language learners and that without this, many students will not, even despite growing up in an English-speaking environment, achieve fluency by the time they reach middle school (Allen, 2010). According to Burke (1988b), the implementation of a culturally relevant curriculum is the responsibility of all schools. Burke posits:

> (An) inclusive curriculum is not an optional extra but an integral part of a social justice strategy. It has both a moral and legal imperative. Most important of all it

> is sound educational practice. Excellence in education can only be achieved by inclusion, not exclusion (p.i).

Such a viewpoint has obvious implications for this research project and the setting of this study; it suggests that teaching in a way that actively involves ELLs in the curriculum is not an option but a necessity to reach. Differentiation, therefore, fulfills an important role in supporting ELLs and enabling them to participate in class discussion, complete assignments and class tasks with assistance, and demonstrate an understanding of concepts taught in mainstream, content area classes. Although differentiated instruction can help all students in the classroom, ELLs require "direct language instruction" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 43) and it is this form of differentiation that I refer to in this research study.

1.4 Summary

Mainstream teachers hold diverse perspectives regarding their role and responsibility in teaching the English language learners in their class. Some argue that the responsibility for language development rests with the ESL teacher, and their role is only to teach content while others hold the belief that they are responsible for teaching content and language. A primary focus of this study is to determine the perceptions and expectations of mainstream teachers regarding this role. Ultimately, however, demographics, school expectations, and school resources, or a combination of these factors will make this a moot point. Currently, given the reality in the classroom, core teachers can either choose to embrace the role of teaching language and content or continue to seek support and professional training to meet the needs of English language learners.

An inability to adequately meet the linguistic needs of ELLs over time may mean that teachers continue to expect less of them and that these students have less opportunity to participate in core subjects. Consequently, many students in this situation risk becoming long-term ELLs (LTELLs) if intervention does not happen in time.

Both the newly adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) present some emerging challenges, particularly for ELL students who already find work academic work in the mainstream difficult. These curriculum standards expect high levels of achievement for all students - English learners included. They also suggest that all mainstream teachers support the language development of all students to reach standards that require them to participate in academic discourse.

Chapter 2 explains how research literature informed this study and provided a greater understanding of how the teaching practices of teachers at the school can be affected by their perspective of their role and desire to modify instruction and assessment for ELLs. This chapter also explains some interventions in the literature that may be directly applicable to this research setting.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this section, an explanation of the research procedure for reviewing the literature is described, in addition to some discussion of how I identified relevant sources. Following this, I discuss the theory guiding this study and other theories supporting its relevance in studying teacher's perspectives of the inclusion of ELLs.

An initial search of Google Scholar, SAGE, and other databases at the beginning of this literature review yielded several hundred articles. Notably, however, despite concern in peer-reviewed articles lamenting the limited ELL training of U.S. mainstream teachers as the population of non-English speakers continues to grow, few appeared when searching journal databases using the search terms: *teacher attitude, teacher perspectives,* and *ELL*. This lack of research articles identified a gap in current research that could be addressed by this mixed-methods study and suggested several potential research questions guide investigation into how mainstream teachers perceive their role in teaching language learners.

Unsurprisingly, many studies discovered during the literature search were grounded on Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1966), since this describes a fundamental belief about the way in which children learn. This theory suggests that learning occurs when teachers begin to base instruction on the child's background knowledge, experience, and level of readiness (Cooper, Gardner & Szabo, 2002; Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Molle, Sato, Boals, & Hedgspeth, 2015; Piaget, 1966). In this sense, constructivist learning theory emphasizes the importance of efficient instruction and a clear, coherent curriculum.

The following literature review and the theories described in this chapter serve as a foundation to begin to determine the origin of teacher perceptions, discover teaching practices used with ELLs, and identify potential interventions that can be employed to innovate teaching and support English learners. A graphic of the conceptual framework (Figure 3) used for this study appears at the end of the chapter, together with an

explanation of how a collection of theories and data address each of the research questions.

2.1.1 Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist Learning Theory, attributed mainly to the work of Piaget (1966), provided a theoretical framework for this study and a lens through which to view instructional practices and teachers' perspectives of how students learn through a process of assimilating new information into what was previously known (Vygotsky, 1978). According to constructivist principles, meaning is actively constructed through experience (Bruner 1996; Booth, 1988: Dewey, 1916, 1938; Lambert et al., 2002), and is influenced by cultural factors (Gardner, 1983). Moreover, language learning posits Gibbons (2002) "involves a continuous process of meaning making" (Gibbons, 2002, p. 12). From a constructivist point of view, learning is continuous and never ends (Poplin & Stone, 1992). No one understands everything and knowledge grows as we interpret information in a social context (Vygotsky, 1978; Peterson & Knapp, 1993).

Constructivism challenges the perception that children must master lower-level skills and knowledge, and the *deficit-driven reductionist framework* (Villa & Thousand, 2005) that has dominated the field of education. Rather, underpinning constructivist theory is a belief that children come to the classroom with different knowledge based on their experience and culture (Villa & Thousand, 2005; Molle, Sato, Boals, & Hedgspeth, 2015). Such an assumption supports a core tenant of this study - that we consider the background, knowledge and skills of English language learners and expose them early to obtainable, higher-level thinking tasks that will engage them, challenge them and allow them to quickly build their understanding of language and content.

Grounded in the theories of Dewey (1938), constructivist theory suggests that teachers should scaffold instruction and build on a child's existing experiences and understandings to make learning meaningful (Bruner, 1961; Dewey, cited by Schmidt, 2010) to create both life-long learners and competent problem solvers. Cultural-historical psychology, however, posits that for scaffolding to be successful, learning must occur within a child's *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)* – the area between

what the child can perform independently and what the same child can accomplish in the socio-cultural interaction with adults or more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1962). Vygotsky (1978) also suggested that learning occurs in a culturally mediated socio-cultural context in which children construct their understanding through their conversation and social interaction with others. In this way, constructivist-learning theory (Piaget, 1966; Vygotsky, 1978) suggests a useful approach to understanding how students such as ELLs construct the meaning of the academic and social concepts they become exposed to in mainstream classrooms.

Constructivist Learning Theory also suggests a potential philosophical framework to support the argument that teacher attitudes and previous training and experience impact the process of learning (Lambert, 2000), and regarding this study, suggests that how mainstream teachers perceive ELL students might affect their quality of education. Furthermore, teachers are learners too. They construct meaning from reflection on their experiences, driven by beliefs and values (Lampert-Shepel, 2006), as they continue to construct and reconstruct themselves through experience (Jordi, 2010) toward a shared purpose (Lambert, 2000). Mitchell and Sackney (2001) explain that the process of effective teacher collaboration involves active deconstruction of teachers' knowledge via reflection and analysis, reconstruction through changes in classroom practice, and co-construction through peer interaction and collaboration.

In a general sense, constructivist teachers view learning as interactive and encourage students to compare new information to their current understanding. Students in these classes are active learners who participate in activities that address real-world problems and allows them to build their knowledge, uncover new ideas and critically question (Educational Broadcasting Commission, 2004). This approach is also known in education as "learning by discovery, inquiry learning, learning by doing or problem-based learning" (Edwards-Groves, Anstey & Bull, 2014, p. 17).

For educators, constructivism can pervade all disciplines across the curriculum (Cazden, 2001) and fulfils a central role in teaching students *how to think* while they talk their way to understanding (Barnes, 1992). Thus, it moves from passive instruction with

monolithic teachers who limit learning opportunities by providing instruction where the students are passive listeners where their teacher is the *sage on stage* to a more democratic environment with both teachers and students collectively participating in robust discussions (Edwards-Groves, et al., 2014). It also denotes the importance of a non-threatening classroom environment that encourages all students to take risks and use language frequently (Krashen, 1988). In short, it creates the type of learning environment that researchers tell us will effectively support the learning of English language learners (Minahan & Schultz, 2014; Wu & Lin, 2014). Another additional, but significant benefit for ELLs, observable in mainstream classroom, is that a constructivist approach can "promote critical thinking and encourage higher order thinking skills" (Edwards-Groves, et al., 2014, p. 12). This can encourage mainstream teachers to expect more of them and help these learners to seek higher academic goals.

Teachers come from different walks of life, and in the school studied - a variety of different countries and cultures. Thus, it follows that they would hold a range of different world views. Social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) accepts these differences and suggests that as a researcher, I should "... make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world" (Creswell 2009, p. 8), while understanding that my own experience and background can shape how I interpret findings. The qualitative phase of this study provided an opportunity for interview and focus group participants to share their perceptions and for me to inductively generate meaning. To ensure that this meaning describes their worldview, rather than my own, I have used broad, general, open-ended questions and included a series of direct quotes in the qualitative component of this study.

2.1.2 Perceptions of Inclusion

As mainstream teachers seek to solve the instructional dilemma of teaching ELLs in their classroom there is a corresponding need for all teachers to understand that they are also language teachers (Waxman, Tellez, and Walberg, 2006). These teachers need to recognize that academic instruction in English provides ELLs access to the curriculum (Cervetti, Kulikowich, & Bravo, 2015; Cline & Necochea, 2003; Perez &

Holmes, 2010). Admittedly, though, some mainstream teachers in international schools may reject this view, believing that teaching ELLs is largely the responsibility of ESL teachers and not perceive that they have a significant role to play in supporting ELLs within their classroom (George, 2009; Yoon, 2008). With this disposition in mind, an examination of numerous theoretical studies sought to identify at least one theory to explain the how mainstream teachers in this study view their role.

Positioning theory provided some authoritative insight for identifying and examining how teachers in the mainstream accept or reject potential responsibilities, such as modifying curriculum, instruction and assessment practices to support ELLs. The theory describes how individual mainstream teachers select a certain perspective or view according to their position and working environment (Davies & Harré, 1998). It also provided a lens for this study through which explanations during in-depth interviews and focus group data could be used to develop an understanding of teacher perceptions and how they position themselves regarding their role regarding teaching ELLs.

While positioning might be a useful mechanism to come to understand the challenges faced when teaching second language learners in a mainstream setting, it may also present some risks (Reeves, 2006). In establishing positions for learners and themselves, teachers utilize their attitudes and beliefs, which often leads to creating bias and misconceptions that are not helpful to ELLs (Reeves, 2006). A mixed-methods study in Malaysia by Tan (2011) found that the beliefs of mainstream teachers regarding their role as only content teachers rather than teachers of language and content, severely limited the learning opportunities available to ELLs. Alternatively, other studies found that some teachers, position themselves as responsible for all students, including ELLs (Khong & Saito, 2014; Yoon, 2008). These teachers maintained goals and expectations that enable students to achieve academic success. Also, according to Alonso (2013), "When teachers are prepared to teach all learners that they encounter in their classrooms, educational success and attainment is raised for all students" (p. 93).

The positions that teachers take up also come with individual rights and responsibilities ranging from a belief that they have the ability to carry out certain actions to the idea that others (such as their students and other teachers) might be allowed to hold their rights and beliefs (Harré & van Langenhove, 1998). Some researchers suggest, however, that positions and beliefs can often be disconnected (Davies & Harré, 1999) and that position theory accepts these contradictions (Sosa & Gomez, 2011).

Positioning operates in two modes – *intentional* or *interactive* (Yoon, 2008). The latter referring to the positioning that occurs as a result of how teachers speak to their students (Davies & Harré, 1999). Based on how they position ELLs—either in a positive or negative light—teachers may, without realizing it, limit the learning opportunities available to these learners and in the process, negatively influence their self-confidence to learn (Tan, 2011; Yoon, 2008).

Tan's (2011) study of English used as the medium of instruction in Malaysian mathematics and science classes, explored the beliefs of teachers and the influence of these beliefs on pedagogical practices. Participating teachers cited curriculum requirements, exam pressures, and time constraints (Khong & Saito, 2014) affecting their ability to modify instructional practices, and a lack of training and interaction between content teachers and language teachers were other possible factors (Tan, 2011).

Tuck Bonner (2009) in a study to explore the personal beliefs and competence of science teachers to teach all students also had similar findings. Through a qualitative study using Bandura's unpublished Teacher Efficacy Scale (undated), and other tools, involving 250 teachers in the United States, Tuck Bonner (2009) discovered that a vast majority of science teachers surveyed believed that they have the ability and expertise to teach learners from diverse backgrounds. The self-efficacy of these teachers, however, significantly fell when asked about their self-efficacy to teach ELLs in their mainstream classrooms due to a lack of professional development. Limited training may be a reason why teacher participants in this study cite for the reservations they have for the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classes.

Fortunately for this study, some positions and perceptions can be discovered in the conversations and interactions of individuals, such as the conversations with interview participants (Assuah, 2010; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003; Yoon, 2008). This interview data can enable further analysis about relationships, which might otherwise speculate about (Zelle, 2009).

Using a methodology that includes in-depth interviews and a focus group meeting to investigate teaching practices and analyse teacher perspectives in this study can yield a major insight into this and potentially other international schools. The approach provides an opportunity to delve deeper into teacher responses regarding inclusion, classroom practices, and how they see their role in teaching ELLs. Assuming that a teacher positions him or herself as a teacher for all students and believes the responsibility of actively working to support the ELLs in their regular classes, additional research through this study can be done to investigate the strength of this self-efficacy.

2.1.3 Self-Determination Theory

Another theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci & Ryan (1985), compliments Position Theory and provides a useful lens to view data in this study to understand the origins of teacher motivation. According to SDT, motivation describes the source of an individual's behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000a) and posits that motivation has three distinct types which range in level of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Motivation within the SDT framework resides along a continuum of self-determination (Gillison, Osborn, Standage, & Skevington, 2009) beginning with amotivation which describes a lack of motivation to start an activity or alter one's behaviour, through extrinsic motivation such as expectations in the work environment. The term intrinsic motivation refers to the highest level of self-determination and the motivation of someone with the inherent drive to act in a certain way or engaging in a task for its sake (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

Self-Determination Theory is considered a macro-theory of motivation and comprises five mini-theories, including Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT) and Organismic Integration Theory (Field, Duffy, & Huggins, 2015). The later encompass

three basic psychological needs of individuals (see Figure 1) - autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). According to self-determination theorists, these needs denote a desire to self-regulate one's behavior and initiate tasks of one's volition, participate in activities with competence, and engage in meaningful work with others (Field, et al., 2015). Research also suggests that workplaces that meet all three psychological needs can generate several benefits (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Supportive environments increase intrinsic motivation, positive work attitudes, job satisfaction, a commitment to the organization's goals and enhanced mental well-being (Gagné & Deci, 2005). While here we consider how to support struggling language learners to grow and achieve higher levels of academic achievement, viewing teacher motivation through an SDT lens can help us see the link identified by researchers (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) between professional identity, well-being and psychological needs.

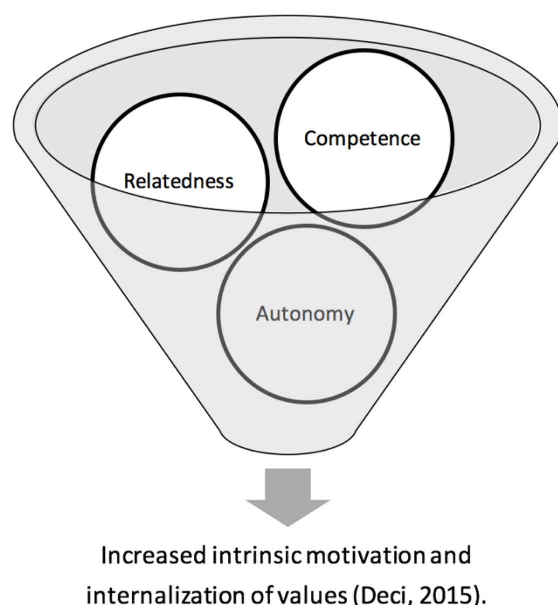

Figure 1. Self-Determination Theory: Basic psychological needs of individuals.

Intrinsic motivation can be used to describe teachers' personal commitment (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) or innate willingness to differentiate instruction and assessment, modify curricula, and engage in professional development activities and for individuals to gain some self-satisfaction or psychological benefit (Church et al., 2013). Teachers with an intrinsic motivation to change their teaching practice do so because a willingness to continue to improve their teaching is congruent with their values and beliefs, and by extension, how they perceive their role. These teachers referred to as autonomy-supportive teachers (Reeve and Jang, 2006; Jang, Kim & Reeves, 2016) are also more likely to welcome additional training and engage in new and innovative ways of teaching (Van Eekelen, Vermunt, and Boshuizen, 2006). In a similar way, Pae (2008) found that high intrinsic motivation has the strongest influence on students' self-confidence and motivation to learn a second language - a finding that has pertinent meaning for this study. In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, another fundamental construct of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000a), "occurs when behavior is motivated by the desire to obtain a reward or avoid punishment" (Guay, Valois, Falardeau, & Lessard, 2016, p. 292). Ryan & Deci (2000b) posit that different types of extrinsic motivation exist along a self-determination continuum. From the lowest to highest level of self-motivation and determination these include:

- Behaving or acting in a particular way to satisfy external pressure (External Regulation);
- Responding to self-imposed pressure to avoid guilt or maintain self-esteem (Introjected Regulation);
- Consciously deciding to act in a certain way because it is important (Identified Regulation);
- An assimilation of external and internal motivation so that extrinsic motivation becomes congruent to an individual's sense of self (Integrated Regulation).

According to Ryan & Deci (2008), people can move through the continuum of motivation and internalize external forms of motivation so that they become autonomous and more self-determined (see Figure 2).

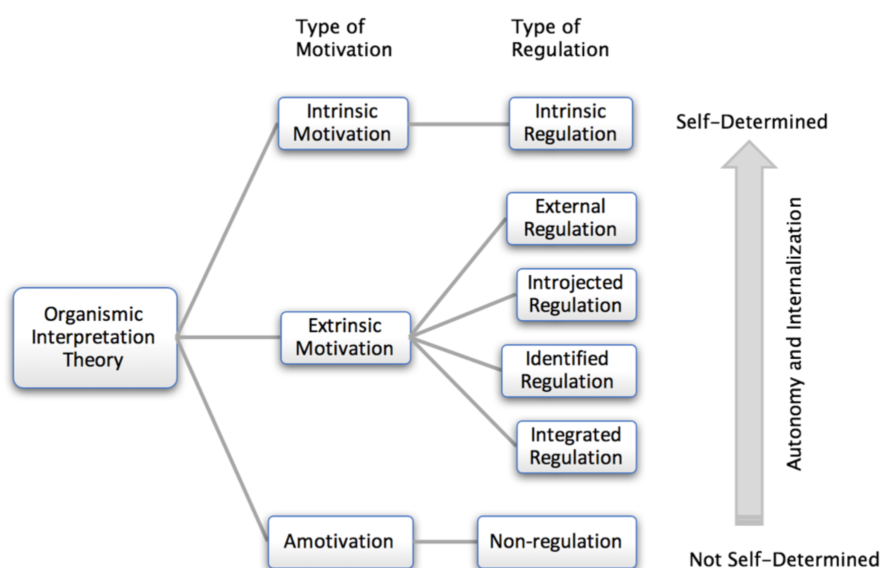

Figure 2. Organismic Interpretation Theory and the self-determination continuum.

SDT theory posits that *amotivation*, a third type of motivation, can result when an individual does not feel an activity is important (Ryan, 1995) or when they lack confidence (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). It can also occur when they do not believe that the effort they put into an activity will achieve the desired goal (Seligman, 1975). Individuals who have amotivation are neither intrinsically motivated nor externally driven and have no intention of acting or behaving a certain way (Ryan & Deci, 2000b); or in the case of this study, differentiating their teaching and assessment practices to align with the needs of ELLs. SDT postulates that this condition occurs when there is a low level of self-determination.

Everyone can be vulnerable to amotivation, although Niemiec & Ryan (2009) advocate that "Inherent in human nature is the proactive tendency to engage one's

physical and social surroundings and to assimilate ambient values and cultural practices" (p. 133). Humans beings, argue Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci (2010) orientate themselves towards self-improvement, adaptation, and growth. Other SDT research, however, suggests there are times when contradictions exist between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In a school setting, a teacher's perception of the school environment and their role within it may create conflict, leading to amotivation (Niemiec, et al., 2010). This perception pressures teachers to act in a certain way, leading to ineffective teaching practices and often burnout (Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012). Teachers who feel this burden to fulfill a particular role in the classroom can transfer this pressure to their students and adopt a controlling style (Tadic, 2015; Kunter, Tsai, Klusmann, Brunner, Krauss, & Baumert, 2008). As a consequence, this often results in students losing self-confidence and intrinsic motivation (Pae, 2008), increasing fatigue and disruptive behavior, and negatively impacts academic achievement (Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012; Jang, Kim, & Reeve, 2016). The joy of learning and enthusiasm that students previously displayed is replaced with feelings of anxiety, boredom or alienation and leads to a self-fulfilling prophesy whereby students are no longer interested in the content of their lessons which the teacher must make them learn (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).

Reciprocally, if students perceive they have autonomy and that their teachers support their needs and well-being, then student engagement increases (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Student motivation, like teacher motivation, can be intrinsic, extrinsic or amotivated depending on how they perceive a given task and their reasons for engaging in it (Ryan & Deci, 2004). Accordingly, the insight provided by SDT into student learning and teachers' motivation to embrace or reject inclusion and differentiation has substantial implications for research here.

Self-Determination Theory can help explain what motivates or demotivates teachers to modify their assessment and instruction. Also, it can help explain teacher readiness to participate in professional development and innovate teaching to support the students in their mainstream classes (Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014). Perhaps more

importantly, though, SDT can identify some ways that schools can improve the psychological well-being of students and teachers (Seligman, 1975) while they internalize behaviors that can help them become more self-determined in their actions (Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012).

2.1.4 Impact of Perceptions on ELL Achievement

Implicit in the belief that a teacher is confident in successfully helping ELLs attain high levels of academic achievement is the notion of self-efficacy. One critical part of Bandura's (1977, 1986) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy or one's perceived capacity to succeed, has been identified as a strong predictor to student success (Bandura, 1986, 1995; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelii, 2001; Pajares & Kranzler, 1995; Usher, 2009). Self-efficacy has also been used as an indicator to ascertain how people feel, think, and act (Bandura, 1994) and further research suggests that self-efficacy has considerable influence over motivational patterns across a range of ethnic groups (Michaelides, 2008). Strong self-efficacy gives teachers confidence and guarantees optimism (Bandura, 2008) and as a result, teachers exert more effort, resilience, and persistence and are more willing to seek challenges, and work harder to reach goals successfully (Pajares, 1997). Without a strong self-efficacy, many teachers give up; feeling frustrated, and leave the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008).

Efficacious teachers, according to Costa (2008) enjoy challenges, problem-solving and figuring things out. They believe that all students, including ELLs, were capable of learning (Muhammad, 2007) and worked hard to support students to reach high levels of achievement. These kinds of teachers embrace the challenge of teaching ELLs in the mainstream and expect a great deal from themselves and their students despite the difficulty faced by many ELLs in mainstream classes - concurrently trying to master both literacy and content (Rance-Rone, 2009; Richardson Bruna & Gomez, 2009).

Academic Optimism Theory also suggests that teachers should have high expectations for their students and provided another potentially valuable framework to

understand teacher perspectives, expectations, and other factors that influence student learning. This theory emerged from research conducted by Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2000) and is supported by the findings of several studies (Hoy et al., 2006). In one study Hoy and his colleagues used a sample of high schools (n = 96) and a random sample of teachers to find that academic optimism was a useful construct to examine student achievement. Hoy et al. (2006) reported that academic optimism significantly improves, even after controlling variables such as demographics and previous achievement.

The main strength of this theory is that it consists of several elements previously found to be effective variables in boosting student performance. According to some research studies (Beard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2010; Hoy, et al., 2006) the theory suggests three powerful and interrelated constructs found to impact student academic achievement. These include three strands of school optimism – self-efficacy, trust and academic emphasis (Beard et al., 2010).

In addition to self-efficacy discussed earlier, trust has also been found to be an effective component of academic optimism (Hoy & Trater, 2011). When parents and students find themselves in a climate of trust, they were more inclined to set themselves challenging goals, and reach them (Hoy, Hoy & Kurz, 2008). Teachers also see themselves as capable and supportive despite the difficulties students may face (Krashen, 1988, 1998).

The third construct of Academic Optimism Theory is academic emphasis, also referred to in the literature as academic press or rigour (Blackburn, 2008; Zohar, Degani & Vaakin, 2001). This refers to the degree to which a school or individual teacher focuses on student achievement and academic success (Hoy et al., 2006). Some researchers found that rigour was raised by both teacher expectations and externally opposed standards (Lee & Smith, as cited in Bower & Powers, 2009). In a study by Bower and Powers (2009) participants associated this goal with instructional strategies using higher order thinking skills and real-world skills that would allow all students, including ELLs, to apply knowledge both in and outside the classroom and go beyond

success in state assessments. In order to achieve this suggested Coady, Harmann, Pho, & Yedlin (2008) and other researchers (Garcia, 1997; Valdes, 2001; Verplaetse, 2000) teachers need to have a good understanding of what ELLs have previously studied and mastered in another country and/or in another language and adapt curriculum appropriately to enable ELLs to reach a high standard of academic achievement. Bower and Powers (2009) found that despite a focus by many teachers on pacing guides, it is possible for them to increase the rigour of their lessons through differentiation. As Coady et al. (2008) suggested, teachers should not use the need to modify their existing curriculum as an excuse for denying ELLs access to "challenging academic content" (p. 251).

High academic optimism can have an impact on the success of a school and the students within it (Hoy et al., 2006) and may create an optimistic perception of ELL students' academic achievement in this setting. Optimism can be just as powerful and critical as motivation and talent (Beard & Hoy, 2010). Moreover, optimism can be learned and developed, allowing individuals to overcome cynicism (Seligman, 1998). Teachers can learn to become optimistic via indirect and observational learning and serve as models for each other to instill the belief that both they and their students can be successful (Hoy et al., 2006).

A study of teachers of core subjects conducted by Couch (2010) suggested a link between the perspectives and academic expectations for ELLs and effective and equitable curriculum and instruction. Teachers have academic expectations of their students and beliefs that can facilitate the setting of important, achievable targets and result in instructional practices and support that can, with the right teacher behavior and student and teacher characteristics (Rubie-Davies, 2009) create a contextually-appropriate and engaging pedagogy that allows ELLs to thrive through the support of both their language acquisition and content learning (Sui, 2015).

Teachers also need to appreciate and value each student's culture (Dara Hill, 2008; Ye, Varelas & Guajardo, 2011). Explicit knowledge about different ethnic groups and their contribution to society can be used as a way to co-create a bridge between the

students' home culture and school (Dara Hill, 2008; Himmele, 2009). Also, teachers can do a better job of meeting the needs of ethnic diverse learners by crafting a culturally responsive curriculum, and modify their instructional practices since interaction with mainstream peers and exposure to English are not enough (Young & Hadaway, 2006). For the purpose of this study, this suggests a number of potential research questions (Appendix E) and areas of inquiry, including: identifying effective practices and determine to what extent teachers are meeting the learning needs of ELLs; investigating if a relationship exists between teacher perspectives and classroom practices; and determining the best way to support and train mainstream teachers.

2.1.5 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Curriculum

Teachers may do many things to adjust their curriculum and instruction in a way that supports ELLs to meet and even exceed academic standards. To provide a means to explore and investigate what teachers do to help ELLs reach academic goals, culturally relevant pedagogy theory is used to discover how mainstream teachers teach ELLs in their classroom. Cultural responsive theory has been taught to pre-service teachers and implemented in numerous schools since the 1990s (Selvester, 2012; Taylor & Sobel, 2011). Designed as a tool to meet the needs of diverse students, this theory grew from a study of minority groups by Ladson-Billings (1995). The theory suggests that academic improvement occurs when students learn via their own experiential and cultural filters. These experiences generate high interest and allow students to learn more in greater depth and with greater ease (Gay, 2000).

Culturally responsive pedagogy is described as a theoretical model to support the academic achievement of students while developing their cultural identity and critical perspectives (Young, 2010). Also, according to Ye et al. (2011) culturally responsive pedagogy is based on the premise that students should achieve academic success and that teachers aim for a high level of achievement.

One study conducted by Pacheco (2010) reported how discourse regarding achievement and success in a climate of educational reform exasperated an experienced bilingual teacher. This ethnographic study carried out at an elementary school

investigated the beliefs and instructional practices of one teacher in his late forties of Euro-American descent and referred to in the study as Mr. Saunders. Pacheco (2010) explained that Mr. Saunders believed that it was unreasonable to expect too much from the ELLs since parenting practices, poverty, and their exposure to their community disadvantaged them. Mr. Saunders also reported that he felt that these students had an intellectual deficit (Pacheco, 2010).

In contrast, Varian's (2008) study of teachers identified for their use of culturally relevant pedagogy presents a different scenario that may be found in this school. Teachers, according to Varian's (2008) investigation, use a variety of instructional approaches grounded in beliefs influenced by their parents' attitudes, values and behaviors; culturally sensitive events that they had experienced personally; and exposure to social justice that made them aware of culturally-rooted inequalities.

In a culturally relevant environment, teaching approaches in the school and other similar settings must vary to take into account the cultural and previous learning experiences of students, and use the experiences of ethnically diverse students to find meaningful connections to topics studied in the classroom (Brander, 2010; Morgan, 2009; Varian, 2008). Schools must also make expectations clear for students and parents, and where possible translate all written communication to families into their native language (Gray & Fleischman, 2005).

Unfortunately, the process of implementing culturally responsive pedagogy is complex and lacks examples in research literature (Au, 2006; Dutro, Kazemi, Balf, & Lin, 2008). A lack of time (Young, 2010), and a feeling of being overwhelmed (Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008) has also been linked to teachers rejecting culturally responsive pedagogy, yet teachers, according to Marx and Moss (2011), need to be mindful of the role that culture plays in learning and make changes to the way in which they teach culturally diverse learners.

Teachers seeking to implement culturally responsive pedagogy should establish a calm, caring environment conducive to learning. A peaceful classroom environment is of particular importance to ELLs struggling with the double burden of dealing with

content in a foreign language and functioning in a foreign culture (Gay, 2000). While this study will not provide a specific pedagogy to support ELLs and investigate the learning environments of ELLs, it should help fill a large gap in the literature regarding how teacher perspectives, and in international schools, in particular, can influence the learning of English language learners.

What makes crafting a culturally responsible curriculum difficult in an international environment, though, is that due to numerous cultural influences, students may find it difficult to define home (Hatfield, 2010). They may face a conflicting and confused sense of identity (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008) and feel that their characteristics do not match their parents' culture or their local one. These students are often referred to as *global nomads* or *third culture kids*, (Pollock, & Van Reken, 2001) and consequently find that they have a third, hybrid culture that has developed as a result of their diverse cultural experiences (Bikos, Haney, Edwards, North, Quint, McLellan, & Ecker, 2014; Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009; Ittel & Sisler, 2012). Unlike their parents, they may be Chinese but not place a high value on social harmony (Gan, 2009), or Japanese but openly express their opinions (Froese, 2010). Since these bicultural students have often internalised more than one culture, they will often act in different cultural ways depending on the situation (Brannen & Thomas, 2010).

An understanding of third culture students in international schools is significant to this study since some literature related to cultural values and how people from certain cultures learn may be irrelevant. Besides, textbooks and professional articles that are written to address the specific needs of one cultural group may have limited value due to the unique experience of these students. International schools by nature contain students who due to their international experience abroad and the contact they have with teachers and peers from countries around the world, can make them defy stereotypes. From this point of view, international teachers may find it hard to rely on outside sources and may be limited to what they discover about the ELLs they teach before beginning to differentiate instruction.

The transient nature of international schools may also mean that students may only attend the school for a short period – possibly only a few years, sometimes less. Non-English speaking students in international, mainstream classes may be aware of this and might hesitate to invest the energy and time in learning English and learning through English when they know that it will only be for a short period. This lack of motivation is another challenge facing teachers despite their best efforts to engage ELLs and make the curriculum accessible.

2.1.6 Language Acquisition and Best Practice

An additional theory was included in this study to understand how teachers in regular mainstream classes might modify instructional practices to support linguistically diverse learners. Krashen's (1987, 1988a) Second Language Acquisition Theory suggested that acquisition is more important than learning a language and that as such, extensive grammar rules and tedious drills should be avoided (Krashen, 1981). Language acquisition, teachers, should be aware, does not occur for some time even under perfect conditions. Complete language acquisition develops slowly over time and much slower than listening comprehension and develops slowly over time (Krashen, 1981).

English language learners go through several stages of learning development beginning at an emergent stage in which they speak little if at all in the second language for weeks (Krashen 1987, 1988) and sometimes months (Himmele, 2009) but were still learning and processing language during this silent stage of language acquisition (Dwyer, 1989; Krashen, 2003). While research has identified this and other stages of learning for ELLs (Hill & Flynn, 2006), the school curriculum and instruction should not rely on this order. It is more important to focus on language acquisition given that most oral language learning occurs subconsciously (Krashen, 2008).

Krashen's input theory focused on language acquisition informs instructional practices and concurs with Vygotsky's (1978) notion of the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD), and suggested that learning of ELLs improves when second language input is just above their level of language competence (Krashen, 1981, 1985,

1998; Lee, 2005; Witton-Davies, 2006). As found in a study in Japan by Shintani (2011), teaching methods based on comprehensible input are far more effective than traditional methods of teaching such as teacher-centered instruction. Krashen (2008) explained input theory by the formula *i+1* or information an English language learner has plus comprehensible input and suggested that the use of a common vocabulary, slow speech, and use of short sentences can make language accessible to language learners. Dong (2005) supports this approach and suggests that mainstream teachers can use hands-on tasks, pre-teach subject specific vocabulary and transition words, use gesture and drawings, and modify discussion while breakdown text if academic content is not sacrificed.

Linguistic support for ELLs in the classroom to make the curriculum accessible while developing communication skills, however, is not enough without the right kind of learning environment. Learning is more likely to occur in a non-threatening, comfortable environment. In a supportive and positive classroom environment, ELLs are more apt to overcome anxiety, become highly motivated, and display self-confidence in their ability (Lucas, et al., 2008; Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2008). ELLs then begin to believe that they were free to make mistakes and continue to try hard to develop their English language skills (Krashen, 1988). Alternatively, a less inclusive environment creates anxiety lowers the self-confidence of English language learners, raises the student's affective filter creating stress which blocks learning and hampers language acquisition (Krashen, 1988; Minahan & Schultz, 2014; Wu & Lin, 2014).

Several research investigations into the use of differentiation (Tomlinson, 2010; Tomlinson, Brimijoin, & Narvaez, 2008) and culturally relevant pedagogical practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995) to support the language acquisition also informed this study since they could be used to contrast and compare best practices with data generated from the survey and teacher interviews. One study conducted at an international school in China found schools that implemented teacher training and differentiated instruction reduced student anxiety and assisted ELLs in reaching and often exceeding content standards (Allen, 2010). Another study by Helmer (2007) of elementary faculty

members (*n* = 40) at Cairo American College, an international school in Egypt, revealed that assessment practices seemed to be biased against ELLs and that teachers often avoid referring ELLs for evaluation and additional support.

Helmer's (2007) findings are significant and relevant to the setting of this study since his participants also included a diverse population of international school teachers from around the world teaching U.S. based curricula. Clearly, there is a need for further study to discover ways mainstream teachers can teach ELLs in a challenging environment while still meeting the needs of their English-fluent peers. If classroom teachers are to successfully meet the challenge of integrating ESL standards into content standards, then the language gains for ELLs will be faster (Gámez, 2015; Ryoo, 2015; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Content area classes offer the potential for these ELLs to develop academic English skills (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). These non-English speaking students will also then have a chance to be immersed in content classes with native speakers, in an environment where learning is meaningful and contextualised. Reaching this stage, however, may require a great deal of additional professional development. Levine, Howard & Moss (2014) and others (Tran, 2014) posit that many mainstream teachers lack the understanding, pedagogical skills and dispositions to teach ELLs. According to Batt (2008), this lack of training and professional development is one of the greatest challenges sighted by in-service educators from schools with a large proportion of English language learners (ELLs). Conversely, training in ELL pedagogy can have a positive influence on teachers' beliefs regarding ELLs in the mainstream and can lead to more effective instructional practices (Pettit, 2011).

2.1.7 Professional Development and Training

Many studies suggest that a lack of training and preparedness result in lower expectations and an inability to effectively engage ELLs in challenging learning experiences (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Sosa Quiles, 2009; Varela, 2010; Verplaetse, 2000). This lack of support occurs despite the good intentions of teachers, who are often ill-prepared to scaffold or differentiate their instruction for language learners (Deveney, 2007). Many teachers find a significant gap between their training and the reality of

trying to teach ELLs within their mainstream classroom (Griffin, 2008; Matson, 2007). A lack of expertise can lead to frustration and anger at being left alone in a situation they had little or no control over (Griffin, 2008; Espinola Mesa, 2007). Also, a lack of time, little communication and a lack of collaboration between teachers and administrators were also factors that inhibit the success of any ESL training conducted for mainstream teachers (Hudspath-Niemi, 2008). In one qualitative study conducted at an international school in Taiwan, Davison (2006) found that negative attitudes by content area teachers toward collaboration with language specialists overrode the support and resources the school had provided, with some teachers suggesting that the needs of ELLs would be better met by ESL teachers. "Not surprisingly," according to Davison (2006), "ESL teachers were generally more positive than classroom teachers about collaboration" (p. 471).

The relevance and usefulness of previous professional development training were also called into question by Hudspath-Niemi (2008) after her analysis of training documentation. One significant finding included a guide for mainstream teachers, that linked stages of second language acquisition with levels in Bloom’s Taxonomy. The guide, suggested Hudspath-Niemi (2008), relegated a large majority of students entering one district with a low proficiency in English to the first level (knowledge), to a stage where limited English proficiency students (LEPs) were expected to answer only simple yes/no questions. Mainstream teachers, according to the guide, were encouraged to categorise students one level at a time “with total disregard for academic achievement and development in their L1 (first language)” (p. 84). These students, suggested Hudspath-Niemi (2008), were not allowed to move between strategies and activities until language progresses to a corresponding level. Consequently, “many ELLs were not presented with higher order and critical thinking until later in their language acquisition, even though they may be capable of more” (Hudspath-Niemi, 2008, p. 84). This approach did little to challenge individual students and enable them to reach their full potential. Nor did it support the view that ELLs were individuals capable of achieving higher-level thinking skills (Hudspath-Niemi, 2008).

Effective training should develop the cultural knowledge and understanding of mainstream teachers and support them in meeting ELLs' needs through the study of second language acquisition and multicultural education (George, 2009; Reyes, 2007). It should also encourage mainstream teachers to develop positive views of the potential of ELLs while making learning rigorous and challenging for English language learners (Hammond, 2008a, 2008b).

