"I WAS NEVER PREPARED FOR THIS": EXAMINING THE EXTENT TO WHICH
CLASSROOM TEACHERS ARE PREPARED TO IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT THE
NEEDS OF LTELL STUDENTS

A Thesis
by
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Abstract

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CLASSROOM TEACHERS ARE PREPARED TO IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT THE
NEEDS OF LTELL STUDENTS

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This study examines the extent to which classroom teachers are prepared to

support Long Term English Language Learners (LTELL), a subclassification of

Emergent Bilingual (EB) students who have received English language support for an

extended period of time and yet they are still striving to achieve English language

proficiency as measured by standardized tests. Because these students have

seemingly mastered the skills that English language instruction offers, they are

usually placed in traditional, mainstream classes alongside their English-only

speaking peers and under the instruction of classroom teachers -- teachers, who in

many cases, as revealed in this study, have little to no training or support when it

comes to working with students developing skills and exhibiting behaviors natural to

the language acquisition process. Based on the reflections, experiences, and

sentiments shared via interviews with practicing teachers, the findings of this study

suggest that the development of an extensive teacher preparation curriculum covering

the various needs of language learning students, as well as interactive professional

development opportunities in collaboration with the English language support team,

would greatly benefit classroom teachers as they prepare to support the LTELL

students in their classrooms.

Dedication

To my students: I see you, I hear you, I am here for you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis examines the pedagogy and experiences of teachers who work with Long Term English Language Learners (LTELLs), and, specifically those students who are unsuited for enrollment in English language support programs and who are placed in the mainstream general education classroom. While teachers in this study used a variety of terms, including English Language Learner (ELL) and English as a Second Language (ESL), the researcher focuses on the profile of the LTELL in contrast to the profile of an Emergent Bilingual (EB). In this study, mainstream general education refers to the typically structured classroom where students are taught by different teachers in each of the content areas, such as English/language arts, science, social studies, and math. The general profile of an LTELL student suggests that they have mastered English as a social language and can communicate almost as well, if not as well, as native-English speakers, yet they often underperform in their academic studies for a variety of reasons.

Consequently, these students are unlikely to "exit out of" English language support programs, "reach proficiency," or "master" the language, at least as it is measured by standardized tests. Oftentimes, this group of students is overrepresented in exceptional children (EC) programs (Sullivan, 2011), overlooked in the mainstream classroom, and misrepresented as EBs who have just started learning English (Brooks, personal communication, Fall 2020), all of which greatly undermines the types of support these students receive in school and greatly affects their abilities to reach their greatest potential

with regard to academic achievement. By EC, the researcher refers to the services and support in place for students who have been identified as having diverse abilities.

Foundational Literature

Foundational research literature on this topic has suggested that LTELLs can potentially be most supported by their general education teachers across the content areas, as opposed to English language support staff and programs; however, because of the lack of understanding about what support LTELLs specifically require, they are often given inappropriate measures of support, ranging from little to none in the mainstream classroom to extensive, yet unnecessary, support from ESL programming that have been designed around the mastery of foundational and conversational English (Menken, 2013). According to the research (Flores et al., 2015; Menken et al., 2012; Seltzer, 2019), it appears that LTELL students would greatly benefit from significant scaffolding in the content area classes, especially with regard to understanding academic language and making meaningful connections between their own experiences and funds of knowledge and the academic content.

It also appears that a more comprehensive understanding of language acquisition would benefit students, especially as teachers review progress assessments; understanding language acquisition and modifying expectations might lead to different forms of support and intervention for students who have actually mastered the content but who need help communicating that they have done so. As long as LTELLs are also given the academic language support they need to succeed, perhaps, they would benefit from staying in the mainstream classroom, as opposed to being pulled out for instruction, as some English Language Support programs suggest. This research project will provide further insight into

both of these instructional decisions, as well as misconceptions about LTELLs that compound this issue. Many times, LTELLs are already in the mainstream classroom and are misunderstood to be low-performers due to capability measures, when the reality is that they are really just not receiving the appropriate measures of support to help them succeed (Brooks, 2017; Menken et al., 2012).

The first wave of research exploring this specific group of students was led by Kate Menken, who focused her work around identifying who were classified as LTELL students and how they were negatively impacted by the measures implemented in schools during the early 2000s (Menken et al., 2012) . Since those studies have been released, other scholars including Flores, Seltzer, and Brooks have focused their research on applying specific lenses to frame their studies regarding this group of students. Flores has taken a raciolinguistic approach to understanding why and how LTELLs are systematically created by American schools (Flores & Rosa, 2017), Seltzer has provided more comprehensive studies on the classroom pedagogy associated with supporting LTELLs, especially with introducing translanguaging practices into the classroom (Seltzer & Celic, 2011), and Brooks has been a leading scholar in redefining how bilingual and multilingual students are classified and addressed, since the original deficit understanding of LTELLs severely limits these students' abilities (Brooks, 2019).

The Purpose of this Study

The research question addressed in this study was inspired by the personal observations and experience of the researcher, who, in completing field experience hours at the local high school, was introduced to two students who were seriously struggling in their English I class. These two students were extremely vocal and engaged in casual, non-

academic settings but seemed unable to complete their assignments for class; after an initial evaluation, the students were said to be reading below grade level in both their home language and English and unable to maintain adequate progress in class due to this language barrier.

The school followed a push-in model, so these students were placed in a mainstream English classroom, rather than being pulled out for an English support class. Though this model might have its benefits, in this case, it seemed to create extra challenges for both the students and the teacher. Not only were the students unsuccessful in the classroom, due to a variety of factors beyond the language barrier, but the teacher also found it challenging to appropriately identify and give the support that these specific students needed. The unique situation prompted the researcher and a close peer to work extra hours with those two students and explore various methods of academic support in an effort to support these two students in their English I class. Much of the support that the researcher could offer was heavily reliant on a trial and error approach; the researcher worked closely with one of the EC specialists at the school, who had an existing relationship with both students but who also found it challenging to identify strategies that would be beneficial for offering them relevant academic support.

Furthermore, as the researcher continued to engage in conversation with other educators and professionals about this particular topic of interest, it became apparent that LTELL students were often misunderstood with regard to their strengths and capabilities and when assessing their areas of greatest need. Also, it seemed that teachers were hesitant, at best, in asserting comfort, much less confidence, in implementing research-based practices aimed at reaching students who fell somewhere between Emergent Bilingual and native-

English speaking students. At the same time, the researcher had made a few personal discoveries regarding literacy and language practices that are often associated with emergent readers, and how those practices are applicable to language learners in the upper grades.

In learning how language is acquired and the logical process by which it is developed for native English-speaking learners, the researcher began to wonder how that new understanding might affect the literacy and language practices of high school teachers when working with EBs; perhaps, the behaviors that teachers observed of their LTELL students were actually indicative of their acquisition of the English language rather than the limitations of their home language. In other words, the researcher wondered whether or not the average, mainstream teacher was aware of exactly what to expect when working with LTELL students in their classroom, and, further, how they could support those students as they moved from one stage of literacy and language acquisition to the next. This further questioning was essential in constructing an interview guide for the data collection process.

This sense of growing concern was strengthened by the researcher's own experience from the year prior, when two students who had been placed in an academic English I class were recommended for extra remediation. While working with these two students, the researcher noticed that the initial reports on file for these two students seemed inaccurate in the sense that the skills they were expected to have were overestimated based on their limited proficiency with the English language; it was not a matter of *this student cannot read this text* but rather *this student does not understand what I am asking them to do in order to demonstrate comprehension of the text.* Reflecting on this experience, the researcher wondered if a better understanding of both the language acquisition process, and the observed behavior at each of those stages, and the student profile for LTELL students might

allow teachers to be more prepared to support these students in finding success in the mainstream classroom.

As the researcher engaged more deeply with academic literature and studies addressing bilingual education, it became apparent that these two young learners fit the profile of a Long Term English Language Learning (LTELL) student; though the researcher had not been introduced to this specific group of students as part of the English Education program of study, it soon became evident that this academic phenomenon was one of much larger magnitude than expected and was responsible for affecting so many more beyond just these two students. Similar cases, though perhaps not as striking, appeared in the researcher's student teaching internship, but it was only when the researcher began studying research-based, culturally-responsive practices for teaching EB students across the content areas that the term "LTELL student" was introduced. In the graduate program, where the researcher engaged with heavily concentrated courses that addressed bilingual education and practices, the researcher was tasked with an assignment which asked for a culturally responsive curriculum plan targeting a specific group of students.

For this assignment, the researcher chose to explore what challenges LTELL students faced in their classes, how their challenges were typically addressed, and to what extent they were able to achieve academic success in school given the current programs and support in place. It was in completing this project that the researcher's curiosity about and concern for this under-addressed, yet growing, population of students took root and inspired the following research.

The Research Question

The question that is addressed in this study will be: In what ways do mainstream classroom teachers feel they have been professionally trained to support LTELL students?

For the purpose of this study, mainstream educators refer to the classroom teachers who are qualified to teach in the general education classrooms, specifically in the content areas once schools transition to models where each course subject is taught by a different teacher. The extent to which they feel prepared to support LTELL students is primarily based on their experiences from their teacher preparation programs and the continuing education they receive as they partake in professional development opportunities through their schools.

As suggested earlier in this chapter, this study is essential because it will aim to form a more comprehensive understanding of the degree to which teachers feel prepared for and supported in working with LTELL students in their classrooms. Interview questions focused on teachers' levels of comfort in working with LTELL students as they pursued academic success in their classrooms, and how that level of comfort and preparation was influenced, or not, by their teacher preparation programs, how the English language support programs within the school supported teachers in addressing LTELL students' needs, specifically with regard to helping teachers to stay informed about best practices that target the engagement and success of LTELL students. Teachers' perspectives are paramount in this project as they will contribute to the construction of a more comprehensive understanding of the school environment in which teachers are trained and work, especially with regard to the support in place for teachers working with LTELL students. Even if teachers are unaware of the needs and differences in LTELL needs from EB needs in their classrooms, that, in itself, suggests a

disconnect between the knowledge of teachers and the challenges that this particular group of students face.

LTELLs form a critical group of students who are often overlooked, misrepresented, and misunderstood in the general field of education, especially at the secondary level. These students have incredibly different needs than newcomer EB arrivals do; yet, it is not uncommon to find them receiving the same kinds of support as other EBs, inappropriate measures of support that EC students usually receive, or little to no support at all in mainstream classrooms due to their high social and oral English communication skills. However, if LTELLs are to succeed in the mainstream classroom, then general education and content area teachers will need to review their classroom pedagogies and intentionally revamp their class curriculums in order to provide a fair education and a supportive learning environment for the LTELL students within their classes. If teachers are expected to adapt their practice in order to better reach LTELL students, this comprehensive understanding of if and how teachers are prepared for and supported in taking that step is required; this research project hopes to provide insight about such an understanding.

Chapter 2

Academic Literature Review

As stated in chapter one, this study is centered around the group of Emergent Bilingual (EB) students classified as LTELL students and sought to address the research question: In what ways do mainstream classroom teachers feel they have been professionally trained to support LTELL students? First, it is important to note that LTELL students are significantly different from their newcomer EB and English-only speaking peers, yet their needs are often overlooked in the mainstream classroom, which, in turn, impedes upon students' abilities to progress, grow, and learn. These ideas are based on the findings of scholars including Menken (2013), Flores (2017), Seltzer (2017), and Brooks (2019), among others, as well as from the experiences shared in a series of interviews conducted prior to this project, as a means through which this topic was developed. The next few paragraphs will present a historical overview of this issue, and then attempt to represent an authentic depiction of the LTELL student profile, as well as give context to the overarching academic phenomenon at hand. This review is drawn from relevant literature, as well as existing interviews with scholars and practicing teachers.

Historical Context

The American education system has been conflicted with how to approach multilingual practices since the eighteenth century (Cavanaugh, 1996; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). Throughout history, the discussion about whether or not languages beyond English have a place in the public school system has been influenced by the country's fluctuating attitude about encouraging the preservation of multinational identities. One of the key features that make America different from most other countries is its origin from a

diverse group of people, cultures, and beliefs, and it is this same circumstance that causes the country to grapple with the role of language as an indicator of the American identity as deeply as it does. To this day, the topic of bilingual and multilingual education programs and the acceptance of such programs within schools are sure to start passionate debates among policymakers, teachers, central administration staff, parents, and students. Though much has changed since this conversation began the question remains: How do teachers meet the needs of LTELLs?

In order to fully understand the context in which this project is situated, it is helpful to understand the progress and setbacks that led to the creation of this particular group of students. According to Cavanaugh (1996), when the colonists first arrived on North American soil, there were a diverse number of languages spoken, and it was not until the colonists realized that they needed to present a united front in order to survive and thrive as a new nation that language became an issue. Before the American Revolution, it was difficult to mandate that colonists speak English due to the various languages used in different church services; however, colonists were soon forced to learn English if they wanted to take part in business and trade. After the American Revolution, there was a time when "the need to create common bonds and loyalties of nation building were paramount" (Cavanaugh, 1996, p. 40), and schools were expected to teach in English regardless of the native language spoken by those in attendance. From this moment on, language became an integral piece of America's national identity and would continue to be politicized as such to this day.

Intentionally politicizing language was a dangerous move that had present day consequences (Cavanaugh, 1996); what was once a decision intended to unite people, evolved to such an extent that the tension around bilingual and multilingual education

actually reveals the fragility of the American identity. Language became a representation of belongingness and began to distinguish those who had adopted the American identity and those who were foreign to the American identity. For example, as immigration increased, language became associated with economic class and education since immigrants were often viewed as "illiterate, docile, often lacking in initiative, and almost wholly without Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, liberty, law, order, public decency, and government" (Cubberly, 1919, p. 41), and the influence of both World Wars also framed other languages as markers of foreignness, whose loyalty was naturally distrusted and feared (Cavanaugh, 1996).

Over time, "the anti-foreign-language and anti-immigration rhetoric that peaks during periods of increased immigration is clear evidence that nativist sentiments can lead to fears that the use of languages other than English in school will somehow fracture the national identity" (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015, p. 30). The politicization of English as America's language even began to affect political decisions, such as California's Proposition 227, which eliminated bilingual classes in California public schools despite the large populations of Spanish-speaking families, and the No Child Left Behind Act, which placed EB students, sometimes referred to as English Language Learners (ELL), in a position where they were expected to perform comparatively to their native-English-speaking peers (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015).

To this day, American public schools have overlooked the effects of their decisions when implementing English language support programs in favor of maintaining political favor, and the result has been the marginalization of non-native-English-speaking students. These students, EB, rarely receive adequate support or resources for them to fairly access the

education that their English-only speaking peers receive (Bronte, personal communication, October 27, 2020; Hyde, personal communication, October 21, 2020). Given that the general classification of EB includes students who have just entered the American school system, those who have grown up in the American school system, and those who have transferred in and out of the American school system, it is unsurprising that the needs of these specific subpopulations get overlooked and misrepresented in schools. However, after considering the needs of one of these subpopulations, LTELLs, shifting the responsibility for reaching and supporting these students from the overextended English language support team to the classroom teachers offers a promising option for these students to achieve their greatest potential for academic success.

Student Perspective: Long Term English Language Learners (LTELL)
Definitions and Background on the LTELL Student Population

The findings from this study suggest that practicing teachers feel ill-prepared in their abilities to support a group of students that account for approximately 10% of their classroom each year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). The implications of this disconnect has perpetuated the growth of a specific group of students that can be found across American public schools to such an extent that they have earned their own classification differentiating them from their peers. English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners, now often referred to as Emergent Bilinguals (EB) or English Language Learners (ELL) in more recent, strengths-based research, are increasing in numbers across the country. That, in itself, is not the issue; the issue lies in the fact that teachers might be inadequately prepared to support these students in the traditional classroom; so, as Menken (2013), the leading scholar in establishing this classification of the Long Term English Language

Learner (LTELL), remarks, "We have this population of students referred to as LTELLs because we created them systemically" (Menken, Interview, November 9, 2020). This chapter responds to the question and concerns raised in chapter one, which explores the extent to which classroom teachers are prepared to support LTELL students in the mainstream classroom, adds to the limited literature that is currently available about this specific group of students, which is reviewed in chapter two, and a qualitative approach to understanding the development and perpetuation of the appearance of these students in the upper grade levels. The following sections will consider the institutional side of the U.S. education system, through the analysis of practicing teachers' perspectives, and how the system, as is, might contribute to the creation of this subpopulation of students.

This study explored content area secondary classroom teachers' experiences with supporting LTELLs and their perceptions of being prepared to sufficiently support this population of students in their classrooms. In order to understand this academic phenomenon, where students receive years of English language support to the point where there seems to be nothing left to give, yet they still struggle to meet standards measuring proficiency in the classroom, there are two perspectives that must be analyzed in depth. One of those perspectives is that of the classroom teacher and the other is that of the LTELL students, themselves. Together, these two perspectives might create a more comprehensive understanding of the whole story and emphasize what gaps and disconnects exist between what services and support is provided and what is needed. The study at hand took a deep dive into the perspectives of classroom teachers and the educational and professional development connected to LTELLS they have experienced.

Students are classified as LTELLs if they have received English language support for six or more years but who have yet to reach a level of proficiency in mastering the language as measured by the state's standardized test (Brooks, 2014). Usually, these students are in middle or high school, and their oral language is strong in both their home language and English. However, for a number of reasons, these students underperform on tasks and assessments that require advanced levels of literacy comprehension and use of academic language (Seltzer, 2019).

LTELL students need to be identified specifically as such because their needs are greatly different from other language learning secondary students; contrary to popular belief, as many as one-third of all English learners are in grades 7-12, but most secondary teachers are usually neither equipped with the education practices to teach English as a second language, as primary grade teachers inherently are when they teach emergent readers, nor do they have the same amount of time to teach English language concepts, like phonics, fluency, and linguistic morphemes, before students are expected to graduate and prepare for post-secondary plans (Maxwell-Jolly et al., 2007). Many times, LTELL students are placed in the mainstream classroom because their social English skills are strong, which leads to their ability to blend in with their English-only speaking peers in the classroom. However, when they underperform on academic assessments, secondary teachers may be confused and misunderstand why this is the case since it contradicts the students' abilities to be successful in classroom exercises.

Typical Classroom Approaches for LTELLs

As briefly noted above, LTELL students are often given English language support in one of two ways: either they are pulled out of the mainstream classroom to participate in

alternative language support programs or they are included in mainstream classrooms with no additional assistance. Both of these options are subpar for LTELL students and do more of a disservice to them than anything else (Brooks, 2016; Menken & Kleyn, 2009), which will be more deeply discussed in the following sections.

LTELL students are most often found in the academic-level, mainstream, late-middle-school to early-high-school classes, though some students may never find themselves exiting this designated classification. They are most often nearly fluent, if not fluent, in conversational English, and therefore are often assumed to perform as well as their English-only speaking peers in the classroom. However, lest it be forgotten, they are still learning English as emergent bi- or multi-lingual students, so to expect them to perform equally to their English-only speaking peers, with no additional support, is not only inequitable, but also illogical. The greatest area of need when working to support LTELL students is building and strengthening their academic language, or language that is specific to educational practices, including learning objectives and instruction, assessment language, and classroom discourse. Other aspects of the mainstream classroom that isolate language learners from their peers are the various cultural references that contribute to the class's ability to build community, the volatile nature of relationships that students and their different teachers may or may not have over the years, and the perceptions students form about their own capabilities compared to those of their peers, all of which affect students' academic achievements. Given that it is the teacher's responsibility to foster students' growth, the barriers that EBs, especially LTELL students in the mainstream classrooms, are expected to overcome, as addressed here, are impossible to ignore.

Common <u>Misconceptions</u> about LTELLs

> Generally they are really good with social English so teachers are like 'Why are they an EL [English learner]; they don't need help with language; they're great'...and then later they are like 'Why aren't they doing this or that' and that is because they don't understand academic language and there is a big difference between those two things (Bronte, personal communication, October 27, 2020).

The quote above comes from an in-service English language support staff member who offered their perspective for a previous research project. The misconceptions about LTELLs and what kind of support they need often fall into one of two extremes: the first assumes that LTELL students require no extra support, since they seem to communicate as well as their native-English-speaking peers, while the second assumes that LTELL students would benefit from English language support that generally targets newcomer EBs. In both cases, the support, or lack thereof, given to LTELLs is neither beneficial nor conducive to stimulating academic growth. In fact, both misconceptions misrepresent the students' needs which result in advancing the adverse effects that traditional schooling has on this already marginalized community of students. LTELLs have their own specific needs that differ from those of newcomer EBs and that are often overlooked in the traditional general education classroom -- more support in understanding and using language for academic purposes (Menken & Kleyn, 2010).

It may be useful to review the use of various terminology used in addressing this particular group of students. Over the years, academia has modified its language to refer to students by their assets, rather than their deficits; for example, the notation EB suggests that the student has mastered at least one language and is working towards adding English to their already-skilled repertoire, which emphasizes their language abilities rather than their limited proficiency in English. Similarly, English Language Learner (ELL) emphasizes the student's

ability to learn an additional language, rather than emphasizing their need to learn English as a second language . In some cases, English may not be their second language and could actually be their third or fourth language. The evolution of these classifications is central to the identity formation for students and the way they are perceived by their teachers and peers, so the progression towards more culturally-sensitive, de-anglicized language is essential in this discussion.

The terminology foundational to this conversation includes classifications such as ELL students, previously known as ESL students, newcomers, or students who have just arrived and enrolled in the U.S. public school system with limited conversational English skills, and LTELL students, the primary interest group for this particular study. Over the course of the interviews, it became evident that the teacher participants were generally familiar with the umbrella classification of EB students, interchangeably used with ELL/ESL in the interviews, yet generally unfamiliar with the formal subclassifications of learners, including the difference between newcomer ELL students and LTELL students, which can be significant when considering their unique needs in the classroom.

Because the general education teacher is unaware of the language acquisition process, it is not uncommon for LTELL students to be mislabeled as needing special services, and this group of students is often overrepresented in EC services (Sullivan, 2011). Without understanding the language acquisition process, teachers are likely to misunderstand students' abilities as deficits resulting from intellectual and cognitive processing disabilities, rather than understanding that the student just needs to learn the language in order to communicate:

> More so at the elementary level because teachers -the average teachers- are not aware
> of what the stages of language acquisition are, so they assume that kids don't know

things, and even when tests are given in their native language, I have a hard time believing that every single non-native speaker of English is testing into EC, and I just feel that there is an overidentification of ELL in the EC population (4:46)...Most often, it's our most marginalized students who get the least and our master schedule is created for high achievers who don't need a lot of support (39:34)...You want somebody to know what this means, help them feel it, touch it, not just hear it...use realia, visuals, posters, manipulatives…and reduce oral language! (Knight, personal communication, October 19, 2020).

However, as Knight, an administrator who was central to a previous project that the researcher led, noted above, the traditional school model is built to accommodate the general education student, so it is also not uncommon for general content courses to assume that students are familiar with academic language and how it applies to their studies. Transforming the mainstream classroom into a learning environment conducive to supporting LTELLs does not have to be pedagogically monumental; providing support and structure in the classroom can be as simple as creating interactive word walls that review common academic language in the content area, encouraging students to use sentence stems when they have questions and when they talk about course content (in order to ease the cognitive load for students when they engage in classroom activities), intentionally using academic language in conversational discourse, and providing opportunities for students to interact with the content in order to build a stronger context in which to ground their learning (Knight, Fall 2020). One of the leading scholars in the field whose work addresses the nuances that are associated with terminology used to discuss bilingual education and language learners, such as academic language and bilingualism, is Brooks (2016).

Just because someone is classified as an English Learner doesn't mean they are learning English (6:32)...This student population often gets viewed as failed learners of English and as not knowing any language well and associated with negative things and as though they are 'disenchanted' with school because they don't really know English (7:48)...It's insulting when you speak English on a daily basis to be put in a class with someone who is just learning English, but to say that these two groups of

people are one and the same and that you really don't know something, especially when you're a teenager. (Brooks, personal communication, October 23, 2020).

Though scholars have really just started, over the last couple of decades, to try to understand why LTELLs are not exiting English language support programs within a predetermined timeline, there have been critical findings that have become foundational for research moving forward (Brooks, 2019; Menken, 2013). The most important of these findings is the mindset that views LTELLs from a deficit perspective, which is inaccurate and misrepresentative of this group of students. Oftentimes, this perspective leads to LTELL students being over-classified as EC and overrepresented in EB programs of study (Bronte, personal communication, October 27, 2020; Sullivan, 2011); this grouping of students, those who have little to no English language skills who need support in everyday communication practices and those who need support in understanding academic language and contextual points of reference in the classroom as it pertains to the specific content areas, is inappropriate as both groups of students have distinct needs that differ from each other. As suggested by this research, misplacing a LTELL student in an EB program is damaging to their perception of self-identity and self-efficacy and wasteful of time and resources (Brooks, 2016). As the above quote suggests, this association between LTELL and newcomer EB students emphasizes and misidentifies students through a deficit perspective, accounting for what they, assumingly, cannot do, rather than identifying what kinds of support students need and working from there.

Brooks argued that the misinterpretation of LTELL students' semilingualism, "...a term used to characterize certain types of bilinguals as having little to no proficiency in either language…" (Brooks, 2016, p. 236), is not only unfair in recognizing students' repertoire of knowledge but is also harmful in emphasizing identity markers that suggest students have

"insufficient" reading skills and are thus "struggling readers," when in fact they may actually be reproducing and reflecting meaning-making as they were taught in the classroom.

Brooks explained, "...the things (reading aloud and powerpoints) they have practiced doing in school for an extended period of time, they are very successful at. So, ...LTELLs struggling with academic literacy, 'academic literacy' is relative because if that is what you've been asked to do in school, then that is academic literacy... These students have been identified as failed learners but they could be learning very well what they are actually being taught" (personal communication, October 23, 2020). The next section will address this understanding, if not the lack thereof, about this type of language practice deemed "academic language," and how academic language relates to the LTELL student, especially across the secondary content areas.

In Context: Academic Phenomenon or Systemic Failure?

> What is language for academic purposes? What is this construct called 'Academic Language'? ...It's not even a measurable construct. We don't even have a clear definition of this thing, so how can we then frame students negatively for not having that? Could it just simply be that these are the students' home language practices that we're now marginalizing because they don't have this other kind of language practices that we call 'Academic Language.' (Knight, personal communication, October 19, 2020)

As Knight mentioned above, the traditional school has been designed to meet the needs of students who have the support and resources to supplement the instruction given in the classroom; unfortunately, it is also systematically responsible for the division between those students and the students who attend school in order to seek out those supports and resources. The latter group of students are highly affected and disadvantaged by school report cards, standardized testing (which requires comfort using academic language), and the general education teacher's lack of understanding of the language acquisition process (Hyde,

personal communication, October 21, 2020; Knight, personal communication, October 19, 2020). Here, there is also a cyclical pattern in the disconnected relationship between English Language Learning students and schools' English language support programs: although standardized tests rely heavily on students' abilities to comprehend academic language, which is where LTELL students need the most support, students' English proficiency test scores affect schools' report card grades. Schools are expected to show growth, so there is an additional pressure for schools to "exit" students out of English language support programs, yet the data that tracks progress and areas needing support is rarely distributed to the classroom teachers (Knight, October 19, 2020).

Unfortunately, these challenges are compounded each year as the LTELL student progresses through school, which separates them from their peers more drastically as they reach the upper grades. Not only does language instruction change and become less focused on phonics, linguistic skills, and literacy, but the environmental pressures around learning change, too (Bronte, October 27, 2020; Dutro, 2002). This is an idea that connects both practicing teachers that have been included in prior interviews with professional literature on this topic. In-service teacher Bronte emphasized some of the conclusions that Brooks' (2016) research has presented within the field. Both of these sources spoke about the environmental pressure in the classroom, suggesting that it is challenging for adolescents to develop a strong sense of self and confidence in their own self-identities, as it is for any teenager; but, for LTELL students, that is compounded with the pressure of advocating for themselves for extra academic support in the classroom, in front of their peers and to a teacher who might not have the background knowledge to teach English as a language, rather than as a content area. The tension that forms as a result of this dynamic between what students need and what they

feel is accessible only serves to further constrain and divide them from their English-only speaking peers.

Teacher Experience: Teacher Preparation for Supporting LTELL Students in the General Education Classroom

Over the last decade, the federal government, along with education representatives and advocacy groups from a range of social and political stances, have been up in arms trying to figure out how to ensure that public school students receive the best education from the most highly qualified teachers. The term, "highly qualified teachers" comes from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), signed into law in the early 2000s by the Bush Administration, that established a minimum requirement for teachers if they expected to continue working in the classroom. The new legislation mandated that teachers prove that they were highly qualified to teach their subject and held them accountable for student achievement by meeting three criteria: highly qualified teachers had a bachelor's degree, held full state certification or licensure and *demonstrated subject matter competency* [emphasis added] (Remer, 2017). This piece of legislation was revised and specifically reevaluated how states conceptualized highly qualified teachers, and in 2015, the Obama administration signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Under ESSA, in an effort to reestablish responsibility at the state level instead of the federal level, the focus shifted from evaluating teacher qualifications to evaluating teacher effectiveness on student success (Remer, 2017). Most uses of the term "highly qualified" were amended to acknowledge teachers who had met their states' certification and licensure qualifications. This shift in responsibility, from federal to state accountability, left the priorities for teacher preparation programs under the influence of states' teacher certification

and licensure requirements and regulations. In other words, after the transition from NCLB to ESSA, states were given more flexibility with how they were going to hold their administration, teachers, and schools accountable for student achievement, but this transition came with its own set of challenges.