For some teachers, however, a lack of training to understand cultural and language needs and differentiate instruction for ELLs is not perceived to be a problem. Many mainstream teachers believe that they can learn on the job (Deveney, 2007). Others report that this training could successfully occur within professional learning communities (Matthews, 2010; Doker, 2010); while an additional group do not see the need for such training and resist attempts to bring their instructional practices more into line with the abilities and needs of the ELLs in their classrooms (Carder, 2008). Whether or not these teachers believe they have a role in developing English language skills (Moore, 1999) by seeking to empower students while ignoring their cultural and educational backgrounds, is a topic for further study. What is clear according to Carder (2008) from his study of teachers in a number of international schools, however, is that it is "necessary to overcome some resistance by some mainstream content subject teachers who express their reluctance to take this on with a dismissive - That's for the ESL teachers attitude" (p. 224). Training, in cases such as this, suggests Carder (2008) might "well reverse the situation." However, as explained earlier, the adoption and implementation of the Core Curriculum State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Standards for Science (NGSS) "necessitate a paradigm shift in the design and delivery of core academic subjects" (Knight, 2014, p. 5). For ELLs to succeed and meet these new expectations, all teachers will become responsible for language development (Carr, 2014).

Although this study endeavors to uncover teachers' perceptions regarding inclusion and discover some approaches used by mainstream teachers that have been active in supporting ELLs, it seems clear that addressing teachers' professional

development needs on a case by case basis will not produce the type of optimism and pedagogy the school requires. Research data related to individual teacher perceptions and practices can provide a starting point for discussions to establish a wider, more comprehensive system for developing optimism and in infusing effective and research-based instruction.

2.1.8 Developing a School-Wide Approach to Support ELLs

In addition to individual self-efficacy mentioned earlier, collective efficacy within the faculty can lead to a change in beliefs and instructional practices that positively influence student performance (Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Hoy, Trater & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Beard and Hoy (2010) suggest that collective efficacy can help teachers develop the confidence they need to effectively teach students, despite difficulties and challenges. Collective efficacy also contributes to developing a positive culture within a school, generating even higher levels of self-efficacy which can encourage teachers to experiment with the teaching practices of their peers (Meirink, Meijer, Verloop, & Bergen, 2009). According to Hoy, Trater, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) "As teachers recognize increased efficacy in their colleagues, collective efficacy becomes stronger" (p. 439). Strong beliefs by teachers that the school can successfully meet the learning needs of its students can, according to researchers, have a significant effect on academic performance (Haworth, McGee, & MacIntyre, 2014; Hoy, et al., 2006).

To this extent, literature into developing a positive collective culture is congruent to some existing priorities within the school since this goal supports recommendations the school reported in its 2008 accreditation report (Western Association of Schools and Colleges & Council for International Schools Accreditation Report, 2008). More recently in a mid-term report to two joint accreditation agencies - the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Council for International Schools (WASC/CIS Five-Year Review: Accreditation Visiting Team Report, 2013) suggested that teachers should find more ways to meet within grade levels and in departments to study assessment data and discuss the means to improve curriculum and instruction.

This report included recommendations for the elementary school to find "opportunities for cross-grade-level discussions regarding curriculum, instruction and assessments to strengthen vertical and horizontal articulation and alignment" (p. 13). It also suggested that the middle school "Establish a system to analyse assessment data that will drive decisions about curriculum development" (p. 22) and that the high school "formalise the analysis of the students' achievement data to inform decisions related to curriculum development, instructional strategies and staff development" (p. 26). Such recommendations have significant implications for this study as they suggest a collaborative and collective approach in which teachers can support and train each other. Horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment fundamentally relies on an understanding of the types of students in the school, their prior knowledge and understanding (Molle, Sato, Boals, & Hedgspeth, 2015), and clear and appropriate goals (Reeves, 2002b). Within this setting, this requires a study of achievement data for all students, including ELLs, and planning to provide an appropriate level of support and challenge. While this could occur at a department level, a school-wide, systemic approach to curriculum development and teacher training could develop a broader collaborative culture that would support faculty and students in all grades and content areas throughout the school. This collective approach, explains Harklau (2000) can also affect how mainstream teachers perceive ELLs.

A literature search into ways similar schools with similar demographics identified School-Wide Pedagogy as one possible approach to developing such a system and culture of collaboration that might have implications for this study. The term *School-Wide Pedagogy* (SWP) was first coined by Crowther & Andrews (2004) and has since then been used widely to describe school improvement efforts (Conway & Abawi, 2013). This approach involves school staff working collaboratively to develop a pedagogical framework that can be used as an umbrella for decisions regarding curriculum and assessment within a school (Crowther, Andrews, Morgan & O'Neill, 2012).

According to other authors (Conway & Abawi, 2013), such a response allows schools "to build capacity for change by developing a foundation of quality principles and practices, created and agreed upon by teaching staff, and that become the reference point for decision-making within the whole school community" (p. 176). As such, creating an SWP in the setting of this study has significant appeal. A school-wide program moves away from a commitment by teams of individual teachers and a written philosophy to a framework collaboratively created and collectively implemented to support the needs of students – in this case, a culturally diverse student population.

If the school chooses to focus on student engagement or constructivist pedagogy, then this must be evident in the practices of teachers throughout the school (O'Neill, Geoghegan, & Petersen, 2013). Likewise, if the school decides to adopt and promote a growth mindset (Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good, & Dweck, 2006), then it follows that this pedagogy, if adequately supported by school philosophy, department agreements, and teacher training, will become embedded in teaching practices and consistent throughout classrooms. If not, then school improvement efforts may be limited to programs, workshops and other professional development that may have only a limited or short-term impact on how the needs of ELLs and others are supported in the mainstream. Levine, Howard, & Moss (2014) suggest that the success of a program to help linguistically and culturally diverse students depends on the ability of teachers "to improve what they know and what they can do" and that mainstream K-12 teachers can be "guided or inspired by an undergirding vision (p. 21)" to address the needs of ELLs.

The *Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools* (IDEAS) Project espouses the importance of establishing a school-wide pedagogy and culture to keep everyone on the same page, and suggests one way to align the school's philosophy, the needs of its students, and the curricula and instructional practices. This initiative commenced in 1997 and was developed jointly by Education Queensland and the University of Southern Queensland (Crowther, Andrews, Morgan and O'Neill, 2012). Since then, the project has achieved impressive results (Chesterton & Duignan, 2004; Ng & Chew, 2008) in over 400 schools in Australia and overseas, including Singapore

and Italy (Dempster, Robson & Gaffney, 2011). According to Lin (2014), the IDEAs project is grounded in the belief that there should be "alignment among school-wide pedagogy, cohesive community, and strategic foundations that are clearly represented in a school's intellectual capital, social capital, and spiritual capital" (p. 319).

Several case studies cited in the related literature describe schools with diverse student populations, not unlike the setting studied. In one case study by Conway and Abawi (2013) described a school that adopted the IDEAs Project in 2007 while it "embraced the challenge of how to meet the needs of an ever-changing population consisting of 46 nationalities" (p. 180). Notably, this type of diverse student population reflects the reality in many international schools, including the setting of this study. The school, referred to as St. Monica's, used the metaphor of flight as a common theme throughout the school to guide curriculum and instruction. The acronym KITES also appeared throughout the school to remind students, teachers, and parents of the school's focus and priority on knowledge, innovation, taking risks, empowerment and success (Conway & Abawi, 2013).

Implementation of this pedagogy began with a facilitation team who lead professional conversations to develop support. This process allowed all participants to experience what Conway (2008) referred to as shared meaning-making and allowed all involved to feel a sense of ownership and build trust. St. Monica's also went as far as including a reflection of pedagogical values during staff development days, to guide training and decision-making (Conway & Abawi, 2013).

Two other schools cited in school-wide pedagogy literature by Geoghegan, O'Neill, and Petersen (2013) were also composed of a high percentage of English language learners. These schools referred to as *Belldean* and *MacKillop* (pseudonyms used) had an ELL population of approximately 98% and decided to implement the IDEAs Project to raise academic achievement. At Belldean, the slogan *Success in any Field* was used and described in the school's school-wide learner expectations. The school also supported this goal by providing professional development training for all

teachers in differentiated instruction, including training in explicit literacy lessons and in developing scaffolded instruction.

MacKillop chose to enact a school-wide approach to literacy pedagogy and group teachers in professional learning teams to address six pedagogical principles: “active commitment, creativity, teamwork, individual, vision and empathy” (O’Neill, 2013, p. 108). It described these through the acronym ACTIVE, provided training for new teachers and grouped and streamed students for literacy. Teachers at MacKillop, according to O’Neill (2013), also had clear learning intentions and the metacognition and a common meta-language that researchers have found can support reflective learning and explicit instruction (O’Neill, Geoghegan, & Petersen, 2013). According to O’Neill (2013), teachers were highly articulate when describing their approach to teaching literature, and differentiated practice was clearly evident in classrooms. Also, posits O’Neill (2013) “MacKillop School’s response to the challenge of their linguistically and culturally diverse student community and the statistically significant improvement in their ESL students’ reading and numeracy is highly impressive” (p. 117). Research showed that the literacy pedagogy of both Belldean and MacKillop had a positive effect on ELL students’ reading over the long term (O’Neill, 2013).

Other research also describes similar success at schools that have embraced a school-wide pedagogy. Some vision statements provided by Crowther, Andrews, Morgan, O'Neill, (2012) include: “Together we achieve the extraordinary, Together, we reach the horizon and beyond, Sharing our forest of opportunities," and "From the hill, we will soar" (p. 4). Obviously, work is needed to bring these goals into the classroom and then ensure that they have a positive impact on the academic achievement of ELLs, including those in this setting.

Conway & Abawi (2013) suggest mobilising the schools’ resources to create a synergy throughout the school. They also suggest that a common pedagogy is embedded sustainability, which encourages teachers, and other members of the community to “embrace collective responsibility for student achievement” (p. 183). This approach also allows teachers to see how their perspectives influence their

classroom practice (Conway & Abawi, 2013). The approach also "draws strongly on the use of data to form the basis of the school staff and community's judgment of school effectiveness" (Dempster, Robson, & Gaffney, 2011, p. 152).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Researchers in the past have used the terms *theoretical* and *conceptual frameworks* interchangeably and this has led to some conflict and debate (Green, 2014). To avoid confusion, I follow the suggestions made by Parahoo (2014) and use the term *theoretical framework* to describe how a key theory (constructivism) underpins the study. The later term, *conceptual framework,* "draws on concepts from various theories and findings to guide research" (Green, 2014, p. 35) and provides an additional, but complementary structure to investigate teacher perceptions, classroom practices and teacher training.

In addition to constructivist learning theory, this study drew on multiple theoretical research studies and approaches to develop a deeper understanding of positioning, effective strategies for teaching ELLs and the impact and benefits of teacher efficacy. These studies served as an important trajectory for themes discovered during qualitative data collection. Theories and frameworks used include positioning theory, self-determination theory, academic optimism theory, self-efficacy theory, culturally relevant pedagogy, differentiation and second language acquisition theory. Each theory was selected after a review of similar studies to examine one or more elements of the research questions addressed in this study (see Figure 3). More specifically, theories helped illuminate and analyse how mainstream teachers in this setting may view their role in teaching ELLs (position theory and self-determination theory) and the self-efficacy and expectations of teachers about teaching these students (self-efficacy theory and academic optimism). They also suggested instructional modifications teachers might use to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners (culturally relevant pedagogy, second language acquisition theory and differentiation). The use of these theories and studies related to them were used to compare findings with sound pedagogy and apply tools to examine how teachers approach the challenging task of

teaching ELLs in their mainstream classrooms. As Creswell (2009) suggests, in mixed-method studies, theories are used "as an orientating lens that shapes the type of questions asked, who participates in the study, how data are collected, and the implications made from the study (typically for change and advocacy)" (p. 208).

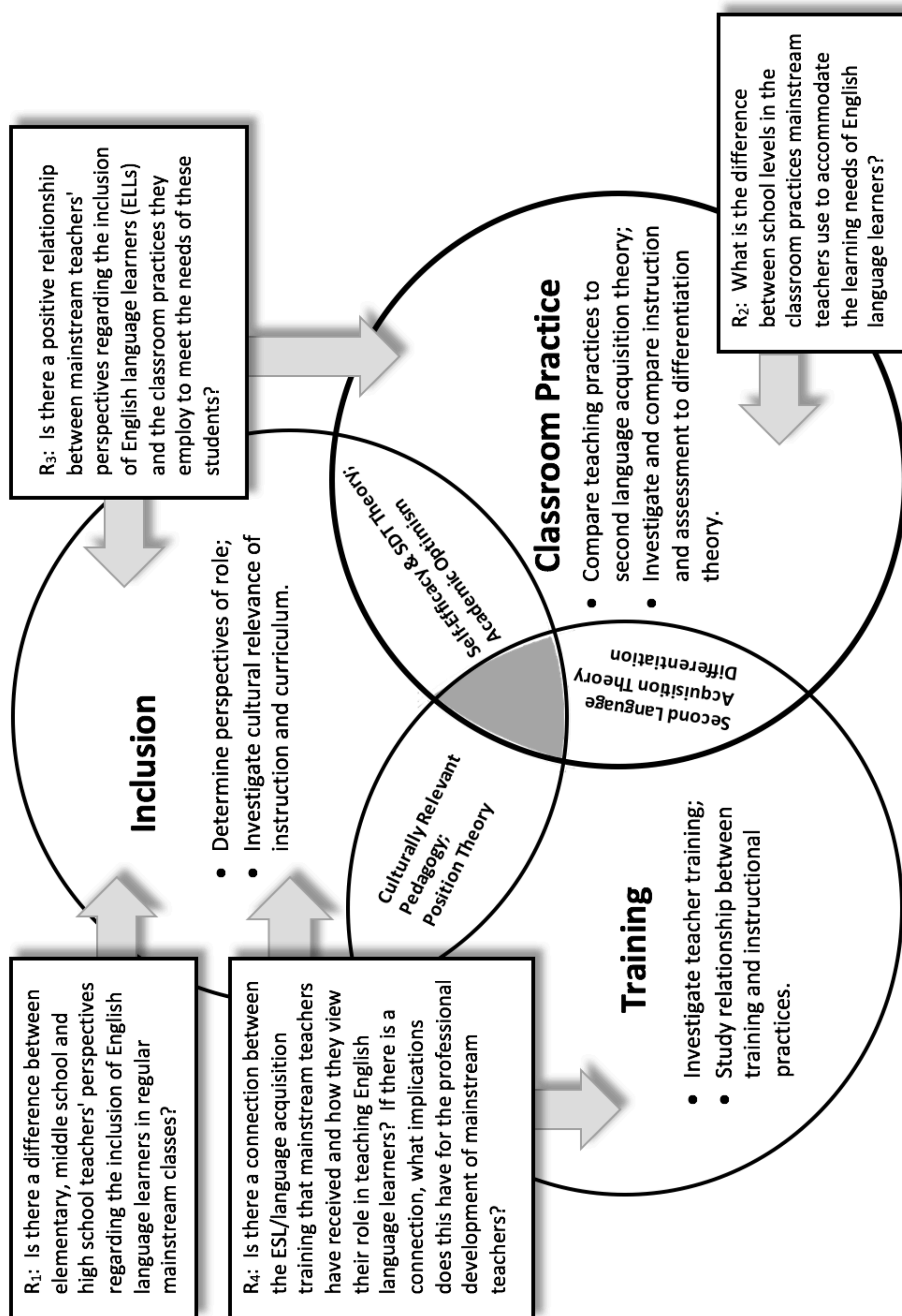

Figure 3. Conceptual framework for research study.

The conceptual framework represented in Figure 3 shows a graphical representation of themes and theories used to create research questions and collect data (Creswell, 2009). These topics are based on categories used by Reeves (2006) in a study titled *Secondary Teacher Attitudes Toward Including English Language Learners in Mainstream Classrooms* and consist of (a) inclusion, (b) classroom practice, and (c) training. Research questions related to the topics appear outside the Venn diagram in the model and arrows indicate whether a question relates to one or more themes. For example, arrows from research questions one and two directly correspond to teachers' perspectives of inclusion (question 1): *Is there a difference between elementary, middle school, and high school teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners in regular mainstream classes?* And classroom practice (Question 2): *What is the difference between school levels in the classroom practices that mainstream teachers use to accommodate the learning needs of English language learners?*

Other research questions relate to two themes mentioned in the diagram. The third research question draws from data regarding both inclusion and the instructional practices teachers use in the classroom, while the fourth question targets the potential relationship between the training teachers received and how they perceive their role in teaching ELLs in a mainstream class. Research question three states: *Is there a positive relationship between mainstream teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners (ELLs) and the classroom practices they employ to meet the needs of these students?,* while Question four asks: *Is there a connection between the ESL/language acquisition training that mainstream teachers have received and how they view their role in teaching English language learners? If there is a connection, what implications does this have for the professional development of mainstream teachers?* Notably, this research question and question two regarding classroom practices seek to identify implications for intervention, including additional training to support mainstream teachers.

Several theories, explained earlier, appear at the intersection of each pair of circles in Figure 3. Self-efficacy theory and academic optimism connect inclusion and

classroom practices to show how they can inform the study regarding the need for mainstream teachers to have: optimism, confidence, positive beliefs, about their work, an atmosphere of trust in the classroom and among parents and other teachers, and a strong focus on rigor and academic learning (Bandura, 1977, 1986).

At the intersection of training and classroom practices, second language acquisition theory and differentiation are again used to provide a model of best practice and a touchstone for instructional practices reported in the surveys, interviews, and the focus group meeting. Also, these theories suggest ways that teachers might modify their expectations and instruction to meet the needs of the ELL students they teach, who are concurrently struggling to meet the demands of achieving English proficiency and master the content of their mainstream classes.

The overlap of inclusion and training (Figure 3) contains position theory and culturally relevant pedagogy theory to show the potential relationship between teacher training and teachers' perception of their teaching role. Position theory suggests that teachers might accept or reject certain teaching responsibilities, including the differentiation of instruction for ELLS, based on how they view their role and their working environment (Davies & Harré, 1998). This, and the culturally relevant pedagogy theory (Ladson-Billings (1995) which emphasises the need for awareness on instruction that is sensitive to each student's culturally background help to identify the source of teachers' perceptions regarding their role. These theories informed interview questions (Appendix F) that asked teachers to discuss their role, their perception of ELLs in the mainstream and things the school could do to support them better.

Together, the theories included in the conceptual framework suggested six specific tasks that could be researched in the study. Those tasks, which appear in the center of each circle in bullet point form show avenues that will be investigated using survey data and corroborated and compared with data from the qualitative phase, which includes the individual teacher interviews ($n = 6$) and a focus group meeting. The intersection of all three circles or lens to view what teachers think (inclusion), how they respond (classroom practice), and the training they can call upon or need to instruct

ELLs (training) provides a pivotal point for this study. This area of overlap contains a key goal of this study that will, at its completion, hopefully answer the central research question - *How and why do mainstream teachers perceive their role regarding English language learners the way they do, and what impact does this have on their expectations and instruction for these students?*

2.3 Potential Interventions

According to research literature, typical behaviours of highly successful schools include the use of data, an aligning of the school's mission, vision, and goals, working in teams, raising teachers' expectations of students, and students' expectations of themselves (Hartnell-Young, Marshall, & Hassell (2014). All of these are behaviours are important principles in a popular approach to teacher training and school improvement (Parrish, Perez, Merickel & Linquanti, 2006) and seem to apply to the school studied. Establishing professional learning communities (PLCs) to monitor ELL achievement, set goals, and share effective strategies for intervention within this school is one possible outcome of this research study. Other types of intervention, found effective in research literature include the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).

2.3.1 Response to Intervention (RTI)

Certainly, trying to learn the content of academic classes while learning English is a daunting task, but if a student also has an underlying physical or learning disability (LD), learning becomes a more formidable challenge. Early identification of these individual ELL students can make a difference. However, language acquisition can often mirror aspects of a learning disability (New York City Department of Education, 2013). Since ELLs appear to be struggling due to limited language proficiency it can be difficult for teachers to notice other difficulties they face (Sanchez, 2015; Zehr, 2009). Both ELLs and LD students may have difficulty following directions, experience problems with phonological awareness and challenges with sight words, figurative speech in text, challenging vocabulary; and may also easily become frustrated and have difficulty concentrating (New York City Department of Education, 2013).

Consequently, teachers unsure of how to address the needs of ELLs in mainstream classes turn to special education and at an alarming rate (Gersten & Woodard, 1994).

A longstanding concern, noted in research literature, is the large and disproportionate number of ELLs in special education programs (Lane & Leventhal, 2015; Lesaux, Marietta, & Galloway, 2014; Olsen, 2010) that for many is not the type of intervention they need (Gersten & Woodard, 1994). Moreover, the identification of students with a learning disability does not consider their cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Brown, Sanford, & Lolich, 2010) and does little to help them build upon their pre-existing education and background knowledge (Ortiz, Robertson, Wilkinson, Liu, McGhee, & Kushner, 2011). This situation leads to ELLs becoming long-term English language learners (LTELLs) who may eventually receive the right type of support, but in the interim these students may lack a foundation for further learning and the opportunity to benefit from learning experiences will be lost (Hakata, 2014; Klingner, 2011). Prolonging the assessment and identification of students until after the 4-7 years it takes them to reach academic proficiency (Calderón, 2007; Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1984) is too late. For the school in this setting and other schools with ELL students, this can be a topic of serious concern. In addition to not receiving the right type of support, teachers and specialist staff may spend a considerable amount of time and effort trying to help an LD student only to find that they have only made a small academic gain.

Unfortunately, the intersection of English language learners and special education is an emerging field of scholarship and research to explain how to identify and serve the needs of ELLs with a learning disability is limited (More, Spies, Morgan, & Baker, 2015). Recent research literature, however, does support the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach currently used throughout the United States as a model to identify and assist ELL students with a learning disability (Friedman, 2015; Klingner, 2011; Zehr, 2009). According to Friedman (2015), the Response to Intervention (RTI) model is "a comprehensive, school-wide approach that seeks to prevent further educational failure" (A Successful Rtl Model section, slide 49). The model focuses on

addressing small learning problems before they become larger ones (Friedman, 2015). This preventative, pro-active approach has also been an effective model "for determining if an English Language Learner (ELL) needs intervention beyond language support" (Zehr, 2009, p. 4).

One of the tenets of Response to Intervention (RTI) is the universal academic screening and identification of students - particularly in lower grades (K-3). Unfortunately, while this assessment would preferably be in English and a student's native language, this is usually not an option. Other sources of data are needed to determine whether academic problems are due to limited English proficiency or some other cause. The New York City Department of Education (2013) in one publication titled *Creating an RTI Model for ELLs Academic Success* recommends the following ways to identify ELL students with a learning disability:

1. Look at multiple sources of information including but not limited to test data, learning background, learner characteristics, linguistic and cultural background;
2. Compare ELLs academic progress with the progress of other ELLs;
3. Analyze data through a language acquisition lens;
4. Examine accommodations made in the mainstream classroom, and ask: Is vocabulary explicitly taught? Does class work and school work match their level of English proficiency? Is progress regularly checked? Does classroom instruction target their learning needs? If so, is the learning environment conducive to learning?

Assessment of text-reading fluency however, does not give a reliable indication of the reading comprehension of English language learners (New York City Department of Education 2013) and phonological awareness tests (Gunn, Smolkowski, Biglan, Black & Blair, 2005; Haagar & Windemueller, 2001), are not recommended as a reliable means to identify an underlying disability. However, since ELLs can reach the same level as monolingual English speakers in both these areas, if they continue to experience difficulties despite appropriate instruction, then poor achievement "is most likely not due

to the child's level of English proficiency" (New York City Department of Education, 2013, p. 3).

The Response to Intervention (RTI) approach is a multi-tiered approach to instruction for students. Brown, Sanford, & Lolich, (2010) and Friedman (2015), together with other authors who have applied it to address the needs of English language learners in mainstream classes (Echevarria & Hasbrouck, 2009; Echevarria & Vogt, 2011) describe the tiers in this way:

Tier 1: Involves approximately 80% of all students. Intervention takes place in the regular classroom within the core curriculum. Teachers are expected to provide effective, high-quality instruction and hold high expectations for all students. Intervention at Tier 1 is school-wide and includes sheltered instruction, linguistically appropriate instruction for ELLs, focused on behaviour, reading, math and writing. Intervention for English language learners includes sheltered instruction and culturally relevant teaching.

Tier 2: Involves approximately 15% of all students. In addition to the core curriculum, additional intensive instruction is conducted in small groups, includes oral components and English language development, and is based on assessment. Students at Tier 2 receive a double dose of the core curriculum. Recommended instruction is for thirty minutes, five days each week (Echevarria & Vogt, 2011). Tier 2 is intended to be a short-term intervention (Echevarria & Hasbrouck, 2009).

Tier 3: Involves approximately 5% of all students. Instruction occurs within the core curriculum, and additional instruction is highly intense, assessment based and provided on an individual basis. Daily instruction is before, during or after school (Echevarria & Vogt, 2011).

Some authors suggest that all English learners can benefit from Tier 2 intervention despite their level of English proficiency (Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins, & Scarcella, 2007). Yet, while these ELLs and other students would benefit from intense instruction at this and even Tier 3 level, the result might be

reduced time in mainstream classes and less opportunity for authentic interaction. Therefore, intervention must be directed towards students with the greatest need.

Implementing a Response to Intervention (RTI) program in the school is one possible intervention to support English language learners. The potential effectiveness of this approach to intervene and reduce the risk of struggling students becoming long-term ELLs will become evident throughout this study. Of further note is the fact that a mechanism now exists to at least identify students who are below grade level.

In October, 2015, the school adopted the *Measures of Academic Assessment (MAP),* an adaptive, online series of standardized tests developed by the Northwestern Evaluation Association (NWEA). These tests for mathematics, reading comprehension and language usage replaced the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the International School Assessment (ISA), both standardized tests held yearly at different grade levels within the school. A second sitting of the MAPs tests occurred in March 2016 and produced additional Lexile scores to indicate each student's reading ability and a RIT (Rasch) scale that can be used to compare student and school performance relative to U.S. achievement and growth scores, and Common Core State Standards (Northwestern Evaluation Association, n.d).

These data present new information on student progress and makes it easy for the school to identify students who need academic assistance and may benefit from RTI intervention. An additional benefit is that the test provides achievement goals that the school can use as a means to monitor student progress and guide intervention. Data from the MAPs tests do not provide a complete picture of student achievement but a potential starting point to begin support for struggling English language learners and other students who are still struggling to reach grade level proficiency. Chapter 9 provides further discussion of the use of MAP data and the implementation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) program.

2.3.2 Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

Mainstreaming ELLs can either promote or hinder their literacy development (Somé-Guiébré, 2015). The difficulties confronting language learners, purports Kay

(1990), "... should not be underestimated. As quickly as they make any progress in English language development, their English-speaking background peers are improving" (p. 66). "To reach a similar level of proficiency" Kay (1990) admits, "...second language learners simply have to make progress at a faster rate than their peers." Since quality classroom instruction is the most important factor in educating these students, and achievement disparities can result from instruction that fails to meet the linguistic needs of English learners (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011), teachers are faced with little choice. One option for mainstream teachers seeking to differentiate instruction to support English learners is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).

This model provides a framework for lesson planning, the means to meet standards, and the potential to raise the expectations and perceptions of core content teachers. Also, the sheltered instruction approach, observe Pawan & Ortloff (2011), "extends support for ELLs beyond the two or three years of mandated ESL instruction by advocating systemic training and engagement of all teachers in the instruction of ELLs." The approach also serves "as a point of convergence that the ESL and content area teachers can use when analyzing, refining and discussing ELL instruction with each other" (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011, p. 464). Via this interaction and intervention, the ultimate aim of sheltered instruction is to allow ELLs to reach the highest level of proficiency possible through explicit instruction and feedback.

The Sheltered Instruction Protocol (SIOP) is now a widely-accepted approach to sheltered instruction and based on tried and true instructional methods to provide language learners with clear and accessible language and content (Hansen-Thomas, 2008). This framework allows ELLs to learn through a new language (Short, Fidelman & Louguit, 2012) and helps "ELLs to navigate the dual challenge of learning subject-area skills and content and learning language" (Daniel & Conlin, 2015, p. 171) by building students' background knowledge and academic language, providing comprehensible instruction, and responding to the other interrelated components of sheltered instruction (Echeverria, Vogt, & Short, 2012; Echevarría, Short, & Powers, 2006). According to Hansen-Thomas (2008) SIOP "is designed to provide second

language learners with the same high-quality, academically challenging content that native English speakers receive through a combination of good teaching techniques and an explicit focus on academic language development" (p. 166).

In response to a growing number of ELLs entering U.S. public schools unable to read, write and speak fluently in English, the Sheltered Instruction Protocol (SIOP) was originally developed as an observational assessment tool for researchers using empirically sound practices for teaching ELLs in a mainstream setting (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Echevarría, Short, & Powers, 2006). The framework was developed collaboratively by Jana Echevarría, Mary Ellen Vogt, and Deborah Short at the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE) under a 7-year federal contract from 1996 until 2003. The origin of the SIOP Model and sheltered instruction, according to researchers, comes from early work by Krashen (1982) on second-language acquisition and theories that ELLs need a low-anxiety environment and comprehensible input (Crawford, Schmeister & Biggs, 2008; Daniel & Conlin, 2015).

Since that time, the term *sheltered instruction* has become an accepted metaphor to describe intervention to support English language learners simultaneously acquire English proficiency and academic content (Fritzen, 2011). Over the same period, the SIOP Model has gone from an assessment and evaluation tool to becoming a framework planning instruction to ELLs in content areas. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is now increasingly used to help elementary and secondary mainstream teachers throughout the United States support ELLs in mainstream classes (Daniel & Conlin, 2015; Hansen-Thomas, 2008). The protocol consists of 30 features, grouped into the three main categories of lesson preparation, instruction, and review/assessment and eight components (Newman, & Nyikos, 1999), that when used together, improve ELL achievement (Echevarría, Short & Powers, 2006; Honigsfeld & Cohan, 2008). The eight components of the SIOP Model include lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment (Echevarría, Vogt, Short, & Montone, 1999). The six elements under the heading *Lesson Preparation*, examine ways to adapt the content of

lessons to meet student proficiency, planning meaningful lessons that integrate key lesson concepts, identifying supplementary materials, selecting content concepts that are appropriate for the age and background of the students, and creating content and language objectives. The SIOP Model begins with assessment of students' current understanding and ability regarding the content. Student progress is monitored once lessons begin to ensure that they are working towards meeting curriculum standards and the content and language objectives the teacher has created. If a student is at-risk of failing to reach these goals, then lessons are modified and retaught.

Building Background refers to emphasizing key vocabulary, and explicitly linking and reconciling new concepts to students' backgrounds and prior experiences, including previous lessons. This might require the teacher to show materials and charts used in the lesson the day before to enable students to make a connection to the new lesson and the new content. Pre-reading activities, KWL (Know-Want to Know- Learnt) charts, personal dictionaries, and text to self-connections are examples of learning activities that students can use to develop understanding. Explicitly teaching key vocabulary found in the content multiple times is an important feature of building background for English learners. Also, SIOP authors recommend teaching vocabulary, reading books to students and other vocabulary building activities (Daniel and Conlin, 2015).

Comprehensible Input (Krashen, 2008) calls for the teacher to speak clearly and slowly enough for ELLs to understand, to explain academic tasks clearly and precisely, and to employ a variety of techniques, such as gesture and modeling. To increase comprehension, the SIOP Model also suggests reducing unnecessary instructions and presenting information in multiple ways. One method is for the teacher to use visuals and images and create support material if ELLs find it difficult to navigate the textbook. According to Echevarría, Short, & Powers (2006) lectures by teachers can making understanding the content difficult for ELLs, and textbook features such as headings, bolded words, graphs, and sidebars that are intended to aid learning may have the opposite result. Alternatively, graphic organizers can also be used to help students

structure their knowledge. Vogt (2012) recommends providing English language learners with partially completed graphic organizers and asking the students to complete them. Another approach to creating comprehensible input includes pairing students so that one can explain a concept taught in class and the other can paraphrase what they heard. This, according to Vogt (2011) helps ELLs to comprehend the content while practicing their language skills.

The *Strategies* component recommends that teachers provide opportunities for ELLs to apply cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies, e.g. to predict, problem solve, organize, and summarize. It suggests the use of Venn diagrams and other graphic organizers to help students improve their comprehension. This component also encourages teachers to use a variety of types of questions throughout the lessons to develop higher-level thinking, and to structure tasks consistently so that ELLs can reach higher levels of achievement.

The elements of *Interaction* encourage teachers to find frequent opportunities for students to socially interact, to provide adequate wait time for student responses and if necessary, to provide ample opportunities for ELLs to clarify key concepts with a teacher, peer or text using their native language. This focus on cooperative learning requires careful planning on behalf of the teacher, and a willingness to move from a traditional approach of *chalk and talk*, whereby the teacher dominates the discussion to increased opportunities for students to interact with the teacher and each other. *Practice and Application* call for the teacher to provide manipulatives and other hands-on materials when ELLs begin to use new content knowledge, provide opportunities for students to use new content and language, and to provide opportunities for students to participate in activities that integrate the elements of language skills, i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening. The *Lesson Delivery* component of the SIOP protocol recommends that teachers pace their lesson at a speed appropriate to the ability of the students, engage students in discussion and a learning activity for approximately 90-100% of the lesson, and support content and language objectives. The final component, *Review and Assessment*, calls for teachers to review key concepts and vocabulary,

provide regular feedback, and conduct informal formation assessment during the lesson to monitor student comprehension and learning.

Each of the 30 items on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) checklist is ranked on a 5-point Likert scale with scores ranging from 0 to 4. Based on this scale a "4" indicates that the standard for the SIOP element is evident and has been fully met in the lesson, a "2" indicates that there are some characteristics of the SIOP model present but need to be more developed, and a "0" that evidence is lacking. A low score for one or more of the 30 items included in the SIOP checklist indicates one or several areas where mainstream teachers can improve their instruction of ELLs.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) concurrently promotes the acquisition of language and the content in mainstream subjects, such as mathematics, science, social studies and English (Kareva & Echevarría, 2013; Short, Echevarría, Richards-Tutor, 2011). A major feature of the approach is that it encourages teachers to develop both content and language objectives to improve the English proficiency of English learners (Echevarría, Richards-Tutor, Canges, & Francis, 2011). Furthermore, it allows students to learn English when reading texts, writing, and participating in academic discussions with peers within the classroom context. Although it is not a step-by-step method of intervention (Echevarría, Richards-Tutor, Canges, & Francis, 2011), SIOP incorporates techniques for making content accessible, provides a coherent approach to improving student achievement (Echevarría, 2005), and is a useful tool to help teachers acquire "the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to support ELLs" (Daniel & Conlin, 2015, p. 169). Some researchers also suggest that SIOP "provides an explicit framework for organizing instructional practices to optimize the effectiveness of teaching second and foreign language learners" (Kareva & Echevarría, 2013, p. 239).

The SIOP approach also helps teachers integrate academic language into their subject and is widely used to differentiate instruction for students as public schools in the U.S. for students with limited proficiency (Tomlinson, 2013). It offers numerous adaptions and modifications to classroom instruction as teachers scaffold their content

for ELLs; can be used as a tool for observation (Honigsfeld & Cohan, 2006); and allows teachers to "self-assess their lesson delivery" (Short & Echevarría, p. 125).

According to the authors of SIOP (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2012), the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol "effectively shelters ELLs from competition with native English speakers via the use of special techniques designed to enhance the comprehension of subject matter" and, according others, serve as "enhanced alternatives to teacher lectures and textbook readings" (Newman & Nyikos, 1999, p. 472). Hansen-Thompson (2008) suggests that it is this combination of effective teaching and an explicit focus on language development that creates challenge and quality, high-level instruction for second language learners.

Despite its purported benefits, the use of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) carries with it some concerns. Teachers' attitudes can strongly influence the success of this type of approach (Calderon, 2012) and even with SIOP trained teachers, there is no guarantee that training will result in teachers differentiating instruction for students (Tomlinson, 2013). Echevarría (2005) agrees and states that teachers may attended SIOP training and have the best intentions to use the model to support ELLs, yet, fail to apply it in the classroom. "It is not unusual for an instructional model or approach to be misinterpreted in practice" and, reports Echevarría (2005), "it has already been reportedly implemented in unintended ways" (Echevarría, 2005, p. 59).

Some researchers stated that the SIOP model had a positive effect on literacy achievement offered "a promising approach for helping ELLs develop academic literacy skills needed for success in school" (Echevarría, Short, & Powers, 2006, p. 206). However, Echevarría (2008) suggested that research has not kept pace with implementation and the growth of this model throughout the States. While Pearson Education, the publishers of SIOP materials, stated that the SIOP model has spread internationally and the model has been adopted to teach other languages outside the United States (I & Chang, 2014), peer-reviewed studies and other empirical evidence are lacking (Daniel & Conlin, 2015).

Another criticism of the SIOP approach is that its focus on instructional strategies limits opportunities to listen to students' ideas and what they have to say (Coffey, Hammer, Levin, & Grant, 2011). According to some researchers, 25 of the 30 items in the Sheltered Instruction Protocol checklist are solely based on teachers' actions (Daniel & Conlin, 2015). This criticism has been addressed to some extent by the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), which is explained in detail below. Although the Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol can be modified to meet the needs of advanced students, differentiated instruction is required for those with limited English proficiency since SIOP assumes a basic level of reading proficiency (Rodriguez Moux, 2010).

Authors of the SIOP model state that students with teachers who are trained and implement the approach with fidelity perform significantly better on language and literacy assessments (Short, Echevarría, Richards-Tutor, 2011), yet the components of SIOP "should be practiced daily in a systemic way, not selectively and occasionally" (Echevarría, Richards-Tutor, Canges, & Francis, 2011, p. 337). It is possible for mainstream teachers without SIOP training to apply some of the elements of SIOP in their lessons (Short, Fidelman, & Louguit, 2012) but teachers who wish to implement the model as it is prescribed "must *buy in* to sheltered instruction if they are to implement it appropriately" (Hansen-Thomas, 2008, p. 168). Teachers and administrators also need to be aware that professional development and training to begin a SIOP program is extensive and takes time, and that some teachers may still require additional training later on (Daniel & Conlin, 2015).

2.3.3 Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)

Another useful instructional model discovered in the literature and supported by research is the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996; Chamot & Robbins, 2006; Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki, 2015). This method of lesson planning and support emerged from research conducted in 1986 in the United States by Anna Uhl Chamot and J. Michael O'Malley, who studied learning strategies used by secondary school ELLs. Both researchers found that successful LEP students

used effective strategies to learn language and content in the mainstream and were flexible in trying new strategies and jettisoning others that did not work (O'Malley, 1988). This early work lead to the development of the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) to help LEP students bridge the gap between sheltered ESL classes and core classes in the mainstream. CALLA was implemented and developed over a seven-year period in Arlington Public Schools in Virginia (Chamot, 2008). The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach model now combines cognitive theory, lesson planning and learning strategies to develop fluency and comprehension.