> While reducing the high-stakes testing culture is a major step, some of the ESSA feels more like a finger-in-the-dyke type of solution … the real paradigm shift needs to occur in how and when we educate our teachers about language and how people best learn it. If schools of education and school districts continue to position ESL programs and ESL certification as an add-on or an extra to "mainstream" education, they will continue to marginalize ELLs themselves. An example of this becomes evident in Texas, a U.S. state with one of the highest ELL populations. It might be reasonable to expect that extra coursework about language learners and specific professional development opportunities be required of Texas teachers, but there is none. In fact, all teachers have to do is simply (ironically) pass a test to be considered qualified to work with ELLs (Lindahl, 2015).

Although federal law, as outlined in the ESSA, encourages states to provide English Language Support programs, EB-specific training and continuing professional development for general education teachers ultimately depends on the priorities and regulations set by the states. "Research indicates that it is beneficial for English learners if all general classroom teachers have some form of EL-specific training, regardless of whether they work directly with English learners or not. General classroom teachers help students gain proficiency in the essential areas of language proficiency: speaking, listening, reading and writing," (Education Commission of the States, 2020). Despite the fact that research also suggests that EB students perform better when their teachers are required to have state certification to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) in any capacity, fewer than half of the states explicitly require teachers to receive this certification before teaching ELL students (Education Commission of the States, 2020). In fact, the very organization that accredits teacher preparation programs across the country simply groups ELL within student populations of diverse abilities,

including but not limited to "students with exceptionalities," "students with disabilities," and cases where matters of "English language learners and language acquisition, ethnic/racial cultural and linguistic differences, and gender differences…[as well as] discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation" impact learning"(National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education , p. 34-37).

As Lindahl (2015) addressed above, grouping Emergent Bilinguals with other diverse abilities does these students a disservice; although some of the strategies used to reach EB students might be similar to those used in EC cases, there are a number of language acquisition and language scaffolding strategies that are uniquely specific to EB students, in addition to the cultural, academic, and interpersonal challenges and processes that are unique to EB students. A lack of targeted instruction and practice in applying language-specific skills sets pre-service general education teachers at a disadvantage for themselves, their English Language Support staff team, and their students. For example, understanding that "while L2 learners do progress through different oral development stages, often including a pre-production (or silent) phase, mainstream teachers cannot equate limited language production with limited academic or cognitive ability, as they might do for first language learners" (de Jong & Harper, 2005, p. 104); assumptions that suggest "ELLs will be expected to acquire all aspects of their L2 'by osmosis'" are dangerous since "...even the most straightforward classroom language can be confusing for ELLs and can limit access to learning. The challenge of idioms and other commonly used, non-literal expressions in spoken English as well as teachers' use of colloquial language to manage the classroom or convey information may be incomprehensible to the ELL student" (de Jong & Harper, 2005,

p. 104). Misconceptions like this can lead mainstream teachers to underestimate EB students and, at worst, default to counterproductive, even subtractive, practices.

While some states, namely New York, California, and Texas, have taken steps to confront this challenge and pave the way for other states to address bilingual education initiatives in any capacity, the achievement gap between native English-speaking students and their EB/LTELL counterparts reinforces the national crisis at hand. Though it is difficult to imagine national-scale bilingual education initiatives being implemented in the public school system any time soon, steps towards a more inclusive, equitable education system must include a closer study of how mainstream educators might become better prepared for meeting the needs of all of their students, regardless of the languages and skills that students bring to the classroom. This research study will attempt to provide a better understanding of what preparation and training general education teachers need as they engage in work with the long-term English language learning population, and will examine teachers' existing knowledge of this population of students.

Chapter 3

Methodology

As stated in chapter one, the research question addressed in this study was inspired by the personal observations and experience of the researcher, who, in completing field experience hours at the local high school, was introduced to two students who were seriously struggling in their English I class. After reviewing research that addressed LTELL students, primarily published by academic scholars including Menken (2013), Flores (2017), Seltzer (2017), and Brooks (2019), among others, and interviewing currently practicing teachers who were responsible for managing and reviewing both EB and LTELL students' cases, it became apparent that there was a serious gap in this field of study since the first wave of research was published in the early to mid 2000s. In an interview with Menken (personal communication, November 9, 2020), the scholar noted that she felt her contributions as a pioneer in the field of study focused on LTELL students still included room for additional exploration, given how quickly the American public school system changes in a short period of time.

The first wave of research, which mainly focused on establishing who LTELL students were and identifying how the current school system has failed these students when it came to addressing their specific academic needs, especially in relation to English-only speaking students and newcomer EB students (Menken et al., 2012); since then, there have been some studies that have suggested strategies that and content areas in which LTELL students would greatly benefit from more targeted instruction, such as planned scaffolding and academic language support across the content areas (Brooks, 2016; Seltzer & Celic, 2011). Studies that presented LTELL students with the opportunity to share their perspectives about their school experiences, as well as studies that targeted teachers who

worked with LTELL students in the mainstream classroom, were quite limited. At this point, inspired by the experience working with the two students from field experience and the research that supported a culturally-sustaining curriculum for LTELL students, the researcher sought to understand the dynamic between and the experiences of teachers who work with LTELL students in the context of content area classrooms.

The Evolving Research Question

The initial question was: In what ways are LTELL students supported in the mainstream classroom by their content area teachers? The study was designed to be dependent on the researcher's presence in the classroom, and data collection was going to be collected through participant observation and interviews, in order to best represent both LTELL students' and their teachers' perspective. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the limited access to classrooms and complex logistics required to interact with students, as required by the IRB's research protocols regarding participant consent, parents representing minors, and measures of confidentiality, paired with all of the safety regulations in place to limit the spread of COVID-19, the researcher was forced to reevaluate both the research question and the process by which data was to be collected.

After some consideration of options for continuing this inquiry in the interest of completing research in a reasonable time, coupled with the complications from the effects of the pandemic, the researcher determined that a focus on teacher interviews rather than a complete examination of field works would be more feasible and allow for teacher voices to be represented in the study. Although individual student data was not considered for this version of the study, the researcher was able to narrow the scope of the project to explore how mainstream teachers perceive their ability to support their LTELL students, specifically

with regards to the training they received in their teacher preparation programs and the professional development opportunities that were offered through their schools. This approach allowed for focus on one dimension of the original research question, in keeping with regulations for pandemic learning and the limitations on research activity created by those limitations.

Given these considerations, the researcher decided to reframe the study around the research question: In what ways do mainstream classroom teachers feel they have been professionally trained to support LTELL students?

Participants and Contexts

Participants were recruited via word of mouth and digital networking strategies, including email; the first points of contact started with teachers known by the lead researcher and members of the advisory committee. From there, participants were referred to the researcher as it became evident that they had the experience and perspective relevant per the parameters of the study. The qualifications that the researcher favored when selecting participants were as follows:

1. The proposed candidate taught grades 8-12, preferably English Language Arts

2. The proposed candidate did not specialize in language learning pedagogy.

3. The proposed candidate taught in an urban district, as judged by the researcher

4. The proposed candidate had students who were English Language Learners in their academic-content-area class

All recruitment and introductions were conducted via email chains due to the safety measures in place for COVID-19; it is also for this reason that the study targeted a perspective focusing on teachers' experiences rather than students' experiences. The

restrictions around communication and interactions between persons involved in the study affected the participant selection process. Virtual communication allowed for the study to include teachers from different counties and across state lines.

The reliance on virtual communication also allowed for the lead researcher to target a different population of teachers than were directly accessible in the rural community surrounding Appalachian State University. The researcher's interest in urban education and secondary education led to the decision to seek teachers who worked within larger, more urban school districts with students in grades 8-12; additionally, statistically speaking, schools within urban-metro areas are more likely to serve students and families representing diverse language groups. In sum, the reliance on virtual interactions allowed for the researcher to select participants that would otherwise be inaccessible if the study was designed around observational or participant case studies.

Five teachers from urban-metro school districts in the southeast United States participated in the study, and all except for one were English teachers from across the 8-12 grades; the other was a Social Studies teacher. All participants were recommended for the study by professional colleagues who held them in high regard, which suggested that they had developed a notable rapport within the field, and some were even able to offer perspectives as mentors to student teachers who were finishing up their teacher preparation programs. See Table 1 for an overview of the five in-service teacher participants. More in depth participant profiles/biosketches will be provided at the beginning of Chapter 4 to better contextualize the findings.

Table 1

Overview of Teacher Participants

Participant Pseudonyms	Teacher Preparation Related Degrees	Teaching Experience	Years of Teaching Experience	School and/or District % ELL/ESL
Ms. Cary Beauchamp	B.S. in Middle Grades Education (w/ concentrations in ELA and social studies; and a reading certificate)	Middle Grades Social Studies	10 years	20%
Ms. Jean Emerson	B.A. in English (w/ a certificate to teach high school English) & M.A. in Education?	High School English	11 years	18%
Mr. Caleb Austen	B.S. in Education & M.Ed.	Middle School ELA	22 years	70%
Ms. Toni Angelou	B.S. in Middle Grades Education (w a concentration in ELA and social studies)	Middle School ELA	10 years	20%
Ms. Blake William	B.S. in English Education & Ph.D. in Reading and Literacy	High School English	10 years	10%

Qualitative Research Methods

This study relied on qualitative research techniques, mainly interviews, since such

methods provided a framework conducive to the experiential nature of the data collected and

analyzed. These methods were chosen because they begin::

> from the theoretical position of describing social realities and their making … It aims at developing theories … Research questions focus mainly on detailed descriptions of case studies … and is not simply a problem which has to be solved technically... data collection methods are treated as secondary.. (Flick, 2014, p. 322)

The research question for this study focused on the detailed descriptions that teacher

participants provided about their experiences in the classroom working with LTELL students.

A unique aspect of this study centers around the teacher participants' self-reported levels of

comfort and confidence when working with LTELL students, as well as their views about how various teacher preparation measures contributed to those feelings. Given the scope of the study, as well as the time constraints and resource limitations, the interview transcripts and the researcher's interpretations of those conversations make up the core of the data collection. Though qualitative studies are heavily influenced by the "authority and authorship" of the researcher, the following conclusions expanded on in Chapter 4 are supported by, and can be traced back to, the voices of the participants themselves, in their own words, and have been validated by the participants, as well as the researcher's advisory committee. Relying on qualitative methods of research practice allowed the researcher to center the study around teacher participants' experiences and share their perspectives using their own voices; in a study about language and the limitations that often surround instances when one's experiences are communicated and relayed by another, it was important to the researcher to honor the integrity and expressions of voice that teachers shared in each of the interviews.

A few of the affordances that are supported by the methods the researcher has chosen include "...exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon, rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them… the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998, pp. 110-111). Though the researcher was unable to fully enter into educational settings, teacher voices provided useful information in constructing accounts of instructional practices in the settings included in this study; in addition to the newly collected data from this study, relevant teacher voices from the researcher's previous studies have been recorded in Appendix A. Engaging in

conversations with teachers allowed them to provide more details and explanations to justify

their decisions connected to classroom practices; furthermore, semi-structured interviews

were used so that conversations are natural, rather than solely question/response, encouraged

teachers to take the time to share more in-depth anecdotes and experiences that give light to

the how or why they feel a certain way. Atkinson and Hammersley (1998) went on to

suggest, "... you can use an open approach such as ethnography for studying a concrete issue

(health concepts and behavior) when you use several methods addressing different levels of

the issue under study, here knowledge (via interviews) and practices (via observation)" (pp.

110-111). For this study, the concrete issue under review is classroom instructional practice

and interactions between classroom teachers and their LTELL students, and the methods

addressing this issue rely on reported knowledge and experiences, both of which are gathered

via interviews. In relying on interviews and the "verbal descriptions and explanations" that

teachers provided, the data was not limited to statistical measures, such as school report

cards, end of grade exam scores, and teacher performance scores, which might have been

shortsighted in accurately conveying the story behind the decisions teachers make as they

work with different students. Qualitative research offers a useful set of tools for study:

> [Qualitative research] seeks to describe culture or parts of culture from the point of
> view of cultural insiders… [and] to account for the behavior of people by describing
> what it is that they know that enables them to behave appropriately. (Hatch, 2002, pp.
> 21)

In this project, the parts of individual teachers' experiences that are under review are the

ways in which teachers feel prepared and supported when working with LTELL students in

their mainstream classrooms, and the researcher gained that insight via interviews with those

teachers, or cultural insiders in this case. While the researcher was not able to physically

enter school environments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, prior experiences in these settings helped to inform the initial direction of the study and provided a reference point for teacher experiences. The research question aimed to understand and explore teachers' experiences (e.g., behaviors, practices, feelings) as they worked with LTELLs in their own classroom; given the constraints of the pandemic, these experiences were relayed through interviews, rather than through observations, which is shared in detail in Appendix B.

The boundaries of this study are limited to the mainstream, secondary classroom and explores the perspectives of teachers who are not specifically trained in working with LTELL students. This framing was critical to the researcher's interests because it allowed for an exploration of the measures of preparation that secondary content area classroom teachers receive in their training/coursework and professional development, rather than the specialized training that teachers receive who work primarily with students in language learning.

Data Collection

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Participants were asked to complete a pre-interview questionnaire, which is included in Appendix C, that allowed the researcher to gauge how familiar the participants were with the topics of interest. The questions were designed according to the Likert-scale and prompted participants to reflect on their experiences related to their comfort, confidence, and preparedness in working with LTELL students in their classrooms. The purpose of this survey was to ease participants into the conversation in a comfortable and inviting manner; it also allowed participants to reflect and gather any thoughts that they wanted to remember to share before the interview. The survey also provided a chance for the researcher to prompt

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participants to expand on their reflections, such as, why participants might or might not have self-reported that they did or did not feel confident in their ability to support LTELL students in their classrooms, or what strategies they had in mind when they claimed to have designed specific lessons around the needs of their LTELL students, specifically. The questionnaire included space for the participants to voice their own questions, comments, and more in-depth details if they felt too constrained by the response options provided by the Likert-scale model.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The data for this study comes from the perspectives of currently practicing teachers and was collected by interviewing participants via Zoom. The interviews were semi-structured in nature, which allowed the researcher to provide guidance for the conversation and prompt targeted experiences, and still encourage participants to elaborate, explain, and introduce topics that they felt were relevant. Interviews were recorded through the Zoom platform, and each teacher completed one interview.

The interview was semi-structured in nature, with beginning questions forming an interview guide. The interview guide (see Appendix C) relied heavily on open-ended questions that prompted teachers to reflect on their own experiences. The order of questions was designed intentionally; teachers were first prompted to share some general information about how long they have been teaching and how they got into the field. This allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of the context for the story that would follow. The next questions introduced the topic around the LTELL student population and was designed for the researcher to get a sense of whether or not teachers were familiar with this group of students, and whether or not they were able to distinguish between LTELL student needs and

general Emergent Bilingual (EB) student needs. Following those were a group of questions that prompted teachers to share what supports were in place for teachers working with language learners, which led into a conversation about what supports teachers relied upon when working with language learners in their classrooms. Finally, teachers were asked to describe what support they would find beneficial when it came to better understanding how to serve a variety of language learners.

The purpose of developing an interview guide was to outline the story that the researcher hoped to obtain from each teacher participant so that their voices were accurately represented and situated in response to the overall research question. By having an interview guide, the researcher hoped to maintain the integrity with regards to the reliability and validity of the data, since each participant was prompted by the same questions. The interview guide also allowed the researcher to be more present in the interviews and guide the conversation more naturally, since the guide provided an outline for the most important topics to make sure to cover and the researcher did not have to mentally register and remember those points during the interview.