A premise of CALLA is that effective strategies and classroom practice result in effective and active learning. In CALLA, teachers use direct, explicit instruction to teach learning strategies to support ELLs in simultaneously learning the content of their core subjects and develop their academic language (O'Malley, 1988). The approach can "assist comprehension and (the) retention of language skills and concepts in the content areas" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987, p. 227) and help to develop students' ability to work with others in a social context (Chamot & Robbins, 2006).

Learning strategies employed by mainstream teachers who use the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach are many and varied. They might consist of inferring from the context of a text, making predictions based on prior knowledge, using a concept map to visually represent content or using online technology to learn new academic vocabulary. Several authors describe a range of strategies teachers can use to support the ELLs in their mainstream classrooms (Bolos, 2012; Chamot, 2009; Díaz-Rico, 2013; Watkins & Lindahl, 2010). A list of some potential learning strategies teachers can teach through direct instruction appears in Appendix C. These activities represent some of the strategies ELL students can use to gain access to core content, understand classroom procedures, plan writing and interact with English-speaking peers.

Scaffolding is a major feature of the CALLA. Students are simply not presented with a stream of learning strategies. Teachers intentionally select strategies ELLs can use to aid their comprehension and develop their language skills. One major aim of

CALLA is to reduce the cognitive load of educational materials by changing the language or form of text but keeping the content the same. Support is temporary and removed as students gain proficiency in English, develop an understanding of the content, learn how to perform tasks, develop an awareness of their ability, and transfer strategies to new tasks. According to Chamot (2008), "the sequence guides students toward increasing levels of independence, thus fostering attitudes of academic self-efficacy" (p. 3).

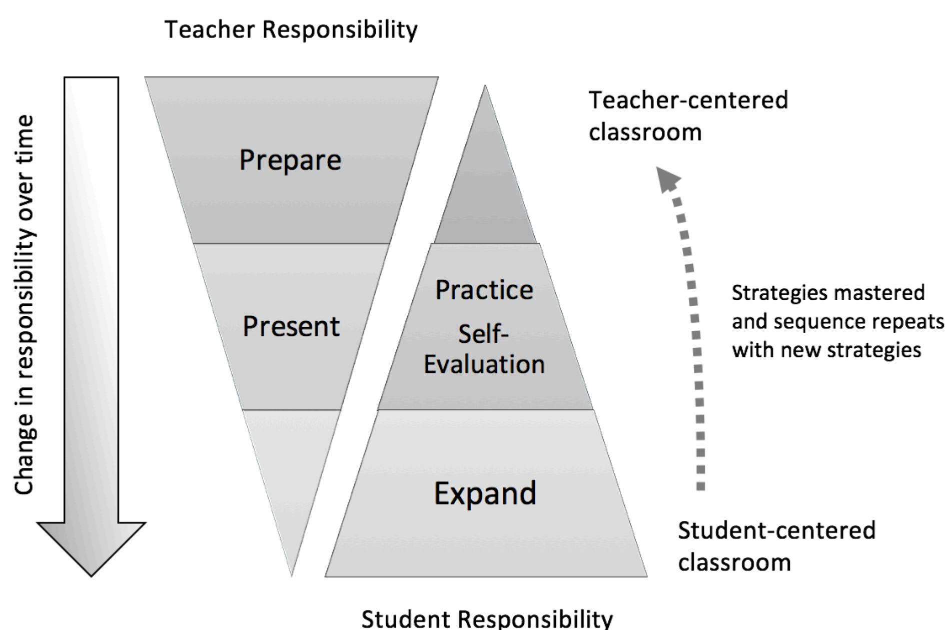

Figure 4. Progression of Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach.

The CALLA model in many ways follows a similar approach to the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Mainstream teachers also prepare lessons that build on students' prior knowledge and provide frequent opportunities for students to interact with peers while they practice learning strategies. At the beginning of a sequence of lessons using CALLA, teachers prepare and then engage in explicit instruction. As shown in Figure 4 above, teachers initially assume a large degree of

responsibility for student learning. Then, as the students come to rely less on scaffolded lessons and become proficient and in using learning strategies this responsibility is gradually transferred, and the classroom becomes increasingly more student-centered. Once this occurs, the classroom teacher then begins to introduce new strategies and the sequence begins again. Students in this way become exposed to multiple opportunities to learn specific strategies through explicit instruction. They practice using these strategies in a variety of content areas to meet the needs of a range of tasks to achieve mastery, before learning more strategies to support their language development and understanding of content. The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach contains five phases, including preparation, presentation, practice, self-evaluation, and expansion.

Preparation in the CALLA model refers to an effort on the teacher's part to determine students' prior knowledge of the content of a lesson or unit of study. Using checklists, questionnaires, diary entries, class observation or other means, the teacher can determine gaps between students' current knowledge and the content in a core subject. Mainstream teachers use this information together with their understanding of students' level of English proficiency to identify linguistic and content objectives and plan a sequence of lessons. During this phase teachers also identify learning strategies the students currently use. Then in the classroom, teachers discuss connections to students' prior knowledge activity and provide an overview of the academic vocabulary and the material that they intend to cover.

Presentation calls on teachers to explicitly teach and model learning strategies that they believe will help students develop their language skills and content knowledge. Teachers model the process of using an approach and explain their thinking process by "thinking aloud" while they demonstrate to the class. During this phase, the teacher explains to individuals, groups or the class how to use the strategy and helps the students visualize how the strategy can help them, why it is important and the applications it has to other tasks and subjects. Teachers attempt to present information in multiple ways

through reading, writing, group discussion, the use of visuals, and where possible, through the use of hands-on activities while frequently referring to strategies by name.

In the *Practice* phase, teachers use authentic learning tasks to provide students with the opportunity to use new strategies. Teachers discuss strategy to use, remind students of the procedure to follow and have them think aloud to demonstrate their understanding. Instruction is differentiated, and mistakes are expected and seen as feedback that can help them improve their performance. Students have multiple opportunities to practice the strategy within different cooperative structures (with partners, in small groups or as a class). Then, in the *Self-Evaluation* phase students assess their use of the learning strategy. In doing this, they develop a metacognitive awareness of the process they followed and the progress they made in learning content and academic language. Teachers at this time may encourage students to create rubrics to self-assess, use a journal, checklist or questionnaire. Teacher support fades as ELL students begin to assume more responsibility for selecting and using learning strategies they prefer.

In the final phase of CALLA, *Expansion* calls on teachers to support their students as they apply strategies to new tasks. Teachers encourage students to share their experience of how they have transferred ideas from their repertoire of strategies to build their language skills and understanding of content. Also, teachers in this phase will continue to monitor strategies taught in class and others developed by individual students (Chamot & O'Malley,1994).

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach differs from SIOP, mentioned earlier, in that it encourages teachers to learn new and efficient strategies for the students themselves and incorporate these practices into their teaching. Although many learning strategies appear in textbooks and other supplementary material, following a text lock-step is not what most LEP students need. In the CALLA model, textbooks are not an end in themselves, but a springboard to develop grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension (Palasan, 2017). Many ELLs may have already mastered some strategies and might not need to learn them. Their time is better spent

learning new strategies that they can use to support their understanding of content and language development. They may also have some learning strategies that they have already found useful, and in such cases, it behooves the mainstream teacher to observe students and listen to them. Others might also benefit from using their strategies. Teachers should give priority to learning strategies that provide some leverage for use in other core subjects, and that can help prepare students for future learning (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987).

2.3.4 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Research literature frequently mentions professional learning communities or PLCs as a means to address the need for mainstream teachers to receive additional training to support ELLs. To learn more about PLCs and their applicability to the context of this study, I conducted further research. My review began with a search of various educational databases, including Google Scholar, SAGE, and Pro-Quest to find peer-viewed articles published within the past six years, with the search terms: professional learning community, learning communities, the abbreviation PLC, and later in the investigation – lesson study. This search revealed tens of thousands of potential peer-reviewed articles and dissertations, so I added the terms English language learners, ELL, English as a second language, and ESL and restricted the search to the past three years to generate a more manageable number of articles to read and review. I conducted additional searches of literature related to professional learning communities limited by the search terms: implementation, timeline, barriers, role, strengths, and weaknesses, for use later in the study to provide a research foundation for the proposed project. Google Analytics revealed that the bulk of the literature was published in 1995 and originated in the United States, shortly after the publication of several books on the subject.

At the suggestion of a colleague, I created a Twitter account and subscribed to the following hashtags to follow emerging discussion and research related to professional learning communities and the teaching of ELL students in mainstream classrooms: #ELLchat, #atplc, and #ell. Doing so was extremely informative and proved to be a valuable source of information. Twitter discussion or tweets allowed me

to learn more about how professional learning communities and the teaching of ELL students in mainstream classes took place throughout the world and pointed me towards useful articles and online videos. Along the way, it was encouraging to learn that many teachers and administrators have expanded their learning network and established connections throughout the world via Twitter discussion (Rees, Posick, Ranwick and Johnson, 2013).

Numerous definitions exist for professional learning communities (PLCs), and schools have adapted the concept of PLCs to meet their purposes. Some definitions for professional learning communities found in the literature include:

1. "An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improving learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators" (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 1).
2. Communities in which the teachers in a school and its administration continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals so that students benefit (Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree & Fernandez, 1993).
3. "Team members who regularly collaborate toward continued improvement in meeting learner needs through a shared curricular-focused vision" (Reichstetter, 2006, p. 1).

Unfortunately, a universal definition for the term professional learning community does not exist (Stoll & Louis, 2007). Jones, Stall & Yarbrough (2013) agree and suggest that "Professional learning communities are difficult to define because they were not new prescriptions, programs, models; nor innovations" (p. 357). Therefore, for this study, the following definition of a professional learning community was used: A PLC is:

> a group of educators that meets regularly shares expertise and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students.

Strong research support and the ability to develop a reiterative process for professional development were major factors in selecting professional learning communities as preferable to other types of intervention (Huffman & Hipp, 2003; Steward, 2014; Téllez & Manthey, 2015). Teachers in the school have long talked about the need for vertical and horizontal meetings to discuss teaching practices and student achievement, and the school's accreditation reports (WASC & CIS Five-Year Review: Accreditation Visiting Team Report, 2013) documented the need for the implementation of collaborative learning communities.

Fortunately, in the setting for this study, the school has just created a school-wide master schedule for K-12. The new timetable has created some common planning time, and most departments and grade levels have frequent opportunities to meet, the creation of a master schedule also creates time for teachers to help students. Unfortunately, although the ability to build professional learning communities now exists, so far teacher interaction has been limited to grade level and department meetings. Teachers are yet to begin collaboratively examine data and discuss intervention strategies.

The suggestion of establishing PLCs is grounded in the belief that this type of practice would provide an effective and efficient way for the school to begin the process of ongoing school improvement (see Figure 5). A professional learning community approach creates an environment of trust in which teachers support each other to take risks while challenging others to improve and question their perceptions (Lambert, 2000).

Using professional learning communities can be a way for the school to create and embrace a type of collective autonomy while developing and implementing an action plan. Moreover, it seeks to close the achievement gap and bridge the gap between reality and a school's shared vision for the future (Zmuda, Kuklis, & Kline, 2004). Fullan (2011) also suggests that collaboration between teachers builds a *collective*

capacity that enables them to share knowledge regarding effective teaching practices. Perhaps more importantly though, this partnership generates a shared commitment (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Professional learning communities can provide a means to meet the psychological needs of the teachers mentioned earlier in discussion regarding Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). PLCs can help facilitate interaction (relatedness), develop mainstream teachers' skills (competence), and provide teachers with some degree of choice (autonomy).

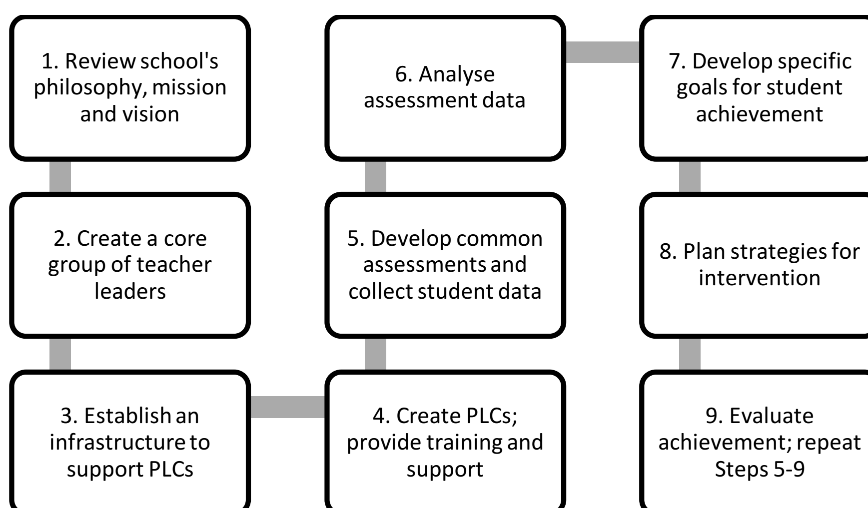

Figure 5. Process for the implementation of professional learning communities.

Many research studies reported that learning communities have been the catalyst for the development of a collaborative culture and improving collective efficacy (Brooks, 2013; Calcasola, 2009; DuFour, 2009; Ellwood, 2013; Fullan, 2001; Louis & Marks, 1998; Pangallo, 2009). A strength of professional learning communities is that they provide an abundant form of professional development. They can be used to tap readily into the expertise of teachers and demonstrate to them that they, their experience and ideas are valuable. Professional learning communities do not rely on external consultants to run workshops to convince teachers that they should do things a certain way. PLCs do not make the assumption that any one individual has all the answers or in

fact that there is a panacea that can be used to raise the academic achievement of students. Professional learning communities are an organic form of professional development, and a reiterative process that never ends (Barnett & Mahony, 2006). For schools heavily involved in PLCs, this practice is seen less as a type of professional development, and more regarding *the way we do business* (Reeves, 2007).

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many (2010) suggested that three big ideas drive PLCs. One is that they must help all students reach high levels of achievement; a second is that the PLC process is a collaborative and collective effort in which teachers are genuinely working and *thinking together* (Senge, 1994) to help support all students. The third idea is that each professional learning community must focus on results. Data showing evidence of achievement and conversely areas of weakness, according to DuFour (2010) can then be used to inform instruction and develop an intervention.

Professional learning communities have numerous benefits for both teachers and students. They have the potential to create a culture that enhances student learning (Hawley, 2007) and allow all teachers, including novice and veteran teachers, to have a voice in open discussions (Levine, 2011). PLCs allow teachers to expose their teaching practices to others in the school and encourage colleagues to do the same (Latta & Buck, 2007). This discussion creates a collaborative focus and moves teachers from isolation in the classroom to a team of peers who have a collective sense of efficacy (Horton & Martin, 2013). It also allows teams to capitalize on the skills, strengths and varied backgrounds of team members.

Many teachers may lack confidence, experience, or training in teaching English language learners in the mainstream - or possibly, all three (Sui, 2015). They report a lack of training and experience or believe "they are inadequate" (Kusuma-Powell & Powell, 2001, p. 132). Even experienced teachers, suggests Vargas (2012), can have concerns. Leo and Cowin (2000) suggest that in such cases the collaborative work that takes place in PLCs helps to make communication clear and enables teachers to accept their vulnerabilities and *deprivatize* their teaching practice.

Also, interaction with others, such as fellow teachers, can also lead to a change in beliefs and instructional practices that positively influence student performance (Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Schwarter & Hallum, 2008). Positive beliefs about their work as teachers and a strong sense of self-efficacy also give teachers confidence and increased optimism (Bandura, 2008). As a result, teachers exert more effort and have more resilience and persistence. These teachers also spend more time and effort crafting good questions for students, getting students to revise their work, and encouraging students to follow classroom rules (Hoy, Trater & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006; Pajares, 1997).

An analysis and discussion of common assessments is an engaging and powerful form of professional development and a way to move the focus from teacher performance to student achievement (DuFour et al., 2008). It is also seen as "best practice in assessment" and the "gold standard in accountability" (Reeves, 2004, in DuFour et al., 2008, p. 225). Through this interaction, teachers can modify instruction to have a positive impact on student learning (Brown, Sanford, & Lolich, 2010; Horton & Martin, 2013; Williams, 2013). The data generated can "both confirm what is working well and reveal the gaps between the current reality and the shared vision in a way that inspires collective action" (Zmuda et al., 2004, p. 183). Furthermore, PLCs can empower teachers (Sandoval, 2011), help them to see that there is no one way to instruct, but many different alternatives (Marzano, 2009), and contribute to reducing the achievement gaps between diverse populations (Hord, 1997a).

In addition to using data to identify areas of academic need, PLCs provide a forum for teachers to plan an intervention, develop differentiated instructional strategies, and build social relationships among group members. They also support teachers as they work to overcome challenges they face in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 1993) and increase teachers' morale and commitment to their school's goals and mission (DuFour, 2010). Research supports this approach to professional development as a means of improving teacher performance and student academic achievement. PLCs also allow teachers to personalize their professional development, self-direct their learning and develop a sense of ownership (Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012). This form of

professional development is also more effective than traditional in-service training in improving instruction for English language learners (DeLuca, 2012; Reeves, 2006). A meta-analysis by Bangert-Downs, Hurley & Wilkinson (2004) suggested that this was especially the case when PLCs focused on teaching expository writing across disciplines.

Although there is an increasing body of research that advocates for the introduction of PLCs, the concept is yet to be embraced by a significant number of international schools (Stuart, 2016). However, this is an approach frequently suggested to support cultural change in schools, the implementation of effective classroom practices and the academic achievement of students (Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree & Fernandez, 1993; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many, 2010). Professional learning communities can also, according to George (2009), provide "an opportunity to bring ESL and mainstream teachers together to learn from and with each other" (p. 46). For this reason, additional research was conducted to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of such a system. This investigation also enabled a detailed study of schools with a high percentage of ELLs in mainstream classes and discovered how to implement professional learning communities successfully.

Although I found the benefits of professional learning communities well documented, I also discovered numerous problems associated with poorly executed and ineffective PLCs. For professional learning communities to succeed, a school-wide culture must be established "that makes collaboration expected, inclusive, genuine, ongoing, and focused on critically examining practice to improve student learning" (National Center for Literacy Education, 2012, p. 2). A survey of the literature suggested that the establishment of this culture, so crucial to the success of PLCs, has proved problematic. Barriers included teachers' resistance to change, their reaction to what they perceived as an increased workload, the difficulty in finding common planning time, and the patience required to see results.

One of the downfalls is that a change in a school's status quo can lead to some resistance and even conflict (Hawley, 2007). Reeves (2010) tells us that "Change is difficult, and opposition is inevitable" (p. 97). However, teachers will need to move from a "that is the way we do things here" (Phelps, 2008, p. 121) attitude and start to address important issues such as student achievement. These problems are often not talked about openly (Barth, 2006). Although there is a long-standing tradition of educators in many schools justifying student failure as a way to teach students to be responsible, there is no research base to support this approach to teaching (DuFour et al., 2008). Teachers and students, therefore, should not see learning or failure as an option. If students are not achieving, then intervention is needed, and principals need to hold teachers accountable (Wilhelm, 2010).

DuFour et al. (2008) suggest that some teachers might refuse to embrace PLCs by giving up too early or by suggesting that someone else needs to do this work – a point reminiscent of a previous discussion in this study about how teachers position themselves. Alternatively, they may look for short cuts, demand more training or attempt to pick and choose programs rather than work towards complete cultural change (DuFour et al., 2008). They may also feel overwhelmed (Ash & D'Auria, 2013), feel resentment (Van Eekelen, Vermunt, & Boshuizen, 2006), and see the project as something requiring more work with little evidence of success (Hawley & Sykes, in Hawley, 2007). Reeves (2002a) suggested that when teachers are asked to take on new initiatives without adequate support, problems arise. In describing The *Law of Initiative Fatigue,* Reeves explained that when organizations add new initiatives to existing ones, and resources such as time, money, and emotional energy remain the same, "organizational implosion is inevitable" (p. 107).

Schools are institutions, and change may occur slowly over many years (Powell, & DiMaggio, 1991). When a new program or a new idea such as professional learning communities are adopted, there is no guarantee that they will be sustainable. New initiatives may take years to establish and as many as 2-5 years to institutionalize to the point at which it becomes part of the school's culture (Marsh, 2009). The only real

change, according to Guskey (2002), only occurs after teachers change their practices and see positive changes in student achievement, which means that progress may be slow.

After establishing professional learning communities, many schools may also experience an implementation dip once initial excitement and motivation wane. Fullan (2001) explained that during this time both performance and confidence could decrease as psychological fear of change sets in, and as teachers were required to adapt to innovation and apply new skills and understandings.

This transition from seeing professional development training regarding programs to implement and stop and see things as they are, require some *re-culturing* (DuFour, 2009; Fullan, 2001).

Negative attitudes are a threat to the sustainability of professional learning communities, and schools must give serious consideration to teachers who are already busy, if not, overwhelmed. Teachers have limited time (Wilson, 2011) and according to Lloyd (2013), time is teachers' scarcest resource. Common planning time and teachers' workloads, therefore, must be given careful consideration (Lloyd, 2013). Establishing and maintaining PLCs in a school requires an enormous amount of energy and hard work. It is "labor-intensive work" and "takes time and indeed never ends" (Fullan, 2001, p. 177). Schools will need to look for ways to use time efficiently which include reducing the number of study halls and transitions to reduce losing valuable instruction time (Nierengarten, 2008). According to Reeves (2006), even the best curriculum and the best pedagogy will have little impact on achievement unless there is adequate time to plan and time to teach.

Teachers quite clearly, have a role to play in establishing and sustaining professional learning communities. Research has shown that this kind of professional development can help teachers feel empowered to support ELLs (Sandoval, 2011) and can have a significant impact on achievement (Reeves, 2010). Studies also indicate that mainstream teachers involved in PLCs can fulfill a valuable role in influencing the classroom practices of their peers and also school leaders (Reeves, 2006). They also

need to work collaboratively and efficiently with ESL/ELL teachers (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004) on an equal footing to develop lessons and units of study to support students with linguistic and cultural differences (Reeves, 2010). Both can offer unique insights into how ELLs can receive the support they need to become engaged with the mainstream curriculum. They may have resources and strategies to share ideas, and their roles within the school mean they can offer different insights to include ELLs successfully.

Others also have vital roles to play in helping these students become successful (Stoll & Louis, 2007). Parents and support staff can also be enlisted to support the success of professional learning communities. At Stevenson High School, in the United States, parents are encouraged to help the school reach its goal of raising student achievement (DuFour et al., 2008) and receive a list of parent commitments developed by the school that specifies what parents should do to support their son or daughter's learning.

The successful implementation of PLCs should also rely on school leaders (Lee, Buxton, Lewis & LeRoy, 2006). Administrators and curriculum leaders have a vital role to play in establishing (King, 2011) and sustaining professional learning communities (King, 2011; Wilson, 2011). The success of this type of professional development depends on what administrators do (Hord, 1997a). It requires, among other things, that the school's leadership work collaboratively with teachers to develop defined goals and a shared mission, focus on student learning (Hord, 1997a) and seek buy-in from stakeholders to increase PLC effectiveness (Stoll & Louis, 2007). According to Hord (1997b), leaders must understand that PLCs are data-informed from multiple sources, are standards-driven, and are specifically focused on instruction.

School leaders also serve as models for teachers (Teague & Anfara, 2012), and their involvement can have a profound effect on this type of professional development (Marzano et. al. 2005). According to Tschannen-Moran (2004), this participation in professional learning communities can develop caring, trusting relationships in which teachers do not feel threatened but see school leaders as equal partners. This change in

relationship calls for distributed leadership (Du Four et al., 2008; Southworth & Doughty, 2006; Wilhelm, 2010). King (2011) argues that school leaders must "develop an enabling or transformational style which empowers teachers through distributed leadership, based on trust, to participate in PD, collaboration and PLCs as a means for school improvement" (p. 153). In a climate of shared leadership, a hierarchy does not exist, rather teachers within a school, lead initiatives in a reciprocal partnership (Lambert, 2000).

Without a sharing and supportive environment focused on the *right goals* and doing the *right work*, it is unlikely that a PLC will have an impact on student achievement (Du Four et al., 2010). It requires school leaders to ensure that systems are in place to clarify the goals for teacher teams, monitor their progress in improving student learning, and provide help when required (Du Four, 2010). Mere putting teachers together to discuss instructional practices and achievement is not enough (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011). School leaders must create structures to focus on improvement (Reeves, 2002a) and be prepared to follow through (Reeves, 2004).

School leaders should also see themselves as learning leaders (Du Four et al., 2006), and professional learning communities as a viable and robust means of professional development (Linder et al., 2012). They should also see themselves as capable of having a significant impact on academic achievement. One meta-analysis study of research conducted in the U.S. between 1970 and 2005 found that school leadership could profoundly affect students' achievement (Marzano et al., 2005).

School administration must continue to work with teachers to ensure that implementation is successful and that their school does not lose the momentum. Continuous school improvement, argue Zmuda, Kuklis & Kline (2004) "is reliant not on a fixed concept of success but on a constant striving to be better" (p. 28). Similarly, in keeping with the Japanese philosophy of *kaizen,* everyone in an organization is part of the improvement process and understands that improvement never ends (Greenberg & Baron, 1995). With the advent of modern technology, a great deal of the exchange

within PLCs does not have to be constrained by time or space. Professional learning communities can now meet online (Schuck, Aubusson, Kearney & Burden, 2012).

Emerging technology enables team members to discuss data and share ideas asynchronously over great distances and free of time constraints (McConnell, Parker, Eberhardt, Koehler, & Lundeberg, 2012). According to DuFour et al. (2010), "Electronic teams use technology to create powerful partnerships with colleagues across the district, the state, or the world" (p. 124). While modern digital tools and this type of interaction compliment more traditional types of professional learning communities, it also means more than teachers simply sharing online. It also requires "extensive face-to-face social interaction" that encourages participants to openly discuss data and their ideas for intervention (Beach, 2012, p. 261).

One way to use digital tools to create online communities successfully, while still providing teachers with opportunities to meet face-to-face, is to adopt a hybrid model (Hutchison & Colwell, 2012). Teachers using this method of interaction might engage in online peer discussions regarding teaching practice or content (Masters, De Kramer, O'Dwyer, Dash & Russell, 2010) to share ideas and feedback via web tools such as discussion forums, social networking, video conferencing or Twitter. These teachers can then discuss their teaching practice in small teams face-to-face with peers. Many online professional development courses for teachers offered by *WIDE World,* developed by Harvard Graduate School, use such a model, including one course to differentiate instruction in mainstream classrooms for English language learners. Also, ample support for such a hybrid method of professional development appears in the research literature (Gerard, Varma, Corliss & Linn, 2011; Mackey & Evans, 2011; Masters, et al., 2010).

2.3.5 Lesson Study Approach to Intervention

Lesson Study is one approach to tapping into the benefits of professional learning communities. This highly successful practice called *jugyou kenkyuu* in Japanese is a highly-developed form of professional development in Japan (Marzano, 2003). Lesson study is part of a comprehensive set of professional development

activities called *kounaikenshuu* but according to Tanaka (2007) plays a "strong part of an in-school training system" (p. 150). Teachers participating in lesson study process see it as an important and integral part of their professional development and professional life, as well as an experience to be enjoyed (Isoda, 2006).

In Japan, almost all elementary teachers and about half of all junior high and high school teachers regularly participate in lesson study (Stigler & Hiebert, 2009). They meet for 2-5 hours per week in small groups they organize themselves around common interests and issues affecting instruction.

Lesson studies occur in a cycle that repeats several times each year (Dougherty, 2012). During the initial stage of pre-planning, teams can examine student work (National Center for Literacy Education, 2012) and identify any areas in need of improvement while considering each student's level of development and long term academic goals (Fernández, 2005); following this, the lesson study group collaboratively co-plan a lesson or revise an existing one to meet the learning priorities they identified.

Fine-tuning and revision of the lesson continues until the group agrees that it has adequately developed and included a lesson rationale, goals and anticipated responses from students (Fernández, 2005; Watanabe, 2002). One teacher then teaches the lesson to a class of students while others from the lesson study team observe and record data (Dougherty, 2012). A follow-up meeting of the group facilitates a discussion of the lesson, its strengths, and weaknesses, and a reflection on the content and lesson design (Marzano, 2003). Based on this lesson revision the lesson is then retaught by another colleague teaching the same grade level to another group of students, while the original teacher observes. This process of goal setting, planning, teaching, and reflection repeats throughout the year. Interestingly, while professional Japanese literature on lesson study explains the process and steps required, the reasons why this type of highly successful professional development has not been adopted extensively outside Japan are unclear (Hart, Alston, & Murata, 2011). Conversely, while professional learning communities widely researched in Anglo-American settings have very similar features to lesson studies, little research and literature on PLCs exists in Asian countries (Hairon &

Dimmock, 2012). This suggests there is an opportunity for researchers to more deliberately share these two approaches to professional development with teachers in their respective countries.

Some interest in lesson study in the United States and other Western countries grew following fears that students were falling behind in mathematics and science. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and others spurred debate in the U.S. that the students from other countries, mainly Asian countries such as Korea and Japan were outperforming American students in subjects that are key to the development of science and technology. The Third International Mathematics & Science Study (TIMMS, 1999) and later the Trends International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS, 2003) suggested that U.S. students and students from many other countries were in fact not just well behind in math and science performance, but the achievement gap had grown (Marzano, 2003). Concern led to considerable research and interest in the United States regarding how teachers in a country such as Japan teach these core subjects. As a result, the use of lesson study has grown in recent years and in addition to the United States is successfully used throughout South Eastern Asia and in countries such as Egypt, Ghana, Honduras and South Africa (Isoda, Stephens, & Ohara, 2007).

Lesson study is all about bringing teachers' experience, training, and expertise to the task of lesson planning to have an impact on student learning. While lesson study can support professional development, and facilitate the development of collaborative teams, it is neither teacher training nor lesson development (Honigsfeld & Cohan, 2008). Similar to professional learning communities, it is a process to make teachers life-long learners. Lesson study improves teacher knowledge, helps to foster a commitment to shared goals and develops learning resources (Lewis et al., 2006). Also, Dougherty (2012), suggested: "a lesson study involves teachers in a number of decisions and collective thinking about what to teach and how best to address improvement" (p. 85).

Lesson study can also provide teachers with an opportunity to try specific teaching strategies that will improve lessons and units, and test new ideas (Marzano,

2003). According to Marzano (2003) "The best application task they might engage in is to actually try out particular instructional strategies" (p. 66). Effective teachers, according to Marzano et. al., (2005), have an extensive repertoire of strategies they use to meet student needs.

2.4 Implications

The findings of this study are intended to lay the foundation for discourse and professional development to encourage effective instructional practices for ELLs in mainstream classrooms at the setting of this study and may encourage discussion at other similar international schools. Without this type of intervention, feelings of frustration and helplessness may continue to hamper the success of both teachers and students (Calderón, & Minaya-Rowe, 2011; Jiménez, David, Pacheco, Risko, Pray, Fagan & Gonzales, 2015).

One implication for the school emerging from this study is to use the data and related findings as a catalyst for discussion and the implementation of professional learning communities. Open-ended discussion regarding teacher perspectives and effective methods of intervention to assist ELLs in mainstream classrooms could be a possible outcome that can help explain, negotiate, and align curricula and the teaching practices they use to meet ELL needs. Professional learning communities allow individuals to engage in genuine dialogue and facilitate authentic learning together (Caine & Caine, 2010). They also encourage teachers to become mutually accountable to attain common goals (Du Four, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). Meta-analyses suggest that professional learning communities are also a powerful tool for continuous school improvement and strong academic growth (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2003).

2.5 Summary

As shown by the vast array of theories and research studies related to how teachers approach the task of teaching ELLs in their mainstream classrooms, the reasons why mainstream teachers might choose not to modify instruction for ELLs vary widely. Some teachers may feel that they lack the training or the confidence to teach ELLs

within their regular classes. Others may be resistant to collaboration with ESL teachers (George, 2009) despite the fact that this can benefit both teachers and students (Alonso, 2013). Also, they may feel that the inclusion of ELLs is detrimental to the learning of the native speakers (Harper & Jong, 2004). Alternatively, they may hold the belief that English language learners should not join content classes until they have the language proficiency to adequately function in mainstream classes (Khong & Saito, 2014).

Position theory suggests that some teachers may reject the task of teaching English to ELLs in their mainstream classrooms. Roegge & Ferej (1995) warned that teacher *turfism* is often firmly entrenched to the point where they may find it difficult to transcend boundaries, work collaboratively, and relinquish areas of responsibility when they are asked to integrate students with special needs.

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) also helped explain intrinsic motivation in contrast to the external pressure some mainstream teachers may feel to differentiate their instruction. SDT suggests that when schools meet basic psychological needs, intrinsic motivation increases leading to external forms of motivation becoming internalized. The work environment, suggest some self-determination researchers, can help to foster positive attitudes, job satisfaction, a commitment to an organization's goals and lead to greater intrinsic motivation and productivity (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Some research and theoretical frameworks found in the literature review imply that ELL students may seem to have a learning deficit and are limited in what they might be able to achieve at school. Other streams of thought, such as academic optimism (Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986), however, suggest that how a teacher approaches the challenge of teaching ELLs makes a significant difference to their academic achievement. With such uncertainty, it is hard to determine without the benefit of detailed research, how schools can achieve intervention and differentiation to support ELLs.

Chapter 3 describes a sample population of mainstream teachers (n = 37) at one international school in Tokyo, Japan used as the setting for this study. It also outlines the quantitative and qualitative data collection methods employed, including a teacher

survey, one-to-one interviews (*n* = 6) and a focus group meeting of department heads (*n* = 9), to investigate the challenges these teachers face in teaching ELLs. Also, an analysis of this data explains these teachers' perspectives on their role and expectations regarding ELLs and the basis of these beliefs. Chapters 9 and 10 refer findings back to theories identified in the literature review and describe how these principles can inform the study's recommendations to address the academic needs of ELLs in the mainstream, content-area classes in this setting.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research conducted as part of the literature review for this study suggested several avenues of inquiry and a potential direction for further study in the second, qualitative phase. The study of existing research also indicated some ways that the school might raise mainstream teacher expectations and consequentially, student achievement. These interventions include the use of Response to Intervention (RTI), professional learning communities (PLCs), lesson study, and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The literature review also guided the development of a response to the central research question of this study - *How and why do mainstream teachers perceive their role regarding English language learners the way they do, and what impact does this have on their expectations and instruction for these students?* This question is introduced in the first phase of this mixed-methods study when teachers completed a survey about their expectations, perceptions and teaching practices regarding ELLs.

The *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* instrument (Reeves, 2002) described in this chapter provided a general understanding of the research problem and the reality in the school. It also enabled the identification of outliers who could supply more detail to explain their teaching situation. Following data collection from interviews with mainstream teachers, a focus group meeting was used as a type of expert panel to assess the study's data collection and findings and to solicit recommendations.

Chapter 3 explains the rationale for the methodology of this study, the setting, participants, procedures in place to protect the teachers surveyed and interviewed, the key research questions employed, and the integration of the quantitative and qualitative phases.

3.1.1 Research Design and Rationale

The research for this project followed a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design following my intention to discover teachers' expectations and perceptions and investigate them in-depth during interviews in the second phase of the study. According

to Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle (2006), sequential explanatory research design is a popular methodology among mixed-methods researchers and relies on quantitative and qualitative data, collected over two phases.

The procedure for data collection used in this study aligned with several rationales given by researchers (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989) for using a mixed-methods approach. These included the ability to use both sets of data for triangulation and to confirm results. The second phase was also used to clarify and elaborate on quantitative data, develop the study using quantitative results, expand both breadth and depth of research findings (Greene, et al., 1989), and explain and interpret quantitative data (Creswell, 2014).

Typically, more weight is given to the quantitative data results of a sequential explanatory study (Creswell, 2008), although exceptions can occur (Bazeley, 2004). In his research study, the qualitative methodology became the dominant mode of data collection. In the first phase, quantitative data were used to gain an understanding of perceptions, expectations, and practices at each school level and to identify outliers and then design qualitative data collection protocols (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

Both phases of this study were used to gain an in-depth understanding of some mainstream teachers' perspectives regarding academic expectations of English language learners and their role in teaching ELLs in their classrooms. Rather than purely collecting qualitative data from interviews, a focus group meeting, or from survey results, the mixed-methods study intentionally includes different types of evidence and "the combination of strengths of each to answer research questions" (Klassen, Creswell, Plano Clark, Smith, & Meissner, 2012, p. 378). It also provided qualitative data that could be used to test further research questions, test related theories from the literature review, explore and understand the experience of individuals, and study the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2009).

Quantitative data provide a general picture to understand the research problem. However, more analysis through qualitative investigation in a mixed-methods sequential explanatory study is needed to gain a deeper understanding (Morrison et al., 2008). This

method is also useful since it can efficiently explore teachers' perspectives and positioning (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003; Harré & van Langenhove, 1998; Yoon, 2008; Zelle, 2009). Also, the use of a combined quantitative and qualitative methodology allows the nature of the phenomenon to be studied as it emerges from data collected while providing the ability to develop a deeper understanding of why this phenomenon occurs (Creswell, 2008).

Survey results in the quantitative phase of this study can suggest teacher perspectives and the teaching practices they employ, yet they may only provide a limited view of the reality for mainstream teachers teaching ELLs. Interviews of outliers, however, can in an atmosphere of trust and respect allow participants an opportunity to explain their perspective and how this informs and guides their teaching practices. The issues, challenges, and dilemmas they face and how and why they choose to respond are a key focus of this study as it evolves, and an understanding emerges.

3.1.2 Research Integration

According to Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick (2006), specific guidelines for the integration of quantitative and qualitative data do not exist for a sequential explanatory method approach. Also, this integration or merging of these data can occur during the two phases of data collection, at the end of qualitative data collection or not at all (Creswell, 2014). Here it took place at the end of quantitative analysis after some understanding of teachers' perspectives and classroom practices within the school was developed. Data from the survey and statistical analysis were used as a guide to inform and revise interview questions to investigate data gathered from previous interviews (Appendix E) and to create specific and probing questions for teacher interviews and a focus group meeting that asked teachers how they deal with ELLs in their mainstream classes.

Interview questions were also designed to ask teachers to reflect on their experience to anchor their responses to individual cases and incidents (Rueda & Garcia, 1996). These questions asked teachers to go beyond the methods of differentiated

instruction suggested in the survey and explain their means of modifying instruction and assessment.

The primary focus of this sequential explanatory methods study was a qualitative analysis of outlier cases who could explain their perception of the ELLs they teach and why they adopt the teaching practices they do. A visual model developed according to guidelines by Ivankova, et. al., (2006) for this mixed-methods sequential explanatory study is shown in Figure 6 to explain the stages of the research process and the outcomes from each phase.

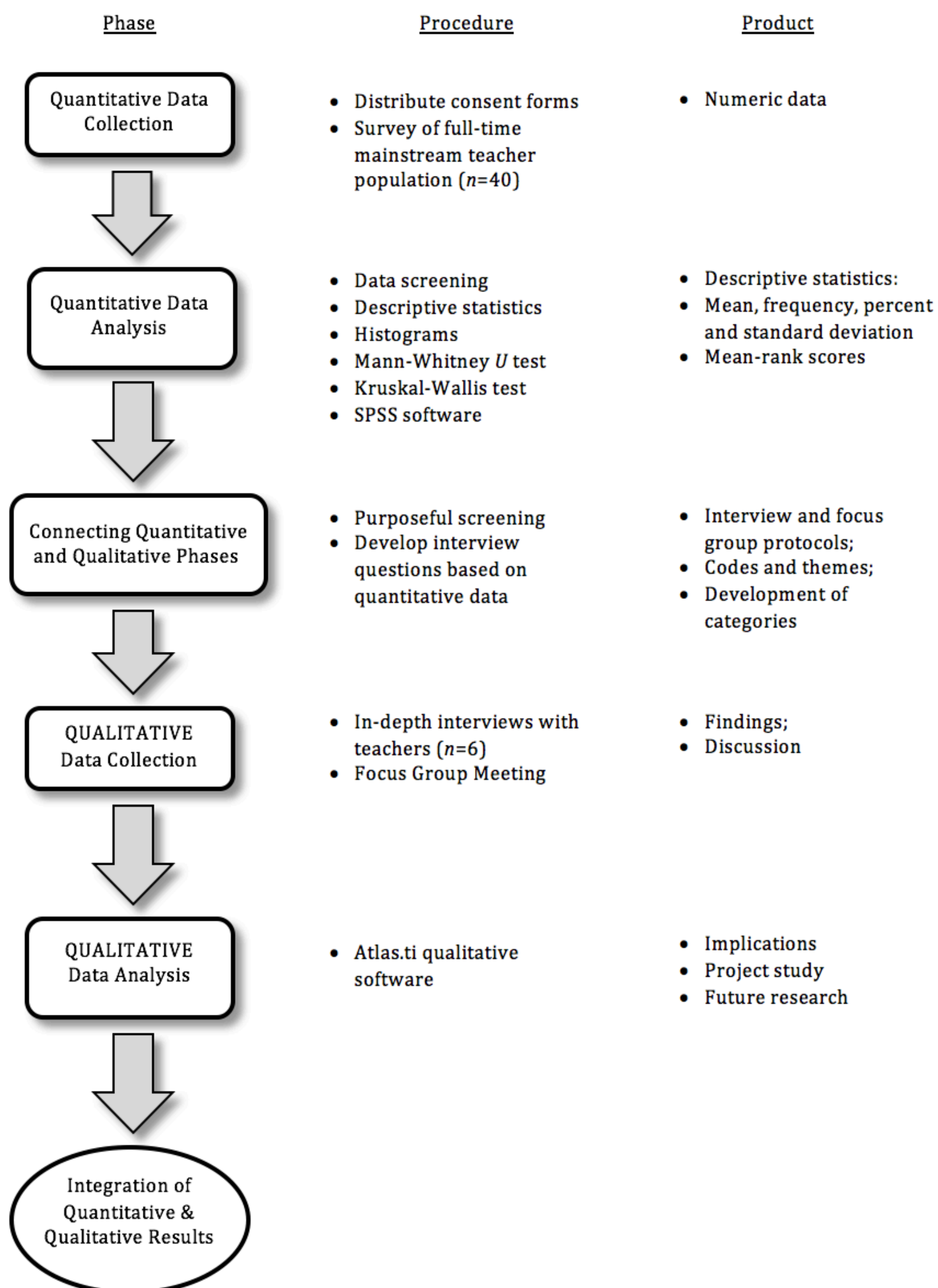

Figure 6. Visual model of mixed-methods sequential explanatory design procedures.

3.2 Setting and Sample

3.2.1 Research Setting

The setting for this research project is an international school, located in Tokyo, Japan. Approximately 850 students (K-12), mainly from expatriate families, from over 50 different countries attend the school. Students on average tend to remain at the school from two to five years. Close to 75% of the student population are from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and approximately two to three students in each classroom have limited English proficiency. Currently, there are three independent ESL classes for elementary school LEP students. During the 2015–2016 academic year the school added a full-time ESL teacher to the high school to run a push-in/ pull-out program in mainstream classes. Academic counselors work at each of the three school levels to provide additional learning support for ELLs and other students experiencing academic problems.

Elementary and middle school ELLs requiring less language support remain in mainstream classrooms and join a writing and language support class while their English-fluent peers attend Japanese language lessons. Students from pull-out ESL classes are integrated into subjects such as mathematics and science early in the school year and join more classes with mainstream students over time. The school offers a full International Baccalaureate Program (IB) in high school to prepare students for a college education, which in most cases will occur in the United States.

3.2.2 Data Sources and Collection

I conducted research and collected data over a 12-month period at the school from March 2014 until March 2015. In the first phase of this study, mainstream teachers from each of the three levels of the school (n = 40) were invited at their respective faculty meetings to participate in the study by completing the survey instrument titled *ESL in the Mainstream Survey*. During these faculty meetings, I explained the aim of this mixed-methods study. An oral explanation and a letter attached to the survey outlined the purpose and importance of the study, and the protocols in place to protect

the identity of teachers and the data they provide, and its relevance to the school. This information included a statement of the safeguards in place to protect and de-identify participants for the survey, ethical protection, and the time commitment for teachers who wished to complete the survey. Each mainstream teacher received a large envelope containing a confidentiality and protection agreement and a copy of the survey. Teacher-participants enclosed their survey in the envelope provided and posted within one week of the faculty meeting in a mailbox in the main office. In return for their participation and to compensate them for their time, survey participants received a gift card of a small monetary value upon submission of their survey.

Items in the survey instrument asked teachers how they viewed the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classes; what, if any, differentiated practices they used to meet the learning needs of these students; how they viewed the process of language acquisition, and what impact professional development had on their expectations of ELLs, and how they see their role in teaching them. Survey items were grouped accordingly and listed in sections titled: *inclusion, language acquisition, differentiation,* and *professional development.* Participants were asked to complete an 18-item Likert-style survey about their experience with ELL students in their mainstream classes. They responded to survey items using a 5-point Likert-type scale - 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree), to create scores for statistical analysis.

Information gathered through surveys was then explored in greater detail through qualitative interviews in phase two of the study. In the second phase of the study, I interviewed teachers who indicated a willingness to participate in a one-to-one interview and gave strong feedback regarding their perceptions of ELL inclusion in mainstream classes.

After recording the comments made in the survey in the quantitative phase of the study, I reverse coded several survey items so that responses regarding inclusion and differentiation could be totaled. Survey items 1-16 (Appendix A) were received given a score on a scale of 1-5. A 1 indicated the subject (or 'respondent') strongly disagreed, while 2 indicated disagreement, 3 was neutral, 4 indicated agreement and 5 indicates

strong agreement. All subsets were totaled and divided by 5 to produce a mean score. Scores close to 5 indicated that the participant overall strongly agreed with the inclusion of ELLs and a score close to 1 that they strongly disagreed overall. The highest and lowest mean scores from the elementary, middle school and high school were used to identify potential teachers to participate in a one-to-one interview after quantitative analysis of the survey.

Since teachers indicated their school level on the survey taken during the quantitative phase of this study, I could determine the number of teachers holding conflicting views at each school level – elementary, middle school and high school. In total, six interview participants came from a pool of teacher volunteers (n = 14) with strong positive or negative responses to questions in the survey regarding the inclusion of ELLs in regular mainstream classes with proficient speakers of English. I selected two interview participants with contrasting views of inclusion from each school level.

After all quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed, and research findings developed, department heads from core subjects from within the school were invited via an email message to attend a focus group meeting. The invited department heads included teachers from all core subject departments in the elementary, middle school and high school. The rationale for their selection was that they would have an acute understanding of issues surrounding ELL achievement and the instructional practices teachers in their department use to meet the needs of English language learners. The focus group meeting occurred in a classroom after school in March 2015. Approximately half of the department heads in the school (n = 9) participated in a focus group in which I shared research results and findings. These participants had an opportunity to respond to the research findings and suggest recommendations for the school.

3.3 Research Questions

In this mixed-methods sequential explanatory study, research questions were explored using a mixture of quantitative or qualitative methods. This approach was adopted to verify data and minimize the risk of misinterpretation (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2008; Lodico, et al., 2006), create a vibrant picture of perspectives and dispositions (Morrison et al., 2008) and reduce the potential for subjectivity (Creswell, 2008).

Each quantitative research question developed for this study related to specific sections of the survey instrument (Appendix A). Since all three school levels had different curricula and different mainstream teachers, I decided to explore and report the data for each group separately rather than as a cohort. Following recommendations from Creswell (2014), I chose to use research questions for quantitative data collection. I then wrote a second set of questions for the qualitative phase following an analysis of the survey data (Appendix E). Both quantitative and qualitative phases of this study were then used to address a hybrid or integrated question (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007) central to the aim of this mixed-methods research - *How and why do mainstream teachers differentiate their expectations and instruction to accommodate the learning needs of English language learners?* Data were grouped into the following three key themes to address these questions: *teacher's perceptions of inclusion*, *classroom practices,* and *ESL/language acquisition training.* Sub-questions developed from these themes and the theoretical construct used to guide this study were as follows:

1. Is there a difference between elementary, middle school, and high school teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners in regular mainstream classes? (Position Theory and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy).
2. What is the difference between school levels in the classroom practices that mainstream teachers use to accommodate the learning needs of English language learners (ELLs)? (Second Language Acquisition Theory and Differentiation).
3. Is there a positive relationship between mainstream teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners (ELLs) and the classroom practices they employ to meet the needs of these students? (Self-Efficacy Theory, Self-Determination Theory and Academic Optimism).
4. Is there a connection between the ESL/language acquisition training that mainstream teachers have received and how they view their role in teaching

English language learners? If there is a connection, what implications does this have for the professional development of mainstream teachers? (Culturally Pedagogy, Position Theory, Second Language Acquisition Theory, and Differentiation).

3.4 Research Participants

Mainstream teachers in the school come from approximately 10 different countries with close to 40% of teachers from the United States, 5% from the United Kingdom, and 10% each from Canada, South East Asia and Australia. Most of these teachers were recruited at job fairs in America, England and Asia and approximately half had advanced degrees in education. In addition to coming from a diverse range of backgrounds, these teachers entered the school with vastly different teaching experiences, with some joining the school after many years teaching in similar international settings and others, with only experience in their home country.

Although most teachers at each of the three school levels have opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues at a similar grade level, different schedules limit the opportunity for vertical department meetings during the school day. Consequently, interaction between mainstream teachers at different grade levels occurs only during monthly faculty meetings and other times when the department can arrange to meet after school.

3.5 Participants' Rights and Ethical Protection

All interview participants and focus group members were given a consent form to sign. Since the survey was anonymous, I took completion and return of a survey as tacit approval by a participant of their agreement to join the study. Potential survey participants were given an information sheet before the commencement of data collection (Appendix G). This document and the consent forms contained information specific to the purpose of the study, its procedure, benefits, risks, voluntary participation, costs, compensation, confidentiality, and consent to participate. I also provided my contact information and contact details for a University of Southern Queensland faculty

member in case participants had questions or concerns regarding the study or their involvement in it.

Mainstream teachers received surveys and an envelope during each of three school-level faculty meetings. Consent forms for interviews and the focus group were given directly to participants to sign before the commencement of one-to-one interviews. Teachers anonymously returned completed surveys in sealed envelopes provided to a collection box located in the main office of the school. Participants retained a copy of an information sheet I provided for their records.

The original *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* used by Reeves (2002c) was revised to prevent the risk of identification. This revision, I believe, encouraged a greater degree of anonymity and helped develop a greater sense of trust with participants and encourage them to respond freely to questions asked (Lodico, Spalding & Voegtle, 2006). Since only a few teachers were involved in the qualitative part of this study (n = 6), care was made to invite potential participants privately. Potential participants were not solicited openly but asked in the survey consent form to indicate their willingness to participate in the qualitative phase of this study. I sent an invitation to the email address provided by volunteer participants. All interview participants selected received a separate consent form and a copy for their records. This document outlined the procedures established to protect and secure data and the identity of participants. Interviews took place in each teacher's classroom or at a location comfortable and convenient for them.

I removed all participant names after data collection. To protect the identity of interview participants, I selected random names using an online name generator to create pseudonyms for transcripts. These names included: *Elizabeth* and *Kathleen* in the high school, *Andrew* and *Maria* in the middle school, and *Paul* and *David* in the elementary. Audio recordings were password protected on an external hard drive and placed together with survey responses and transcripts from interviews and the focus group meeting in a safe at my residence. As promised participants, I will keep all documents and records for five years, as required by the university, and erase audio files and destroy all hard copies of the data after this period.

3.6 Role of Researcher

I am a mainstream teacher and have taught for over twenty years at several different grade levels in the school used for this study. My previous teaching experience includes classroom experience at grades 2, 5-9, and 12, four and a half years teaching ELL adults, middle school, and high school students, and two years spent as a teacher for severely and profoundly intellectually disabled adults at a school in Melbourne, Australia. Presently, I am a sixth-grade teacher of science in the middle school. Within the past 15-20 years, I was the chair of numerous departments, including the elementary/middle school math department (twice), middle school/high school science departments, and elementary social studies department. Although I have this background in various core subject areas, I do not believe that my previous department chair positions would cause teachers in this study to feel pressured to participate.

Like teacher participants in the study, I am responsible for teaching several ELLs of varying degrees of English proficiency in my mainstream classes. I have received some pre-service training for teaching ELLs and additional training as a tutor of the *ESL in the Mainstream* and the *Teaching ESL Students in the Mainstream* courses. While this might suggest a potential bias, I acknowledge that differentiating classroom practices are time-consuming and difficult to implement. Throughout the study, I relied on member-checks, detailed notes, and audit checks to minimalize any potential bias.

3.7 Summary

This chapter began with a description of the setting and population for this study and described key research questions, the methodology used in this research project, the role of the researcher and the ethical protections put in place to protect teacher participants. Chapter 3 also described the mixed-methods sequential explanatory approach used to gain insight into teacher's perspectives regarding ELLs in mainstream classes. Also, the section outlined research questions I plan to address in the quantitative phase of the study and the central research question for this mixed-methods

study - *How and why do mainstream teachers differentiate their expectations and instruction to accommodate the learning needs of English language learners?*

In the chapter, I described the steps and procedures put in place to protect the identity of participants and protect the data they provided. These include the use of pseudonyms for interview participants.

As described in the chapter, a quantitative survey of teacher volunteers (n = 37) provides a general picture of the research problem and the strategies used in content area classes to support ELLs. Then, in the second phase of the study, qualitative data are collected from interviews with individual participants (n = 6) and a focus group of teacher representatives from the elementary, middle and high schools. Survey data are used to identify two teacher participants from each school level – one strongly supportive of ELL inclusion in the mainstream and the other strongly against their inclusion in the mainstream.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, explains the survey instrument, the process of data collection and the analysis of data gathered from surveys, teacher interviews, and a focus group meeting of teacher representatives.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Data Collection

4.1 Introduction

Information discovered during the literature review process highlighted the impact of teacher perceptions and expectations on student achievement. It also suggested that mainstream teachers' expectations and how these teachers perceive their role in teaching ELLs are often visible in their instructional practices. While classroom observations and an analysis of texts, unit plans, and student work might have illuminated how mainstream teachers respond to these students in class, this was not a viable methodology given the scope of this study. In its place, the *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* (Reeves, 2002) was used to build an understanding of teachers' perceptions and practices. Data gathered from the survey were then analyzed using statistical measures to determine teacher expectations, perceptions of inclusion and differentiation, and assessment and instruction practices.

Chapter 4 describes the data collection process, the survey instrument, and its validity and reliability. Later, Chapter 5 explains the analysis of the study's quantitative survey data and describes how these results altered the direction of research for phase two of the study.

4.1.1 Survey Instrument

Janelle Reeves (2002c) developed the survey instrument titled *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* for the purpose of examining the perspectives of secondary mainstream teachers (n = 279) regarding ELL students. Permission from the author was granted to use the survey and modify it to address the research questions of this study. All demographic questions included in the original survey by Reeves (2002c) were deleted to make the survey anonymous and limit the information that could be linked back to identify individual teachers. This demographic information included data related to specific grade levels, years of service, and gender.

Some survey items in the original survey (Reeves, 2002c) were limited to three choices; these options included *seldom or never, some of the time,* and *most of the time*. All items for the modified survey were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale to enable

participants a wider and more diverse range of responses. This range of choices also served a secondary purpose since quantitative data were used to identify outliers with strong views for or against the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classes to interview later in the study.

Short responses provided by the original survey were also changed to form one open-ended item inviting participants to add any additional comments they had about ELLs in mainstream classes. I maintained the term *ESL* was rather than *ELL* since teachers in the school commonly use the former.

4.1.2 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted by Reeves (2006) to assess the readability and content validity of items contained in the *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* instrument (Appendix A). Participants of this pilot study consisted of 30 middle school teachers who examined survey items in the fall of 2001 and responded to the following questions: (a) "Which, if any, questions on the survey were unclear to you?" (b) "Which, if any, items did you find difficult to answer?" and "While completing the survey, did you feel that this scale adequately allowed you to express your opinion? If not, when not?" (p. 133). Participants in Reeves' (2006) pilot study reported that the survey had good readability and high content validity.

Before distribution of the survey used for this study, I field-tested the modified survey instrument in March 2014 using guiding questions from Reeves (2006) with a small group of local international school teachers (n = 4) from outside of the sample population of this study. This field test occurred in a school classroom where all participating teachers were asked to sign the consent form used for interview participants, detailing their rights and responsibilities. After this, the field group completed the survey and discussed its wording, rationale, and format. Field test participants completed the survey within 5.22 to 7.30 minutes.

Revisions to the survey instrument were made based on participants' requests to make the survey clear and unambiguous and a *neutral* column was added. After making these changes, participants suggested that the survey instrument had strong reliability

and validity. At the end of the field test, participants were invited to provide feedback on sample interview questions designed for the study. All participants expressed satisfaction with the proposed questions and none made suggestions for revision.

4.1.3 Quantitative Data Collection

After approval by the university's Internal Review Board (IRB) and the school headmaster to conduct this study was granted, I introduced the study during three separate school level meetings and explained the purpose of the study. Hard copies of the *ESL Students in the Mainstream Survey* (Appendix A), a participant information sheet, and envelopes were handed out to mainstream teachers at this time. The information sheet explained the aim of the study, the option to participate, and the precautions implemented to protect the identity of participants and the data shared. Instructions included in this document asked teachers to enclose and seal the survey in the envelope provided and submit the completed survey to a collection box placed in the main office of the school. After the conclusion of the faculty meetings, I remained to respond to questions from potential participants. Reminder messages to complete and submit the survey were sent 48 hours after surveys were distributed and again one week later to encourage a high degree of participation.

In total 38 surveys were returned, however, one came from a teacher not teaching a core class in the mainstream and was removed from the quantitative data set. Some comments in the survey, however, regarding teaching strategies and practices seemed relevant and were included (see Appendix D). The remaining 37 survey responses from mainstream, content area teachers represented a return rate of 92.5%. This return rate met the recommended sample size of 37 participants (Nulty, 2008), assuming a confidence interval of 95% ($p < .05$) with a 5% margin of error to determine statistical significance.

Quantitative data gained from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics and SPSS Statistical Software (version 22.0). Subscales in the survey were broken down into categories identified and created by Dekutoski (2011) to analyze quantitative data, and one further group was added to determine how teachers viewed

their role. As the revised *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* (Appendix A) only contained a few items related to language acquisition, these were moved to the inclusion and differentiation categories to create three groups which included: *inclusion, differentiation,* and *professional development.*

Since some survey items were worded such that a theoretical construct was assigned a high value and other questions a low value, reverse coding was employed to compensate for these conflicting values (DeCoster, 2004) and establish internal consistency (Lodico, et al., 2006). After coding values, the sum of each of the subscales was calculated and divided by the number of statements grouped with it. These values were used for comparisons across subgroups and provided data for descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney *U*, and Kruskal-Wallis tests to address each of the study's research questions.

After reverse coding, the average total score for items in the inclusion and differentiation sections of the survey was calculated for the surveys of teachers who volunteered to participate in a follow-up interview. Email addresses provided on the survey form helped to identify potential interview participants ($n = 14$) and were used to indicate their consent to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. In elementary school, the outlier pairs had mean scores of 2.8 and 4.6, in middle school the outlier scores were 2.5 and 4.1 and high school – 2.4 and 3.8 respectively. These participants were contacted one week after quantitative analysis to schedule a one-on-one interview.

4.1.4 Data Reliability

Reeves (2006) did not report on the reliability of the survey instrument in her dissertation or journal article. To calculate the internal consistency of the questionnaire, I used a two-tailed Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test with alpha levels set to .05 to calculate Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each of the subscales contained in the survey. I removed several items due to poor reliability. The inclusion subscale consisted of 3 items (1-3) and had a Cronbach's alpha score of .796 ($\alpha = .796$). The differentiation subscale consisted of 5 items (7, 9-11, 15) with a Cronbach's alpha of .717 ($\alpha = .717$) and the training and professional development subscale a total of 2 items (17 and 18)

resulted in a total Cronbach's alpha of .895 ($\alpha = .895$). Since an alpha score for two-item scales is of little use in measuring reliability and internal consistency (Eisinga, Te Grotenhuis, & Pelzer, 2013), I used a Spearman correlation coefficient test to examine items 17 and 18. These items included: *I have adequate training to work with ESL students* (item 17), and *I have adequate training and knowledge about second language acquisition to work with ESL students* (item 18). A split-half reliability test of these two items had a strong correlation, with a Spearman-Brown Correlation score of .895 (SB = .895).

The overall reliability of the survey after removal of items with negative correlations had a Cronbach's alpha score of .824 ($\alpha = .824$), which is considered a reasonable level of reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). Table 1 below illustrates the results of reliability tests on each of the three subscales within the survey.

Table 1

Reliability statistics for survey items (subscales).

	Reliability Tests			
	Mean	*SD*	*Cronbach's Alpha*	*Spearman-Brown Coefficient*
Inclusion	11.57	2.14	.796	.817
Differentiation	17.91	3.89	.717	.719
Training	6.37	2.05	.895[a]	.895

[a] Reliability data relies on a two-item test; the Spearman-Brown Coefficient was used to report reliability.

Following work by Dekutoski (2011) to assess the reliability for the survey subscales, Schuilwerve (2011) employed Spearman-Brown prophecy coefficients. Schuilwerve (2011) adapted the survey and reported reasonable ($r = .07$) reliability for survey items in the categories of inclusion and class practices and a slightly lower, but moderately stronger correlation coefficient for the training category ($r = .65$). Both lie within the range of what would be considered statistically reliable (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008; Lodico, et al., 2006).

Reliability for the inclusion subscale in the survey instrument for this study was also assessed using Spearman-Brown coefficients and suggested good consistency (SB = .817). Subscale assessment for differentiation also showed good consistency (SB = .719), as did the internal consistency of training and professional development (2-items), which was strong (SB = .895).

4.2 Sample Characteristics

Data generated by the survey met several key assumptions indicating the suitability of parametric methods to analyse results. An initial visual inspection of scatterplots recommended by Lodico, Spauding, & Voegtle (2006) helped to determine that a monotonic relationship existed between variables. Data subsets examined using SPSS statistical software showed that the results for inclusion and differentiation from each of the three school levels followed the approximate shape of a normal curve, suggesting that data could be analysed using parametric methods such as *t*-tests, ANOVA, and MANOVA tests. Histograms, normal Q-Q plots and box plots generated using SPSS also showed that the data from these subtests were symmetrical and approximately normally distributed.

Further testing for kurtosis and skewness, however, were negatively skewed for inclusion and differentiation data for most school levels (see Table 2). Given the small size ($n = 37$) of the data sample and the inability to meet all assumptions for parametric tests I decided to employ non-parametric measures and descriptive statistics to analyse the inclusion and differentiation data from the survey. Following suggestions by Siegel & Castellan (2003) I chose to use descriptive statistics, box plots and histograms to study and report general characteristics. Other statistical tests included Mann-Whitney *U* to test and compare grade levels in the sample and Kruskal-Wallis Tests to find effect size, and Spearman Rank-Order Correlations to find the strength and relationship between variables.

Table 2

Tests for normality, skewness and kurtosis (data subsets).

	Normality and Skewness Results			
	Inclusion p-values	*Differentiation p-values*	*Inclusion z-values*	*Differentiation z-values*
Elementary	.72	.97	.72	-.295
Middle School	.269	.885	-.5	-.113
High School	.348	.26	-.102	-1.303

Data from ESL/language acquisition training items in the survey are reported using percentages, Spearman's Rank-order correlation tests, scatterplots, the open-response comments survey participants provided and responses from teachers during one-to-one interviews in the qualitative phase of the study. The results of non-parametric tests for inclusion, differentiation, and training data are reported and discussed in the following chapter and later compared and contrasted to qualitative data gathered in the second phase of the study.

4.3 Summary

In the first phase of the project, I collected quantitative data from a modified version of *ESL Students in the Mainstream Survey* (Appendix A), developed by Reeves (2006). A total of 37 mainstream teachers (n = 37) from the total population (n = 40) of teachers in the elementary, middle school and high school completed and submitted the survey in March 2015. The survey instrument asked participating teachers to respond to 18 survey items with a Likert scale offering five choices. Participants also had an opportunity to provide feedback in an open response item and were invited to participate in an interview in phase two. Open response comments were grouped into categories with interview data using Atlas.ti qualitative software and compared to effective strategies for teaching ELLs.

Using a sequential explanatory protocol (Figure 6), data guided revision and the development of additional questions to be added to the interview protocol (Appendix E) used in the qualitative phase of the study. Using descriptive analysis, I summarized survey results in tables, and through an analysis using several different non-parametric tools, such as Mann-Whitney *U*, Kruskal-Wallis tests, a Spearman Rank-Order Correlation, and an analysis of scatter plots I was able to study and compare quantitative data to the results of one-on-one interviews. Results from the inclusion and differentiation sections of the survey were analysed using non-parametric statistical tests since the sample size was small (n = 37) and data were skewed and not normally distributed. In contrast, training and professional development data were analysed using percentages, Spearman Rank-Order Correlation tests, scatterplots, comments in the survey instrument and teacher responses during one-to-one interviews.

An explanation of the methodology used in the second, qualitative phase of the study is provided in Chapter 5, together with a discussion of the results from the teacher interviews and focus group meeting.

Chapter 5: Quantitative Data Results and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I described the adoption and modification of the ESL in the Mainstream Survey (Reeves, 2006). Changes to this survey instrument removed the possibility of individual identification and created the ability to identify and invite participants with strong views of ELL inclusion to participate in one-to-one interviews. The survey instrument also generated data to address preliminary research questions and provided a direction for inquiry during the qualitative phase of this study. In the previous chapter, I explained the process of data collection and the validity and reliability of the survey instrument and the statistical characteristics of the data collected. Since some data were slightly skewed and kurtotic, I decided that non-parametric methods would provide the best means of analysing the quantitative data.

In Chapter 5, I explain how graphs and information for various statistical tests were used to investigate each of the research questions for this study. This analysis helped to create a rudimentary understanding of whether a difference exists between school levels in the perception of ELL inclusion and the instruction and assessment used with ELL students. Data studied in this chapter also helped to: (a) develop a greater understanding of teachers' previous training and experience, (b) study the relationship between teacher training and classroom practice, and (c) identify potential mainstream teachers to interview in the qualitative phase of the study.

5.1.1 Perspectives of Inclusion

For the purpose of statistical analysis, six survey items related to inclusion were selected. Items 1-5 from the *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* (Appendix A) asked teachers whether they would welcome ELLs into their mainstream classroom and whether the inclusion of these students, benefits or disadvantages native-level English speakers in the classroom. Item 14, which states: ESL students should not be included in mainstream classes until they acquire a minimum level of English proficiency, was added to the data subset.

A preliminary examination of survey item scores (Figure 6) also suggested that a higher proportion of elementary teachers favored the inclusion of ELLs (92%). This percentage was considerably higher compared to the middle school (36%) and high school teachers (79%). Alternatively, this indicated that 8% of elementary, 64% of middle school, and 21% of high school teachers did not believe ELLs should be included in mainstream classes (Figure 7). Also, in agreement with research by O'Brien (2007), a significantly large percentage of mainstream teachers in the middle school (91%) and high schools (92%) felt that the inclusion of these students increased the teacher's workload. Survey data also suggested that more middle school (27%) and high school teachers (31%) than elementary teachers (15%) felt that the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream slowed the pace of others (Figure 8).

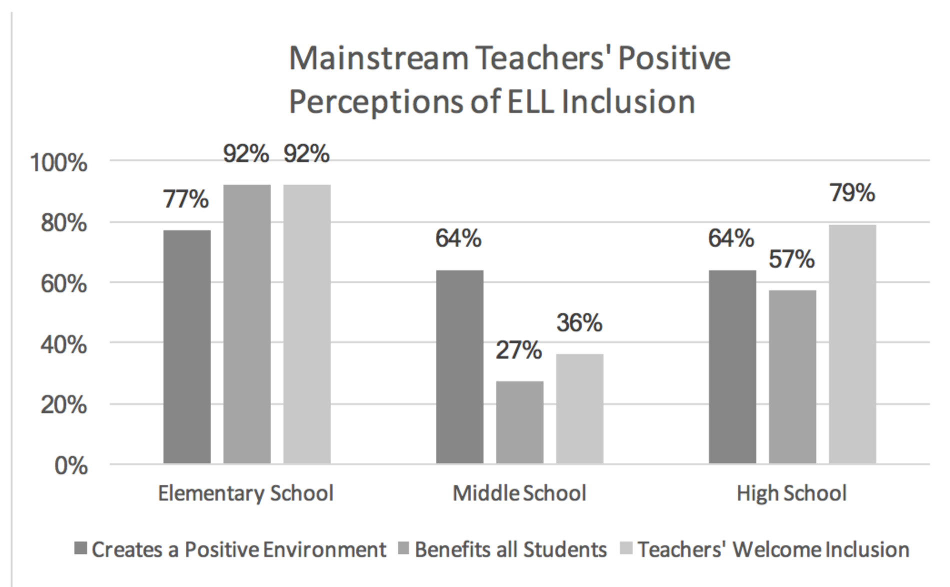

Figure 7. Mainstream teachers' positive perceptions of ELL inclusion.

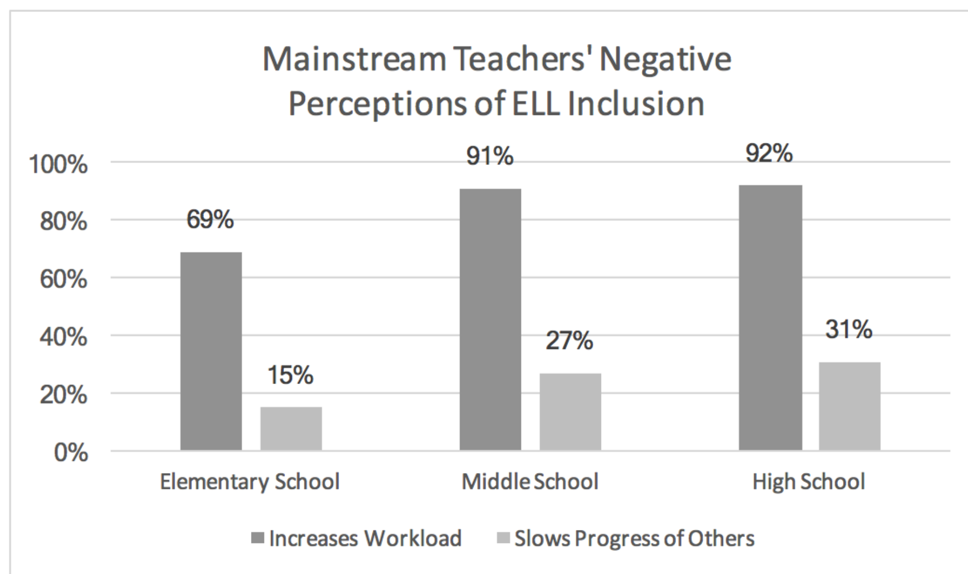

Figure 8. Mainstream teachers' negative perceptions of ELL inclusion

Similar to research conducted by Reeves (2006) and Schuilwerve (2011), this research study used descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) to determine differences in teachers' instructional approaches and expectations for ELLs. Statistics from the survey data helped answer the first research question - *Is there a difference between elementary, middle school, and high school teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners in regular mainstream classes?* These statistics also supported the view that elementary teachers (*n* = 13) were more favorable of ELL inclusion (see Figure 7). The median score for this group was 4.67 (SD=.645) suggesting that on the five-point Likert scale, participants had a strong positive perspective of inclusion, followed by high school teachers, and then middle school teachers who were neutral (Table 3).

Table 3

Inclusion statistics for elementary, middle school and high school.

	Descriptive Statistics			
	Frequency	*Mean*	*Median*	*SD*
Elementary School	13	4.31	4.67	.645
Middle School	10	3.43	3.33	.446
High School	14	3.74	4.0	.73

A box plot of the inclusion data (Figure 9) also suggests a similar range of scores in the three school levels. The elementary school mean and median data show strong support for the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream (Table 3) and the high school data were slightly lower. The middle school group had a greater range of scores than the other two and had the lowest mean score indicating that a larger proportion of mainstream teachers in the middle school were less supportive of ELL inclusion.

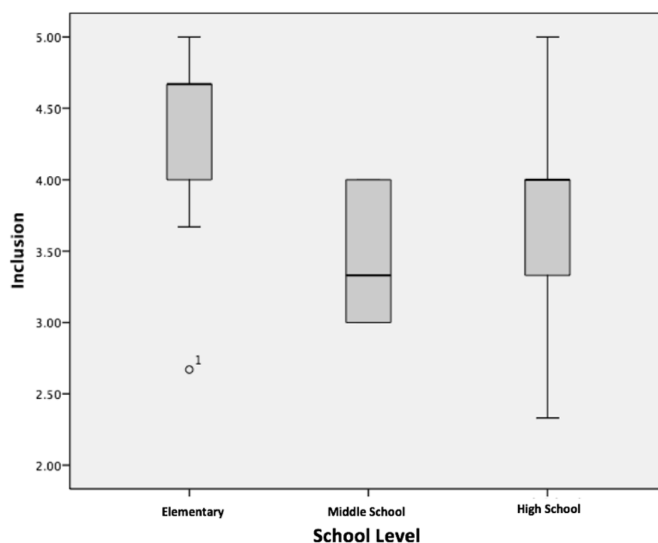

Figure 9. Distribution of the inclusion scores according to school level.

A Mann-Whitney *U* test was used to compare rank data between the elementary school teachers and the middle school teachers, and an additional test was employed to

compare data between teachers from the middle school and high school. Both the elementary and middle school groups differed significantly ($U = 18$, $p = .003$), as did the elementary and high school teacher groups ($U = 45.5$, $p = .025$). Mean rank data between the middle school and high school groups, however, were statistically non-significant ($U = 57.5$, $p = .462$, $p > .05$).

Following this, a Kruskal-Wallis Test, a more generalised test to compare data across all three groups was used to assess the research hypotheses and to determine effect size. This test is a non-parametric equivalent of commonly used statistical measures, including a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and an independent *t*-test. In contrast to the ANOVA, the Kruskal-Wallis Test does not assume that the data were normally distributed and can be used to compare rank data from three or more groups and determine if a statistical difference exists. One assumption for using the Kruskal-Wallis Test is that the data for each group was similar and had a homogeneity of variance. To test this assumption, I calculated rank-scores for inclusion and differentiation, and the rank means for school level groups. I found that absolute difference between the means by subtracting the rank from the mean group rank from each data set.

Using the absolute difference scores a non-parametric Levene's Test was conducted to assess the homogeneity of variance assumption. The results of this test regarding inclusion failed to reject the notion that mainstream teachers at different levels of the school perceived the English language learners in their class any differently ($p > .05$). Since the variances were roughly homogenous across schools, I inferred that the assumption of similar distribution also applied.

Next, I used a Kruskal-Wallis Test, a more generalised test to compare data across all three groups to determine effect size. I calculated a mean rank of 26.12 for elementary, 11.75 for middle school, and 17.57 for high school teachers. I also found a chi-square value for inclusion data of 10.70, and the p-value was significant at .005 ($p < .05$). Since this value was less than an alpha score of .05 and there was a difference

between the mean ranks of each group, it appeared that there was a difference between the perceptions of the elementary, middle school and high school teachers.

I used the chi-square value to calculate the effect size estimate (eta squared) for teachers at each school level. Results showed a 29.73% (ES= .2973) variability in inclusion rank scores between school levels, which is considered a statistically significant effect size, given that some guidelines for interpreting *r* effect size measures are considered small at .10 and medium at .30 (Cohen, 1988).

Based on the mean ranks from the Kruskal-Wallis test I assumed that there was a significant difference between the inclusion scores from the elementary and the scores from the middle school and high school. Mean rank scores between the middle school and high school appeared similar at 11.75 and 17.57 respectively. Separate follow-up post hoc tests showed a significant difference between elementary and middle school rank scores (p =.003, ES = .3964). The results, however, indicated little difference regarding effect size and failed to show a significant difference between the middle school and high school (p =.126, p >.05). A moderate difference was evident between elementary and high school (p =.025, ES = .1945). These findings supported the results of the Mann-Whitney *U* test.

Although these quantitative results suggest a significant difference between the perspectives of elementary and the middle school and high school teachers regarding the inclusion of English language learners (ELLs) in regular mainstream classes, data for teachers in the middle school and high school suggested otherwise. Reported data, however, can lack reliability since participants can tend to respond more positively to questions related to their knowledge, ability, and opinions, and may report what they expect the researcher to hear (Cook & Campbell, cited in Yu, 2010). Therefore, further research is required to discover if teaching practices were effective, culturally and linguistically relevant to the needs of ELLs, and used by teachers on a regular basis.

An analysis of student work, and lesson observations may have helped build an understanding of the extent to which teachers support ELL inclusion, as might observations of the school and classroom environment (Ontario Ministry of Education,

2008). Such data would help to confirm or reject survey data but lie outside the methodology of this study. In its place, one-on-one interviews and a focus group meeting are used in the second phase of the study to test whether one group of teachers in the school is in greater need of training and support to differentiate instruction for ELLs. The reality that some mainstream teachers in each school level reported in the survey instrument that they do not agree with the inclusion of ELLs and do not differentiate instruction for them, however, indicates a need for further research. The difference in perceptions and practice also suggests that the school make the role and expectations of teachers regarding ELLs explicit. Also, it is clear that teachers of ELLs need to be aware of the school's expectation (if one exists) that curriculum should be differentiated for English language learners.

5.1.2 Expectations and Classroom Practices

Five survey items provided data for analysis and interpretation of the second research question: *Is there a difference between the classroom practices elementary, middle school, and high school teachers use to differentiate instruction for ELLs in mainstream classes?* These items were as follows:

Item 7: It is good practice to simplify instructions for ESL students.

Item 9: Teachers should not give students a failing grade if they display effort.