The interviews were hosted via Zoom because of the safety precautions in place due to COVID-19. Though this was not the preferred method for data collection when the study was initially proposed, the affordances of relying on virtual communication soon became prevalent as the study was conducted. The Zoom platform was chosen due to its accessibility by all parties and some of the features that it offered, such as recording, transcription, chat features, and shared screen, were also convenient and beneficial.

As mentioned before, the affordances associated with Zoom interviews allowed the researcher to speak with teachers who would otherwise be inaccessible due to issues that

arise when travel, time differences, and full-time student and teacher schedules come into play. Minimizing the extent to which those factors interfered with finding a time and place to talk, by relying on Zoom's virtual option, was crucial to the timely completion of data collection for this specific study.

Data Analysis

All of the data collected for this study was recorded via Zoom, which allowed the researcher to maintain a copy of the interview in a video file, audio file, and transcript version. The review of the data can be broken into three phases. The purpose of the first review phase was to watch all of the interviews in order to revise the automated transcripts so that they were accurate and take note of recurring, thematic responses and to review LTELL profile. The purpose of the second review phase was to collect those notes in a single document, so that the thematic elements from each interview could be analyzed in comparison to the others. This use of participants' words aligned with the in vivo coding method (Saldana, 2021). Finally, the third review phase involved reaching out to both the participants and the advisor of the researcher's committee; this review was mainly for validation that the data was accurate and the interpretations and themes were adequately supported by the data and allowed for member checks of the data for accuracy.

First Review

Because the transcripts were automatically created by Zoom, the researcher realized that there were many inaccurate representations of what was communicated in the interview. Therefore, it was crucial for the researcher to review the video recordings of the interviews and revise the transcripts so that they accurately represented what was said, and in a few cases, record responses that were non-verbal. For example, some questions had multiple

elements that prompted participants to indicate the affirmative or negative in response to the statement, which they did non-verbally; participants then continued to elaborate on their responses verbally, which the transcripts were then able to record. In other cases, the researcher was unclear to what the participant was referring or responding, so reviewing both the video recording and the transcript allowed the researcher to take notes and give more context to the core of the conversation already provided.

After all of the transcripts were cleaned up, the researcher read through them again, marked interesting responses, and noted ideas that were repeated throughout individual interviews. Responses that were noteworthy included practices that were unique, strategies that aligned with the academic literature, responses that elicited strong reactions, and anything that was mentioned or referred to repeatedly. The researcher read through the data multiple times in order to accurately synthesize the various pieces of a greater story -- one that centered around the narrative of the professional growth in regard to working with LTELL students.

Second Review

The second phase of data analysis involved sorting through the interview transcripts and transferring the noteworthy ideas into a second document; the main reason that this step was necessary was because the original transcripts contained an extensive amount of information, not all of which was relevant to the story that was being told in response to the research question. Furthermore, by separating the noteworthy pieces from across all of the interviews, different thematic elements and the connections among the various experiences became increasingly evident. To consider the elements of transcripts that were noteworthy, the researcher returned to the questions that were written to guide the study. In order to

preserve the authenticity of the teacher participants' voices, the data was transferred in direct quotes.

This process also emphasized some of the most prevalent and significant perspectives, especially since these teachers were selected from different counties. Themes began to arise as the synthesis of the more specific, targeted collection of data suggested that these teachers' individual conclusions and perspectives were in agreement. For example, teachers were describing the same visions for professional development opportunities and expressing concern for the same insecurities they felt affected their abilities to support LTELL students in their classrooms, despite coming from various backgrounds and experiences.

Once this data was collected in its own document, the issues that were repeatedly emphasized became more apparent and the researcher color-coded those appearances to make them stand out even more. This color-coding process was useful in considering the full range of data and for synthesizing data into subsequent findings. These eventually became the foundational areas of interest that would group the data into core themes. Grouping the data in this way increased the validity of the data because teachers were reaffirming each other's issues and concerns.

Third Review

The third review phase involved reaching out to the teacher participants and the advisory committee via email (Appendix D) with a summary of the overarching themes and findings. The purpose of this phase was to reaffirm the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations from the collected interview transcripts and to invite participants to respond if any of the researcher's conclusions were inaccurate, misrepresentative, or misinterpreted.

During this phase of review, the researcher also worked on condensing the findings into clear and concise thematic statements, each supported by the various perspectives collected from the teachers' own voices. Each of these findings will be expanded on in chapter four prior to sharing implications of the study.

Summary

In summary, this study relied heavily on qualitative techniques and followed a qualitative approach to data collection. The research question evolved as the researcher faced environmental and circumstantial challenges, but in the end, the project targeted the perspective of various secondary teachers from urban-metro school districts to form a collective story that conveyed the extent to which teachers feel prepared to support LTELL students, as outlined above. This sequence of interviews became central to the study. The data was collected via virtual Zoom interviews, which had its own affordances, including accessibility to teachers across the southeast United States at the convenience of both the researcher's and teacher's schedules. Finally, the data was reviewed in three distinct phases and yielded clear themes that incorporated the voices of all five teacher participants.

The following chapter will review those findings and analyze, in depth, the implications of those findings as it pertains to the secondary classroom teacher and their instructional practice with regards to working with LTELL students.

Chapter 4

Conclusions & Implications

Every year, the traditional general education teacher receives a brand new roster of students, and every year, teachers embark on a new journey of discovery in adapting their curriculum and classroom practice to best meet the specific needs and interests of the new students before them. It is a task that teachers are expected to perfect each year and is unique to the teaching profession, especially with regards to the various high stakes assessments that claim to measure teachers' "success" each year. In order to prepare for this task, teacher preparation programs focus on a variety of different topics, which include specific content areas, assessment and intervention strategies, and classroom management and differentiation models. The research question explored in this study was: In what ways do mainstream classroom teachers feel they have been professionally trained to support LTELL students?

Participant Profiles

All participants and any identifying details have been pseudonymized in order to protect their, and their students', confidentiality, though the researcher has honored their own words, voices, and experiences as accurately as possible. All participants worked in large urban-metro school districts in the southeast US. The following profiles aim to construct and convey a general understanding of the participants' credibility and expertise, as well as provide some environmental and background information that addresses the researcher's goal of building a comprehensive story that uncovers the mysteries associated with LTELL students.

Mr. Cary Beauchamp

Mr. Beauchamp is a middle grades English/social studies teacher who taught 8th grade social studies at the time of the study. He was the only participant who was not an English teacher. The researcher decided not to restrict the study, given the reality of the LTELL student profile, which suggests that they take classes across the content areas and are generally enrolled in academic level, mainstream classes. At the time the study was conducted, Mr. Beauchamp was finishing his final year of teaching before retirement. Somewhat untraditionally, Mr. Beauchamp, earned a B.S. in Middle Grades Education (with concentrations in English and social studies education) and a reading certification from a traditional teacher preparation program, but only taught for five years before transitioning to the business sector for 32 years; he later returned to the classroom for the last five years. This is worth mentioning because, although Mr. Beauchamp primarily worked outside of the classroom for most of his professional career, his foundational pursuits in education paired with the wisdom he collected from the business sector have been notably key in how he approaches classroom practice and interacts with diverse groups of students.

Ms. Jean Emerson

Ms. Emerson is a high school English teacher who taught 12th grade at the time of the study. Ms. Emerson graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program, which, to maintain clarity within this study, is understood to be a four-year university degree route. Ms. Emerson had experience teaching English across the high school grade levels over the last 11 years since graduating from college with a degree in English and a certification to specifically teach high school English. She has had experience teaching in small, rural communities, though she taught in an urban-metropolitan county at the time of the study. She

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also earned a Masters of Arts degree in Education in 2014 and has been National Board Certified since 2014, as well. At the time of the study, she was pursuing her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration, with the hopes of pursuing a position as a school principal some day.

Mr. Caleb Austen

Mr. Austen is a middle school English teacher who taught 8th grade English Language Arts at the time of the study. He had 22 years of experience.. Though he attended an undergraduate program outside of the state in which he teaches now, Mr. Austen noted that most of the training and professional development he has attended, that address classroom support for language learning students, has been sought after by his own individual efforts. At the time of the study, Mr. Austen teaches in an urban-metropolitan school that serves a population of students where 70% of the students are ELL from diverse linguistic backgrounds ranging from origins in different Latin countries to India. Mr. Austen was also able to offer the unique perspective as a teacher mentor to beginning teachers in the English department, which allowed the researcher to gain insight into the levels of preparedness teachers right out of their teacher preparation programs demonstrate once they start work in the field.

Ms. Toni Angelou

Ms. Angelou is an 8th grade English Language Arts teacher and has been in the field for almost ten years. She graduated with a B.S. in Middle Grades Education (with a concentration in language arts and social studies) from a traditional teacher preparation program. At the time of the study, Ms. Angelou taught at a Title I magnet middle school that integrates global studies and world languages throughout the curriculum.

Ms. Blake William

Ms. William is an English teacher for 9th-11th grades and has been teaching for about ten years. She graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program with a degree in English Education and has since earned her Ph.D. in Reading and Literacy. At the time of the study, Ms. William taught at an academy, which simply groups students by career interests; Ms. William was part of a team that taught students who were interested in the health sciences.

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Themes & Conclusions

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The voices of the five teacher participants outlined here contributed to and supported the bulk of the themes and findings that will be discussed in the section that follows; some of their reflections echo voices of the academic scholars that pioneered studies addressing LTELL students in the American public schools (Brooks, 2016; Menken et al., 2012), while others emphasize ideas that practicing teachers from the researcher's previous interactions have mentioned, too. All in all, the repetition of certain themes and sentiments suggest that larger issues might be present that have yet to be addressed across school district and state lines, especially given the specificity of some of the themes, concerns, and suggestions the multiple teacher participants offered despite teaching in entirely different places.

The thematic groupings of ideas were organized as follows:

1. There seems to be a general unawareness of the presence of LTELL students (or at least the formal definition/classification) in the classroom, even if they are there in reality. The lack of a formal classification/student profile for these students leads to

insecurities about how exactly to best support these students with regards to classroom practices/ lesson accommodations.

2. There is a disconnect between the support currently in place for teachers working with language learners and the support that teachers would find beneficial. Teachers would find it beneficial to have professional development opportunities that worked closely with the language learning team to review what exactly test scores mean for the student sitting in the classroom, to review accommodations and strategies that made lessons more accessible, and to create a curricular document that better correlated what students are able to do and what the next steps/supporting steps are for instruction.

3. The teacher's ability to read the audience in the classroom affects their instructional decisions; some of the most prevalent understandings that teachers seem to rely on when interacting with LTELL students, especially, include cultural competency, incorporating students' funds of knowledge, and understanding students' individual experiences and perspectives.

4. Teacher preparation programs need to accommodate today's diverse classroom, which includes a course that addresses how to support language learners in the mainstream classroom. This course should include topics such as those addressed in the above-mentioned PD opportunities, specifically targeting teachers' understanding of the language acquisition stages (what to expect as students acquire language/communication skills, what is natural in the timeline/progression, how to move towards the next stage) and incorporating hands-on experience with language learners

As outlined in chapter three, the analysis of the data collected from the five interviews included three phases. The emergent findings from the first two phases of analysis can be found in Table 1, and a more comprehensive set of analyzed data can be found in Appendix A. As demonstrated in Table 1, analysis moved from identifying themes and ideas that were repeatedly emphasized across the five interviews to more cohesive and comprehensive conclusions that will be discussed in the following sections. In other words, each of the themes, which are supported by the teachers' own voices as in vivo codes (Saldana, 2021), contribute to a larger conclusion, either in solidarity or in tandem with another related theme, which then falls into a story-like narrative, such that, read from top to bottom, the conclusions follow a natural problem-solution framework. While column 1 was focused around participant's own language/insights, column 2 is where the researcher sought to bring these patterns and themes into conversation with the larger body of scholarly literature.

Table 2

Themes and Findings & Conclusions

THEMES	FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS
1. Awareness of definition/identification [or not] of LTELL students	The limited understanding/knowledge of language learning leads to insecurities about how to best support LTELL students
2. PD/Support currently in place [or lack thereof] & Desired PD/support	There is a disconnect between the support currently in place for teachers working with language learners and the support that teachers would find beneficial
3. Strategies for making coursework more accessible for students	Teachers rely on their own funds of knowledge and experiences to read the audience in order to make

4. Importance of:
    ● cultural competency,
    ● incorporation of students' funds of knowledge,
    ● understanding students [and their experiences/perspectives]
	appropriate instructional decisions and create an environment that's conducive to learning for all students in the classroom.

5. Academic Language, Language Acquisition 6. Teacher prep programs & Self-reported level of preparedness	Therefore, teachers need to be prepared for the diversity found in the 21st century classroom, which includes having sufficient training in the process of language development and the unique needs of language learners.

Drawing from this overview, the researcher will present each finding separately, using the visual as a guiding framework. The final conclusion summarized in the right hand column will be expanded on, using representative teacher quotes, using the topics and themes that were emphasized in the interview as supporting evidence.

Finding 1: Teachers' Limited Understanding/Knowledge of Language Learning

Perhaps the most interesting conclusion, to the researcher -- and the most significant, for any future studies addressing LTELL students -- that was established early on in each of the interviews was whether or not practicing teachers were familiar with the terminology that appears with high frequency in discussions about the larger Emergent Bilingual (EB) population of students.

Although teacher participants might have been unfamiliar with the formal terminology, their experiences working with LTELL students in their classrooms was anything but unfamiliar. After the researcher reviewed the typical LTELL student profile, as the academic literature has outlined according to Menken's (2012) work, Ms. Angelou noted,

"I know exactly what you mean because that's exactly what I'm looking at [in] my data and I see [that] all the time, like they've been in the program for so long, and you recognize there might be a problem with them attaining the content, based on this, but … they're in eighth grade and they've been here since third grade and it's like what's going on, you know?" (March 8, 2021).

This sentiment was also echoed by both Ms. Emerson: "Fully. Absolutely. 100%, where I mean, I would say across the board, most like mid to low performing students struggle with academic vocabulary to begin with, but then adding a language difference on top of that, definitely, definitely…" (March 4, 2021), and Ms. William: "I'll get a report that's mostly about where their skills are… the typical student I have that is monitored for ESL will have high conversation skills, so they can communicate pretty well in English with peers and teachers, but often the reading and writing is a lot lower" (March 5, 2021).

These perspectives reinforce the importance of understanding how the various classifications that appear on a student's profile are embodied within the classroom. While LTELL is a classification used in scholar literature, it is perhaps not as evident in practice. Even though teachers were unfamiliar with the formal terminology and classifications, they were easily able to identify their students who fit the LTELL profile; this indicates that, regardless of whether or not teachers were previously aware of who these students were and what they needed, these students were present in their classrooms. LTELLs were, essentially, hidden in plain sight among a range of other language-learning students; this lack of specificity within what it means to be a student learning English as an additional language could have led to some of the lack of confidence teachers expressed in working with this population.

In fact, this issue of misunderstanding students' language profiles extends far beyond classroom teachers. Mr. Austen mentioned this specific concern in his interview:

> Our guidance department, for example, they have no clue, so they [ELL/LTELL students] get put into a class… so like we even need to educate our guidance people who make schedules of how to interpret data and how to do a quick assessment, those sorts of things, so that we're not shoving them [ELL/LTELL students] into places that they really don't belong, and then it takes me, the classroom teacher, two, three weeks, sometimes, to figure out what's going on, and then another week or two to make a change happen, … [by] then, they've already built those relationships, those friendships, they're comfortable and then I'm pulling the rug out from under them and making another change for them (March 9, 2021).

This reflection highlights the disruptions that LTELL students are likely to face, to no fault of the teachers or their educational team, misunderstanding student profiles, specifically those regarding LTELL students in this study, causes unnecessary setbacks, disorientation, and inconsistencies for students who are already marginalized in the classroom. The danger incurred by these disruptions affect student learning as well as their ability to build relationships with the school community, especially their teachers. Building relationships and fostering a learning community within a classroom is essential for student achievement, since teachers are expected to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of the students before them and since effective classroom communities foster environments and mindsets that encourage students to build strong senses of identity and self confidence as they are introduced, interact, and find their places in the world around them.

However, if teachers are less than confident in their abilities to understand who sits at the desks before them or are expected to recalibrate how to organize student needs every time a student is misplaced in their classrooms, the effectiveness of their teaching can only be expected to falter. The recurrence of this misunderstanding causes teachers to internalize unwarranted frustration and insecurity, when in reality, they, and their educational teams, had

not been given the support or preparation necessary to adequately or appropriately address the needs of the LTELL, and other EB, students in their classrooms.

Finding 2: Disconnect Between Professional Supports Currently in Place and Supports Teachers Believe Would be Beneficial

One of the themes that inspired some of the more emotionally-loaded responses across the teachers' interviews addressed the support in place for educators working with EB students, in general, regardless of what subclassification students were grouped. To begin with, the fact that there was substantial frustration with how little these mainstream teachers felt they were prepared to work with EB students as a whole suggests that there was even less support with regards to working with LTELL students, specifically. When the researcher asked Mr. Austen about professional development opportunities specific to addressing the work teachers do to support EB students, he said, "Unfortunately, I mean, it is lackluster at best" (March 9, 2021).

Even, in his experiences with working with the ELL support team, he expressed disappointment in the teamwork and support offered by those who have been occupationally trained in working with EB students:

> This is just me being honest, I don't think there are enough [scaffolds and supports in place]... unless you're actively helping, and helping them [ELL support staff] come to teachers and understand how to do this, then it kind of goes in one ear and out the other right? And so, I think so many of the students are left there just to kind of sink or swim, so to speak… they [ELL support staff] will send you a reminder about those wonderful "Can Do" statements -- I'm so sick of seeing that sometimes -- You know they'll do that; they'll send you reminders about, you know, don't fail a kid because of his language deficiency, you know that sort of thing that, I mean, again my opinion, … The ESL teachers, they didn't have enough confidence in those students, they did not believe that they could do the rigorous work we were asking them to do, it was just too hard for them, they can't do it, you're asking them to do too much, and that was a huge battle my first year…" (March 9, 2021).

So, as evident in Mr. Austen's reflection, classroom teachers might not only face internal insecurities about knowing how to best support their LTELL students, but also find that they face external challenges from those who are supposed to be the primary advocates for language learners. Other teachers echoed this disillusionment when it came to finding support in understanding the reports and student profiles they were given each year; Ms. Emerson admitted, "...it was very, used to be like, just being handed over the materials, well not materials, but, like, the information to be like, here's your students, here's where they're at, and I was like, cool, I don't know what to do with this" (March 4, 2021).

In sum, the impression that the researcher gathered from these teachers' testimonies suggests that the extent of support from ELL support staff was limited to the student profiles shared at the beginning of each semester, and anything beyond that was per the request and effort on behalf of the classroom teachers. However, with limited training on how to interpret such profiles, classroom teachers emphasize the difficulty in understanding how to transfer the information they are given into applicable teaching practices conducive to supporting LTELL students, as opposed to their newcomer or English-only speaking peers. Ms. Angelou said:

> I've gotten the chart that gives you, like all the kids names, and like where they are, like [what] they can do as far as the writing and the speaking… but I don't know what happens with ACCESS… I think if we're giving the test, there should be more communication as far as how and what it means. To me, it's a lot of time, a lot of money for us to, like, not utilize it as best as we can (March 8, 2021).

The ACCESS test is designed by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium, which "... is made up of 40 U.S. states, territories and federal agencies dedicated to the research, design and implementation of a high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate system to support English language learners in K-12

contexts" (WIDA, 2020). In 2015, President Obama signed the ESSA, which made significant changes in holding states accountable for measuring and sustaining academic achievement in their public schools. As part of this measurement, ELL students' progress is calculated into school report cards, just like End of Grade (EOG) and End of Course (EOC) scores (Knight, Interview, October 19, 2020). However, unlike EOG and EOC scores, ACCESS score reports rarely find their way onto the desks of classroom teachers, even though, specifically in the cases of LTELL students, they are their primary instructors. Moreover, even if some record of students' language proficiency scores are shared, many classroom teachers are unfamiliar with how to interpret the results so that it translates to how students should be expected to perform in the classroom, which is evident by Ms. Emerson's and Ms. Angelou's thoughts as shared in the previous paragraphs. On providing more training for classroom teachers to help them understand how the ACCESS test scores correlate with students' academic performance, Mr. Austen suggested:

> I think that we would have teachers who could have a better understanding of where the students are… we aren't trying either…I've also started, this year, pulling out WIDA, access, rubrics for writing… and so I think if teachers were able to do that, and understood how to do that, and the importance, then students are going to have, you know, feel so much more success and they're willing to take more risks along the way. Again, I mean, a lot of it is just language; it's not their ability, it is just language, so if we can start looking through a different lens than what we're used to and being trained how to look through that… you know, their confidence would definitely go up (March 9, 2021).

Fortunately, teacher participants were just as vocal about what professional development and training would be beneficial for their own growth as educators as they were about what aspects of the current support systems were inefficient or ineffective. Ms. William said, "I think, probably, the thing that I would benefit most from, would be time worked into my day to sit down and plan with someone who's a specialist, like the ESL

teacher, and be able to run my plans by her and say 'Okay, so you know, what can we do to modify or to make this more inclusive'" (March 5, 2021).

The encouraging part about this point of view is that the resources necessary to fulfill such visions are already in place, and the major changes that teachers propose are centered around reviewing how those resources are accessible to classroom teachers. This exact vision was also vocalized by Ms. Emerson:

> I am most comfortable with explaining things verbally and working with students verbally and least confident with writing out directions and assignments in accessible ways and providing more scaffolding to support students the way that they need… ahead of time before… meeting, that is not a strong suit of mine… [having] … dedicated time for interactive PD… like bringing in an assignment and having somebody work with me on how I could break it down and scaffold it and just, like, use as a model for future assignments… that would be the most proactive (March 4, 2021).

The ELL support team already has the expertise and experience needed to translate figures and data from assessments, both formal, standardized assessments and formative, observational assessments, into student profiles that accurately reflect the student's skills and abilities. By misusing or not utilizing their expertise, these valuable perspectives and resources are wasted. The ELL support staff are often overwhelmed with case loads, anyway, so training classroom teachers to feel prepared to support the LTELL students in their classes would, logically, redistribute some of that responsibility; in addition, encouraging more effective collaboration between the ELL support team and classroom teachers would potentially widen the network of support that students have access to from the school.

Another vision that teachers expressed in solidarity across the interviews was a collective team effort between the ELL support team and classroom teachers to build a resource guide that outlined the content curriculum's objectives and correlated those skills

with the coded classifications sorting EB students into tiers, or levels at which they have

achieved English Language Proficiency (ELP). Ms. Emerson explained:

> ... so in well-working schools you've got articulated curriculum, so that you know, by the time a kid is hitting you, as a junior in English, they have already learned this set of skills," and suggests that this model be expanded such that, "…it's like if you're a student that is an emergent bilingual, here's what they know, here's how you can help them. If your student is intermediate, like, here's what they know, here's kind of what their goals are… (March 4, 2021).

> Having a central guide for teachers to reference where a student is in terms of the

language development and acquisition process and how that correlates to the skills they

should have would allow teachers to better design content curriculum that is effective and

relevant for students, where expectations are not too high as to frustrated the student or too

low as to cap their capabilities and potential:

> We're all doing the same lessons across all of [my]county so I would hope that we find some modifications for that ["Can Do"] chart to say, like, "Okay, the kid is here. Here is an activity that can help them attain the curriculum… and I just think that, considering that, like we're the biggest county, … and we're all teaching the same lessons, you would think that we will find some, like, accommodations in that sense that will really help. I also think that, like I said, alignment in the [ELL pull out and support] classes with what we're doing in our classes…versus them doing something completely isolated in their classes… Then that way it kind of just helps with building the cultural background… the language to help students (Angelou, March 8, 2021).

> Mr. Austen also emphasized this frustration with not having any sort of guide that

helps classroom teachers understand how to support both ELL and LTELL students in

mastering the language skills they need to then access content curriculum:

> Unfortunately, what I've experienced, what we still cannot get away from, just the Can Do statements; 'Here's what you can do at this level, there's what your students can do at this level,' and we really, for some reason -- It is probably just the lack of training and the lack of interest, I think -- we just can't get past that and there's more that has to be done….I would like to see actual practical ways to make that rigorous work accessible to the students because so many times we take that Can Do and we're like, 'Oh, they can't. They can't access this text about Frederick Douglass because,

look, it's too high, they can't do that,' and it ... just means we have to come up with a different way to have them experience it. And so there's not enough, I don't feel I have not enough, of that practical, 'Here's how to do it, let's go through and model this' ... OK, let's open up our curriculum: how would you modify the lesson that's coming up this week? How do you modify that lesson to make it more accessible to the students? So I think just some more practical things ... to help students ...and then also the students who ... are five, six, seven years in... because we need to understand, they still need support (March 9, 2021).

All in all, the disconnect between the professional development and support systems that are currently in place and the desired professional development opportunities that cater towards the requests of classroom teachers leads to the mismanagement of expertise and resources that are meant to be in place for all EB students, not just those who primarily work with the ELL support team directly. Based on the conversations with the teacher participants in this study, classroom teachers would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with ELL support staff to design lessons and activities that allow LTELL students to continue to develop their language skills in the mainstream classroom. But first, in order for these teachers to feel confident in their ability to adjust instructional practices and facilitate classroom discourse to create an environment that encourages LTELL students to learn and grow, they need to feel supported and prepared to transform the stack of standardized test scores and student profiles into the living, breathing students who sit at the desks in front of them, each with their own backstories, experiences, and skill sets.

Finding 3: Teachers rely on their own funds of knowledge and experiences to read the audience in order to make appropriate instructional decisions and create an environment that's conducive to learning for all students in the classroom.

When students phase out of the more immersive ELL support structures, they transition into more traditional classroom environments, and that is where LTELL students are likely to be found; however, without sustained language development, these students, as

Mr. Austen notes, often lack the support they require to perform and be fairly compared to their English-only speaking peers. Teaching is one of those professions that is constantly changing, from year to year, semester to semester, and even day to day; that is why patience and flexibility are essential characteristics that successful teachers must hone and practice. The third finding that became apparent over the course of the study's interviews is a testimony to this, as teachers have explored ways in which they have to change their practice in order to better support their LTELL students.

Like other professions, teachers rely on their education, past experiences, and funds of knowledge to help them make the most appropriate decisions on the job, however, as this study establishes, without the opportunities to gain relevant and adequate experiences pertaining to educating students at various points of their language development, teachers are forced to come up with creative ways to reach their students. Based on their own teaching philosophies and previous classroom experiences, classroom teachers rely on their own intuition to reach LTELL students as they feel they can:

> I typically find myself applying the same sort of strategies that I would with an EC, your special ed students, especially when it comes to like breaking down words, context clues, reading levels and whatnot and trying to break down structures that way to hopefully make texts more accessible, even though I know that it's not the same sort of learning efficiency...that's kind of all I know what to do (Emerson, March 4, 2021).

Ms. Emerson is not alone in this endeavor to figure out exactly how to best support her LTELL students as they continue to acquire proficiency with more specific domains of the English language. An administrator from the researcher's previous work with this population of students explained what she has observed of many high school teachers who have LTELL students in their classes:

The service time [ELL support services], because of the nature of scheduling, really focuses on newcomers...where if they are incoming 9th graders it is assumed that they have received years of instruction and those kids probably wouldn't even get any accommodations; they would just not be addressed at all, even though they still need domain specific instruction--that is going to be the most effective form of instruction (Knight, October 19, 2020).

In addition to relying on strategies and techniques that teachers have been trained to apply for the benefit of diverse learners, usually in the context of special education classrooms, they also express the importance of relying on their ability to read the audience within their classrooms to create an environment where LTELL students feel safe and supported, which is the foundation for any child's development, drawn from Maslow's principles outlined in his hierarchy of needs:

Mostly, some of the things I do as well is just really centering my class on engagement in general so that students are motivated to attempt the work, even if it seems daunting. Knowing that there's going to be supports along the way and that it's interesting enough to tempt them to do it. [The language barrier affects their performance]... I know it slows them down because even when they are motivated to do it, whether it's writing or reading the directions, it just takes them longer because they're having to do either mental or like physical translation, and so I think sometimes it can be a little isolating to feel like you're a little behind other people...and that causing kind of a cycle of being stressed out about it, and then the lack of motivation because they're kind of turning off' (William, March 5, 2021).

Ms. William emphasized the importance of finding ways in which she can make the coursework more accessible to hesitant students, explaining:

One of those things that I think helps all students who struggle with literacy, whether it's because of language barriers or not, I do use a lot of graphic novels in my classes and that helps in a lot of ways for any student who's kind of intimidated by a book of any sort. Obviously, that just lowers the barrier for entry… My approach is more to match whatever that particular student needs and I haven't found that one thing that works for everyone… I just remind them that they can use their native language and use that to their advantage….almost all the time, your ideas are going to flow more easily and come first in your native language (March 5, 2021).

Understanding students' experiences and perspectives and how they can be points of entry into the curriculum was a strategy that the teachers seemed to emphasize across the

board, especially in considering how the student feels as a part of the classroom community.

Brooks, who was interviewed by the researcher in a previous study, noted:

> Just because someone is classified as an English Learner doesn't mean they are learning English...This student population often gets viewed as failed learners of English and as not knowing any language well and associated with negative things and as though they are 'disenchanted' with school because they don't really know English...It's insulting when you speak English on a daily basis to be put in a class with someone who is just learning English, but to say that these two groups of people are one and the same and that you really don't know something, especially when you're a teenager... (Brooks, personal communication, October 23, 2020).