Item 10: Teachers should not modify assignments for an ESL student enrolled in mainstream classes.

Item 11: The modification of class work would be difficult to justify to other students.

Item 15: ESL students should be able to use their native language in class.

A two-tailed, Mann-Whitney *U* Test was conducted to find if a difference existed between school levels regarding the classroom practices used to accommodate the needs of English language learners. The results of this test were in the expected direction but not statistically significant for the elementary and middle school teachers (Table 3). Elementary teacher scores for differentiated classroom practices had an average mean rank average of 13.69, while the middle school teacher had an average rank of 9.8, which indicated a notable difference between the groups. The results from the

elementary school teachers (*n* = 13) and high school teachers (*n* = 14) had mean ranks of 17.23 and 11.00 and were statistically significant. The Mann-Whitney *U* Test yielded, however, little difference in average mean ranks between the survey results from middle school (*n* = 10) and high school (*n* = 14), and were not significant. The average ranks of these two schools were 13.75 and 11.61 and also suggested that there is little difference in the classroom practices used by these groups to meet the needs of ELLs.

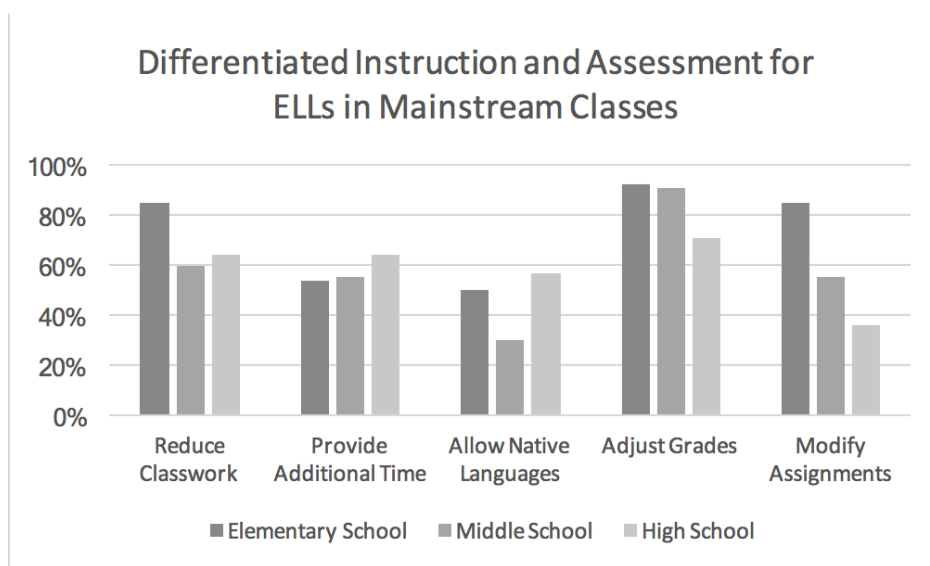

Figure 10. Differentiation and assessment practices reported by mainstream teachers.

A box-plot (see Figure 11) featuring the medians of each of the three school groups suggested that a significantly higher percentage of elementary teachers responded positively to modifying assignments (85%). Other data also supported the view that these teachers favoured reducing class work for English language learners (85%) compared to the teachers in middle school and high school (Figure 10). The percentage of elementary teachers who reported that they use differentiated instruction was also at least 20% or greater than the percentage of middle school and high school teachers.

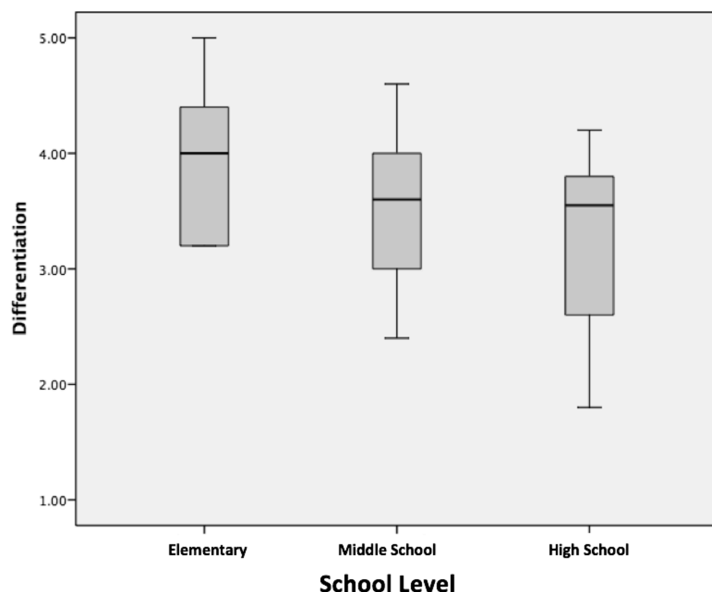

Figure 11. Distributions of the differentiation scores according to school level.

Although there was some statistical evidence of a difference between the high school and elementary school, other data were less convincing. I therefore concluded that there is no difference between school levels regarding the classroom practices mainstream teachers use to accommodate the learning needs of English language learners (ELLs).

5.1.2 Comparison of Inclusion and Differentiation Results

Data from several different survey items were analysed to answer and statistically assess the third research question for this study: *"Is there a positive relationship between mainstream teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners (ELLs) and the classroom practices they employ to meet the needs of these students?"*

Three survey questions came from the inclusion subset. Also, an additional five survey items (see Appendix A) were used for the survey items that related to differentiation. Statistical tests used both averaged survey item scores and the mean scores for survey categories - inclusion, differentiation and training.

Before analysis of inclusion and differentiation data using non-parametric tests, scatterplots (Lodico et al., 2006) were studied to confirm that a monotonic relationship existed between the variables. Since the variables were also measured using ordinal data, I decided that data met assumptions for conducting a Spearman's Rank-order correlation or Spearman's Rho. Scatterplots generated to compare inclusion, differentiation, and training data (Figure 12) showed a positive relationship between each set of variables and a high correlation between inclusion scores and scores for differentiated instruction.

A Spearman's Rank-order correlation was run to determine the strength and direction of the association between mainstream teachers' perceptions of inclusion and the classroom practices they reported they used to address the needs of English language learners (ELLs). There was a moderately, strong positive correlation (Creswell, 2008) between these two variables, which was statistically significant (rs, (35) = .515, p= .001, p< .05).

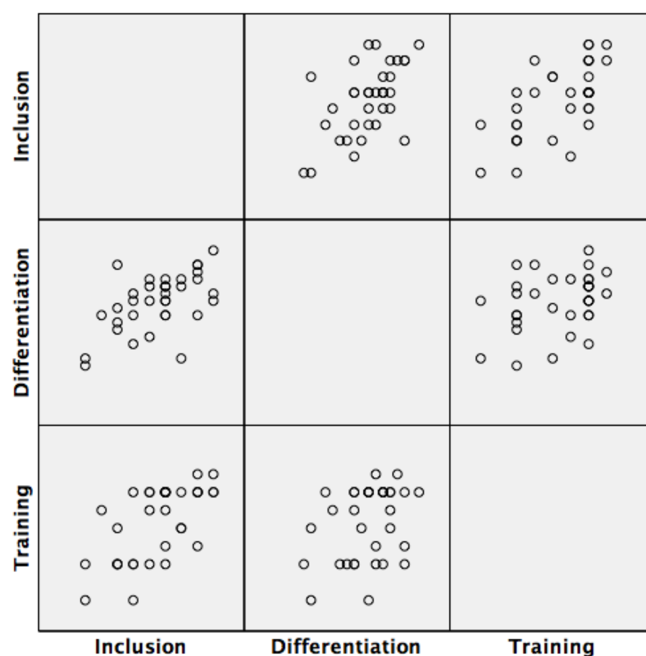

Figure 12. Scatterplot correlations between inclusion, differentiation and training data.

Further data exploration using a Spearman's Rank-order correlation and data were separated into school levels to find if one group's perceptions of inclusion had a strong association with their classroom practices (Figure 12). My analysis found that while there was still a moderate, positive correlation for elementary teachers, this was not significant (rs, (11) = .513, p = .073, p> .05). The correlation between inclusion and differentiation data for the middle school teacher group showed only a low to moderate association (rs, (8) = .449, p = .192, p > .05). Also, there was no significance, and for the high school teachers the findings were similar - the teachers indicated a moderate association rs, (12) = .447, but at p = .109, this result was not significant enough (p >.05) to make any meaningful assumptions.

Based on this data I determined that there was little or no relationship between mainstream teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners (ELLs) and the classroom practices they employ to meet the needs of these students. This finding supported the suggestion that contradictions can occur in the way people position themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Sosa & Gomez, 2011) and explains why some teachers gave positive responses to the inclusion (7 items) in the survey, yet unfavorable responses to questions regarding differentiation (6 items). Alternatively, some participants (n = 6, 16%) expressed agreement with many differentiation strategies listed in the survey but responded negatively to items related to the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

Since these contrasting views ran contradictory to other research findings (Kupermintz, 2003; Nespor, 1987, Pajares, 1992; Reeves, 2006) I decided to re-examine the surveys and determine if individual teacher data suggested a positive or negative correlation. To complete this analysis, mean scores for differentiation and inclusion were calculated for each survey to find if teachers agreed or disagreed to the inclusion items and differentiation strategies suggested. Based on these results, teachers were grouped into four categories (see Figure 13).

Several survey questions asked for teachers to share their views of inclusion suggest potential strategies for intervention (Appendix A). They also asked teachers

about assessment practices, the training and professional development they need. These questions helped identify a need by the school to articulate the roles and responsibilities of mainstream teachers and to find ways to reduce the barriers to inclusion that were suggested by teachers in the survey. These issues included including the time required to provide support to ELLs, a policy for the assessment of ELLs, additional resources, and training to support the language acquisition of ELLs. These suggestions also helped to form an initial understanding of the support required by mainstream teachers and became the basis for the recommendations that are later shaped by data from teacher interviews and a focus group meeting in the second phase of this study.

5.1.3 Teacher Perspectives and Differentiation

An analysis of the inclusion and differentiation sections of the survey instrument revealed that attitudes regarding ELL inclusion and the use of differentiation varied among teachers. Mainstream teacher responses to inclusion and differentiation survey items placed them in one of four quadrants (see Figure 14). These groups consisted of teachers for supported inclusion and differentiated their instruction; those who supported inclusion and did not differentiate; teachers who did not support ELL inclusion in the mainstream and differentiated; and those who neither supported inclusion nor used differentiated instruction.

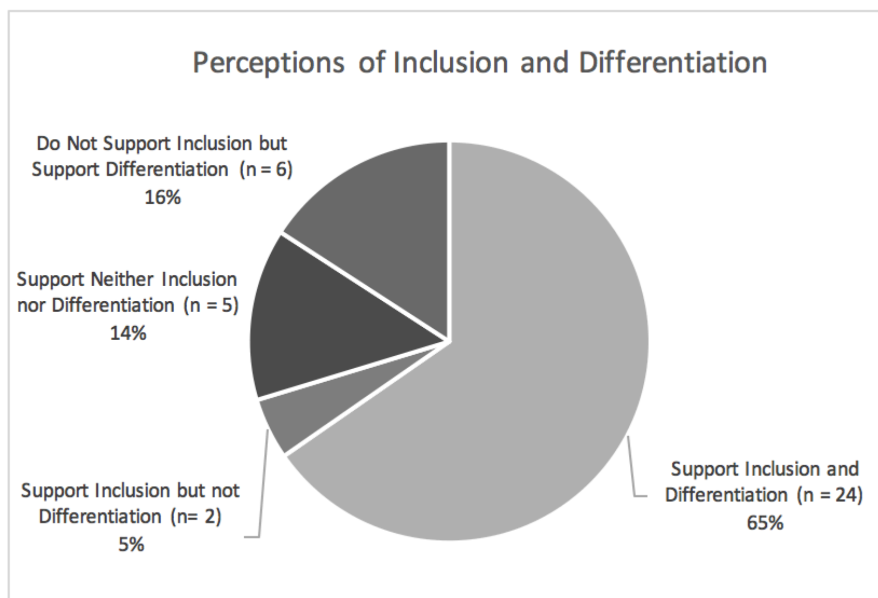

Figure 13. Mainstream teachers' perspectives of inclusion and differentiation.

In Quadrant I (Figure 14), approximately 66% (*n* = 24) of all survey participants (*n* = 37) stated that they supported the inclusion of ELLs and agreed or strongly agreed that ELL inclusion creates a positive educational atmosphere and benefits all students. These teachers also agreed that it is good practice to simplify instructions for ELLs, adjust grades and the quantity of work for ELLs, modify assignments and provide additional time to complete assignments. Given that these teachers supported ELL inclusion in mainstream classes it appears reasonable that they would express a desire to differentiate their teaching and assessment practices to support them. For want of classroom observations and some examination of unit plans to confirm the extent and quality of these differentiation efforts, additional data are needed to confirm the reality in the classroom. Never-the-less, by indicating that they agree with differentiation practices we can assume that there is a high likelihood that this group of teachers would welcome modifying their instruction for English learners.

	Differentiated Instruction *Agree/Strongly Agree with Differentiation*	**No Differentiation** *Disagree/Strongly Disagree with Differentiation*
Support Inclusion *Agree/Strongly Agree with Inclusion*	**Quadrant I** (*n* = 24, 66%) • How can these teachers continue to receive support? • Are teaching practices effective and based on current research? • What other types of differentiated instruction can be added to lessons and units of study? *Support & Encourage*	**Quadrant II** (*n* = 2, 5%) • How can professional development and training be provided for these teachers? • What obstacles prevent teachers from using differentiation? • What mentoring or supervision opportunities exist to ensure ELLs receive support to meet and exceed academic standards? *Provide Training & Mentoring*
Do Not Support Inclusion *Disagree/Strongly Disagree with Inclusion*	**Quadrant III** (*n* = 6, 16%) • Why do these teachers differentiate instruction? • Why do they feel that ELLs should not be included in mainstream classes? • How can school policy clearly define the role and expectations of mainstream teachers in regard to the instruction and assessment of ELLs? *Define Role, Support & Encourage*	**Quadrant IV** (*n* = 5, 14%) • How can the school clearly define the role of mainstream teachers in regard to the instruction and assessment of ELLs? • How professional development and training be provided for these teachers? • What mentoring or supervision opportunities exist to ensure ELLs receive support to meet and exceed academic standards? *Define Role, Provide Training & Mentoring*

Figure 14. Mainstream teacher perspectives of inclusion and differentiation for ELLs.

In two other cases (*n* = 2, 5%) in Quadrant II, survey participants indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the inclusion of English language learners in mainstream classes (items 1-5), although they were significantly less supportive of using differentiated instruction. These teachers, via their responses to differentiation items,

disagreed or strongly disagreed with the use of modified instruction (items 6-8, 10) and indicated that modified classwork would be difficult to justify to other students (item 11). They also suggested that it was difficult to deal with the needs of ELLs (item 12) and unreasonable to expect the mainstream teacher to teach a student who does not speak English (item 13). Such responses might suggest that while these two mainstream teachers were happy to accept English language learners, they provided no additional support over and above the instruction and support given to their native speaking peers. In terms of self-determination theory, this might indicate that these teachers have responded to their perceived extrinsic motivation and accepted English language learners in their core classes regulation or because they lack the expertise to differentiate instruction for these learners.

Alternatively, in Quadrant III, some teachers (n = 6, 16%) indicated in their survey results that they did not support the inclusion of ELLs, but still agreed or strongly agreed that they should modify instruction and assessment for these learners. This response suggests that despite disagreement with the practice of inclusion, these teachers perceived that they had a role to play in supporting the language learners in their mainstream class. While not ideal, it is encouraging that these teachers respond to the academic needs of ELLs by differentiating instruction and assessment.

The fourth group in Quadrant IV (n = 5, 14%) indicated in the survey instrument that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes and did not modify their instruction to cater for these learners. To what extent their perception influenced their reported practices are unclear, but it does raise questions about how these teachers might respond if they were (a) provided professional development training, (b) specifically told by the school that they have a role in supporting the language development of ELLs and (c) were provided with in-house support to develop and deliver a curriculum that will make content linguistically and culturally accessible to ELLs.

While most mainstream teachers (78%) reported in the survey that they differentiate instruction to some extent, approximately 20% of other teachers in

Quadrants II and IV indicated that they do not differentiate their instruction for language learners. Of these, five teachers stated that they did not support the inclusion of ELLs, so it is possible that these mainstream teachers felt that the responsibility for language instruction rested with English teachers and ELL specialists while they present lessons and assess all students - native speaker and language learner, alike in the same way. Whether clearly defining the role of these teachers in teaching both content and language and providing training would bring about a change in perception and practice could not be determined from this data, but it appears to be plausible.

5.1.4 Professional Development and Training

Quantitative data from the *ESL Students in the Mainstream Survey* (Appendix A) provided little insight into the relationship between professional development and training and how teachers perceive their role in teaching English language learners even though scatterplots seemed to show a correlation between these variables. Overall data from all three schools failed to show normal distribution, and a relationship between these two variables and it seemed improbable that parametric tests and non-parametric tests could enlighten my understanding of the relationship between language acquisition or ESL training and classroom practices. In addition, two high school teachers did not complete the subsection for training and professional development in the survey. This compromised the reliability of this data since the number of participants was reduced ($n = 35$).

I relied on participant responses to the open-ended survey item to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between training and differentiation in the classroom and to address the fourth research question – *Is there a connection between the ESL/language acquisition training that mainstream teachers have received and how they view their role in teaching English language learners?* The participant responses also contributed to answering the following question: *If there is a connection, what implications does this have for the professional development of mainstream teachers?* This question asked participants to share any additional comments they had "about ESL students studying in mainstream classes" and "strategies that have worked with these

students." I also decided to use the one-to-one interviews in the qualitative phase of this study to ask teachers what ESL and language acquisition training they have received and how they felt this has affected their teaching practice.

Histograms (Figure 15), scatterplots (see Figure 12), and tables (see Table 4) illustrate the training and experience of the teachers at each of the three levels. These charts with other data also helped determine whether they thought they needed additional training to help support ELLs and whether or not there was some connection between this and the classroom practices of teachers. A closer look at data in scatterplots generated from the survey instrument indicated that a correlation between these existed but since data for training and professional development had questionable reliability, further parametric and non-parametric analysis was not possible. Consequently, data analysis was limited to descriptive statistics and data from the qualitative methods used in phase two of this study.

Table 4

ESL/Language Acquisition Training Experience of Mainstream Teachers.

	Descriptive Statistics			
	Frequency	*Mean*	*Median*	*SD*
Elementary School	13	3.73	4.0	.695
Middle School	10	2.8	2.75	1.059
High School	14	2.917	3.0	1.104

Descriptive data regarding the ESL and language acquisition training (Table 4) showed that mainstream elementary teachers (n = 13) reported they had received more training and/or had far more experience in teaching ELL students (mean [SD] = 3.73 [0.695]) than those in middle school (mean [SD] = 2.8 [1.059]) and senior high school (mean [SD] = 2.917 [1.104]). Median scores on a 5-point scale showed elementary teachers felt more prepared to teach English language learners in regular mainstream

classes. The percentage of teachers from elementary school (Figure 15) who said they had sufficient training to teach ELLs in these classes (83%) was also significantly higher than their middle school (40%) and high school colleagues (36%).

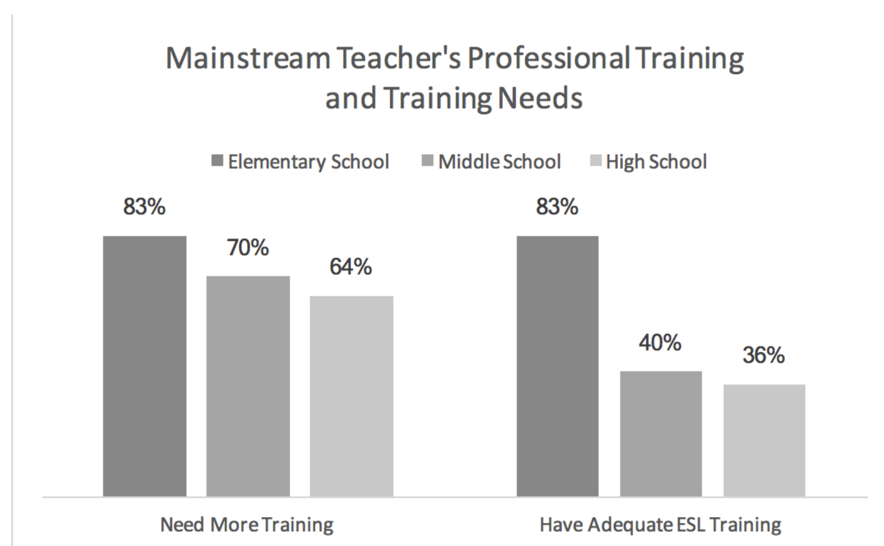

Figure 15. Teachers' reported ESL and second language training and training needs.

While a difference in training and experience appears to exist, as noted earlier, a difference in teachers' perceptions of inclusion regarding ELLs in the mainstream was not statistically significant. Therefore, evidence was not useful in determining whether a correlation exists between these two variables. Given the survey data available, findings failed to prove that the ESL/language acquisition training that mainstream teachers received significantly influenced how they perceive their role in teaching English language learners.

5.2 Reported Instructional Practices

In addition to the responses teacher participants provided on a Likert scale in the *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* (Reeves, 2006), their comments also helped illustrate their expectations, instructional practices, and frustrations when teaching ELLs. Teachers were invited to share their thoughts and ideas in a general and open prompt at

the end of the survey to "Feel free to add any other comments you have about ESL students studying in mainstream classes, especially regarding strategies that have worked successfully with these students." Once I transcribed these comments, five key themes emerged from the data – *vocabulary development, modified assignments, oral instructions, interaction with peers,* and *culturally and linguistically assessable curriculum.* Each topic was analyzed and compared to current literature and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), mentioned earlier. Also, a review of the literature was used to identify some pedagogical approaches to teaching ELLs not referred to in the survey comments.

Survey responses varied and it was not possible to tell without studying unit and lesson plans and conducting class observations to what extent the teachers throughout the school used these practices. They do, however, provide a snapshot of some practical approaches supported by research. These instructional practices may provide a valuable starting point for other teachers in other classes and at other levels throughout the school via professional conversation or collaboration as part of a professional learning community (PLC) working to provide support to English language learners.

5.2.1 Vocabulary Development. It came as little surprise that many teachers mentioned vocabulary development in their survey comments. Vocabulary building activities and the use of guided reading materials to help make books linguistically accessible to English learners who have limited language proficiency were mentioned specifically as ways to differentiate instruction.

One survey participant also suggested, teaching vocabulary using storytelling. Unfortunately, this teacher did not elaborate in the response they gave in the survey, so it was not possible to ascertain how they used this instructional approach. Possibly, the teacher may have been referring to using new vocabulary in the stories they read to their class or having students use new vocabulary words in their storytelling as a means of developing their vocabulary base. Both approaches seem feasible.

What did appear significant in the comments by these and other teachers, however, was that they mentioned no other methods or techniques to build academic

vocabulary or pre-teach core terms. As explained earlier, ELLs often lack a working knowledge of key terms and a limited understanding of vocabulary make comprehension difficult - increasing the likelihood that they will struggle academically and will fall behind their English-speaking peers. An examination of academic vocabulary contained in the *corestandards.org* site and in middle school textbooks used at the school uncovered some terms that ELLs will not use in their conversations with peers but are required to know to become successful in content area classes. Some academic vocabulary used in core content classes include, for example:

Science: procedure, analysis, hypothesis, elements, carbon dioxide,

Mathematics: congruent, integer, mean, ratio, probability, scatterplot

English: irony, metaphor, plagiarism, statement, foreshadow

Social Studies: treaty, medieval, monarchy, topography, peninsula, bureaucracy.

In response to this need, a large amount of intervention to assist ELLs in the mainstream in other schools, feature strategies explicitly linked to vocabulary and vocabulary development. Why teachers did not mention similar strategies in the survey in this setting, raises some questions, but without further data, it was not possible to tell if a lack of strategies mentioned on the survey instrument equated to a lack of language acquisition training or an unwillingness to differentiate instruction for English language learners.

5.2.2 Modified Assignments. Some teachers in the school reported that they differentiate assignments to create more equitable opportunities for English learners in content classes to participate in the same learning tasks as their English-proficient peers. It seems that by offering this type of modification to existing assignments designed for native-speaking students, these teachers aimed to create a level playing field that would provide ELLs with some degree of equity and allow all students to participate, although further research and data were needed to understand the expectations and motivation of these teachers.

The idea of extending assignment deadlines for ELLs and giving them additional time to complete tests were two strategies mentioned to provide support. Other

strategies included spending time with ELL students to explain what will be on a test beforehand and allow some students to read novels in their native language or use an audio version of the text. These approaches appear to provide much-needed support, although it is unclear if only ELLs received these kinds of opportunities. If not, then they might invite some criticism since specific guidance to help students do well on a test differs from explaining questions used on an assessment so that ELLs can respond.

Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010) warn that while some aspects of an assignment can and should be differentiated for ELLs to provide equitable access, ultimately, they will be assessed with their English-speaking peers and held to the same criteria. In this respect instruction and assessment may not seem equal but should appear equitable and fair to ELLs and their native speaking peers. Authors, Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010) suggest:

> In order to think about how to differentiate assignments for ELLs, we must consider the aspects of the assignment that can or should be differentiated since all students must be held to the same standards, this means that differentiation should be focused on language-based expectations and scaffolding and support (p. 83).

In theory, this should mean that core teachers need to modify assignments for ELLs, but do so with a view to remove scaffolding and support once these students develop adequate English proficiency to complete work independently.

5.2.3 Providing Oral Instructions. Several teachers mentioned in the open response section of the survey the importance of giving instructions that ELL students can comprehend. These teachers explained that they clarify instructions and use short and simple sentences when providing directions or explanations. Some also wrote that they speak loud and clear to make their instructions to English learners easier to understand, and in doing so appeared to align their teaching practices with some components in the lesson delivery section of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (Echevarría, 2008).

Also, some survey participants also reported that they use many visuals, including sketches, timelines, and charts to explain concepts and provide directions - again, an approach supportive of components in the SIOP framework, and as described earlier, an approach commonly considered to be best practice. One teacher wrote in the survey that they provided guided support to English language learners so that they can participate in class activities with their peers, but did not elaborate on what this support entailed.

5.2.4 Interaction with Others. A few teachers explained in the open-response section of the survey that they provide opportunities for English learners to develop their language skills via interaction with other students. These teachers reported that they assign mentors and partners to help guide and support ELLs and in doing so explained an effective practice for developing quality interactions with others. The experience of conversing with others allows language learners to practice their oral skills with partners who take pains to understand what they wish to say and build on their contribution (Wells, 2008).

Another survey participant reported that they use partner activities that allow ELLs to work with someone who can translate and explain information from the mainstream class in their mother tongue. Although teachers were divided with only 50% in the elementary school favoring the use of native languages in mainstream classes, and a similar number of high school teachers advocating the practice, it does have support from researchers who view it as an effective strategy for ELLs to comprehend and learn the content of their core classes (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010; Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010).

Research also suggests that the development of the mother tongue is important since it can support the acquisition of English (DelliCarpini, Musetti, Salas & Perez, 2009; Francis, Lesaux, & August, 2006; Goldberg & Coleman, 2010). In addition, it can assist in developing cognitive skills (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), and is crucial to developing the cultural identity of students (Wiley, Garcia, Danzig, & Stigler, 2014; Young, 2010).

5.2.5 Culturally and Linguistically Accessible Curriculum. In the survey, one teacher wrote that they "use culturally inclusive texts and reading materials" as a strategy to support ELLs. This approach appears to be a logical step towards making content accessible to ELL students who do not have the necessary cultural background and knowledge to cope with the content in the mainstream. Implicit in this understanding, however, is the belief that English language learners are not *tabula rasa* - blank slates (Lambert, 2000). They come to school with a wealth of experience and background knowledge that teachers can tap into to make learning meaningful (Dong, 2005; Echevarria, 2008; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Teachers who fail to take account of the diverse backgrounds and prior experience of the ELLs in their classrooms can ignore a valuable resource for all students by helping them widen their worldview and appreciate other perspectives (Molle et al., 1992).

Moreover, several researchers argue that ELLs were often not identified, and there is lack of instructional practices to meet their unique linguistic and cultural needs (Harris, Plucker, Rapp, & Martinez, 2009). Harris et al. (2009), among others, found that teachers lack training and rarely made an effort to discover the histories and cultural backgrounds of students to make their curriculum relevant (Tran, 2014) and time to effectively support regular students (O'Brien, 2007). Other studies revealed that teachers have comprehensive and diverse perspectives of student needs and differentiate instruction accordingly (Rodriguez Moux, 2010; Rueda & Garcia, 1996; Suh, 2011) while others lacked experience to recognise and then address the needs of ELLs (Lenssen, 2006).

We might be tempted to assume that all ELLs share a common cultural and academic background and a similar foundation for learning English. Yet, according to Rance-Rone (2009) "In reality, there is a patchwork quilt of English language learner profiles - a quilt rich with diverse life experience, but loosely woven with common learning needs" (p. 32). Therefore, getting to know your students is a good place to start and a central tenet of differentiation (Iyer, 2015; Pereira, & de Oliveira, 2015). In the case of ELLs, this also includes learning about their academic (Lucas, Villegas, &

Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008), family Molle et al., 1992, linguistic and cultural background (Baecher, Artigliere, Patterson, & Spatzer, 2012). By taking into account the previous learning of ELLs in this way, teachers can help them bridge the gap between their level of English and the English proficiency of their peers (Gibbons, 2002).

5.3 Discussion and Findings

Using the Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1966) as a theoretical framework offered some insight into quantitative data collected in the first phase of this mixed-methods study. Rather than seeing teachers as transmitters of knowledge (Rueda & Garcia, 1996), constructivism assumes that they teach and students learn through applying their experience (Piaget, 1966). This theory also implies that for learning to take place in the mainstream, each teacher must accept responsibility for teaching the students in their classroom and actively engage them in the curriculum.

Some survey data of teachers' perspectives on the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classes (Table 3), while not conclusive, suggested that elementary teachers viewed inclusion ($U = 18$, $p = .003$) more favorably than teachers in the high school ($U = 45.5$, $p = .025$). Although the survey could not determine potential reasons for this, it seems plausible that elementary teachers would be more likely to position themselves as language teachers and take greater ownership of the academic achievement of ELLs. These teachers have been trained to teach English (although not necessary as a second language), and have greater opportunities to infuse language content into their lessons.

A difference in the inclusions scores for middle school (91%, $n = 10$) and high school teachers (92%, $n = 14$) compared to elementary teachers (69%, $n = 13$) suggests that some elementary teachers may see the integration of ELLs not so much in terms of a problem, but *their* problem. The fact that some middle school (64%) and high school teachers (21%) indicated in the survey that they did not welcome ELLs into their classroom (8%) and a much greater percentage of middle school (64%) and high school teachers (21%) agreed, however, raises some concern and runs counter to the argument that teachers need to accept all the ELLs in their classroom, regardless of their

background (Council for International Schools, 2016; Khong & Saito, 2014; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008).

Also, while all but one mainstream teacher in the elementary school said that they support the integration of ELLs (92%), fewer indicated that they reduce classwork (85%), provide additional time to complete work (54%), and allow the use of native languages (50%). This difference suggests that although a high percentage of the teachers welcome ELLs into their mainstream classes, they do not necessarily differentiate instruction to engage these students in lesson content fully. A Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation test also failed to find a significant statistical relationship among elementary, middle school and high school teachers reported perspectives regarding the inclusion of ELLs and the classroom practices they use to teach these students.

Survey data also suggested several avenues of research in the qualitative phase of this study. These included investigating why some middle school teachers were significantly less willing to include ELLs in mainstream classes, while others choose to support inclusion. Results also raised a larger question of why some mainstream teachers do not favour inclusion (n = 19) and whether this perspective has an impact on instructional practices, although some further analysis of focus group data later in the study may shed some light on this.

The Constructivist Learning Theory used to ground this study also suggests that the teacher should know the members of their class and strive to tap into each student's existing and background knowledge (Lambert, et al., 2002), and find a way to make the content of the curriculum relevant and comprehensible. Some strategies mentioned in the *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* (Reeves, 2006) to differentiate instruction for ELLs include simplifying instructions, adjusting the quantity of class work, modifying assignments, allowing additional time to complete assignments, and allowing them to use their native language. Of these, reducing class work (85%) and modifying assignments (85%) were the most popular means of intervention reported by teachers in the elementary school. Middle school teachers, however, were approximately 30% less in favor of using these strategies. Also, only 36% of high school teachers agreed with

these types of intervention - perhaps due to the demands of IB assessment, a perception that students at this level should not require modified assignments when they need to prepare for external assessment, or since they have considerably more students than elementary teachers.

The amount of in-service training mainstream teachers reported they received in second language acquisition or strategies to support ELL students varied considerably between the elementary (M = 4.0, SD = .695), middle school (M = 2.75, SD = 1.059), and high school (M = 3, SD = 1.104). Although a correlation between ELL training and classroom practices could not be statistically confirmed, a large percentage of teachers throughout the school indicated in the survey and their survey comments that they would like this type of professional development (Table 6). In the elementary, school 83% of mainstream teachers said that they would like additional training, while 70% of middle school teachers and 64% of high school responded favorably to the suggestion of additional training.

Data from the *ESL in the Mainstream Survey* (Appendix A) also indicated that many teachers throughout the school modify the assessment of their ELL students. A majority of elementary teachers (92%) and middle school teachers (91%) said in the survey that they adjust grades for these learners compared to a smaller percentage of mainstream teachers in the high school (71%). This disparity between the high school and other grade levels perhaps should not be a surprise since teachers of students in grades 11 and 12 in the school are required to follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and its assessment guidelines and have significantly less opportunity to change grades. Unfortunately, since the survey instrument was anonymous, it was not possible to determine the grade levels taught by the 29% of high teachers who said they do not modify grades.

5.4 Summary

Data gathered from the inclusion items in the survey described the perceptions of mainstream teachers regarding English language learners in core classes. Survey data

were analysed using quantitative non-parametric methods including Mann-Whitney *U* tests, Kruskal-Wallis tests, scatterplots and Spearman's Rank-order correlation tests. Non-parametric statistical tests were employed since (a) the sample size was small, (b) the exact population distribution was unknown, and (c) most data for inclusion and differentiation items in the survey were skewed and not normally distributed. For the purpose of this study, I used an alpha of .05 for statistical interpretation; values below this indicated that effects were statistically significant.

Key findings from the quantitative phase of the study showed a difference between mainstream teachers at different school levels regarding their perceptions of inclusion. This difference was significant between the elementary school and the middle school but only moderate between the elementary and high school. The Kruskal-Wallis Test failed to find a significant difference between middle and high school teachers perceptions of inclusion.

Descriptive statistics showed that a larger percentage of middle (91%) and high school (92%) than elementary (69%) teachers felt that the inclusion of ELLs increases their workload; approximately a third of middle school and high school teachers felt that integration slowed the pace of others. In contrast, only half as many elementary teachers expressed this concern (15%). Mean ranks and median scores showed little difference between the amount of differentiation at the three school levels, although a significantly higher number of elementary teachers (83%) indicated that they modify assignments and reduce class work for ELLs. Data gathered from the open response question in the survey instrument showed that teachers at all school levels employed strategies to develop vocabulary; modify assignments, provide clear, comprehensible instructions; encourage student interaction, and provide a culturally and linguistically accessible curriculum. A Spearman's Rank-order Correlation test showed a moderate, but not statistically significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and their classroom practices (rs, (35) = .515, $p = .001$, $p < .05$).

Training and professional development survey items had questionable reliability and could not be tested using statistical methods. Data interpretation was limited to

descriptive statistics and suggested that a significant number of elementary teachers compared to the middle, and high school teachers felt they had sufficient training to support English language learners.

Quantitative research findings from this initial phase of the study were used to craft interview questions for the second, qualitative phase. A deeper investigation into classroom instruction assessment practices of teachers occurs during the qualitative phase of this study when I interview teachers with strong views regarding inclusion (n = 6) about their perspectives, and teaching and assessment practices. These and other results are reported and discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Qualitative Data Collection

6.1 Introduction

In the second phase of this study, I selected a purposeful sample of mainstream teachers (*n* = 6) from teachers who volunteered to participate in an interview. I chose two teachers from each school level who showed a strong positive or negative response to items related to the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classes and the use of differentiation for ELLs.

Interviews with these participants helped to explore and explain mainstream teacher perspectives and why they chose or did not choose to modify instruction and assessment for English language learners. These interviews allowed key informants the opportunity to provide specific knowledge related to the research questions (Lodico, et al., 2006). Such diversity also provided a rich insight into teachers' perspectives regarding their role, and the type of instructional practices teachers may adopt to support English language learners (ELLs).

During this step of the research process, I further investigated: how teachers perceive the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream, differentiate curriculum and instruction, and respond to professional training. These topics were explored using statistical analysis, but this qualitative component of the study enabled a more in-depth analysis of the views of teachers who gave very low (1) or very high (5) points on the Likert-scale in the survey to items related to the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream; and the differentiation of classroom practices. These interview discussions also allowed me as the researcher to elaborate and explain the quantitative results discovered earlier (Creswell, 2014) and integrate both sets of data to create an expanded and deeper understanding that would not be possible using one methodology alone (Creswell, 2008).

6.1.1 Research Questions

Since this study used an explanatory mixed-methods, two-stage design, several research questions could only be identified after the completion of the first phase (Lodico, et al., 2006). Questions developed for the qualitative phase of the study

focused on eliciting open responses from interview participants regarding their training, how they perceived their role in teaching ELLs, their academic expectations of ELLs, strategies they use to support language in their mainstream classes and what they believed the school should do to support the needs of English language learners.

According to Merriam (2009), the key to getting meaningful data from interviews and focus groups is to ask well-constructed questions. Questions that stimulate responses are especially helpful when they focus on experiences and behaviours, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, and background (Patton, 2002). These types of questions formed the basis for preliminary questions used in the study's interview protocol and created a foundation for the focus group phase of this study. Interview questions designed for the qualitative phase of the study can be summarised as follows:

1. What is your role and what are your academic expectations regarding the ELLs in your mainstream class?
2. Is there anything you do differently regarding your instruction or assessment for ELLs? If so, what do you do?
3. When should ELLs be included in regular mainstream classes?
4. How can the school better support the academic needs of English language learners?
5. What kind of ESL/language acquisition training have you received and what effect do you think this training has had on your classroom practice?

A complete list of questions developed for use during teacher interviews, titled *Teacher Interview Protocol*, appears in Appendix E. These questions provided a way to gather data to address each research question of the study, and in the process, develop an understanding of how teachers perceive their role in teaching ELLs and what they do in response. Additional questions were asked to probe further into teachers' expectations and classroom practices.

6.1.2 Teacher Interviews

Individual interviews helped to explore teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of ELLs and their response to their inclusion in the mainstream. A purposeful sample of six semi-structured interviews (*n* = 6) took place in the classrooms of each of the participating teachers involved in this study. Each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes.

In using this semi-structured interviewing format, open questions were then followed up by more specific probing questions (Glesne, 2010). These questions sought to explore how teachers felt about their role in both supporting the language development of ELLs while teaching them content. Additional questions were asked during interviews to help understand: (a) the background and experience of teachers in teaching ELLs; (b) teachers' academic expectations and self-efficacy in regard to ELLs; (c) how teachers challenge and at the same time support ELLs; and (d) what, modifications teachers make to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Some questions were also asked to determine how teachers positioned themselves in relation to the ELLs they teach and discover if they see their position as a teacher of English and content, or just of content alone.

Triangulation to increase the validity of this study was achieved by comparing and analysing feedback from the open response items on the survey with interview data, and interview transcripts. Although a sequential explanatory mixed methods approach did not require the researcher to converge and merge quantitative and qualitative (Creswell, 2008) an audit trail, member checks, and rich-thick descriptions of qualitative data were compared to survey data and used to strengthen the internal validity of the research findings.

6.1.3 Focus Group Meeting

After an analysis of data from surveys and one-on-one interviews, a focus group meeting was convened at the school in March 2015. Department heads from each of the three school levels (K-12) were invited and agreed to participate in the focus group meeting (*n* = 9). In alignment with Merriam's (2009) recommendations regarding focus

groups, this study used a purposeful sampling of approximately ten participants, who generally do not interact with each other on a daily basis and are “people who know most about the topic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 94). In contrast to the detailed, candid responses sought in teachers’ interviews, the purpose of the focus group meeting was to guide a discussion of teachers’ perspectives regarding their role and what happens in the classroom at each school level to scaffold instruction for English language learners.

One week before the focus group meeting the department heads in the school received an invitation to attend, a consent form and information form for the study via e-mail. At the beginning of the meeting, I explained that participation was voluntary, data would remain confidential and that pseudonyms would be used to report comments made. I also explained details regarding ethical protection and the study. These included the aim of this research study and the ability of the focus group participants to freely withdraw their data and themselves from the study.

To establish a safe, non-threatening environment to reveal perspectives, a short segment from the *Lingo* video from the *ESL in the Mainstream Tutor Training Course* (developed by the South Australian Department of Education and Training) was shown to focus group participants. This video segment showed English language learners who explained their frustrations in trying to learn English and content concurrently, and actors assuming the role of teachers charged with teaching ELL students who described how they perceived their role in teaching ELLs in a mainstream setting.

Following this, I showed focus group participants a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the survey and interview findings of the study. Department heads were then given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study’s aims, methodology, and data and were invited to make comments and share their experience and insight. The participants were then grouped and asked to respond freely on Post-it-Notes to the following guiding questions, based on key findings from the quantitative phase of the study. These included focus questions included: 1) *What challenges do mainstream teachers face in teaching ELLs?* 2) *What are concerns?* 3) *How can we better support ELL students in mainstream classes?* and 4) *Future: What if we don’t do anything?*

What if we do? These Post-it-Notes were then attached to four separate charts placed around the room and participants were randomly assigned to a group of 3-4 to discuss one of the focus questions and develop a summary statement. After the completion of the task, one representative from each group reported on the small group discussion and then all participants were invited to share their thoughts regarding the study's findings and their relevance to responses posted on the focus question charts. Within 24 hours, a summary of this discussion in mind map form was sent to all participants for their feedback (see Appendices H-K). Focus group participants did not make any suggestions for revision.

6.2 Summary

Data collection and analysis occurred sequentially throughout the qualitative phase of this study. These data enabled some modification of my interview questions and provided an opportunity to change the focus of inquiry as data emerged and as I formed a greater understanding of teacher perspectives and teaching practices. This assortment of data was used to triangulate findings from other qualitative data, verify other information gathered, and develop an understanding of teachers' expectations and perspectives regarding ELLs in mainstream classes. Multiple methods of data collection strengthen the validity of research findings and reduce the risk of misinterpretation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Open responses from the survey and in-depth interviews with open-ended questions from the survey were used to guide further investigation (Patton, 2002), which occurred during focus groups meetings.

To gain quality data, I sought interview participants with diverse perspectives of inclusion and differentiation. One benefit of studying diverse views is that data gathered can be approached and examined through the use of several different but complementary theories, "… with several hypotheses in mind, to see how each fare in relation to the data" (Seale, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 54). These theories included, but were not limited to: positioning theory academic optimism theory, self-efficacy theory, second language acquisition theory and culturally relevant pedagogy. Counter evidence, as

suggested by Creswell (2008), was also analysed. This collection of data allowed an in-depth investigation into diverse perspectives mainstream teachers of ELLs compared to those held by ESL teachers and their peers. It also enabled me to discover how teachers in regular classes challenge and support ELLs in learning both language and the content of their lessons. A discussion of qualitative results and an analysis of data gathered during interviews and the focus group meeting follows in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Qualitative Data Results and Analysis

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how data gathered from interviews with teachers who indicated that they strongly supported or rejected the inclusion of English language learners in mainstream classes enabled the researcher to investigate teacher perspectives, the origin of teacher attitudes, and discover their expectations regarding ELLs. Survey and interview results ($n = 6$) together helped to identify key findings concerning when teachers felt ELLs should join the mainstream. It also helped pinpoint some challenges that emerge for teachers and students when these students enter the mainstream in middle school and high school when academic expectations increase.

In addition, teacher interviews provided a forum for participants to share strategies for teaching ELLs. These participants explain many useful approaches that are supported by research to differentiate instruction to support and challenge ELLs. However, they differ in their opinion of who should provide this instruction and whether or not the use of native languages should be permitted.

The discussion that follows explains how expectations within the school regarding assessment and from outside the school in the form of external exams influenced the expectations of mainstream teachers regarding the academic performance of ELLs. Also, interview and focus group data suggest a need for additional training in the school to support the linguistic needs of these learners better.

Findings from interviews helped to establish parameters for discussion during the focus group meeting. Themes for the focus group discussion included: *Challenges, Concern, Support,* and *Future.* This final phase of the study provided an opportunity to discuss the survey and interview data and helped to isolate concerns and successful approaches to teaching ELLs.

7.1.1 Interview Analysis

In the qualitative phase of the study 30-40 pre-existing codes were used as a lens to view data (Lodico et al., 2006). Codes included: *ELL experience, training, role*, and *vocabulary support,* were used together with codes using phrases and words from the

interviews and survey responses to broaden the scope of the study. Word clouds using Atlas.ti's word crunching feature provided a visual view of themes mentioned and key ideas were used in addition to Boolean logic searches (AND, OR and NOT) of primary documents to provide a quick and economical means of devising codes for an initial analysis. Together, they suggested *Assessment Policy, Admission of ELLs, Future Direction, School Policy* and the *Use of Native Languages* as themes and topics to address each of the study's research questions. Other codes, including: *Differentiation, Teacher Role, Expectations, Training* were considered according to Merriam's (2009) suggestion to employ open or analytical coding.

Variables and codes were compared across interviews and the open survey responses and dated memos were used to triangulate data between transcripts, note emerging patterns and look inductively at primary source data from interviews and the teacher survey. As minor and major hierarchical codes were identified, codes were merged and reduced to 10 first-level codes to address the study's research questions. Categories and interconnecting themes, which were "sensitive to data, mutually exhaustive, and conceptually congruent" (Merriam, 2009, p. 186) then served as a foundation for a thematic discussion of the findings. These final themes and topics included: *Admission of ELLs, Assessment Policy, Differentiation, Expectations, Future Direction, Inclusion, Professional Learning Community, Teacher's Role, Training and Native Language (L1).*

All interviews were then recorded and transcribed with the help of voice recognition software. Transcripts were re-read several times while listening to the audio recordings made and then shared with individual participants within 24-hours to check for accuracy. Following member checks, I embedded transcripts into Atlas.ti software for coding and analysis. To maintain the rigour of qualitative research and ensure the internal validity and reliability of this study, I created an audit trail so that data and findings could be reconfirmed later, if necessary.

7.1.2 Interview Findings

All interview participants appeared eager to share their perspectives and explain their classroom practices. Each spoke with concern and conviction about what they thought they and the school should do to improve the academic achievement of ELLs, although, some teachers differed in their view of who should ultimately be responsible for the language support for these learners. The following six key findings were identified comparing interview data with the results from the survey instrument:

Finding 1: Many teachers expressed concern regarding pushing ELLs into regular mainstream classes until these students have a better grasp of academic English.

Quantitative data from the first phase of research suggested that there was a statistically significant difference between the perspectives of elementary teachers regarding the inclusion of ELLs compared to teachers in middle school (p =.003, p <.05) and high school (p =.025, p <.05). Statistical testing, however, showed that there was no evidence of a difference in perspectives between mainstream middle school teachers and mainstream high school teachers regarding inclusion (p =.126, p >.05).

Teacher interviews in this research phase were used to investigate why elementary teachers viewed the inclusion of ELLs differently and why teachers in all three school levels agreed or disagreed that mainstream teachers should challenge these students. Interviews also helped me delve into why a higher percentage of elementary teachers said in the survey that they would welcome ELLs into their mainstream classes - 92% of elementary teachers agreed compared to 36% and 79% of mainstream teachers in the middle school and high school respectively (Figure 7).

One possible reason for a disparity in results is that all mainstream teachers in the elementary school are required to teach English, in addition to other core subjects. Since these teachers need to support the language development of their students, it seems that many would infuse language activities into assignments in subjects such as science and social studies.

ELLs in the elementary school, unlike ELLs in middle school and high school, have many years available to reach an academic level of English (Calderón 2007;

Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1984). Elizabeth, a mainstream high school teacher, interviewed, suggested that language acquisition for these younger students is much easier. She commented that:

> The young ones I think take less time because they're like sponges… but if we start inserting people in middle school and above the learning I think is not quite as steep… I think if you're going to enroll students at that level that… that's (sic) the ones you have to support. I think the younger ones develop a lot, you know… it's easier for them to develop.
>
> *Figure 16.* Comment by Elizabeth - High school teacher.

While many comments were also positive in middle school, some teachers at this level expressed concerns regarding some ELL's ability to meet the expectations of their core classes. One middle school teacher in the survey said that while he attempted to differentiate instruction, he found that he also had to lower his expectations. This teacher went on to explained that while he understood the need to do this for ELLs he did not like the idea of lowering his standard. Andrew, a second middle school teacher, during one interview, said that many of his students struggle since "all instruction is through English and students must use English at all times." Andrew stated that many students in his core classes:

> ... find it very hard to attain the high academic standards expected of them. This is because for the vast majority of them ... approximately 95%.... English is a second language. They have problems understanding academic English and are weak at reading and writing in the content area.
>
> *Figure 17.* Comment by Andrew - Middle school teacher.

Some other mainstream teachers expressed frustration in attempting to teach students who seemed to have limited English proficiency. One middle school teacher in

the survey wrote: “In my current position I have a wide range of abilities in a class of 20+ and I find this very challenging.” The same teacher went on to say: “My sense is that for many of my weaker students – being mainstreamed is counterproductive – and they are demotivated by their inability to cope with the level.” However, another mainstream teacher in the high school went well beyond the suggestion that ELLs should not be in the mainstream classes and in the survey and expressed the opinion that ELLs should not be admitted to the school at all unless they had a certain level of English competency. This high school teacher wrote in the open-ended section of the survey: “If students are allowed in an English-speaking school there must be a threshold of basic communication necessary, and support for the student outside the school as well.”

Kathleen, a high school teacher interviewed, suggested that ELLs could be included in core content area classes but should be given more language support during the school day. She also explained that unlike the elementary and middle school, the high school did not offer ESL classes, unaware that the school had hired a high school ESL teacher for the 2015-2016 school year to *push-into* mainstream classrooms and *pull-out* students who require additional support. Kathleen remarked:

> I think they should be pulled out of electives there, to help them with their assignments… but in high school, we don’t have a system like that. So ESL… I feel bad… they’re just stuck....
>
> *Figure 18.* Comment by Kathleen - High school teacher.

Elizabeth in the high school expressed similar frustration and explained that the school was “continually enrolling these students who have language acquisition issues” and said, “we’re really struggling” …. “It’s a real problem for sure.” She suggested that “in the end the responsibility falls to the individual teacher who has had no training or has had no dialogue” with others about how to differentiate their instruction. Elizabeth

explained that mainstream teachers “see this (as an) added responsibility without any conversation.”

Elizabeth also went on to explain that the school should do more to enable teachers and administrators to “communicate their strategies,’ ideals and vision for how to make the school more inclusive of ELLs." She wondered aloud if the school is “going to address the fact that we have a changing clientele.” Then Elizabeth adds: “Are we going to adjust to that situation and make the correct accommodations? What if the school decided to be the best language acquisition school in Japan?... We’d have people clawing at the door, right?”

It was unclear from the survey and interview data if other mainstream teachers shared the same vision for the school or wish to continue to focus on college preparation by teaching and assessing how they did in the past. Only a few teachers participated in interviews (*n* = 6) and not all mainstream teachers completed and submitted the survey. It was also unfortunate that the interview with Elizabeth was the last one conducted, and there was no opportunity to pursue this line of questioning with other interviewees. Responses from other teachers could have helped illuminate the reasons why some teachers expressed a need for additional staff and training and why some had reservations about differentiating their instruction.

Finding 2: Teachers use a broad range of strategies in their mainstream classes to meet the needs of English language learners.

Interview participants echoed the comment made by Kathleen in the high school that: “it is unfair for students to struggle for a long time to complete the same amount of work as other students.” They also appeared to share the perspective of David, one mainstream teacher in the elementary school who explained during a one-to-one interview:

I see not just a little difference but a pretty big difference in English ability. So, I do see myself modifying things and changing things, whether it's the workload that I give to the students or the depth that I go to depending on where they're at in the classroom.

Figure 19. Comment by David - Elementary school teacher.

David goes on to say, "In any classroom, non-ELLs or full of ELLs, you have varying degrees. No one is exactly the same place, so, I feel I do make modifications. I vary activities a little bit."

Numerous strategies to differentiate instruction and assessment for ELLs were shared in the survey (Appendix D) and during one-to-one interviews. Teacher participants suggested several different visual strategies to scaffold and differentiate instruction for ELLs in the open-ended section of the survey. These included using body language, sketches, audiovisuals, graphs, pictures, timelines, and charts. Other types of strategies, teachers reported included: carefully selecting culturally and linguistically appropriate texts, storytelling and guided reading, pre-teaching key subject-specific vocabulary, humor, modified assignments, extending deadlines for assignments, checking notes after class to make sure ELL students understand concepts taught and providing additional time to complete tests.

Clarifying instruction was an additional strategy cited to differentiate instruction for ELLs. One mainstream teacher wrote in the open-response section of the survey that they "use simple, short sentences for making the directions and explanations clearer to them, enunciating in a loud, clear voice so that they can understand better." The teacher suggested that they "also make sure to ask if they are following and not left behind."

Another strategy frequently mentioned during interviews was providing ELL students with additional instruction during school, at recess or after school. Maria said during her interview that she reminds the students to see her at lunchtime or after school

if they need any additional help. In her words: "They can just drop in, even if they know I am marking papers."

One mainstream teacher goes over test questions with ELL students after school and Paul, an elementary teacher, stated that he enlisted the help of parents and explained: "If I see a persistent area of weakness that I think is quite crucial I would let the… the parents know and have the students take home some things they can work with." David, a colleague in elementary school, said, "I don't like doing this, and I know I will have to change my ways but I have them stay in for one of the recesses…. so I can work one-to-one with them." He added: "I don't like it because I know there's importance in going out and socialising… But that's the only time I can find" and then concludes: "I find that like 15 minutes of recess time I could (sic) talk with them without it being so loud and noisy and distracting to the student."

The most common method suggested for differentiating instruction, and mentioned in the literature (O'Brien, 2007), however, was to assign each ELL student a partner to act as a de facto teacher aide. This partner could, as suggested by one survey participant, explain information in the ELL student's mother tongue to help them. Elizabeth also said that she used reciprocal teaching and has students tutor others. She explained that:

> I find it beneficial to… I think it's really actually the person doing the tutoring because they have to articulate what's going on… but it also helps those that are struggling… and to be honest, the students that are struggling are language acquisition students.
>
> *Figure 20.* Comment by Elizabeth - High school teacher.

David in the elementary school suggested that he paid "quite a lot of attention to pairing who goes with who, and they do buddy activities." David also explained that he has "the stronger students help the weaker ones." A third teacher wrote in the survey that it is useful to expose ELL students to "oral discussions and activities where they are

in a group or partner (sic) who can guide and support them." A fourth suggested in the open-response section of the survey that mainstream classrooms should "have as many communicative activities as possible (small groups) to allow ESL students to interact orally with students from English speaking backgrounds" since this experience "develops communication skills."

Many teachers who participated in an interview reported that they had no problem explaining to their native speaking students why they differentiated their instruction for ELLs and others struggling academically. The following vignette, taken from an interview with David, one mainstream teacher in the elementary school, illustrates this point:

> We just explain to everybody the different points of the learning curve and 'you need to do this because of where you're at. This person needs to do this because of where they're at'– just a real honest explanation. Students really get it. So I have never had any issues and think it's fine.
>
> *Figure 21.* Comment by David - Elementary school teacher.

Like these students, mainstream teachers appeared to agree with the need to differentiate instruction for ELLs in regular classes. One middle school teacher wrote on the survey about the need for all teachers to modify and differentiate their teaching practices to allow ELLs to become fully engaged in mainstream lessons. She commented: "Lessons should provide opportunities for guided support from the teacher and help from peers so that all students can participate in activities, irrespective of their level of English proficiency." The teacher also expressed a view that content area teachers should support the language needs of the ELLs in their classes. According to the teacher: "All teachers should be able to use ESL strategies in their classroom as part of their differentiation skill set – especially those who work with linguistically and culturally diverse students."

While many teachers seemed to agree that ESL strategies are necessary, they disagreed if they or a support teacher should be the one responsible for using them. There was also some disagreement regarding which differentiation strategies would best meet the needs of ELLs. One topic in particular which seemed to divide mainstream teachers, was whether or not native languages should be utilised in content area classes.

Finding 3: Teachers throughout the school varied in their opinion of whether or not ELL students should be allowed to use their native language in class.

Using the students' native language was suggested in the survey as one way to differentiate instruction for ELLs. Responses in the survey and face-to-face interviews with mainstream teachers showed that they varied greatly in how they perceived the use of a mother tongue in the classroom. Similar to the responses reported in the survey (see Table 4) with approximately 48.6% of the mainstream teachers surveyed favoring the use of native language, 28.6% neutral and 22.9% against, interviews also revealed a wide range of opinion. Congruent to the survey findings, interviewed teachers across and within grade levels varied in their opinion of whether or not the school should allow the use of native languages in the classroom - even within school levels.

One high school teacher in the survey suggested that one way to help English language learners in a mainstream class is to "Partner the student with another who can explain information in mother tongue." He also suggested that the teacher could "Allow student (sic) to read class novels (when available) in mother tongue or audio version."

Paul, an elementary teacher, during a one-to-one interview said that the use of native language in the classroom is justified if there is something ELLs "really don't understand." David, another teacher agreed and remarked that "… if it comes to a point where you can't understand stuff… your native language…. I think that's fine", but suggested the teacher should use this strategy "only after we know the students have tried to make some amount of effort." Andrew in the middle school seemed to also agree and said that mainstream teachers have to find a way to communicate with ELL students when they "cannot understand the concepts if they cannot understand the words."

Other teachers at other school levels also supported the idea of using the students' native language to some extent to make the content in mainstream classes more accessible. Kathleen in the high school explained that if a Japanese ELL has trouble comprehending something she will explain in Japanese. According to Kathleen, sometimes as the language become more difficult and the concepts more complex, it helps to “understand the subject through other languages.” For this reason, Kathleen explained a Korean student, for example, might use “a Korean textbook” to supplement his or her learning.

Paul commented: “it is beneficial for them to use their native language” and explained that the research he did as part of his graduate training supported the view that teachers should aim to develop the students’ literacy in their native language (L1) and English (L2). He also suggested that a strong foundation in a language helps students to “learn in a new language” such as English.

David said when describing the faculty at his previous school “…they’re all about embracing all languages… was really interesting and it worked.” He stated that his former school worked hard to communicate with non-English speaking parents - conducting student conferences at the school in other languages such as Korean, English and Hindi. According to David “…whatever language the parents were comfortable talking to and listening to, ah, they would use that.” David then said that the policy in this school is different and that this type of communication “…. has to be strictly English.”

The *English-only* rule in the elementary school was also mentioned by other mainstream teachers. Paul, another mainstream teacher of ELL students, confirmed the school’s English-only policy and confided:

I know, I know, it kind of goes against the (name of school deleted) rule, but I tell them if there's something, you know, here school is a place where you learn. I can understand that you might not have the vocabulary for it. If it's Japanese, just say how do you say "blab, blab, blab" whatever the Japanese word is in English? In that sense, I don't mind... if the English really doesn't come out – it's fine, but the first thing they have to do is try to say it in other words because that's part of learning a language too. If you don't know the word for it, just re-phrase it.

Figure 22. Comment by Paul - Elementary school teacher

For Andrew in middle school, however, the school's *English Only* policy was a source of frustration, and he spoke passionately about the topic and the problems of limiting struggling ELL students to L1 in their regular classes. Andrew remarked:

We hear students speaking Japanese and then we sometimes punish them... but look, they have their rights... Is that not part of their learning to be able... we keep on saying 'Oh, we should be able to help the students to express themselves' but how if the only way to express themselves is to say it in their mother tongue. Are we going to say no?

Figure 23. Comment by Andrew - Middle school teacher.

He also expressed concern in limiting ELL students to English outside of the classroom. Andrew explained that the school has a "policy of only speaking Japanese in the Japanese classroom," and felt that this means that teachers should "discourage students from speaking Japanese around the campus." Andrew, however, explained that the *No Japanese Policy* does not apply to most ELL students and discriminates against Japanese speakers. He stated:

I've never heard though anybody complaining about students speaking Korean or Chinese. It's only Japanese. Most of them… 'He's speaking Japanese.' Right? But then I've also heard um… students speaking Jap… Chinese. I don't know if that's Mandarin or whatever, and if they see you, they stop.

Figure 24. Comment by Andrew - Middle school teacher.

Andrew then asks "Why only Japanese?" and said that it was "interesting" that this policy exists, given it is not relevant to a significant portion of the ELL population at the school who use a mother-tongue other than English. Andrew also suggested that teachers who only speak one language may "…not be able to understand how difficult it is to learn a second language" and may have "no sympathy" and "compassion" for the plight of these students.

The frustration this teacher felt seemed to be best described by one comment he made during our interview:

The reality is once you get out of the classroom you use the language that is much easier to express your ideas and so I understand what's going on with these students. Not only Japanese, but also Koreans… but of course it's a school policy, so I just tell them (to) speak English.

Figure 25. Comment by Andrew - Middle school teacher.

Elizabeth in high school said that she was unsure of the school's policy concerning speaking English in and outside of the classroom. Later she commented that "there's no real rule, and no one knows what's going on." Elizabeth also acknowledged that she held conflicting views of whether or not ELL students should be using their native language in her mainstream classroom, commenting, "I've got to admit I'm mixed on that." She also explained that if these students "don't practice the English

they're going to be constantly translating back and forth, and I don't see how that works... because the words don't translate." Elizabeth lamented:

> If you have a young man who is struggling, and he has a peer next to him that has a little bit more expertise, and he can explain it better in his native language, I, you know, I encourage that too. So, let's just say I hope that there's not a real rule at school about it because I flop like a fish out of water sometimes on that.
>
> *Figure 26.* Comment by Elizabeth - High school teacher.

In respect to a school rule regarding using languages other than English, Kathleen, also a mainstream teacher in the high school admitted that she allowed her ELL students to use their L1 as a means of differentiating instruction. However, she stated, during the interview said: "We're getting into a gray area because the high school does not have a language policy."

Andrew in the middle school very pragmatically explained his interpretation of what he thought was the school's policy at his level regarding the use of native languages in mainstream classrooms in this way:

> I have read the arguments for and against this. In my opinion, the native language can be used as a last resort. It is better for the student to understand the content in his native language than not at all because of a school rule.
>
> *Figure 27.* Comment by Andrew - Middle school teacher.

Andrew went on to describe how he has seen this work in his own classroom: "Sometimes I see Korean kids explaining to a friend in Korean and I see the student suddenly understand the content and being able to progress, rather than sitting there…. not understanding and then giving up."

These interview conversations together with the quantitative data from the survey given to mainstream teachers appear to suggest that more could and should be done to articulate clearly the school's position regarding when it is acceptable to use L1 in the classroom. Without doubt, there are many benefits to using another language when students become frustrated, are stressed and sense that they have to find a way to make themselves' understood. Research supports the use of native languages and suggests that incorporating native language into bilingual (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010) and even sheltered English classes increases the quality and effectiveness of learning (Francis, Lesaux, & August, 2006; Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). As mentioned in recommendations in Chapter 7, any decision regarding how and when teachers might allow ELLs to use another language should be based on current research and best practices.

Finding 4: Assessment procedures, perceptions of effort, school, and outside expectations influenced mainstream teachers' expectations regarding the academic performance of English language learners.

Several factors appeared to influence the assessment practices used by mainstream teachers in this setting to grade their ELL students. High school teachers explained that external assessment such as the International Baccalaureate Program (IB), dictated that while instruction should be differentiated, assessment should not. Some elementary teachers explained that since their report cards they write for their students enable them to use a different grading scale for English language learners, then assessment is relatively straightforward. These students receive grades of "S' satisfactory, "S+" above an expected level of achievement, "S-" below expectations, or "NI" – in need of improvement. In contrast, their mainstream teacher counterparts in the middle school and high school are faced with the dilemma of assessing ELL students on

the same grading scale as their English-speaking peers. Looking back at quantitative data from the survey instrument it appears that several teachers modified grades but not their differentiation of instruction or assignments (Figure 10). This disparity between ELLs' knowledge and understanding and their grades for core subjects suggests, for lack of a modified grading scale, some grades are inflated to encourage effort and maintain students' motivation and self-esteem.

Most responses from the elementary teachers when asked about their assessment practices during interviews explained how they differentiated their instruction and prepared ELL students for tests. David, an elementary teacher, explained that he does not tell these students “what will be on the test” but has a discussion with them about “the things we studied” and “the concepts we’ve talked about.” During tests, this teacher explains, he will:

> ...scan their answers to see if it really matches what the question is and if it’s really off, that means they don’t get it, which means I need to re-phase and explain the question again, but then I just pull them aside.
>
> *Figure 28.* Comment by David - Elementary school teacher.

David said that at this level “… you don't study… just so long as you pay attention, you understand what is going on…. the tests are not that difficult.” He also added that just so long as students made an effort, they would not receive a failing grade. A high school teacher supported this policy regarding ELL students and stated: “the only thing I expect from them is ... definitely effort.” Paul also emphasized the importance of effort and a growth mindset. He stated during an interview that:

> It's all about effort and of course, they may… they may not be up to par with the other students but I think *effort* (emphasis added) goes a long way and if you don't recognize that … that's all they've got to cling onto at that point, right? Knowing that they're already a bit lower or a bit behind the other kids, so no, that's pretty devastating.
>
> *Figure 29.* Comment by Paul - Elementary school teacher.

Elizabeth in the high school agreed that effort is important for ELL students and said that although she was limited to IB regulations regarding assessment and that "…we're all on the same playing field, and we're having to be compared against not only other people in our classes but every other person in the world," differentiation is used in the classroom to the extent that "the student would have to try to get an F in my class." Elizabeth continued to explain during the one-to-one interview that:

> If a student is giving consistent effort and you see that he's being challenged and is challenging himself…. I just don't necessarily believe that the "F" represents what happens in the class. So, um… in my class you'd have to do a pretty good job of laziness in order to get an "F."
>
> *Figure 30.* Comment by Elizabeth - High school teacher.

Paul an elementary teacher, in contrast, explained that while English language learners might earn failing grades for tests and assignments, these scores were not reported to parents in the students' report cards. He explained the process for doing this as follows:

What I have done in this class is put "needs improvement" and overwritten their "fail" mark, even if they've given effort and um… they were expected to achieve a "C" or a "D" by the end of the year, but it's just taken them longer to pick up the language and also understand the math concepts, so nobody is given an "F." They are just given "needs improvement" and a comment was written on the report to explain that.

Figure 31. Comment by Paul - Elementary school teacher.

Paul added that he thought that this was a good way to report grades to parents and said "I think the parents were also happy because that's their record…. and they don't want to have an "F" when it was because of the language barrier." Kathleen in the high school concurred and commented that "the way the school wants the grading done" is to not "penalize students for their English skills" if the subject they are taking is not English. Kathleen explained that she did not "pay much attention to errors in English writing and did not take points off for a presentation "because they can't speak clearly."

Some teachers reported that they had found an equitable way to grade their ELL students. One middle school teacher explained in his comment on the survey instrument that: "I modify the grading system and the amount of work considering that they cannot communicate enough of what they want to say and write."

Maria explained during an interview that many middle school students do not understand questions on tests "so they will either guess or leave the question blank." She stated that this was mostly a "language issue" and did not reflect what students actually understood the concepts covered in class. Maria added that she tries to pre-teach academic vocabulary and meets with students after school to go over tests, and during a testing period will "spend more of the test time explaining what the questions mean." Maria also found that adapting tests so that 60% of questions are in simple English, and 40% are at a higher level seems to help ELL students grasp the meaning of most questions while challenging more capable, native-level speakers.

Kathleen in the high school responded that she felt she should be reasonably objective with students regarding assessment especially since she teaches the IB program. She explained that the IB standards dictated grades but said "I don't think we have really done this in the high school… talked about what do grades really mean…" Kathleen also stated that policies for accepting or rejecting late assignments at this level are unclear and vary depending on the teacher and explained: "there's a big battle between accepting late assignments or not." This difference in policy suggests that some disagreement regarding assessment standards may result in differing teacher expectations.

Andrew, a mainstream teacher in the middle school, was shown histograms of the survey results and explained that teachers also differ significantly in their opinion on whether assessment should be differentiated for ELL students. In response, he commented: "I am not surprised that everyone is divided. There is no clear guidance at the school how we should be assessing our students. What do the experts say?" Andrew added: "I think we need to look at how we assess as a school."

In addition to a clear policy regarding the use of the mother tongue in the classroom, it seems clear that more discussion is needed to develop a consensus regarding assessment practices – particularly those related to English language learners. The Council of International Schools (CIS), one of the two organizations providing accreditation, suggest that the school should support the "...development of fluency in the language(s) of instruction, in another language, and - with as much support as the school can offer - in student mother tongues" (Standard A3d, Council of International Schools, 2016).

Finding 5: Several mainstream teachers in the survey explained that intervention to support and challenge ELL students should be provided by ESL teachers or a teacher's aide.

One key research question for this research project is whether or not mainstream teachers see themselves as teachers of language to ELL students, in addition to content. Although the survey data provided some insight, the data from interviews with teachers

who strongly favored or disagreed with the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream proved to be far more meaningful.

Paul, an elementary teacher hinted at how he perceived his role and how linguistic support could be provided to ELL students by stating in the survey that: "It would be great to have ESL teachers or aides in the class to assist the mainstream teacher." Another high school teacher responded on the survey that: "ESL students in the mainstream class are not a problem if a TA is provided." David, an elementary teacher, commented:

> If we're really in it for kids, yeah, I think that they should be mainstreamed, and they should have the support, and they should be… they should have someone else in the classroom with them to make those bumps a little smoother.
>
> *Figure 32.* Comment by David - Elementary school teacher.

David suggested that a language acquisition specialist could be helpful for ELL students, especially at "times like English and Social Studies when, it's text heavy, heavy conversation." Paul, another teacher, echoed this need for a support teacher in the mainstream classroom and said: "I think if the teacher's time is being taken up by the ESL students then I think that is the ESL teacher's role… if they are slowing down the rest of the class." Paul then went on to explain a situation where they felt an ESL teacher needed to intervene:

In math class, there were a couple of boys who came with barely any English, but the stayed in the math class. They can do calculations and they can … but couldn't read the written instructions…. So, that needed to be explained to them or demonstrated to them. And sometimes I would spend a lot of extra time helping them… as long as the rest of the class was able to do work independently… but if the rest of the class need help then I kind of … ah… put off helping them.

Figure 33. Comment by Paul - Elementary school teacher.

Paul conceded: "I feel the main priority was the majority of the students…. I can't just sit one-on-one with two of them when the other ones need further explanation as well." In the same vain, Kathleen, a high school teacher when asked the role of the content area teacher in regard to teaching English language learners replied: "I would say, I personally don't see much of a role... ah… and I think I should… when I actually get the roster, I don't get to see who is classified as ESL." Then later in the interview, Kathleen stated that among her 250 students, she had little idea of how many really need ESL support. Kathleen suggested:

... the best answer is "Oh, get a tutor" … but the tutors are…. But you know, tutors are not effective, so if the school can have a serious pull out to assist ESL students … I think that's one of the one the most important things … I think that's all the school needs.

Figure 34. Comment by Kathleen - High school teacher.

Elizabeth, a mainstream teacher from high school, however, was more direct and stated during her interview:

There is a limited amount we can do because we have to teach a subject. We are not ESL experts, so I think a lot of teachers assume that ESL issues should be taken care of by an ESL teacher.

Figure 35. Comment by Elizabeth - High school teacher.

The teacher, however, went on to say that while mainstream teachers may not have the expertise to support ELL students fully, they should understand that they have a role to play in their English development. She commented during a one-to-one interview that we "all have engrained in your heads, we all teach content, but we're all English teachers per se" and suggested that it would be good for an ESL teacher to work in a mainstream classroom with the content area teacher. Under these circumstances, Elizabeth suggested that teachers should accept working with another adult. Elizabeth stated:

That's a whole part of the training itself. You know, teachers, in general, are always looking for that kind of, you know, "Oh, it's not my responsibility" right? But, right now… "Oh look there's the person that can do that now I… and I just… that's not… that's just not being properly trained.

Figure 36. Comment by Elizabeth - High school teacher.

In contrast, Andrew in the middle school teacher did not suggest that the school hire additional staff to teach ELL students but argued that the mainstream teachers themselves should assume a greater role in helping English language learners develop their L2. Andrew claimed:

> You don't just go into a room and say 'Oh, that's not my problem. Why are you accepting these students?' When… what's your role as a teacher then? You're supposed to teach. You don't expect students to know everything once they get into your classroom… Yeah, it's a challenging part on the part of the teacher, but you've got to accept the challenge and do something else because teaching won't stop there, won't end there.
>
> *Figure 37.* Comment by Andrew - Middle school teacher.

Clearly differences in how mainstream teachers perceive their role in teaching ELL students are a concern. If teachers feel that they only need to teach the content of their subject area and see that teaching English to ELLs as the role of other teachers, then it seems likely that students will not receive the kind of support they need. Alternatively, if teachers feel as though they are responsible for teaching language in addition to content, then they may find that they are frustrated and lack adequate resources and support.

We might expect elementary teachers to be more sympathetic to the language needs of their students since all homeroom teachers teach English in addition to other core subjects. Interview and survey data, however, suggest that this is not always the case and that some teachers may only see themselves as fully responsible once a student leaves the *push-pull out* ESL class and has acquired a level of English similar to his or her peers.

Further discussion regarding the role of mainstream teachers in teaching English language learners is needed. This exchange of ideas would give teachers an opportunity for mainstream teachers to share their perspectives and enable the school to either clearly articulate the teacher's role or create additional positions for support staff in the school who will assume this role in supporting ELLs. In the interim, since roles are unclear, it seems likely that in many classrooms, while there is some attempt to

differentiate instruction, not enough is being done to meet the needs of the school's culturally and linguistically diverse population.

Finding 6: The majority of mainstream teachers indicated that they would like additional training to meet the needs of the ELL students in their mainstream class.

Survey results indicated that 71.4% of mainstream teachers at all three school levels would like additional training, 51.4% agree that they have adequate ESL training, and 54.2% that they have adequate training and knowledge about language acquisition to work with ESL students. These results indicate that although approximately half of the mainstream teachers in the faculty believe they have sufficient training, another half do not. This finding and the qualitative data collected in this phase of research suggest a need exists to provide the teachers with access to more training and professional development specific to differentiating instruction for English language learners in the mainstream classes.

Admittedly, some teachers during interviews and in the survey stated that they had received adequate training before coming to the school and felt prepared to meet the challenge of teaching in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. One teacher reported in the survey that they "have been trained using the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) Model and have used it for four years." This teacher explained how this training helped him scaffold instruction (Gibbons, 2002) and clearly define objectives "before beginning a class." Elizabeth, who was interviewed said that her initial teaching credential "was all about differentiation" and had a lot of emphasis on creating challenging tasks and working with students who were struggling and "struggling to get up to what we might class, the acceptable level."

Some other teachers during interviews said that they had received some training as part of a graduate course. Maria in the middle school commented: "I have received no specific training from the school" and explained: "My knowledge comes from my experience as an ESL teacher and my research for a thesis I did a few years ago." Andrew, a second teacher, also at the middle school level said that his "training was limited to reading and discussions that I participated in as part of a master's program."

However, while some teachers indicated in the survey or a face-to-face interview that they had received training and were using this expertise to differentiate instruction for English language learners, many others cited a lack of training as a source of frustration (Kusuma-Powell & Powell, 2001). One middle school teacher in the open-ended section of the survey responded:

> My work in my current school involves a large number of ESL students. I realize that many of my teaching strategies do not meet the needs of ESL learners – party because of a lack of training and partly because of time constraints.

One high school teacher also hinted that a need exists for some mainstream teachers to modify their teaching practices. This mainstream teacher wrote in the survey:

> I think the type of instruction used by a teacher is the challenge. Traditional methodologies that are teacher-centered make differentiation difficult, but changing the paradigm to student-centered creates a more comfortable environment for second language acquisition; lowering the affective filter.

Another high school teacher expressed a need for professional development. She wrote: "I advocate for ESL students" but then explained "…teachers need training. Even great teachers may not be able to accommodate ESL students without the proper training." Curiously, this teacher indicated on the survey that she did not have adequate training and knowledge to work with ELL students and responded neutrally to the survey item asking if they were "interested in receiving more training to work with ESL students."

Some teachers acknowledged that they lack training but explained that they were learning how to support ELL students while on the job. David, an elementary teacher, interviewed said in response to a question about the ESL/language acquisition training they have received: "I have not received anything. So, I'm kind of learning as I go." When I asked where he gets ideas from, David responded: "Well, obviously sometimes I Google search if I have questions, but I just kind of make decisions on the spot." After

some thought, he added: “It’s true – I do talk to other ESL teachers and say… like if you have students like this what would you have done and just ask their opinion.”

During an interview with Paul, another elementary teacher, he suggested that one of the five things the school could do to support ELL students would be to have more knowledgeable educators who know how to differentiate instruction (Tomlinson, 2010). The depth of this expertise and length and detail of teacher training will, of course, depend on a few things. Survey and interview findings suggest the school will need to clearly define the role of mainstream teachers regarding teaching ELLs and that the teachers receive additional support from ESL trained staff to help ELL students in the mainstream or that they assume this responsibility.