Echoing the significance of this awareness, Ms. Emerson added:

> I always asked students, 'what are you self-conscious about with your writing or what do you want to improve?' and I do notice, I mean maybe it's just me seeing it, overwhelmingly a lot of long term EL students will say 'rewriting general grammar… It makes the world of academia a lot more accessible, I think, because if a teacher goes in and just automatically corrects things… then the automatic implication is just like, what you're doing is wrong and, like, you [the teacher doesn't] don't respect what you're [the student is] doing…A language barrier may absolutely exist, but in the grand scheme of things, you're an adult and it's our job as teachers to make all students feel comfortable, so if you're feeling anxious about not understanding what your student is saying, then it's like 40 million times more important to recognize that that student is feeling utterly overwhelmed in not knowing necessarily fully what their teacher is asking them to do" (March 4, 2021).

The affordances that this instructional practice provide include allowing students the opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and growth, which strengthens students' self-efficacy and promotes an environment that prioritizes self-advocacy, accountability, and self-confidence, all of which are foundational as students come to terms with their cultural identities. Another piece of advice that was strongly emphasized was that new teachers make sure they are:

> creating more time and spaces for them to talk to the kids outside academic time, so they can explain what their processes are like and what their day is like.... [and] also try to create time with parents because I think there's a big misconception about parents and how they support their kids and so more conference time will be helpful

to just make it clear about what's going on at home versus at school, when possible. I think most teachers are really caring and they want their kids to be successful but it's just that when they don't understand, I see that perspective is harder for them to support them (Angelou, March 8, 2021).

This value for understanding the students' perspectives and experiences when it came to their lives outside of the classroom really provided valuable insight for classroom teachers as they made efforts to cater to the interests and needs of the whole student. Ms. William even shared how learning a new language, herself, gave her insight about how challenging students must find learning English and learning specific content at the same time, especially those students whose native language does not share the same alphabetic or phonetic features as the English Language (March 5, 2021).

As these teachers made evident in the information they divulged, educators rely on their own educational and professional experiences and funds of knowledge in order to make instructional decisions, sometimes needing to absorb student perspectives as a source for understanding how to make course content more accessible, just as students' experiences and perspectives change their ability to engage authentically with the course content. In the absence of formal training opportunities, educators bring other strengths to bear; yet, there is still a need for intentional learning opportunities for teachers. Therefore, providing classroom teachers with adequate and appropriate preparatory experiences, be that professional development opportunities or teacher education curriculum, is essential for classroom teachers and their LTELL students in their pursuit of academic achievement.

Finding 4: Teachers need to be prepared for the diversity found in the 21st century classroom, which includes having sufficient training in the process of language development and the unique needs of language learners.

The teachers interviewed for this study were all currently practicing and had been so for a number of years, so they have had the time and experience to build and improve their repertoire of skills when it came to working with students who required additional support, for whatever reason. These teacher participants were also highly recommended for the study because of the rapport they had built with their students, colleagues, and school community members, as well as the reputation they had established as professionals who embraced opportunities to grow alongside the students in their classrooms--and, their reputations preceded them before the researcher had the privilege to interview each of them. However, it was surprising that the feelings of insecurity in their own abilities to provide the appropriate services and support needed by LTELL students was mutually expressed across the panel of participants, especially given that these teachers were clearly model educators. Nevertheless, the conversations that followed their honest self-reported levels of confidence and preparedness offered informative and valuable insight for teachers in training and programs preparing teachers to consider.

The two issues that were thematic across the interviews in terms of the classroom teacher's general understanding of the language acquisition process, specifically in the upper grades, and the exposure of teacher candidates to the needs of EB students in their teacher preparation programs.

Language Acquisition Training. For the purpose of this study, language acquisition refers to the process by which students learn how to use language, in all forms measured by speaking,

listening, reading, and writing, to communicate in various domains. This process is methodological and the acquisition of skills are sequential, meaning that students work through phases where they have mastered specific skills, are using but confusing skills at the next stage, and working towards an even more complex stage. These stages appear in reading and writing, which can be measured by the student's vocabulary, comprehension, spelling, and fluency; these stages also appear in the student's speaking and listening skills, which can be measured by their colloquial language, use of slang and domain-specific language, and listening comprehension. Because this process, where students are building and deepening their understanding of language, is based on the student's previous mastery of skills and concepts, the expectations for what skills or behavior the student is able to demonstrate with proficiency is generally predictable. Yet, "the average teacher doesn't understand language acquisition and the stages of language acquisition; they don't know what is normal and what is not…the average teachers are not aware of what the stages of language acquisition are, so they assume that kids don't know things" (Knight, October 19, 2020), which can cause "teachers [to] get impatient and then they get worried...so classroom teachers need to become more familiar with the language development standards because their attitude is more so in the sense of 'can'...what the student can do, what do we have to do so that they can do the next step by the end of the year...so LTELLs need patience but the right kind of patience" (Hyde, October 21, 2020).

Oftentimes, upper education classroom teachers receive little to no training or background in facilitating students' language acquisition, since the typical student in their classroom has already mastered the English language proficiently enough to be able to succeed in their classes. Ms. Angelou emphasizes the importance for educators to be familiar

with the different stages of language acquisition and what is to be expected of different learners as they engage with an entirely new process by which those around them use to communicate, especially with regards to "the quiet years" and "being okay with a kid going through that experience" (March 8, 2021). For LTELL students, the very classification suggests that they are still working through the language acquisition process, even as they have placed out of beginning English support programs; when teachers fully understand this learning process, for one to acquire another language, they would be more likely to notice that LTELL students have and are actually attaining proficiency and improving in their language skills, though compared to their English-only speaking peers, the amount of progress they have made is greatly diminished:

> We even see that, I think… we're not, middle school teachers are not prepared to teach language acquisition… we're trying to remediate kids and build that language acquisition, I mean the typical classroom teacher has zero clue how to do that… how to use phonics, … how to, you know, to build strong vocabulary, other than here's your vocabulary list and let's practice a little bit… So definitely I mean, I think, understanding and being able to pick out the words that students are going to need and how to build those words and how to break those words apart, so they can then use that knowledge to … comprehend other words as well. And then, also the misunderstanding that reading is very different from comprehending and middle school teachers, we don't get that; sometimes we think if you can read it, then you can comprehend it, and that is not true (Austen, March 9, 2021).

Nevertheless, LTELL students still need instructional support as they progress through the more complex stages of language acquisition. One of the defining characteristics of LTELL students is their mastery of the English language for the means of general communication, which sometimes causes them to be misidentified as being entirely fluent in the language alongside their English-only speaking classmates. However, once students have acquired the foundational skills required to communicate general ideas in English, they are no longer classified as newcomer EB learners, and the English language support programs in

place for those learners becomes irrelevant. At this point, students are transitioned into the mainstream classroom where the language's domain dramatically shifts from conversational English to academic language, which is specific to both the field of academia and the content area.

Not only is academic language complex in its specificity to its content area, but it also forces many students to rely on decoding skills and context clues rather than rote memorization, which adds an additional layer of complexity to assessments and instructional activities. Over the years and after much trial and error, the teacher participants shared that they have found strategies to support LTELL students as they familiarize themselves with the academic language used in their classrooms. Strategies ranged from immersing students in the academic language to frontloading instructional lessons and assessments with a review of specific academic language in context to a mixture of both.

Ms. William preferred "a fluid notion of literacy and language acquisition; we're engaging with stories and kind of learning, not by rote, but like immersion... Because, I do think that's when learning takes place, when language acquisition takes place, like, not drilling vocabulary words, but getting them in content…" (March 5, 2021). And, Ms. Angelou found that taking a more predictive approach helps her students:

> What I've started doing ... I gave them our end of year assessment ... and I just said 'highlight any words that are unfamiliar to you in the questions,' and then I had them take those words, and I said 'okay, now… I want you to translate ... any words that he doesn't know' (March 8, 2021).

Additionally, Angelou found that there were a number of words that were picked out by many students over and over that shared similar cognates across various languages, so she decided to include those vocabulary terms in her word wall, which served as a reference point for her students as they were given assignments over the semester. She, as well as Ms.

Emerson, also noticed that there were categories and patterns in the words that seemed to cause the most confusion for LTELL learners, which prompted the use of collected sentence stems and starters to help outline the "steps for how to make directions, and then steps for how to explain what you [the teacher] want, or what you're asking in language that they would have already been introduced to and are familiar with…" (Emerson, March 4, 2021). Providing access points to encourage LTELL students to engage in classroom discourse supports students by easing the cognitive load in both their ability to understand what is being asked of them as well as in creating more mental space for them to express their own thoughts. Other strategies for easing students' into immersive experiences with academic language included:

> ... asking questions more frequently, … so when you're talking to a kid about a text, you know as opposed to just saying, 'do you understand?' what they're gonna say 'yeah' because they want you to move on and go to the next kid… [instead,]you can kind of, say… 'what is this question asking you to do?'… and taking time to go over the academic vocabulary whenever you're going through a learning target … going over like, 'Okay, the learning target is students will be able to analyze the text,' we need to take time to talk about what analyze means, and we need to take time to talk about what kind of texts we're going to be looking at, nonfiction or fiction,... really analyzing those learning targets is huge, as far as trying to bridge that gap (Angelou, March 8, 2021).

> Mr. Austen also recommended taking the time to really analyze how academic

language appeared throughout instruction, especially in standardized assessment contexts:

> I do not shy away from using those words with the students; they need to hear those words and I don't change them to make it more kid friendly: here's the word, we're going to use it and we need to learn what it means. We spend a lot of time just working through that, and modeling, questioning and letting them kind of go back through it, and, you know, we use it over and over and over … we talked about 'okay, so look at this instruction, circle the most important words, okay, now, this is what I would have circled,' and I showed them and then we read and we stopped through each chunk of text, and we talk about 'okay, mark what words you understand, now let's write a little short one sentence summary of that chunk based on what you understand or what you would have written.' So we just kind of go through... the

questions: 'okay, here's the question, what's the most important word in the question? Now, let's look at the possible answer choices. What words do you know?' And we started, you know, we just started walking through and just doing some test taking strategies (March 9, 2021).

Even still, Mr. Austen is not alone in his worry that what he knows to do based on experience is not enough to truly support his LTELL students reach their full potential, with regards to their language development and thus, their subsequent academic achievements:

> I still worry, I still am concerned that sometimes I'm not able to give them that language acquisition, like they really need... You know, I'm trying, I'm doing my best, I see progress, yet I still don't have enough understanding of how it happens and how it works… (Austen, March 9, 2021).

Ms. Emerson admitted to similar insecurities:

> I sincerely, like, I don't know I can say in good conscience, like in good faith, that I do give any specific support [for LTELL students' language development and academic language acquisition]… I mean my biggest thing that I provide to all my classes, so it's not necessarily specific, but I will give them a cheat sheet of academic language that I use in the classroom; so, "when you hear me say this, this is what it means, when you hear me say this, this is what it means (March 4, 2021).

The significance of these perspectives -- the self-reported insecurities from highly educated and experienced classroom teachers -- cannot be overstated and goes to suggest that the experiences and feelings of preparedness in teachers who are new to the classroom are in an even graver condition, which leads to the final thematic point of discussion that sparked emotional responses from the teacher participants in this study.

Teacher Preparation Programs. As reviewed in the participant profiles, the participants involved in this study represented a more traditional route of teacher preparation, having graduated from a four-year, university degree program, and were able to provide valuable insight regarding the extent to which that program addressed EB studies. Mr. Austen was also able to provide additional perspectives about some of the beginning teachers whom he

mentors and his perception of how prepared they were to support LTELL students in their

own classrooms. He explained:

> So honestly once they reach a certain level there's not a lot of support [after tier 2, students would generally fall under the LTELL classification]… they're monitored… but, honestly, by that point there's not an additional person in the classroom [to offer resources, expertise, and support] … so, like, we have a new teacher this year, and she has some of those ESL students and so she has really been struggling with 'well they're not technically ESL anymore, [but] yeah, well they really are, but you know that they don't receive services, well, they can'. And so to have those conversations with her that she's never been trained … and they still need those supports at times because again we're really digging into some different complex things that even native English speakers are having a difficult time with, and it's in a language that they completely understand (Austen, March 9, 2021).

Ms. Emerson also touched on some of the challenges she has seen beginning teachers

face with regards to EB and LTELL learners: "A huge misconception that teachers have [is

that ELL] specifically refers to like Spanish speakers and it's like, oh, no. So, like, just being

able to speak Spanish or being in, like, a dual classroom … doesn't necessarily mean that

you're teaching in English and Spanish because you could have, like, three to four to seven

different languages [in one classroom]" (March 4, 2021). These observations led to a robust

discussion about what needs to change in teacher preparation programs so that beginning

teachers are more prepared to work with EB and LTELL students when they have their own

classrooms, and to give them an advantage, per say, over practicing teachers who have had to

develop their classroom practices, for LTELL students, in the field:

> If there's going to have to be a change in those teacher prep programs to where those kinds of things -- working with ESL students -- is not embedded in another class, it's not a part of the curriculum and instruction class, it is a class, and it may be two to three classes... because we are in a world now, in a culture where in most places you're going to experience this… everything is just embedded in like in one of those curriculum classes and you may have a chapter on it … and then, if they [beginning teachers] spend the first two, three years of their career not working with an ESL population, they don't look at that again; then, all of a sudden that year they're going to get ESL kids in their classroom… and it's just, you know, you mentioned it already, just the sustainability -- getting it started, but then sustaining it through your

career and, unfortunately, with all the other things that we have, it just doesn't seem like it is as big of an interest or importance as it probably should be (Austen, March 9, 2021).

Coming from an experienced teacher who is held in high regard by his peers, this reflection only serves to emphasize the importance of intentionally including intensive coursework in teacher preparation programs.

The concept of having an entire course dedicated to addressing the needs of EB and LTELL students was one that was emphasized across the interviews, especially given the various other kinds of support that these students require in addition to that surrounding their language development:

> ...the thing is, a lot of times, we assume that .. somebody is completely fluent in their native language yet these are still eighth grade words in their native language… I think you're working with a lot of different factors outside of just English language learning. You're also working with self esteem, social skills, and, and in some instances, learning disabilities… (Angelou, March 8, 2021).

Given a course of its own, teacher candidates would be better prepared to support their language learning students in a variety of ways, including the transitions that students are expected to make between home life and school life, different cultural expectations, and other key identity components that adolescents are expected to navigate. For this particular group of students, they are not only establishing their identities as typically developing adolescents, but they are also tasked with navigating what it means to be members of minoritized communities..   With these additional challenges in mind, Ms. Emerson expanded on this understanding by asking:

> So how are we making sure that we are supporting students academically, but then also providing support they need because they're changing cultures, and the mental-emotional support they need, depending on what country they're coming from and why they're coming from that country? If they're coming from a place where there's no, like, first semester... I had two kids from Syria, like, straight up, like, refugees 100%.…supporting students is far more than just language, which is why I don't think

it's fair that it's, like, lumped in with something else. It needs its own semester-long course for regular ed teachers -- ELL needs its own semester-long course for all teachers -- we're doing our students a huge disservice by not training teachers and making it mandatory that teachers have to know how to do that [teach language acquisition and reading and decoding skills]. I'm really sad that college programs aren't doing due diligence...even when I got my my master's in education, I don't think we have anything about English Language Learners …there's no way that you can get a … semester's worth of information and resources and tools you need to be efficient, so, like, as a whole, I would really, really love more teacher prep programs to include and incorporate at least a course -- a full mandatory course -- for different grade levels.… (March 4, 2021).