While teachers such as David use Google to find lesson plans and activities to use with these boys and girls, a more direct and systemic form of professional development seems necessary. One elementary teacher stressed during an interview that we should “make sure that ESL teachers are trained” as well as the mainstream teachers. The teacher then explained what kind of training they thought was necessary: “I don’t think they have to have a degree of it (sic). They don’t have to have some English as a second language, additional language degree, but they’ve had the experience, they know what they’re doing.”

Elizabeth in the high school agreed and commented during an interview - “if you’ve got trained teachers, and you have support staff… It’s a pretty positive situation.” She added that: “You need to train teachers… and that’s not cheap.” This is a good point but the need for “more collaboration” is also another important point made by one elementary teacher.

Perhaps using a structure such as professional learning communities (PLCs) could fulfill a need for greater collaboration among teachers. This option would allow the school to establish a relatively inexpensive system for ongoing professional development using the expertise of teachers at the school. This type of professional development is in contrast to ineffective one-shot training (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011) and aims to make a difference in the academic achievement of ELLs

(Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Rueda & Garcia, 1996). Further discussion of professional learning communities emerged from the focus group meeting phase of this study with participants suggesting a collaborative approach to developing policies and strategies to assist English language learners in the school. A detailed description of how a professional learning community model might work in the school is provided in the next chapter.

7.1.3 Focus Group Findings

A focus group meeting was held in March 2015 and lasted for approximately one and a half hours. Pre-determined questions used in the field-test guided discussion and led to the creation of several central themes, referred to in the meeting as: *Challenges, Concern, Support,* and *Future.* Data from this meeting were used to compare, contrast and discover perspectives regarding the perceived role of teachers in teaching ELLs, how confident teachers feel they can meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners, their academic expectations of ELLs, and what they do or do not do in their classrooms to differentiate instruction for ELLs.

Discussion during the focus group meeting regarding the theme of *Challenges* (Appendix H) suggested, “There is no magic bullet” to address the needs of ELLs adequately in the mainstream and precipitated a discussion of the difficulties associated with differentiating instruction and assessment. Several participants suggested that it was time for the school to begin to consider how the curriculum can be structured to support ELLs without diminishing standards and teacher expectations. Department heads also appeared to agree that there are now multiple levels of English ability in each class. Regarding assessment and reporting, participants expressed concern about how teachers might achieve the learning standards designed for native English speakers. One focus group member explained that it was difficult “finding time to differentiate instruction but also to resource it.” Another from the elementary school asked, “How can we differentiate with so many different levels in the one class?”

Other challenges to providing adequate ELL support cited by the group included large class sizes and a lack of teacher training. Smaller classes, some department heads

suggested would allow teachers to spend more class time with ELLs. Additional training, explained participants, would provide teachers with knowledge to identify specific learner needs and strategies they can employ in their mainstream classrooms.

The group also discussed how the school's clientele has changed in recent years and that more and more ELL students are entering mainstream classrooms (WASC & CIS Five-Year Joint Report, 2013). One high school participant expressed the view that "Lecturing is not working for ELL students… I think one of the issues is instructional strategies… I thought the video (Lingo) was very telling about what goes on at our campus." Another participant from the middle school agreed that mainstream teachers in the school need to understand the learning needs of the increasing number of ELLs in their content area classes and modify their instruction accordingly. The teacher added:

> And we've got to get over this water cooler talk about saying 'Oh, our kids are changing, and we don't have the same ones we had before… (name of school deleted) is changing…' and go with what's going on with the rest of the world… and change, probably change our whole idea of being a school.

The second theme of *Concerns* (Appendix I) also became the catalyst for discussion of class size, and some participants suggested that differentiating instruction for ELLs in a mainstream classroom of 24 students is difficult. These teachers suggested that this problem could be addressed with lower staffing ratios, greater support in the classroom or by revising the school's admission policy. Some concern was also expressed whether increased support for ELLs in the mainstream will slow the progress of their native-speaking peers. Others said that there were times when an ELL student was diagnosed with problems with language acquisition and was struggling in the mainstream only for teachers to learn later that the student had an underlying learning disability. "Often," suggested one focus group member, it is easy to "lump problems to do with a second language" together with other issues (Zehr, 2010). This teacher explained, "there could be a whole lot of other things complicating matters from my point of view... from what I see there is not a lot of professional support to do that."

Participants also discussed learning support and suggested that the current pull out system used in the elementary and middle school could be more effective. *Direct learning* it was suggested, occurs in context and that learning in content areas should be through English rather than simply in English. One department head present at the meeting also added that students can experience a drop in their achievement after long periods away from school. He suggested that teachers and parents should provide more opportunities to practice the academic English they learn at school and stated “We need to lengthen the time that kids are speaking English… Ten-weeks summer holiday…. There needs to be some English during that time… Three weeks Christmas holiday." Although other focus group participants appeared to agree with this comment, no suggestions were offered regarding, for now, these students could increase their exposure to English during vacation periods.

Teachers’ expectations were also investigated in this study and a theme that emerged in focus group discussion. Frustration in assessing ELLs in mainstream classes was mentioned in one-on-one teacher interviews and again triggered concern during the focus group meeting. Some focus group participants wondered aloud: “Are grades fair?” and asked others if we should pass students if they fail to meet grade-level standards. “Could,” asked some middle school and high school participants, “the school offer a non-IB track for ELL students who struggle academically?” Some department heads asked if teachers should slow instruction down to differentiate and whether this might lead to mainstream teachers dumbing-down curriculum and diluting content. Rather than drop standards or risk students failing to meet IB requirements, suggested participants, the school should emphasize rigour for all students while supporting ELL students as they work toward achieving realistic goals. This demand for greater challenge supports the assertion by Echevarría, Frey, and Fisher (2015), that ELLs deserve a challenging and rigorous education and have the ability to “participate fully in rigorous lessons and achieve high academic standards” (p. 23).

When asked for recommendations to help ELLs, one teacher replied, that "assessment is a big one.” This teacher then went on to say “If we modify grades for

ELLs are we doing that consistently across grade levels the same way from grade to grade... I think that has to be looked at." This comment about assessment led to a deeper discussion about the need for specific policies at the school and the need for "some kind of agreements." Policies, which one participant insisted must be based on research.

Another theme emerging from survey and interview data was *Support* (Appendix J) and when I asked department heads several suggested hiring teachers trained in ELL strategies and best practices. In agreement with research (Ovando, Collier & Combs, 2003), these "specialist aides" explained participants, could push into regular mainstream classes, model appropriate English support and work collaboratively with core teachers to team teach classes. Some in the group also suggested that specific instruction and support in mainstream classes could and should become a major feature of intervention to help ELL students. Mainstream teachers, participants suggested, could embed an approach such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) into core lessons and purchase supplementary resources to support ELLs while providing consistent instruction and assessment. Such classes would, according to focus group participants, be differentiated and skill orientated. Another suggestion made, and supported by research (Marzano, 2009; Sandoval, 2011; Zmuda et al., 2004), was that department heads or faculty liaisons could meet on a regular, perhaps weekly basis to discuss and share appropriate instructional strategies.

The fourth theme discussed was the *Future* (Appendix K) of language learners at the school, "What," asked a guiding question shared with the focus group, "will be the impact if we intervene and respond more effectively to the needs of linguistically challenged students, and what might happen if we do not?" In response, participants explained that a great deal depends on how teacher view the linguistic ability of their students. According to one participant "I think we need to think of bilingualism as valuable and not just oh, they're not being English speakers" (Focus Group, March 2015).

Similar to recommendations made by some teachers during the interview phase of this study, members of the focus group also recommended a collaborative approach to

develop policies and plan curriculum to support students. Focus group participants also agreed that there was a need for teachers in the school to develop a consensus regarding policies such as the assessment of ELLs and the use of native languages in mainstream classrooms. One department head present at the focus group meeting stated, "I think that we get on the same page about a lot of this stuff… all working towards the same thing." Another commented:

> How about instead of, I guess I should say, isolation between the levels or divisions, we kind of come together as a group… as a school… The teachers need time to become somewhat of a professional learning community of some sort, rather than isolated conversations (sic).

Immediately following this, another participant suggested that establishing this kind of professional community would be his "number one recommendation." The teacher also suggested that these conversations "will be long conversations" but that they will produce a unified decision, based on research that will lead to effective intervention for ELLs. People who do not "want to get on the same page" the teacher suggested, will leave. Common agreements, explained focus group participants, would also help to prevent teachers acting unilaterally with an attitude that "I believe this and they're telling me this (sic) but I'm going to do what I want anyway."

These comments corresponded to suggestions made by individual teachers during one-one-one interviews. They also highlighted the need for school-wide discussion of current practices and policies and the need for a collaborative approach to developing curriculum and instructional strategies.

7.2 Summary

While some teachers may report a willingness to teach ELLs both language and content, given that beliefs and attitudes do not always have an impact on instruction, it is hard to investigate the extent one influences the other. A more detailed study that goes beyond the reported practices of teachers and specifically looks at what happens in the classroom is needed. An awareness of how teachers modify curriculum and instruction

and why they choose to do so, however, may provide some insight into how they view both their role in teaching ELLs in mainstream classes.

A small sample size (n = 6) for teacher interviews limited the ability to generalize the results of the qualitative part of this study to other schools and settings. Yet, the study did provide some insight into diverse teacher views and illuminate some of the reasons that teachers at this school setting and other mainstream teachers who teach ELL students may choose the instructional practices they do.

A focus group of department heads (n = 9) was convened in March 2015. Data from this focus group meeting were also used to help answer an important core question central to this study – *How and why do some mainstream teachers choose (or not choose) to modify classroom practices to accommodate the linguistic needs of English language learners?* While some teachers revealed in their survey responses, interviews, and in the focus group meeting that they willingly modify their instruction to accommodate the language needs of ELLs, others suggested that this role should be the responsibility of those who have the training and expertise, and hold the position of ESL teacher. The focus group meeting also helped provide opportunities to compare and contrast views and practices of teacher participants and develop specific recommendations for school improvement that are described in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Research Implications

8.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how despite differing views of whether or not ELLs should be integrated into mainstream classes, teachers at the school implement a variety of differentiation strategies to instruct and challenge the ELL students in their classes. Teachers suggested the need for more differentiated instruction and state that a greater amount of training and professional development is needed if the school continues to hold them accountable for the academic achievement of ELLs. Alternatively, many participants suggest that specialist teachers with specific skills can be recruited to meet the needs of this group of learners. Teachers also share two case studies to illustrate how students within the school can struggle to achieve an academic level of English and risk becoming long-term English language learners (LTELLs) if appropriate intervention is not provided.

Discussion in this chapter deals with the influence of school policies regarding assessment and the role of mainstream teachers in regard to the academic achievement of ELLs. It also includes a discussion of programs and initiatives that have the potential to support to meet the needs of language learners in this setting. Among these approaches, the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), professional learning communities (PLCs) and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) are discussed as possible solutions. Although survey and interview participants do not specifically mention a need for the types of programs and approaches mentioned in the literature review, they do explain a number of pressing needs that could be addressed by this kind of intervention.

8.1.1 Discussion

Perhaps the most striking finding of this study was the reaction of teachers at all school levels to the inclusion of ELL students in their mainstream classroom. Despite educators' expectations, perspectives regarding their role and self-reported instructional practices, mainstream teachers overwhelmingly expressed concern and frustration in

their efforts to support English language learners. Many survey participants indicated that they supported inclusion. They explained that they differentiated their instruction to cater to the needs of ELLs (n = 24), and some suggested that they agreed with inclusion but were unable to differentiate (n = 2). Others said that they did not agree with the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream and did not differentiate instruction or indicated that although they did not agree with inclusion (n = 5), they differentiated never-the-less (n = 6). Those who felt that English learners should not be included in mainstream classes until they were proficient in English may have responded to survey items due in part to how they positioned themselves but also expressed a need for either more support or training, additional staff, to teach these ELL students, or both. All interview participants, regardless of how they viewed inclusion and perceived their role, spoke passionately and at length about how they wish they or the school could do more to help struggling ELL students in their classes. Although these teachers cited only a few cases, it was evident from their commitment that they cared about these students and contrary to what I had previously assumed, were concerned about the lack of support for English learners. Teachers genuinely appeared to want to help them or find someone else who would.

This finding brings the conversation back, yet again to the central question that guided this study - *How and why do mainstream teachers differentiate their expectations and instruction to accommodate the learning needs of English language learners?* Now at its completion, the question remains. Based on the data from the survey instrument, teacher interviews, and the focus group meeting, it seems that most teachers use a diverse range of strategies (see Table 7) to address the linguistic needs of ELL students. Many teachers do this to help them access the content of mainstream classes, whether or not they agree with their inclusion. Others who did differentiate because they were unable to do so or felt that was not their role.

The results from survey, interview, and focus group data suggest that many teachers need to do more to help ELLs, and that they are not alone in fulfilling this responsibility. Certainly, the school must create policies to support struggling ELLs and

struggling teachers. First, it needs to articulate the responsibility of core teachers to differentiate their instruction for students still learning English while trying to learn the content of their classes. If these teachers are not responsible for the language development of struggling ELLs, then there must be a plan for providing additional assistance to prevent them from failing or becoming long-term English language learners (LTELLs). The key point is, if the dual task of teaching content and language is the sole responsibility of the mainstream teacher, this must be made explicit and measures should must be put in place to ensure teacher accountability. The argument that content is more important to teach than language is wrong and disadvantages ELLs. Research suggests "Language and learning are inextricably linked. Language is not merely a means by which we demonstrate what we know, it is also one of the most important means by which we learn and refine our understanding of concepts" (Burke, 2006, p. 5).

Secondly, training and a system of ongoing support should be provided to ensure that mainstream teachers can reach this goal for all students. We must also hold teachers accountable without this kind of professional development. Yet, paradoxically, according to Echevarría, Short, and Powers (2006), most mainstream teachers in schools "are held accountable for their students' performance but are without training or experience in effective instruction for ELLs" (p. 199). Whether this is the case in this setting needs to be recognized, and if not, mainstream teachers need to be trained to develop the skills they are expected to use to differentiate their instruction for ELLs.

This differentiation, however, should not be limited to strategies that just allow students to access the content of classes. If teachers differentiate in this way, they may find that their ELL students can manage to keep up but that this type of individualized support is not sustainable. In contrast, mainstream teachers should focus on teaching ELLs strategies that will help them to become self-sufficient, and congruent with the principles of SIOP and CALLA, able to develop language skills and an understanding of the content of core classes. While several participants explained in some detail how they differentiate instruction, few of these strategies appeared to provide the type of support ELLs most need.

Interview and survey data are a case in point. During one-to-one interviews teachers mentioned a range of strategies and ideas to support the ELLs they teach. They explained that they tutor some students during school time, at recess and after school, or find a partner for them to act as a kind of *de facto teacher's aide* to explain tasks. Teachers stated that in some cases they allow students to speak Japanese or Korean to a student to explain concepts in class, or in the case of one high school teacher, encourage some students to use a Korean textbook. One interview participant said that he includes a high percentage of questions in simple English (about 60%) in his tests so that ELLs can experience some degree of success and level of engagement, and another in the survey mentioned that he reduced his expectations. Also, in the elementary school, survey and interview participants indicated that they use a modified grading scale. Then again in the open-comment section of the survey, teachers suggested more than a dozen means of differentiation, but only a couple, such as the use of visuals and vocabulary building activities, that could be termed learning strategies (see Appendix D).

Again, many helpful approaches to support ELLs were mentioned in the study, but the vast majority are not strategies that will enable LEP students to move towards independent learning. More time to complete tests, a partner to explain the content, and flexible deadlines do not do that. They are helpful but limited forms of differentiation. As they are, these types of differentiation mentioned appear to serve as a crutch but not the support that will eventually move the responsibility for learning to the student. With the current forms of differentiation, once support ends, the ELL student is left to struggle to understand language and content and their mainstream experience is no longer a case of English immersion but submersion in a language they cannot comprehend. Clearly, new approaches to differentiating instruction for language learners are needed.

The large number of students who require language support in mainstream classes also suggests that the school should actively seek to recruit teachers with specific skills to assist language learners and students with special needs. Better yet, the school could hire staff who can train other teachers and provide on-going, in-house training that will support them in their efforts to differentiate instruction for ELL students.

In the course of discussions with interview participants the cases of two students still struggling to acquire an academic level of English proficiency were described - one in upper elementary school who exited ESL classes two years prior and the other in middle school who has never received additional language support. Both, while struggling in academic core subjects could be described as *long-term English language learners* (ELLs). Names have been replaced by pseudonyms and some other identifying information has been changed to protect their identities.

Ken is a quiet, middle school student with a Japanese mother and an American father. He entered the school in grade one after spending three years in a mainstream kindergarten at another international school. Ken regularly plays tennis and soccer and like most boys his age enjoys music and spending time with his friends. Unfortunately, there are concerns regarding Ken's receptive and expressive English, based on school grades in academic subjects, reading grades in standardized testing and comments by some of his teachers who suggest that Ken often experiences difficulty with listening comprehension. External language assessment by an educational psychologist in elementary school reported that Ken's language problems stemmed from a lack of speaking practice and that he needed more exposure to English to develop his proficiency.

Figure 38. Case study of middle school student.

Ken, in this case has not had enough experience in speaking English, despite having an American father and attending the school since first grade. Therefore, we cannot assume that he will gain enough academic language ability to succeed at school. He will require greater opportunities to develop his oral proficiency and structured and scaffolded instruction to improve his understanding of vocabulary, reading comprehension, and ability to write in academic English. Without this kind of support from tutors or his teacher, he runs a serious risk of continuing to fall further behind. Ken and his parents might also benefit from some counselling since having an American

father does not necessarily mean that English is spoken at home and there may be identity issues affecting his willingness to speak in English.

The second student, Jeong Min, entered the school as an English language learner and received language support in ESL classes and like Ken has some ongoing issues in acquiring an academic level of English.

Jeong Min is in upper elementary school and is a friendly Korean student, with a reserved manner, who joined the school in first grade and due to his limited English speaking ability, immediately joined the ESL class. He plays the piano, has an above average ability in mathematics, and regularly plays in a soccer team. Jeong Min is well-liked at school and has a close group of friends, but some of his teachers are concerned that he only seems to play with other Korean students and when he does communicate with them, it is in Korean – not English. Although, Jeong Min left ESL in first grade, he has continued to require support from additional language classes conducted during the time when his native English speaking peers attended Japanese language classes. In recent years, Jeong Min has received high grades for mathematics but his grades and scores for other core academic subjects are low.

Figure 39. Case study of upper elementary student.

In both cases, Ken and Jeong Min display the characteristics of students who like others their age, are interested in sport and spending time with friends. They do not pose behavioural problems and stand a high probability of being passed on from grade to grade without ever fully catching up with their native-speaking peers. These and other students in the school like them require language support sooner rather than later, and before they reach a stage where the gap between their academic English ability and grade-level expectations becomes too wide. It would be easy for mainstream teachers to see the present gap in the learning of both boys as too great a challenge that they neither have the expertise or resources to address. In contrast, if teachers have a clear

understanding of their ability and where to begin instruction then there is a greater likelihood that differentiation will take place. One key factor as to whether differentiated instruction occurs however, is how they perceive students such as Ken and Jeong Min and their ability to support them.

As mentioned in the literature review earlier in the study, perceptions can have a powerful impact on teaching practices (Conway & Abawi, 2013). While changing existing perceptions of teachers can be difficult (Carder, 2008) one way to move towards positive expectations and action might be to change some of the terms used within the school. In contrast to the term *ESL* or *English as a second language* learner*,* students who have not yet reached English proficiency could be referred to by the term used throughout this study - *English language learners* or *ELLs*. Although this change of terminology seems small or even trivial, it does help to develop a different perspective of these learners. To begin with, the current term of ESL implies that students are, in fact, learning a second language, when many students in the school, are in fact, learning English as a third or even fourth language (Gunderson, 2008). This reality resonates with parents whose mother tongue is not English and who have different nationalities and native languages, apart from the local language of Japanese. Secondly, calling students *English language learners* implies that they are on a continuum of English proficiency, who are all concurrently learning English at the same time as content in their mainstream classrooms (Goldberg, 2008). At little to no cost, the school could by changing its vocabulary, help to foster the belief that the school has a range of language learners with some limited English speakers (LEPs), all the way to students who appear to be proficient in the language but still require additional instruction to fully acquire academic language.

Changing some other terms would also allow the school to change its focus. Special meetings within the school for academic counselors and teachers to discuss struggling students are called *Kid Chats* (in high school) or referred to as *Child Study Meetings* or *Academic Support Meetings* (in elementary and middle school). While these terms suggest that teachers will meet to discuss the progress of academically

challenged and failing students, they do not suggest what the school might do to provide intervention. I believe that changing the name of all these types of discussion at all school levels to *Response to Intervention (RTI) meetings* would create a very different expectation in the minds of teachers, administrators, parents, and the students they are designed to support. This new term goes far beyond discussing who is struggling and comes with the implied intent that a very specific process to identify, provide intervention, and then reassess individual achievement will occur. Also, the new name for these meetings sets an expectation that some plan for support will be developed and may also encourage teachers to study the RTI approach and follow this protocol for early intervention.

Moreover, the implementation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) program would probably be a good place to begin. If an ELL student begins to experience learning difficulties beyond what we would expect, and is identified early, then intervention can be implemented within a short period, and while the student still has an opportunity to close the achievement gap. This intervention will decrease the probability of them requiring extensive, additional support and the likelihood that they will become long-term English language learners (LTELLs) who may never catch up to native speakers. A mechanism to identify student needs will also mean that these struggling students will receive the type of support they need, sooner, rather than later.

8.2 Research Summary

Although not specifically referred to in the teacher survey, interviews and the focus group meeting, teachers when explaining potential support for ELLs in the mainstream suggested elements of some interventions outlined in the literature review for this study. These included Response to Intervention (RTI), the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), professional learning communities (PLCs) and lesson study, a culturally and linguistically accessible curriculum, and a School-Wide Pedagogy (SWP). Perhaps this is not surprising since these types of intervention are well-documented approaches to

establishing a culture of high academic achievement, identify and address specific study needs, differentiate classroom instruction, and create collaborative teams of teachers to target areas of weakness. Given the unique benefits of each intervention and the need for some form of intervention, it was difficult to isolate just one for the school to adopt. All types of support are needed as the school transforms support for students, the ability of teachers to effectively teach content and language, and to establish a school culture that has high expectations for all students.

The discovery of a mixed-methods study conducted by Honigsfeld and Cohan (2006) titled *Lesson Study Meets SIOP: Linking Two Successful Professional Development Models* provided a timely, watershed moment. This study explained how some forms of intervention to develop linguistic skills can be combined. The study also suggested that rather than the school providing training to help teachers teach in a way that supports language acquisition, it could ensure that that the strategies studied, make their way into the classroom, continue to be practiced, tested and refined, and that this professional development is applied consistently in the classroom.

While the school might encourage teachers to differentiate their instruction, there is no guarantee that this will happen efficiently and consistently. Here the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) would fulfill an important need and provide teachers with a framework to plan lessons and evaluate their instruction. The implementation of this type of program requires extensive training over a period (Waxman, Tharp, & Hilberg, 2004) and runs the risk of not being implemented properly or even being dismissed as the latest fad or trend.

One way to establish a firm foundation for the school-wide implementation of a SIOP program is to begin small with a small group of teachers who have an interest in learning and applying components of this approach. These teachers could receive training, possibly a year before the program is rolled out to other mainstream teachers at the school. During this time, they could undertake professional development training in the SIOP model, identify and collect resources, and establish routines to discuss lessons and lesson planning. They can also develop a guide to head off potential problems with

implementation, and develop their expertise so that they can take an active role in training other teachers.

Within the same time period, all faculty could be engaged in learning about lesson study and professional learning communities (PLCs) to identify specific needs and collaboratively work with other teachers to respond to them. A detailed plan for how this might happen in the setting in this study is provided, in the next chapter.

All of this intervention admittedly is contingent on how the school responds to some significant challenges. Providing additional support to struggling ELLs aligns with a constructivist approach to education. It is also in tune with current and influential studies of intelligence which tell us that all children can develop a range of intelligences with the right kind of experience, thanks to Gardner's *Multiple Intelligence Theory* (Gardner, 1983). Also, that intelligence is not fixed and can grow if we have a growth mindset and believe that if students work hard and exert effort, they will become smarter (Dweck, 2007).

Assessment of English language learners is also another dilemma for mainstream teachers that should be resolved. Most interview participants voiced their concern for how ELL students were assessed and their grades reported. In the elementary school, this was seen as less of a problem since these students who had not yet reached proficiency were given either a "P+" for above average achievement, a "P" if they were considered to be working at an appropriate level, or a "P-" if they were falling below expectations. Understandably, as one participant explained, these grades are based on teachers' perceptions of effort and not on achievement, since it is difficult to gauge their level of achievement due to their limited English ability. For teachers in the middle school and high school, the criteria were less clear with some teachers suggesting that they graded mostly according to effort while others felt that teachers should grade ELLs on the same criteria as their English-speaking peers. Given this ambiguity among teachers and the likelihood that some parents of ELL student may interpret good grades as an indicator of academic performance rather than effort, a clear assessment policy is needed.

If we hold English language learners to the same academic standards as their peers, differentiated instruction is required to allow them the opportunity to illustrate their understanding despite their limited English ability. In this case, grades for all students regardless of proficiency can be reported according to a standard criterion. However, if the assessment standards for ELLs differ then this should be made clear when reporting student achievement.

Effort grades alone, however, do not explain what an ELL student knows and understands and therefore do not adequately convey achievement. A quiet student who appears to be engaged in the classroom but has little or no understanding of the mainstream content might receive a grade identical to one who might have a fully developed understanding of the content but due to limited language skills, is unable to explain concepts. After two and possibly three years of receiving similar grades, parents and teachers may assume that each student has achieved a certain level of understanding while the reality is quite different. This type of situation suggests that provided the school has decided that all students should learn academic content and not wait until ELL students are proficiency in English, more needs to be done to explain achievement and monitor student learning.

Developing a clear and coherent assessment policy for all ELL students will almost certainly require a significant amount of discussion and hard work. Without this type of understanding among teachers and parents, the achievement of English learners will continue to go unreported and unmonitored - putting them at risk later when achievement gaps and learning disabilities become evident. Brighter ELL students who have a good grasp of the content covered and reach proficiency, however, may also suffer since they lose opportunities to challenge and advance their understanding. Either case, suggests an important priority and need for ELL students, teachers, and the school.

Some decisions also must be made by the school regarding the use of native language. Policy for the use of native language in the school is also desperately needed. The lack of a clear policy for all school levels expressed by mainstream teachers in the study is a source of frustration. Some interview participants explained that three

different policies exist in the school, depending on a school level and that the interpretation and implementation of these policies vary considerably among the faculty, with some teachers allowing students to converse openly in their native language while others expressly forbid it. Policy based on proved research-based practices would not only serve to eliminate inconsistency but allow the school to align rules and expectations to practices that will support students and their linguistic development. An egalitarian approach to teaching which assumes that all students, including those who are learning English, learn the concept of lessons in the same way and at the same pace fails to accept the diverse needs of learners in mainstream classes.

Schools and international schools included, cannot hope to predict how to meet the needs of all language learners. They can, however, look to the performance of these students in core classes to see how they cope with the academic demands of their classes and work to plan ways to bridge the gap between their performance and the expectations held by mainstream teachers. Weaknesses in the acquisition of academic vocabulary, reading or writing will suggest that schools need to implement differentiated instruction to meet students at their instructional level, support them to advance to greater proficiency, and then monitor their progress to see that they reach this level before setting new expectations for their academic achievement. Modified grades, school policies to define the role of mainstream teachers and intervention strategies such as Response to Intervention (RTI), the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and professional learning communities (PLCs), within the structure of a School-Wide Pedagogy (SWP) should help ELLs reach English proficiency and achieve the academic results they are capable of achieving.

8.3 Summary

Discussion in Chapter 8 described how mainstream teachers varied in their perception and support of language learners. Four categories were identified - those who supported inclusion and differentiated instruction, those who neither supported

inclusion nor differentiated instruction, those who did not support inclusion but differentiated, and those who did support inclusion but did not differentiate.

The chapter outlined two case studies of students at the school who, despite their apparent academic ability, still struggle to reach English proficiency and run the risk of becoming long-term ELLs. In addition, Chapter 8 explained how existing school structures, such as academic support meetings, can be used to identify *at-risk* ELLs and plan for intervention. The Response to Intervention (RTI) protocol was explained as one model the school could use to support ELLs and monitor their academic progress. This chapter also outlined the need for clear and coherent policies regarding assessment for ELLs. Professional learning communities (PLCs), the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and a School-Wide Pedagogy (SWP) are also discussed as methods to focus instruction and support for English language learners.

Chapter 9 explains the implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) in detail since this form of intervention appears to offer the most sustainable and effective method to support ELLs in this setting. The chapter describes how PLCs are used to study achievement data, set academic goals and identify resources and available support. A potential timeline for the implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) is provided, together with some suggestions to evaluate their effectiveness. Chapter 9 outlines recommendations for the study and further explains how professional learning communities can be implemented in the school to improve the academic achievement of ELLs.

Chapter 9: Recommendations and Project

9.1 Introduction

Based on the data from the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study and an investigation into how similar schools have used professional learning communities or a School-Wide Pedagogy (SWP) to address the needs of ELLs in the mainstream, I developed several recommendations for the school. These align with similar findings and recommendations by researchers to support ELLs by providing access to the curriculum and making content comprehensible. Also, this support requires a school climate in which ELLs value their culture and language and teachers set high academic expectations for achievement, and provide explicit language instruction in academic English (Echevarría, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). Using findings from the literature review and data from this mixed-method study, I recommend the school involved in this study:

1. Create a school-wide philosophy regarding the role of mainstream teachers in teaching English language learners, after developing a consensus in departmental and grade level meetings;
2. Collaboratively develop a school-wide pedagogy for teaching literacy at all grade levels and across subject areas that aligns to the school's mission and vision statements;
3. Implement a school-wide Response to Intervention (RTI) program to identify and support at-risk learners;
4. Establish policies based on best practices and current research regarding the use of native languages at school and the assessment of English language learners using WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) ELP Standards and/or other standardized assessment, such as MAPs (Measure of Academic Progress) tests;
5. Provide ongoing, professional development in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and systemic training, in the form of professional learning communities (PLCs), for teachers to support and challenge English

language learners in mainstream classes while using ELL student achievement data to inform decision-making.

9.2 Professional Learning Communities

While the benefits of professional learning communities are well documented, so are problems associated with poorly implemented and ineffective PLCs. Several methods of implementation are suggested in peer-reviewed research and from these several ideas and steps appear to be feasible for the setting of this study. Importantly, implementing PLCs will not directly address the perception amongst some teachers that ELLs will continue to fail in the mainstream.

The proposed roadmap that follows is based on consideration of what appears to be the best way to begin the process. It suggests implementing PLCs over a two-year period, with the first year dedicated to reviewing the school's philosophy, mission and vision; the creation of a core group of teacher leaders; and then the establishment of an infrastructure to support PLCs within the school (see Figure 5). In the second year, the remaining six steps of the implementation process begin. During this time, PLC teams undergo training, analyze assessment data and develop common assessments based on these and other forms of assessment. These teams develop specific goals for intervention, plan and implement intervention strategies, and then evaluate the PLC process before the next cycle (see Figure 5). While not the only way to implement professional learning communities in the school, the following can describe some potential steps:

1. *Review School's Philosophy, Vision and Mission.* Before attempting to implement professional learning communities (PLCs) in the school, some work needs to be done to ensure that all teachers understand the school's mission and vision. The school's philosophy and mission and vision statements need to guide decisions in the school, and a common understanding of these among teachers is needed to create a foundation for school improvement and initiatives such as professional learning communities.

The establishment of a School-Wide Pedagogy (SWP), as discussed earlier in the literature review can also provide teachers with a common frame of reference for

decisions regarding curriculum and instruction. Without this foundation in place, PLC participants may wonder what they need to do and question the importance of why they need to do it. DuFour et al. (2010) posit that the foundation of a professional learning community should be based on four pillars. These include: (1) defining the school's mission and asking: What is our purpose? (2) Identifying the school's vision by asking: What do we have to reach our goal? (3) Deciding what is valued and asking the question: How do we behave to achieve our goals? And (4) setting some goals by asking: What were our targets and timelines?

2. *Create a Cadre or Core Group of Teacher Leaders.* Beginning professional learning communities in a school half-heartedly is worse than minimal implementation or not implementing PLCs at all (Reeves, 2010). It makes sense to start small with a group of committed teachers who have a shared vision of academic excellence (Zmuda et al., 2004). This group could meet regularly over the course of a year to discuss ways to support the implementation of the professional learning communities while deepening their understanding of PLCs through the establishment of group norms, the analysis of data, the creation of specific learning goals, and plans for future intervention. In doing this, teacher members have an opportunity to test drive PLCs and develop their understanding and skills, through book studies, video clips, and other resources to a point where they might be able to mentor members of other PLCs in the future. This group of teacher advocates can then join and support professional learning communities the following year when the process is implemented school-wide.

3. *Establish an Infrastructure to Support PLCs.* Schools need to provide time for team meetings and collaboration (Sandoval, 2011). Recently, in response to this and some other needs related to teacher schedules and the use of facilities the school in this study recently developed a master schedule for all grades K-12 for implementation in the coming academic year. This restructuring should help provide some additional time to help English language learners. It should also create some additional time for lesson planning and teachers to observe each other – an important component of professional learning (Sandoval, 2011).

4. *Create PLCs and Provide Training and Support.* There were numerous ways to group teachers to create professional learning communities. These PLCs can be formed vertically across several different grade levels, according to discipline or horizontally within a grade level in the second year of implementation. For elementary teachers, it may make more sense to choose that latter approach and form teams of 3-4 teachers each grade level who can work collaboratively to create common assessments, analyze these and other data to identify areas of weakness, and then work together to plan an intervention. This approach is often used in schools to create grade level PLCs.

Alternatively, middle school and high school teachers may prefer to work with others from their department in PLCs, since they were often the only teacher at their grade level for their subject. Rather than avoid confrontation by assigning certain teachers to certain teams, research suggests that there may be a need to embrace it for the sake of meaningful change (Barth, 2001). Barth (2001) suggested, "to change a school's culture requires the courage and skill not to remain victimized by the toxic elements" (p.162).

It is not likely that all teachers will agree to how to form PLC teams, but all alternatives deserve consideration. Regardless of how teachers choose to structure their professional learning communities, they will continue to require access to resources. After establishing PLCs, professional development can begin. This training could involve an internal teacher trainer or outside consultant to build the teachers' background, and explain the rationale for PLCs. They could also take faculty through protocols for meetings and discussion. Journal articles, books, videos, and online courses can also provide valuable support for teachers as they begin the PLC process. By using these resources, teachers can learn how to improve and develop their professional learning community.

5. *Develop Common Assessments.* Research regarding PLCs often mentions the development of common assessments as a way to clearly define standards (Du Four et al., 2010). Whether all teachers throughout the use school standards to develop curriculum or not, the process of collaboratively designing common assessments can

make the real learning goals of the school clear. Researchers also suggest that frequent assessment using quality, formative assessment tools can be a powerful way to improve student learning (Ainsworth, 2007, Du Four et al., 2010; Marzano, 2006; Popham, 2002). Several different options exist for PLCs developing common, formative assessments in the school. Some possible include quarterly writing assignments, grade level unit tests for math, diagnostic reading and mathematics tests, and grade level or discipline specific projects that demonstrate what students understand. According to Du Four et al. (2010) "If all students were expected to demonstrate the same knowledge and skills regardless of the teacher to whom they were assigned, it only makes sense that teachers would work together to assess student learning" (p.76).

6. *Analyze Assessment Data.* Data analysis is a highly effective method of studying assessment results and promoting discussion about what they tell us (Reeves, 2002a). According to Reeves (2002b), this activity can be a kind of treasure hunt that helps schools use achievement and other data to find out what went wrong and how to fix it. During this phase of the PLC process teachers can collectively analyze data and become more invested in professional development to improve student achievement (Zmuda et al., 2004).

Data summaries or short descriptions of assessment results generated from data analysis can be used to illustrate the current achievement of students (including ELLs), develop goals and priorities, synthesize evidence and develop a sense of ownership of the performance data (McTighe & Thomas, 2003). These data summaries can be used in the initial implementation phase of PLCs to develop priorities and work towards the creation of goals to support student learning, and again as part of future PLC cycles.

7. *Develop Specific Goals for Student Achievement.* After data analysis, professional learning communities within the school can begin to formulate some specific goals to improve the academic achievement of ELL students and others in need of greater challenge or intervention. One method used by many PLCs in schools is to create S.M.A.R.T. goals (Du Four et al., 2010). According to the acronym, these are goals that

are: specific, measurable, achievable, results-orientated, and time-bound (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2005).

Although PLCs may create S.M.A.R.T. goals they wish to achieve in one school year, some goals may be a high priority but take longer (Reeves, 2010). Some examples of smart goals PLCs might develop include: The reading comprehension score of students receiving additional language support will improve by 10% or more in the next academic year. All ELL students in mainstream classes will earn a passing grade or higher each quarter in all core subjects.

8. *Plan Strategies for Intervention:* After the identification of a number of manageable goals, professional learning communities can begin to plan intervention strategies. One way for teachers to do this is to work as a team to develop a lesson or series of lessons, observe these and provide feedback and then help to make revisions. This process is standard to one approach used widely in Japan called *Lesson Study* and was described in the literature review in Chapter 2.

9. *Evaluate ELL Achievement and Repeat the PLC Cycle:* During this phase of the PLC, teachers examine the effectiveness of their interventions and make revisions as necessary to reach the goals their team set in Step 7.

After the completion of the first year, it would also be helpful for teachers to spend some time evaluating their performance as part of a professional learning community and ways in which to improve the PLC process. These suggestions can then be used to improve the quality of PLC meetings and the effectiveness of teams as they continue the process of analyzing data, setting goals, planning intervention and evaluating their effectiveness (see Figure 5).

9.3 Project Implementation

Underpinning the earlier discussion of possible strategies such as professional learning communities (PLCs), Response to Intervention (RTI), and Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) is the key that multiple forms of intervention are needed to support the English language learners in this setting. One approach such as Response

to Intervention (RTI) may facilitate the introduction of a process of early intervention and remediation, but unlike SIOP it does not specifically address the need for mainstream teachers to differentiate their instruction for ELLs. Similarly, professional learning communities (PLCs) could provide the structure and impetus for grade levels and departments to meet, but without a clear purpose, any initial enthusiasm by teachers will be lost. To create an environment where all mainstream teachers perceive that they are responsible for language development requires them to experience a system of support and training via PLCs and SIOPs, and defined by a school-wide philosophy.