Even though upper grade teachers concentrate their expertise in specific fields, they are still responsible for supporting all students, including LTELLs; however, as it stands currently, classroom teachers for these grades are usually only extensively trained in the content and less so in instruction and learning development.

Ms. Angelou also adds that it is important for teacher preparation programs to emphasize the need for teacher candidates to spend time in the field with EB and LTELL students as part of their training:

There needs to be a diversity of learning programs… If everybody in the program is a native English speaker, you're already losing from that learning experience of being able to have somebody in your classroom who is kind of like 'hey, this is what I experienced.' It's one thing to read about it in the book, but to have somebody in your class, I think, plays a big role … diversity is important. I would also say that there needs to be time working with students in the actual field who are English language Learners. Like, in my four years [at university], I've never worked with an English Language Learner, so that's important … There are some kids who went to school and everybody spoke English, and so I think that they're coming into the classroom and they're ill-prepared if they've never been around somebody speaking a new language… (March 8, 2021).

She went on to explain how her limited exposure to students with language learning needs in her teacher preparation program affected her when she became a teacher in her own classroom:

When I first started working with students who were emerging in language, there wasn't a lot that I knew how or what to do… I was mad about it, you know, and it's,

like, I mean ultimately, I'm glad that you're doing this [research study] because it needs to be more of a priority. Yeah, because when I came into the classroom, there was nothing. There was Google Translate; that was about it. Yeah, it needs to be talked about… I'm just ready for it to become a priority, I think, ... like, put the money in it, put the time into it for the students (Angelou, March 8, 2021).

All in all, the voices of these teacher participants emphasize that in order for teachers to feel prepared and confident in their own abilities to support LTELL students, there needs to be a change in what's required in their training and in the ongoing support structure within schools. As addressed previously, teachers' abilities to adjust their classroom practice relies heavily on their own educational backgrounds, experiences, and funds of knowledge. In order for teachers to feel confident in their abilities to make instructional decisions that support all students in their classrooms, they need to have appropriate and adequate training and support in place for them to reference:

I do think it's just important for teacher prep programs to understand that the classrooms of today are not the classrooms of the 1990s, not even 2000s, and in that, we, as a world, are changing and our classrooms are becoming more diverse, and, in order to truly support students, -- I went into business to support students and that's all students -- then I have to adapt and my classroom has to adapt, and to do that, we have to have a better training and better understanding (Austen, March 9, 2021).

Limitations

The limitations of this study were primarily caused by the global pandemic and really only dramatically affected the researcher's own goals as they were originally set to explore a different research question. However, as outlined in chapter three, the revised question and resulting study allowed the researcher to take a deeper dive into the phenomenon surrounding LTELL students in the U.S. public school system. Despite limited access to classrooms as a result of the extra safety regulations in place to limit the spread of COVID-19 and complex logistical requirements set by the IRB's research protocols for working with students, including participant consent, parents representing minors, and measures of confidentiality,

the researcher reevaluated both the research question and the process by which data was to be collected. The researcher was able to reframe the scope of the project from exploring LTELL student perspectives in the classroom to exploring how mainstream teachers were prepared to support their LTELL students, specifically with regards to the training they received in their teacher preparation programs and the professional development opportunities that were offered through their schools, thus eliminating the conflict-causing details altogether.

This approach allowed for focus on one dimension of the original research question, while abiding by the regulations in place for safe learning during a pandemic and the limitations that consequently affected research activity. Although the main source for data originated from interviews with teachers who were recommended for the study, which could have led to potential bias, the researcher did not have any conflicts of interest or extensive prior professional or personal relationships with the participants in such a way as to influence the results shared in this study.

Implications for Practice

The perspectives collected from these teachers suggest that those in training and those currently practicing have a responsibility to find opportunities to interact and learn about the experiences and needs of students in a variety of stages of language acquisition and progress toward bilingualism. Though there are specialists who handle the casework of students who need English language support, the presence of LTELL students in the mainstream classroom suggests that there is an overlap in services, which requires appropriate preparation and support for all instructors across the departments. In effect, even classroom teachers who serve as content area instructors need expertise in differentiating and working with students who represent the nuances of language learning. Once students have mastered the English

language to such an extent that they no longer need conversational and foundational English support, they, just like English-only speaking children, still need instruction and support as they develop more complex, domain-specific language.

Though this process may be occurring at a later stage in their lives, after they have grown up understanding and communicating in a different language, the acquisition process still follows the same sequence; to that note, if students are not totally fluent in their first language, the acquisition of a second language has additional challenges that are unseen in monolingual individuals. Understanding this process and the natural progression through the different stages of language acquisition, is critical for classroom teachers, since they will most likely have LTELL students in their classrooms. Even more importantly, understanding the difference between EB students and LTELL students is essential for supporting the growth and language development of LTELL students, too. Their needs are vastly different from newcomer students, and, as Brooks (2020) mentioned, it is offensive to assume that they require the same types of support.

Requiring current training for teachers who have or will possibly work with LTELL students is a step that has been long overdue for a field that is constantly changing with the demographics of the nation. This training should emphasize at least three areas of expertise, which are outlined as follows:

1. **the language acquisition process**: so that teachers understand what behaviors and skills are naturally expected at different stages and how to support students in reaching proficiency and mastery at the next level

2. **cultural competency**, so that teachers understand the various factors that affect an LTELL student's learning environment and mindset

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3. and, **fieldwork opportunities**, so that teachers have the experience of collaborating with the English language support team and working with language learners hands on.

Because the education field is constantly changing to match the growth and diversity of the nation, these areas of expertise should also be reviewed and revised often, in order to prepare teachers for the reality of what is expected of them in the classroom. Training to work with EB and LTELL students should be extensively covered in teacher preparation programs, in its own course, and continued via professional development opportunities once teachers enter the field. While teachers demonstrated an ability to draw on additional resources, including their own funds of knowledge, precise training and professional development could lead to more confidence. One such area of professional development that is central to the researcher's own teaching philosophy is the incorporation and implementation of culturally-sustaining pedagogy into classroom practices; doing so naturally relies on the diverse experiences that students bring into the classroom and centers instruction around those various perspectives (Paris & Alim, 2017, Rodriguez, 2013). Designing instruction around culturally-sustaining pedagogy specifically addresses LTELL needs because learning experiences are built upon the students' strengths and funds of knowledge and introduces new concepts using the students' foundational understanding of the world around them.

Implications for Policy

As it stands currently, the ESSA outlines the expectation that teachers and schools maintain a highly qualified standing as measured by the state's regulations, and includes the expectations that schools and teachers should meet in order to receive federal funding. These

expectations are exhaustive, yet group all English learners into a single entity, despite the differences among students who have just arrived to the United States and those who have attended U.S. schools for many years.

Though it is a start, progressive in the sense that this group of students is acknowledged as one that requires substantial attention and expansive responsibilities across departments, the expectations for teacher preparation programs are vague enough for specific curriculum, like the one proposed by this research study, to fall through the cracks. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2020), one of the organizations that accredits teacher preparation programs, sets "Content and Pedagogical Knowledge" as its first standard, and, as is common in such cases, groups ELL students with all other diverse classifications. However, as emphasized by the teachers who participated in this study, refraining from differentiating between learners does little to prepare teachers for the reality they will face once they receive their first roster of students. Grouping language learners with other diverse abilities, especially EC classifications, exposes them to the risk of over- and under-classifying students due to a tendency to disregard the student as a complex, unique individual with circumstantial and individual experiences (Angelou, March 8, 2021).

Therefore, creating clear policies for what is expected of teacher preparation programs as they train teacher candidates is essential for the sake of their future students. Waiting this long to address the double standards that challenge LTELL students --since "to be considered monolingual, that means you can communicate (at varying degrees) in one language, but to be bilingual, there is an expectation that you have mastered reading, writing, speaking, listening in full for both languages…[even though] that's not realistic" (Brooks, personal communication, Fall 2020) -- has contributed to the growth of this population of

students within the schools, and with intentional changes in policy and practice, the creation of LTELL students will greatly diminish, as they find the support and resources to continue their language development in the mainstream classrooms, eventually attaining proficiency and mastery alongside their English-only speaking peers. Again, the nation's demographics are changing and the public schools are becoming increasingly diverse, so ignoring the various areas of need when it comes to language learners reinforces the societal inequity that pushes them to the margins of society and the classroom.

Implications for Research

At the turn of the 21st century, Menken and colleagues pioneered this research and exposed the institutional negligence that lay at the root of the LTELL phenomenon. At first, it was a question of why these students were not meeting the expectations with regards to mastering proficiency of English language skills, even after years of receiving English language support. But current research, including this project, has now suggested that the issue was not in the hands of the students, but rather at the hands of the institution; and, perhaps the misunderstanding of how students acquired language and what kind of support students needed after they have proved proficient in conversational English excused the lack of resources and support in place at the time.

Yet, a decade has elapsed, and little to no discernible change has been integrated into how upper grade classroom teachers are prepared for the job at hand. The perspectives and insight shared within this study suggest that classroom teachers are still not adequately prepared for this responsibility that is passed on to them when LTELL students appear in their classrooms. There is significant research to be done in this field, addressing this specific group of ELL students, that will make clear the effects of such insecurities, affecting areas

that have yet to be discovered, such as LTELL students' academic achievement and professional success, socialization into mainstream society, and identity formation. This study reveals that teachers are doing their best with the resources, experiences, education, and support they have -- and yet, it is not enough. As a nation known for being a melting pot of cultures and abilities, the existence of this group of students is unacceptable and totally preventable, if only the attention, resources, and appropriate training and support were made a priority.

Conclusion

What started as a unique case study that flagged two EB students as cause for concern for their English language proficiency progress, quickly became a multilayered investigation into the academic phenomenon that mystifies a specific, yet common, student profile in the upper grades of the American public school system -- the LTELL student. Expanding upon the works of academic scholars in this field, primarily Dr. Kate Menken (2012), Dr. Maneka Brooks (2016), Dr. Kate Seltzer (2011), and Dr. Nelson Flores (2017), this study continues to uncover the root of the issues concerning who these students are, why they have been misunderstood and, thus, inappropriately supported in school, and how the schools prepare teachers to reach the LTELL students in their classrooms. LTELL students are a subclassification of EB students who have received English language support for an extended period of time, and, for various reasons, have yet to reach English language proficiency as measured by academic performance on standardized tests. Because these students have mastered foundational, conversational English, they are often placed in the mainstream classroom under the instruction of traditional teachers. However, as this study reveals, the lack of appropriate training and preparatory support for classroom teachers might be one of

the leading causes that perpetuates the existence and marginalization of this subpopulation of students in the classroom.

This study took a qualitative approach and was heavily reliant on the voices of practicing teachers, in addition to the perspectives collected from previous research projects; there were five teacher participants interviewed for this study, all of whom taught grades 8-12 in urban-metro school districts. A close analysis of these interviews revealed thematic experiences, reflections and sentiments that were emphasized and reinforced by each of the teachers in ways that were surprisingly specific. The themes and findings that emerged from this study suggest that although teachers were generally unfamiliar with the specific needs of LTELL students as they compare to other EB and English-only speaking students, they were incredibly familiar with the LTELL student profile. One of the most prominent findings from this study was the collective reports of insecurity and self-doubt about how to best support LTELL students when teachers felt they had little to no support or training when it came to working with students who were developing language skills in addition to content mastery. Fortunately, the teachers in this study were also passionately vocal about what they felt would enhance their professional development, especially emphasizing the importance of collaborating with the English language support team, understanding the language acquisition process, and dedicating extensive curriculum within teacher preparation programs and professional development opportunities that addresses the various academic, cultural, and developmental needs of EB students, LTELL students included. Given the findings of this study, it becomes clear that there needs to be continuous research that demystifies the presence and experiences of LTELL students in American schools and immediate

implementation of research-based preparatory supports for students, staff, and administrators

entering and remaining in the field moving forward.

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Appendix A:

Full Data Table

Data Dive

Quote	Key Words & Themes
When I first started working there we didn't really have an ESL program because they pulled students… who would fall into that category to other schools that had a more robust program. We have, as it works now, two classes of pull out ESL classes, where students, depending on their level, might take these two classes and basically they replace their English classes… hopefully, junior and senior years they go into the regular education classes.	- PD/support in place -EB vs LTELL -pull out/push in
I'll get a report that's mostly about where their skills are… the typical student I have that is monitored for ESL will have high conversation skills, so they can communicate pretty well in English with peers and teachers, but often the reading and writing is a lot lower.	- LTELL definition/identification
My approach is more to match whatever that particular student needs and I haven't found that one thing that works for everyone… I just remind them that they can use their native language and use that to their advantage….almost all the time, your ideas are going to flow more easily and come first in your native language	-funds of knowledge -importance of cultural competency
One of those things that I think helps all students who struggle with literacy, whether it's because of language barriers or not, I do use a lot of graphic novels in my classes and that helps in a lot of ways for any student who's kind of intimidated by a book of any sort. Obviously, that just lowers the barrier for entry. I rarely... require students to read out loud. It made me feel really good to know that I had something that was like really going to be useful for her, like a graphic novel that had some Vietnamese words in it, that you know, connected to her culture and her experience; it	-strategies for accessibility

was also a graphic novel so the English was easier to understand	
Mostly, some of the things I do as well is just really centering my class on engagement in general so that students are motivated to attempt the work, even if it seems daunting. Knowing that there's going to be supports along the way and that it's interesting enough to tempt them to do it. [The language barrier affects their performance]... I know it slows them down because even when they are motivated to do it, whether it's writing or reading the directions, it just takes them longer because they're having to do either mental or like physical translation, and so I think sometimes it can be a little isolating to feel like you're a little behind other people...and that causing kind of a cycle of being stressed out about it, and then the lack of motivation because they're kind of turning off.	-strategies for accessibility
[this professional development]... intensely focused on empathy, honestly and about really understanding where the students might come from… really understanding how to reach those students more on a personal level and understand that it's not just a language barrier, it's a cultural barrier and all sorts of barriers that are going on and so teaching with those things in mind by incorporating cultural elements into your class opportunities for the student to use their native language in your class just things again that are focused more on overall engagement, rather than strictly content, can be more helpful.	-importance of cultural competency
I'm pretty confident with the engagement part… I guess I'm least confident in, as far as experiences I've had, kind of, when to correct a student… when do I want to let them just express themselves and not, like, write over their paper of what's wrong and when should I offer some corrections and which corrections are language based and just not language based since I don't know the grammar of each language they come from, you know it's harder to tell.	-self-reported level of preparedness