Only through a commitment to change the school's culture on several levels can teachers begin to address many of the problems currently experienced by ELLs in the mainstream. As suggested by survey and interview data, the sooner support is provided for teachers and students, the better. Yet, to attempt to implement all of the programs recommended in this study simultaneously and expect them to succeed is unrealistic. Many schools and school districts face challenges just establishing and sustaining one program - let alone several.

Considering what is feasible and realistic in this setting, it seems that intervention programs should be phased in over time. The school will need to begin with small, incremental, but manageable steps. Establishing a Response to Intervention (RTI) program within the first 3-6 months of the school year appears to be a good place to begin. As explained earlier, the RTI program could replace *Kid Chats* and *Child Study Meetings* to provide: (a) clear criteria for the identification of students who are struggling academically, including long-term English language learners; (b) a specific course of intervention to address learning needs and (c) a system to assess the effect of intervention.

Admittedly, full implementation of a Response to Intervention Program (RTI) appears to be a challenge, but less so if we consider that support meetings are already held for each grade level, approximately one a month. Adding specific identification criteria, agreed upon intervention and a timeline to evaluate the impact of intervention strategies should not be overwhelming. It also bears repeating that if learning needs are

not addressed and addressed soon, there is a high probability that achievement gaps will grow and the need for intervention will become more acute. One possible timetable for the implementation of intervention could be as follows:

Phase 1: Within the first 3 Months. The Response to Intervention (RTI) protocol should be implemented school-wide to identify students at-risk and in need of support, including ELLs at risk of becoming long-term ELLs. Once students are identified, counsellors and homeroom teachers can design and begin intervention for students at risk, including, but not limited to, tutoring outside of school, modifications in the mainstream classroom, and enrichment classes during school and outside of school time. During the first six months, the Response to Intervention (RTI) program should be monitored and teachers implementing it, supported via the use of videos and other professional development material.

Phase 2: During the First 3-6 Months. By the second quarter the implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) should be complete and the system to identify, provide support and monitor academic progress, while setting short-term goals to improve support. While academic counsellors and other interested staff address ways to improve the RTI process department heads and volunteer teachers could participate in professional development for the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) during a common planning time to study the SIOP approach and develop lessons and units of study. Concurrently, protocols for providing feedback can be discussed and developed. Departments and grade levels can also begin to create professional learning communities to review grades and create common assessments that they can used to improve instruction.

Phase 3: From 6-12 Months. Following the second or third quarter of the school year mainstream faculty can begin Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training and begin the practice of teachers conducting classroom observations. Instructional and assessment practices can also be documented in the school's online curriculum site (ongoing).

Phase 4: From 12-18 Months. One year after the implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) program academic counsellors, and departments under the guidance of department heads should evaluate the success of this approach and use data gleaned from assessment and discussion to develop improvements. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and professional learning community (PLC) training for new and existing members of the staff would occur during this time and provide students opportunities for teachers to work together to plan lessons, units and assessment. This might also be an effective time for some PLC groups to observe others implement SIOP and meet in their PLC groups.

Phase 5: After 24 Months of SIOP and PLC Implementation. After two years to run several cycles of running both programs, SIOP and PLCs should be evaluated using external assessment tools, achievement data and teacher feedback to gauge their effectiveness. This could also be a time to establish department, grade-level, and school-wide goals and review the professional development needs of teachers at the school.

9.4 Project Evaluation

At different stages the impact on teaching and learning of English language learners should be evaluated. Teachers and school leaders will need to know whether or not professional learning communities have a positive effect on the learning of these students. One way that this might occur is by evaluating the language skills of the ELLs in reading, writing, listening and spoken English. Standardized tests, subject grades, and the *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment program* (WIDA) adopted in recent years by the school could be used to monitor the progress of English language learners and to develop strategies to make the curriculum more assessable.

Ongoing evaluation of the curriculum and the needs of ELLs will allow teachers to see if class materials are culturally and linguistically appropriate to these students. It will also enable mainstream teachers to investigate whether the curriculum asks too little or too much of the English language learners in their content area classes.

The concept of professional learning communities has been in existence for some time, and a significant amount of resource material exists to help teachers not only begin them but monitor their success as well (Du Four et al., 2010). These materials and the rubrics created by publishers such as *Solution Tree* can provide helpful guidelines to develop evaluation tools that can be used with school faculty to determine what is working regarding PLCs. These resources also enable schools to see what is not working, and where the school needs to direct its attention to retool and revise its professional learning communities. Staff surveys and open discussion that encourage some reflection of the PLC process can also help teachers see what is happening regarding support for ELLs and other learners, and determine if these students are on a trajectory towards academic success.

9.5 Summary

The suggested project provides one road map for the school to follow to assist it in raise the level of engagement and academic achievement of English language learners in mainstream classrooms. Professional learning communities (PLCs) have numerous social, educational, and professional benefits. Research supports their use in schools as an effective way to provide professional development to teachers that is specific to their needs. The use of PLCs can also provide a platform for discussion regarding how mainstream teachers can support language development in addition to teaching content. One particular type of professional learning community – the lesson study, can also be used as a system for collaborative lesson development. The fact that these types of learning communities are relatively inexpensive since they tap into the pedagogical expertise within the school makes this approach an attractive alternative to conferences and in-house workshops. The nature of learning communities means that teams of teachers can use a steady stream of common assessment data, student work, and other assessments to set goals, and evaluate the success of the strategies used to achieve them. This approach ensures a process of ongoing reflection where teachers ask the crucial questions of what worked and why (DuFour, et al., 2010). Such interaction and mutual

support of teachers can foster positive attitudes and beliefs and help create conditions for further differentiation, support and greater collective efficacy (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006).

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

Evidence gathered throughout this mixed-methods study reiterated the challenge facing mainstream teachers teaching ELLs. Some teachers stated during interviews and the focus group meeting that hiring support staff in the form of teacher assistants or ESL/ELL specialists might be an effective way to meet the linguistic needs of language learners. This suggestion seems plausible since it only requires recruiting additional staff and does not require existing faculty members to be trained. Such an approach, however, does not negate the legitimate need for the continuous support offered by mainstream teachers to improve the learning experience for ELLs. Bringing in additional support staff may just shift the burden and responsibility from teaching ELLs away from these teachers. Moreover, we cannot assume that ESL/ELL teachers or aides can provide adequate support and abdicate responsibility for teaching English to ELLs to these specialist teachers (George, 2009; Khong & Saito, 2014; Rance-Rone, 2009).

What is more, just exposing students to English in a classroom setting does not result in interaction or language acquisition (De Jong & Harper, 2005). They need explicit and systematic literacy instruction to learn to read in English (Albers & Martinez, 2015; August & Shanahan, 2006), direct language instruction (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and comprehensible input (Krashen, 1998) for efficient language acquisition to take place. Also, they need opportunities to engage in collaborative discussions with other mainstream students (Edwards-Groves, et al., 2014). Without interaction with native English speaking peers, ELLs will continue to be linguistically isolated and socially segregated, with the classroom teacher as their sole model for spoken English (Olsen, 2010). Even with institutional support, it can take 4-10 years for English language learners to acquire the academic language to participate in mainstream classes fully (Cummins, 2000). Furthermore, to delay their entrance into mainstream classes denies them of the language-rich environment they need to develop and thrive (Himmele, 2009).

10.2 Research Limitations

This study was not intended to produce replicable findings, but specifically, address a problem in one school. However, some important considerations might have relevance and hold interest for other international school settings. Schools with similar demographics may be interested in professional learning communities and lesson study to provide support in the mainstream, influence teacher's perceptions regarding the inclusion and instruction of ELLs, and hopefully, build upon the research begun here.

Frequent student and teacher transition is an accepted facet of international schools (Mackenzie, 2009), and a changing teacher population creates some limitations for this study, including different degrees of training and experience and academic expectations. The school used as the setting of this study is no different and has close to a 20 - 25% turnover of students each school year (Western Association of Schools and Colleges & Council for International Schools Accreditation Report, 2008). Many teachers also leave at the end of the school year to return to their home countries or to pursue career opportunities at other international schools abroad. This transition can mean that different teachers with differing degrees of ELL training, different perceptions, and different approaches to teaching ELLs may enter the school each academic year. Given this scenario, the chance of a longitudinal study seems remote. In its place, the snapshot view of teachers' perceptions and practices used in this study provided a limited but effective means of research.

The focus of this mixed-methods study was on the perceptions of mainstream teachers in core academic subjects. Yet it would be reasonable to expect that art, physical education, and other specialist teachers may contribute a great deal to the conversation. These teachers also have content to teach and must present the curriculum to ELLs using only English. They, like their mainstream colleagues, may also experience frustration when trying to teach ELLs, have questions regarding how to assess ELLs, employ strategies to help ELLs achieve high standards and hold perceptions regarding their role in teaching these students (Tran, 2015). This study was

limited to exploring the perceptions of only mainstream teachers. Further investigation into the expectations and classroom practices of specialists could help the school gain a much richer insight into the extent of support available for English learners and tap into the expertise of these teachers to support ELLs.

10.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Data gathered during this research study provided considerable insight into mainstream teacher perspectives regarding the inclusion of ELLs. It also provided a deeper understanding into some of the differentiation strategies they use, why teachers chose to modify their instruction, assessment practices to accommodate ELLs, teachers' level of training and how they view this training and other professional development to support English language learners.

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the kind of instruction and assessment reported by teachers in this setting reflects the delivered curriculum. More research using classroom observations, some study of student work, an analysis of teachers' lesson and unit plans, and even dialogue with ELLs might help to determine what happens in the classroom. An analysis of textbooks and other learning materials could also provide some insight into the expectations placed on ELLs and some of the challenges they might facing when attempting to access the language in these books. Although additional data would not detract from the quality and worth of this study, an audit of the curriculum might help to determine if materials are culturally relevant and linguistically assessable. These results and findings could then be used to develop a deeper understanding of the experience of ELLs in their content area classes.

Future studies along these lines could provide reliable evidence of what happens in the classroom and provide a good point for discussion. They will also help teachers compare curriculum with the ability of ELLs and enable the school to identify and address gaps in curriculum and instruction. Although teachers elsewhere reported that they use research-based strategies, the reality is that they prefer to use strategies to support all learners and are less are less likely to adopt teaching practices that

specifically meet the needs of ELLs (Rader-Brown & Howley, 2014). Further research suggests that without careful attention paid to the unique linguistic needs of many of these learners, their inclusion in mainstream classes merely creates a *sink or swim* approach (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 1997).

These students also need frequent monitoring and intensified instruction based upon their teacher's understanding of BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication) and CALPS (cognitive academic language proficiency), connections between standards, quality classroom instruction and a commitment to their educational needs (Albers & Martinez, 2015). Monthly or bimonthly classroom-based assessment in the form of running records, alternative assessment, anecdotal notes, and competency checklists can also be used by teachers to chart the progress of ELLs toward English mastery (Rance-Rone, 2009).

A review of related research literature revealed that many studies had examined teachers' attitudes regarding ELLs in regular classes (Khong & Saito, 2014; Reeves, 2002; Yoon, 2008). Framing this study in terms of *perception* rather than *attitude* was, in retrospect, an effective way to investigate teachers' views on inclusion and instruction for ELLs and suggests a new and emerging area of research. It seeks to examine mainstream teachers less about their attitude, which has the potential to be seen as judgmental and either positive or negative, and more regarding to how teachers view their role.

An investigation into teachers' beliefs regarding inclusion and motivation to differentiate instruction for ELLs can seem threatening to participants. These teachers might resent questions that appear to examine their attitude. Others might respond in a way that seems appealing to the researcher and the school, rather than disclose their true beliefs and teaching practices. Neither case creates favorable conditions for data collection. Any suggestion of bias or attempt to force participants to accept the researcher's viewpoint should be avoided (Merriam, 2009). Conversely, studies that elicit the opinions and views of participants will yield better data to interpret information (Patton, 2002).

Further studies based on the role of mainstream teachers in meeting the needs of English language learners are required to fill a gap in the research literature (Fives & Gregoire Gill, 2014). Additional studies in other international schools could also help to identify how mainstream teachers see their role within linguistically and culturally diverse settings. This research will provide a sound basis for decision-making regarding professional development and contribute to a better educational experience for ELLs (Khong & Saito, 2014).

10.4 Research Impact

Three significant issues and themes that impact current research emerged from this study. Firstly, data and findings from this study indicate that international school teachers hold a diverse range of perspectives not described in current literature. The data from this study revealed that some mainstream teachers spoke a second language and used this ability to explain content, while other monolingual teachers stated that students should speak English only since this was a school policy. A few mainstream teachers during interviews talked about how they provide additional instruction outside of class time to help ELLs understand concepts and prepare for tests, and modify their assessment practices, yet others did not.

We can expect a range of perspectives and approaches to deal with English language learners in mainstream classrooms, and this study has described many of them. However, just as we need to think about the cultural backgrounds of these ELLs, we also need to consider how teachers from a range of cultural backgrounds might hold different expectations and approach their role and the challenge of teaching differently. This study came face-to-face with this issue and also added to the limited body of research conducted in international schools and other settings with faculty members from diverse backgrounds. A variety of perspectives regarding inclusion, grading practice, the use of native languages, and support for ELLs were a few areas where teachers differed, most likely due to their experience.

This study also brings into question whether just transplanting programs and methods of intervention and bringing in the *best of the West* (Huntington, 1996) is the most efficient approach to school improvement. McNiff (2013) posits that teachers have cultural and epistemological assumptions and often impose their culture to address school issues. This approach, however, can hurt despite well-intended beliefs. In such cases, schools can deny cosmopolitanism and establish the potential for cultural imperialism which people from other cultures may resent (McNiff, 2013).

While the use of professional learning communities (PLCs) seems to present the best response to the growing need for the support of mainstream teachers, we should consider that this type of school reform needs to cater to the diverse needs of teachers. As shown in the research (Figure 11), not all mainstream teachers support the inclusion of ELLs or differentiate instruction for them. Also, in many cases, a reciprocal relationship does not exist between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and teaching practice, and vice-versa. Differentiation it seems, should not only occur within mainstream classes but with schools' professional development efforts as well.

Second, the issue of fairness that arose from data in this study points to an area that desperately needs attention. According to McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner, & Algozzine (2014), much of the controversy surrounding the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream has focused on the emphasis teachers place on whether they believe they are *valuable participants* rather than students who need differentiation. In addition, a lack of research into how mainstream teachers can include and meet the needs of ELLs in their classes supports the concern voiced in this study. Without clear school directives and professional development to guide teachers, they will continue to be limited to their current skill set, which may not be the support they need for language development and to become involved in learning the content of lessons. Concern regarding the use of native languages, additional help, extensions for assignments, and other forms of differentiation for students may diminish if we accept the views of proponents of differentiation who suggest that *fair isn't always equal* (Wormeli, 2006) and that we need to decide *to teach them all* (Tomlinson, 2003).

Welch (2000) suggests that in an environment of intense competition and increasingly diverse classrooms, student beliefs regarding fairness will increase. Despite a legal and moral obligation to provide accommodations (Welch, 2000), many mainstream teachers continue to resist efforts to differentiate instruction and assessment because they perceive this would be unfair for other students in the class (Polloway, Bursuck, Jayanthi, Epstein, & Nelson, 1996). Unfortunately, the procedures teachers and schools use to make decisions regarding these issues are often *unclear* and *unknown* (Welch, 2000).

Third, the use of Self-Determination Theory as a lens to view teacher perceptions regarding their role and expectations presents a paradigm shift in thinking about school improvement. In previous studies, researchers looked at teachers' attitudes and various methods to *encourage* teachers to comply with school improvement directives. Viewing motivation through an SDT lens moves well beyond a *carrot and stick* approach to change behaviour (Deci, 2015) and suggests that schools should focus on creating the right conditions to support teachers' psychological needs. Rather than asking how to motivate employees, suggest SDT theorists, organizations need to ask how they can create environments in which they can motivate themselves (Deci, 2015). To this end, schools should provide ample opportunities for autonomy via diversified leadership, and opportunities to develop competence and mastery while encouraging and facilitating the interaction of teachers in meaningful work. More money, more training, and more support staff will never be enough if teachers do not see the point of differentiating their instruction and including ELLs in mainstream classes. Professional learning communities, as my recommendations suggest, could help move schools in the right direction while providing opportunities for teachers to learn from each other (Caine & Caine, 2010; Reichstetter, 2006), develop competence (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2003), improve their expertise (Astuto, Clark, Read, McGee & Fernandez, 1993), and find autonomy in shared leadership to make decisions (DuFour et al., 2008; Southworth & Doughty, 2006; Wilhelm, 2010). Collaborative discussions and actions will also support the daily use of differentiated instruction to improve the quality of education for ELLs

and provide them with better opportunities to reach higher academic standards. They will also help the school meet a critical accreditation requirement that curriculum, teaching practices, and support can enable *all* students to reach rigorous goals in their courses (Standard B2b, Council of International Schools, 2016).

10.5 Research Summary

A key aim of this study was to discover why some mainstream teachers of core subjects positioned themselves as teachers of language and content while others of content only. This question persisted through both the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study, and now at its conclusion, I find that I have a far greater insight into how individual teachers perceive their role.

This mixed-method study also sought to discover *who* is responsible for the language learning of ELLs in the mainstream to facilitate their greatest chance of academic success. Now at its conclusion, it seems that an answer to this question is obvious - *all* teachers have a responsibility to support the ELLs in their class. What is less clear is how the school can implement this support and what steps it should take to reach this goal. As stated by participants in the focus group meeting, ELLs have lots of potential that teachers can tap to create effective differentiation strategies. Such strategies will allow ELLs to build and communicate their understanding of mathematics, science, and other mainstream subjects. Differentiation and an inclusive environment should also instill a climate of trust in the classroom (Hoy, Hoy & Kurz, 2008), foster teacher optimism (Costa, 2008; Hoy et al., 2006; Krashen 1988, 1998) and build the confidence of these students (Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2008) to pursue greater academic challenges while they solidify their language skills (Pae, 2008).

Based on the findings of this study it is clear that the school needs to create policies to define teacher roles. Without a definitive change to the status quo, mainstream teachers at the school will remain free to decide how much to differentiate instruction for the ELLs in their classrooms, if at all. Likewise, decisions regarding expectations and assessment practices will, in many cases, mostly remain in the hands of

individual teachers. While this situation will continue to allow mainstream teachers autonomy, it will not create an inclusive mindset and consistent expectations for student achievement. For reasons explained earlier in this study, such a scenario will not provide the kind of support that ELLs need.

Furthermore, a lack of policies regarding the assessment and instruction of ELLs throughout the school means that a consistent approach to teaching ELLs in mainstream classes does not exist. Policies suggested in the recommendations of this study would help to clearly define expectations for mainstream teachers of ELLs, and provide guidelines for test accommodation, and fair, valid assessment (Abedi, 2008; Lane & Leventhal, 2015). They would also provide a rationale for the use of native languages in core classes to support students with limited English proficiency.

In the absence of specific policies, differentiation for ELLs in core classes depends almost entirely on teachers' experience, training, expectations, and perceptions. Under these circumstances, teachers have limited choice and differentiation may become a case of doing more or doing less, rather than doing things *differently*. The need voiced by teachers for further training to support ELLs and documented in accreditation reports (Western Association of Schools and Colleges & Council for International Schools Accreditation Report, 2008; International Baccalaureate Organization, Five Year Report, May, 2008) in the survey, interview and focus group data continues to exist. In the meantime, without adequate professional development, teachers may lose self-efficacy and feel frustrated in their efforts to teach (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008).

School change needs to be systemic and result in changes for the whole school (McLeskey, et al., 2014). It would be a mistake to assume that we as individual teachers can remain the same and still change the system. According to Fullan (2005), "Each of us *is* the system" (p. 222), and we must begin by recognizing our responsibility to work collaboratively to make a difference. DuFour et al. (2010) argue that it is a fact that one of the most common reasons for failing to do what we know we should, is not a fear of conflict with others. It is a fear *from within* not to change instructional practices simply

because it is easier to use ineffective and questionable practices than having the self-discipline to adopt new ones (Du Four et al., 2010).

We may never fully understand teachers' perceptions regarding inclusion and differentiation; nor do we need to. Understanding that diverse perspectives and levels of experience and competence exist provides a starting point. From there, the school can implement PLCs, lesson study, or some other type of professional development. Collaborative work to meet clear expectations based on the achievement data of ELLs should: (a) Enable these students greater access to the content of their mainstream classes, (b) Create conditions for ELLs to reach challenging academic goals, and (c) Foster the development of higher levels of motivation for teachers and students - ELLs included.

The project outlined in Chapter 8 of this study provides the school with an integrated collection of intervention strategies, including professional learning communities (PLCs), Response to Intervention (RTI), and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) to create better educational opportunities for ELLs. It is by no means the only approach nor one the school can achieve quickly. The process of assessing ELL achievement data and developing intervention will be on-going and take time. Teachers regardless of their expectations and perspectives, I expect, would appreciate this type of collaborative support. This approach can allow content-area teachers to build a foundational understanding of ELLs, and the pedagogical language and content needed to implement new instructional approaches in mainstream classes (Molle, Sato, Boals, & Hedgspeth, 2015).

Whether the school's finances permit the hiring of additional ELL specialists recommended by some interview participants, is unknown at this point. What matters is that the discussion at one international school has started about ELLs and the role of mainstream teachers in meeting those students' needs. The school faculty can now focus on the academic needs of a quiet but growing population of students who continue to struggle in mainstream classes to master content and language (WASC & CIS Five-Year Review: Accreditation Visiting Team Report, 2013). This study has contributed to the

discussion of how teachers at this and other international schools, can differentiate their instruction and expect more from the ELLs they teach. These changes will allow more of these students to be actively engaged with the curriculum and improve their academic achievement.

At the beginning of this research study, I described a debate I witnessed some years ago about the role of mainstream teachers regarding ELLs. Now with the benefit of hindsight, research into other settings, and my own in this one, my perspective is much clearer. Mainstream teachers are ultimately responsible for *all* learners in their classrooms. As formidable a challenge as it is, they need to find ways to support English language learners' development of both language and content. Neither can wait. To put language development or content learning on hold limits the opportunity for ELLs to achieve the high academic levels they are capable of reaching.

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Appendices

Appendix A: ESL Students in the Mainstream: Teacher Survey.

Inclusion

1. The inclusion of ESL students in subject area classes creates a positive educational atmosphere.
2. The inclusion of ESL students in mainstream classes benefits all students.
3. I welcome the inclusion of ESL students in my classroom.
4. The inclusion of ESL students in my class/classes increases my workload.
5. The inclusion of ESL students in my class slows the progress of the entire classes.

Differentiation

6. It is good practice to simplify instructions for ESL students.
7. It is good practice to adjust the quantity of class work for ESL students.
8. It is good practice to allow ESL students additional time to complete assignments.
9. Teachers should not give ESL students a failing grade if they display effort.
10. Teachers should not modify assignments for an ESL student enrolled in mainstream classes.
11. The modification of class work would be difficult to justify to other students.
12. It is difficult for mainstream teachers to deal with the needs of ESL students.
13. It is unreasonable to expect a mainstream teacher to teach a student who does not speak English.

Language Acquisition

14. ESL students should not be included in mainstream classes until they acquire a minimum level of English proficiency.
15. ESL students should be allowed to use their native language in class.
16. ESL students should be able to acquire English, and interact fully with the curriculum and their peers, within two years of enrolling in a school where English is the language of instruction.

Professional Development and Training

17. I have adequate training to work with ESL students.
18. I have adequate training and knowledge about second language acquisition to work with ESL students.
19. I am interested in receiving more training in working with ESL students.

Additional Comments

Please add any additional comments you have about ESL students studying in mainstream classes, especially regarding strategies that have worked with these students.

Note: Adapted from "Secondary teacher attitudes towards including English language learners in mainstream classrooms," by J. Reeves, 2006, *Journal of Educational Research*, *99*(3), 131-142. Adapted with permission.

Appendix B: Operational Definitions for Research Study.

Academic Language:	The language of instruction used in academic subjects such as mathematics, science, and social studies, and art. (Cummins, 1999). Academic language describes complex ideas and includes vocabulary, syntax, and discourse used in and outside of school (Zwiers, 2013).
Basic Interpersonal Communication (BICS):	Conversational language used in everyday life (Cummins, 1999).
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALPS):	Academic language used in textbooks; language required for success at school (Cummins, 1999).
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy:	An approach to teaching that embodies the principles of identity and cultural development, equality and academic excellence, developmental awareness, caring relationships, and teaching the whole child (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).
Culturally Responsive Teaching:	Using the cultural background of students as a bridge to academic success and promote cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness (Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008). Culturally responsive teaching responses to the students' need to belong and develop a sense of identity, and honors their human dignity (Gay, 2000); it also taps into cultural knowledge, prior experiences and performance styles to make learning appropriate and effective (Ladson-Billings, 1992).
Differentiation:	Maximizing the academic potential of students and challenging them by offering different learning experiences to meet their different levels of ability, interests, and preferred learning style (Ravitch, 2007). Tailoring instruction to respond to the unique needs of students by altering the content, process, products or learning environment (Tomlinson, 2010).
English as a Second Language (ESL):	Traditionally referred to students who come to school with English as a second language (ESL). However, this term for many students is incorrect

	since some children have English as their third, fourth and so on, language (Gunderson, 2008).
English Language Learners (ELLs):	Learners who have a first language other than English. These students concurrently study content and English in mainstream classrooms (Goldberg, 2008).
Global Nomads:	See Third Culture Kids (TCKs).
Inclusion:	"Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people." (University of California, Berkeley, 2015).
International Schools:	Schools that have students from diverse nations, offer a curriculum typical of one country in another or offer a curriculum and educational system typical of two or more countries (European Council of International Schools, 2012).
Long-term ELLs (LTELLs):	Students classified as ELL for five years or more (Wilson, 2015).
Mainstream Classes:	Regular classrooms containing fluent speakers of English (Tinajero, 2004).
Mixed-Methods Sequential Explanatory Design:	a "highly popular (type of mixed-methods research) among researchers and implies collecting and analyzing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study." (Viet Hung, 2012, p. 165).
Response to Intervention (RTI):	Practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions (RTI Action Network, n.d).

Rigour:	The creation of an environment by teachers in which students were supported and expected to reach high levels of achievement (Blackburn, 2008).
Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP):	The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol or SIOP is a comprehensive framework of academic interventions for teachers to increase the language proficiency of English language learners in mainstream classes (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2012).
Teacher Perspectives:	"A reflective, socially defined interpretation of experience that serves as a basis for subsequent action. Actions are a combination of perspectives, intentions, interpretations which interact continually…. Perspectives are understood as situation specific and action-orientated" (Tabachnik & Zeichner in Dooly & Ross, 2010, p. 96).
Third Culture Kids (TCKs):	Children growing up abroad, away from their parents' culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Appendix C: Potential Learning Strategies for English Language Learners.

Making meaningful connections to new content
Drawing on prior knowledge to elaborate and predict
Using mind maps to represent content from textbooks
Applying linguistic knowledge from other languages
Creating flashcards to learn vocabulary
Creating graphic organizers to organize information
Using search terms to conduct research
Using a protocol to provide feedback to peers
Notetaking
Using expository text frames
Creating story maps
Using the question-answer relationship (QAR) strategy
Breaking down large tasks into manageable pieces (e.g. Big 6)
Identifying and defining key words
Using R.A.F.T. (role, audience, format, topic) prompts
Finding the meaning of words in a dictionary
Using Google's image search feature
Using cooperative learning structures such as jigsaw
Writing a bibliography in MLA format
Using online tools to revise writing and prevent plagiarism
Summarizing the main points of a text
Creating mnemonic devices to memorise information
Developing questions to provide a focus for reading
Using online translation tools
Replacing verbs to write a lab report using scientific vocabulary
Inferring meaning and making predictions
Using prompts to participate in group discussions
Using KWL charts (know, want to know learnt)
Determining the meaning of words from context
Writing topic sentences and creating outlines
Using graphic organisers to learn new academic vocabulary
Inferring meaning from text
Creating rubrics to self-evaluate work
Visualising information from written text

Appendix D: Effective Differentiated Instruction Reported in Survey Instrument.

Instruction with plenty of visuals; sketches, timelines, charts
Oral discussion activities with a partner who can guide and support them
Vocabulary through storytelling
Allow extra time to complete tests
Explain what will be on a test beforehand
Use culturally inclusive texts and reading materials
Check students' notes to make sure they understand key vocabulary, concepts, etc..
Guided reading
Clarify instructions; use simple, short sentences
Speak loudly and clearly
Vocabulary building activities
Body language; humor
Modify assignments
Guided support from teacher and peers to enable ELLs to participate in activities
Partner students with a partner who can explain information in mother tongue
Assign mentors
Allow students to read novels in their mother tongue or use audio version
Extend deadlines

Appendix E: Teacher Interview Protocol.

Central Research Question:
How and *why* do mainstream teachers perceive their role regarding English language learners the way they do, and what impact does this have on their expectations and instruction for these students?

Inclusion & Role

- What is the role of the content area teacher in regard to teaching ELLs?
- What are your expectations for the ELLs in your mainstream class?
- Some teachers might say that even English language learners with limited English proficiency could become fluent in a mainstream classroom provided they have the time and support to do so, while others suggest that it is better to include these students in ESL classes until they were ready to function in English at a level comparable to their peers. What do you think?
- What are five of the best ways for the school to support the language needs of English language learners (ESLs)?
- How long do you think it might take for students with low English proficiency to become fluent and capable of participating in class at the same level as native English speakers?

Differentiation

- What some things you do or have done in your classroom to differentiate instruction and/or assessment for ELLs?
- Can you describe a situation in which you have seen an English language learner experience difficulty with the curriculum, instruction or assessment? What worked with this student? What did not?

Professional Development and Training

- What kind of ESL/language acquisition training have you received? What effect do you think this training has had on your classroom practice?

Appendix F: Qualitative and Quantitative Data to Address Research Objectives.

Research Questions	Teacher Survey Items	Interview Questions
1. Is there a difference between elementary, middle school, and high school teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners in regular mainstream classes?	• In which school, do you teach the most? • What subjects do you teach or prefer to teach? • Inclusion items: 1-5 • Differentiation items: 7-13 • Items to reverse code: 4, 5, 10-13.	1. What is the role of the content area teacher in regard to teaching ESL students? 2. What are your expectations for the ESL students in your mainstream class? 3. How do you feel about the inclusion of ESL students in mainstream classes?
2. What is the difference between school levels in the classroom practices mainstream teachers use to accommodate the learning needs of English language learners (ELLs)?	• In which school, do you teach the most? • What subjects do you teach or prefer to teach? • Differentiation items: 7-13 • Items to reverse code: 10-13.	4. Questions 1-3 above; also: 5. Is there anything you do differently in regard to your instruction and/or assessment of ESL students? If so, what do you do? 6. What do you believe is the best way to support the language needs of ESL students?
3. Is there a positive relationship between mainstream teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of English language learners (ELLs) and the classroom practices they employ to meet the needs of these students?	• Inclusion items: 1-5. • Differentiation items: 7-13. • Items to reverse code: 4, 5, 10-14, 16.	7. Questions 1-5 above; also: 8. Can you describe a situation of where one or more ESL students experienced difficulty in your class? What did you do?
4. Is there a connection between ESL/language acquisition training mainstream teachers have received and how they view their role in teaching English language learners? If there is a connection, what implications does this have for mainstream teachers and the ELLs in their classroom?	• Inclusion items: 1-5. • Training items: 17-19. • Items to reverse code: 4-5	9. What kind of language acquisition or ESL training have you received? 10. What effect has this training had on your teaching practice?

Appendix G: Information Sheet for Interview Participants.

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Information Sheet for Interview Participants

HREC Approval Number: H13REA233

Full Project Title: Mainstream Teachers' Expectations and Perspectives of their Role in Educating English Language Learners

Principal Researcher: Stephen Dixon

I would like to invite you to take part in this study and participate in a one-on-one interview. This study has been designed to satisfy the requirements of the University of Southern Queensland's Doctor of Education Program. The findings of this study should help to identify how English language learners can best be supported in learning academic content and their language acquisition. I appreciate your consideration.

Procedures

I understand that:

- Interviews will take approximately 30 minutes;
- Participation in this study is confidential and I will not be personally identified in any data or research reports;
- There is no perceived risk of any harm, psychological or otherwise from my participation in this study;
- Participants will receive a 2,000 Japanese yen Starbucks voucher at the end of the interview;
- Data will only be used for the purpose of this research;
- Participants will have an opportunity to read the transcript of the interview to verify its accuracy;
- All data from this survey will be kept in a secure place at the researcher's residence for a period of 5 years and then destroyed, in accordance with university requirements;
- I can retain this information sheet for future reference.
- Participants will receive a copy of the research findings and the study's recommendations.

Voluntary Participation

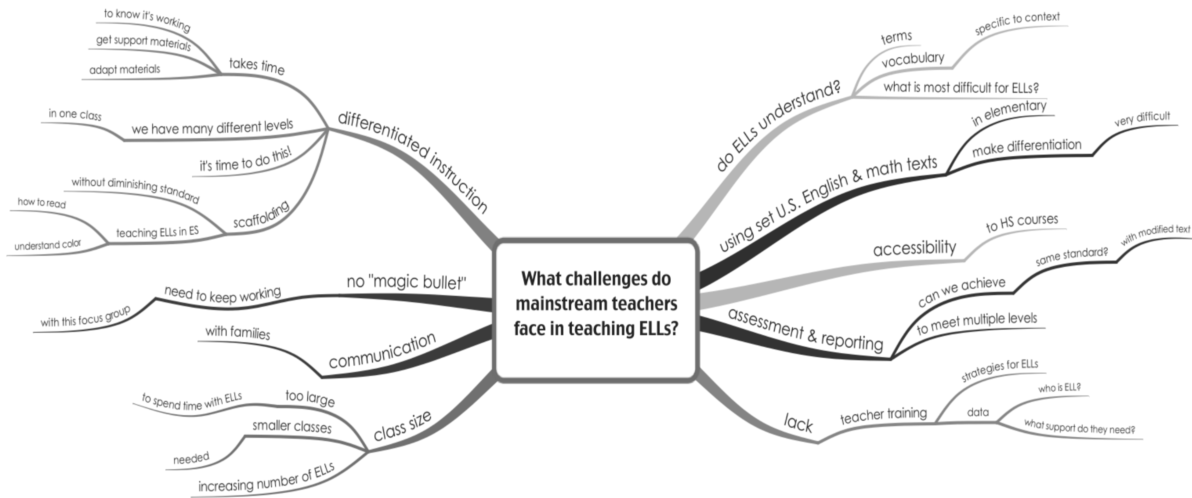
Participation is entirely voluntary. **If you do not wish to take part in this study you are not obliged to.** If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. Any information already obtained from you will be destroyed. Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the University of Southern Queensland and/or (school name deleted). Please notify the researcher if you decide to withdraw from this project.

Should you have any queries regarding the progress or conduct of this research, you can contact the principal researcher: Stephen Dixon (Details deleted)

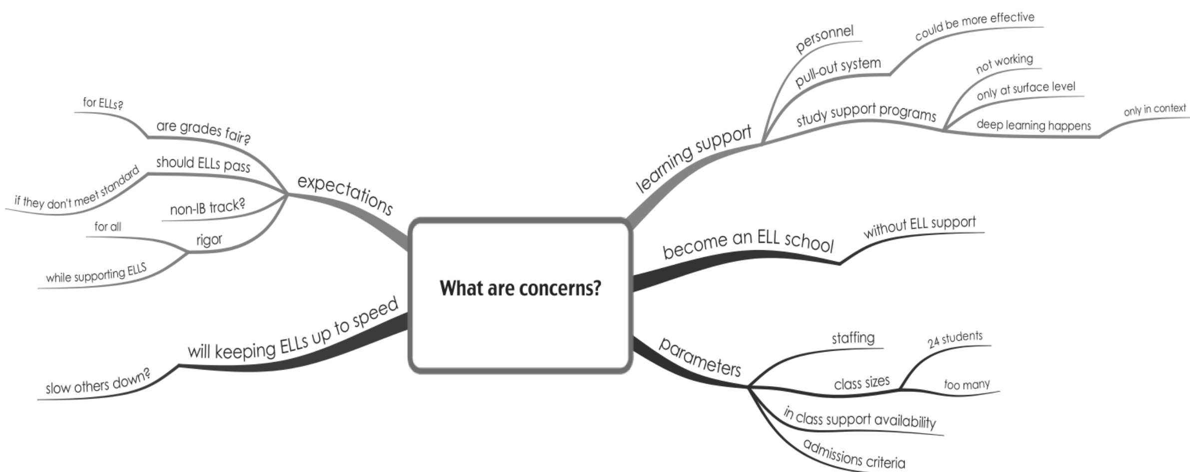
If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Ethics and Research Integrity Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees
University of Southern Queensland
West Street, Toowoomba 4350
Ph: +61 7 4631 2690
Email: *ethics@usq.edu.au*

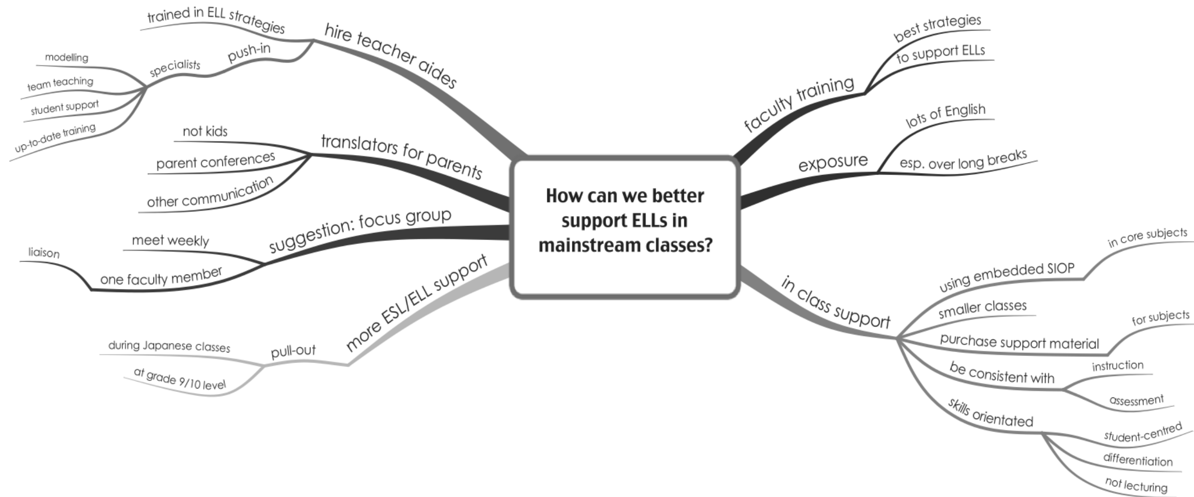
Appendix H: Focus Group: Discussion of Challenges Facing Mainstream Teachers.



Appendix I: Focus Group: Discussion of Concerns of Mainstream Teachers.



Appendix J: Focus Group: Discussion Regarding Better Support for ELLs.



Appendix K: Focus Group: Discussion of Possible Future Outcomes.