I talk about… a fluid notion of literacy and language acquisition; we're engaging with stories and kind of learning, not by rote, but like immersion. I think at district-, state-level legislation levels, engagement is not necessarily at the forefront of people's opinion on literacy or language acquisition; it's often things like, you know, phonics, like RTI, like, very specific programs, which I don't agree with, so in my classroom, I really do, again, engagement… I really focus on just time spent reading, but time spent reading particular books they enjoy, so they can get into that, like, flow state. Because, I do think that's when learning takes place, when language acquisition takes place, like, not drilling vocabulary words, but getting them in content, in something, that they're interested in.	-academic language/language acquisition
I think, probably the thing that I would benefit most from, would be time worked into my day to sit down and plan with someone who's a specialist, like the ESL teacher, and be able to run my plans by her and say 'Okay, so you know, what can we do to modify or to make this more inclusive.'"	-desired Professional Development
The new teachers, honestly I do feel like they're set up pretty well, I do feel like they have struggled less than the older teachers who did not get that training [exposure to ESL pre-teaching].	-teacher prep programs
I'm trying to learn Chinese for myself… and it's teaching me a lot about the process of trying to communicate when you don't know the language and so my wheels are kind of turning about how my students are doing that and how listening is so much more difficult than reading because you can translate and how important it is for those students to be able to have written directions, instead of just verbal because then they can look back at it and translate it and so I think the process of trying it myself is really helpful	-strategies for accessibility -language acquisition
Every year, I feel like I'm becoming better equipped with ESL students in my classroom, but I cannot say, with confidence, that it is something that I'm really, really good at.	-self-reported level of preparedness

I typically find myself applying the same sort of strategies that I would with an EC, your special ed students, especially when it comes to like breaking down words, context clues, reading levels and whatnot and trying to break down structures that way to hopefully make texts more accessible, even though I know that it's not the same sort of learning efficiency...that's kind of all I know what to do.	-strategies for accessibility -self-reported level of preparedness
Previously, it was very, used to like, just being handed over the materials, well not materials, but, like, the information to be like, here's your students, here's where they're at, and I was like, cool, i don't know what to do with this	-PD/support in place -self-reported level of preparedness
Prompt: I kind of want to focus on the long term ELs, which are different from Emergent Bilinguals, slightly, and I was just wondering what you knew about this specific group of Emergent Bilinguals. >> Nothing. Prompt: [describes typical LTELL student] … do you think that's accurate in describing a number of the students in your classes now? >> Fully. Absolutely. 100%, where I mean, I would say across the board, most like mid to low performing students struggle with academic vocabulary to begin with, but then adding a language difference on top of that, definitely, definitely…	-self-reported level of preparedness -LTELL definition/identification
Prompt: have you ever attended PD or engaged in course materials to help better understand language acquisition… >> NO. ACCESS testing >> NO. Or interpreting score reports >> NO.	-self-reported level of preparedness -PD/support in place

And would you find that helpful in adjusting your classroom practice? >> definitely.	
ELL was not something that was on school prep radar, so it was, like, maybe a week's worth of talk about it in a larger course	-teacher prep programs
I always asked students, "what are you self-conscious about with your writing or what do you want to improve?" and I do notice, I mean maybe it's just me seeing it, overwhelmingly a lot of long term EL students will say "rewriting general grammar." It makes the world of academia a lot more accessible, I think, because if a teacher goes in and just automatically corrects things, whether it's for ELL or a lot of our black students as well, or even like lower-income white students depending on where they grew up, if you just go in and correct stuff, then the automatic implication is just like, what you're doing is wrong and, like, you [the teacher doesn't] don't respect what you're [the student is] doing.	-strategies for accessibility -funds of knowledge (accountable for own learning) -cultural competency (?)
Prompt: What kind of academic language support do you give your long term EL students, maybe as opposed to what you would give a newcomer? >> I sincerely, like, I don't know I can say in good conscience, like in good faith, that I do give any specific support… I mean my biggest thing that I provide to all my classes, so not necessarily specific but I will give them a cheat sheet of academic language that I use in the classroom; so, "when you hear me say this, this is what it means, when you hear me say this, this is what it means."	-strategies for accessibility -academic language/language acquisition
I am most comfortable with explaining things verbally and working with students verbally and least confident with writing out directions and assignments in accessible ways and providing more scaffolding to support students the way that they need… ahead of time before… meeting, that is not a strong suit of mine.	-self-reported level of preparedness -desired PD

… honestly like working in more of that, like, academic vocabulary so it's like steps for how to make directions and then steps for how to explain what you want, or what you're asking in language that they would have already been introduced to and are familiar with… so in well-working schools you've got articulated curriculum, so that you know, by the time a kid is hitting you, as a junior in English, they have already learned this set of skills, … so it's like if you're a student that is an emergent bilingual, here's what they know, here's how you can help them. If your student is intermediate, like, here's what they know, here's kind of what their goals are … [if] there's a student who likes to try to scam everybody and pretends that they don't know what you're asking them to do, then the teacher or caseload manager is, like, oh no, no, no, here's all of our data here's their information here's what she knows. we're like, oh okay. so … they're interpreting the ACCESS scores, and everything, kind of like putting them in the language that teachers understand... so yeah that's been the nicest thing [ELL staff support].	-academic language/language acquisition -desired PD -PD/support in place
… dedicated time for interactive PD… like bringing in an assignment and having somebody work with me on how I could break it down and scaffold it and just, like, use as a model for future assignments… that would be the most proactive.	-desired PD
[advice for new teacher working with LTELL students] Not being afraid or intimidated by a perceived language barrier; a language barrier may absolutely exist, but in the grand scheme of things, you're an adult and it's our job as teachers to make all students feel comfortable, so if you're feeling anxious about not understanding what your student is saying, then it's like 40 million times more important to recognize that that student is feeling utterly overwhelmed in not knowing necessarily fully what their teacher is asking them to do.	-strategies for accessibility -funds of knowledge/understanding students -cultural competency
Overwhelmingly, especially with learners who are Coming from Central and South America, i'm seeing how excited students get when you're able to talk about their culture	-cultural competency

and their food with them; it's like, instantly, I think, the easiest way to get to know students…	-funds of knowledge/understanding students
I'm really sad that college programs aren't doing due diligence. Where it's like, even when I got my masters in education, I don't think we have anything about English language learners … but even with how short those programs are, there's no way that you can get a … semester's worth of information and resources and tools you need to be efficient, so, like as a whole, I would really, really love more teacher prep programs to include and incorporate at least a course -- a full mandatory course -- for different grade levels.	-teacher prep programs
… a huge misconception that teachers have [is that ELL] specifically refers to like Spanish speakers and it's like oh no so like just being able to speak Spanish or being in like a dual classroom like that doesn't necessarily mean that you're teaching in English and Spanish because you could have like three to four to seven different languages.	-level of preparedness
So how are we making sure that we are supporting students academically but then also providing support they need because they're changing cultures and mental emotional support they need, depending on what country they're coming from and why they're coming from that country, if they're coming from a place where there's no like first semester; I had two kids from Syria, like straight up like refugees 100%. … even in that the idea of supporting the students is far more than just language, which is why I don't think it's fair that it's like lumped in with something else; it needs its own semester-long course for regular ed teachers -- ELL needs its own semester-long course for all teachers … we're doing our students a huge disservice by not training teachers and making it mandatory that teachers have to know how to do that [referring to teaching language acquisition and reading/decoding skills].	-cultural competency -funds of knowledge/understanding students -teacher prep programs -language acquisition

when I first started working with students who were emerging in language, there wasn't a lot that I knew how or what to do...	-self-reported level of preparedness
I didn't really know how to work with like an English language learner teacher or anything like that... I always knew that it was bad to have a student be the main translator ... that was one thing that I absolutely knew.	-self-reported level of preparedness -PD/support un place
… what I've what I started doing was I sat down with one student who was maybe ...speaking English for about five or six years and one student who spoke no English and I gave them our end of year assessment ... and I just said "highlight any words that are unfamiliar to you in the questions," and then I had them take those words, and I said "okay, now… I want you to translate these words to him and any words that he doesn't know… … the thing is, a lot of times, we assume that .. somebody is completely flowing in their native language yet these are still eighth grade words in their native language…	-strategies for accessibility -academic language/language acquisition
… there's a big difference, based on the teacher and … I don't know if there's like a standard procedure… putting students on our radar… When we're looking at online learning, it's hard to know … where a kid is and their understanding of the English language … so, like, just kind of saying like this is what this kid can do, what this kid doesn't know how to do, this is why this kid is giving you a blank stare. That's really helpful.	-PD/supports in place -funds of knowledge/understanding students
I would like to see more … alignment with what we're doing in the classroom versus them doing something completely isolated in their classes [other classes] …. Then that way it kind of just helps with building the cultural background… the language to help students.	-desired support/PD -importance of funds of knowledge/understanding students
I've gotten the chart that gives you, like all the kids names and like where they are like they can do as far as the writing and the speaking and but also to that and I don't know what happens with ACCESS… but I think if we're	-PD/supports in place -self-reported level of preparedness

giving the test, there should be more communication ... to me, it is a lot of time, a lot of money for us to, like, not utilize it as best as we can.	
Prompt: [describes typical LTELL student] … do you think that's accurate in describing a number of the students in your classes now? >> I know exactly what you mean because that's exactly what I'm looking at my data and I see all the time, like they've been in the program for so long, and you recognize there might be a problem with them attaining the content, based on this, but … they're in eighth grade and they've been here since third grade and it's like what's going on, you know.	-LTELL definition/identification
so I mean what I've kind of found is helpful is asking questions more frequently, … so when you're talking to a kid about a text, you know as opposed to just saying, "do you understand?" what they're gonna say "yeah" because they want you to move on and go to the next kid and so you can kind of, say… "what is this question asking you to do?" … and taking time to go over the academic vocabulary whenever you're going through a learning target … going over like, "Okay, the learning target is students will be able to analyze the text," we need to take time to talk about what analyze means, and we need to take time to talk about what kind of texts we're going to be looking at, nonfiction or fiction, tags for really analyzing those learning targets is huge, as far as trying to bridge that gap.	-strategies for accessibility -academic language/language acquisition
And then give them a chance to succeed because I think you're working with a lot of different factors outside of just English language learning. You're also working with self esteem, social skills, and, and in some instances, learning disabilities, which, a lot of times, English learners are both over identified and under identified. What I see most frequently is the English language learners are under identified. There are some times where kids are really struggling and it's like well just because	-importance of funds of knowledge/understanding students -cultural competency -LTELL definition/ MIS-identification

they're ELL, I'm like I don't know about that, like they've been eight years or so, and it seems… like they get one label and it's like gone but I think there needs to be more diving into that to understand what's happening …	
outside of that chart, it tells what the kids can do, that's about it… I would like for them to create some modifications, like… we're all doing the same lessons across all of Wake county so I would hope that we find some modifications for that chart to say, like, "okay, the kid is here. Here is an activity that can help them attain the curriculum." And I just think that, considering that, like we're the biggest county, W----- County, in ----- ----- that and we're all teaching the same lessons, you would think that we will find some, like, accommodations in that sense that will really help. I also think that, like I said, alignment in the classes with what we're doing in our classes…	-PD/support in place -desired PD support
I thought man, I was mad about it, you know, and it's like, I mean ultimately, I'm glad that you're doing this because it needs to be more of a priority. Yeah, because when I came into the classroom there was nothing. There was Google translate that was about it. Yeah, it needs to be talked about. … I'm just ready for it to become a priority, I think, in that something that we can like more is time to like put the money in it put the time into it for the students	-teacher prep programs -desired support
Prompt: How comfortable do you feel with the language acquisition process? >> I mean just from experience, I would say that I'm probably like a three out of five; I would say that I know a lot more than I used to, but I know there's a lot more for me to learn about…	-self-reported level of preparedness
There needs to be diversity of learning programs like if everybody in the program is a native English speaker, you're already losing from that learning experience of being able to have somebody in your classroom who is kind of like "hey, this is what I experienced." it's one thing	-teacher prep programs -cultural competency

to read about in the book, but have somebody in your class, I think. plays a big role … diversity is important. I would also say that [there] needs to be time working with students in the actual field who are English language learners like in my four years I've never worked with the English language learner, so that's important, … there are some kids who went to school and everybody spoke English, and so I think that they're coming into the classroom and they're ill prepared, if they've never been around somebody speaking a new language. I would also say, like you were saying about the language acquisition process, like talking about the quiet years and talking about being okay with a kid going through that learning experience… … and then also just cultural sensitivity training as well, I mean I know we're talking about language, but I think culture plays a big role as well,	-understanding students -language acquisition
[advice for new teacher working with LTELL students] Also creating more time and spaces for them to talk to the kids outside academic time, so they can explain what their processes are like and what their day is like.... Also try to create time with parents because I think there's a big misconception about parents and how they support their kids and so more conference time will be helpful to just make it clear about what's going on at home versus at school, when possible. I think most teachers are really caring and they want their kids to be successful but it's just that when they don't understand, I see that perspective is harder for them to support them…	-strategies for accessibility -cultural competency -importance of understanding students
.. when I first started teaching there was little to no, I can't really think of any, ESL classes training that we had in my undergrad program.	-self-reported level of preparedness
so at our school, we have an ESL department, and so, for those very beginning students who have just arrived here and do have almost zero to almost no experience with an English language they are in, you know those particular	-PD/support in place - EB vs LTELL

classes and they only really, and so they have ESL teacher that teaches them the core subjects. And then, after they've been in that program for a year and they're tested … then they go out into the regular classes with regular ED teachers now. They typically will have if they're just like a second year, like a tier two, then they are going to have an ESL co-teacher in the room, so I have an ESL co-teacher with me, and so we write lessons together.	
… we actually have started a new English program and it is based on the science of reading and it has really ramped up. The rigor that a lot of our students, that a lot of teachers and students in our school have not been familiar with, and so it's been a challenge. And so, that is something like so we meet and we taught the lessons each week in a PLC and then we create support documents for our ESL students and then alternative activities that they can work through to help them master the standard.	-PD/support in place
… So honestly once they reach a certain level there's not a lot of support [after tier 2… aka LTELL students] … they're monitored so we do a progress monitoring on them … but, honestly, by that point there's not an additional person in the classroom … so like we have a new teacher this year, and she has some of those ESL students and so she has really been struggling with well they're not technically ESL anymore yeah well they really are but you know that they don't receive services well, they can and so to have those conversations with her that she's never been trained … and they still need those supports at times because again we're really digging into some different complex tags that even native English speakers are having a difficult time with and it's in a language that they completely understand,	-PD/support in place [and not in place] -[lack of] teacher preparation
so I teach three blocks, and in my second block is where I have that ESL teacher who co-teaches with me and my	-strategies for accessibility -PD/supports in place

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third block, I do have an assistant, but she is not a certified teacher...	-importance of understanding students
We still offer them support documents to where when we're going through a lesson like we might give them a choice board that is based off of the standard and based off of their can do charts that we look at, to just kind of give them some help along the way. They may get a little bit more sentence starters or paragraph frames, those sorts of things … now in March though, they've been with me for all for several months now, and so those supports are going away.	
Their confidence has grown this year and I just started taking little by little away and then hopefully they're able to fill in some of those gaps.	
A lot of oral reading is done for them; a lot of conversation is actually just getting them to speak with me. That is something you know, especially you know kind of the lower ones work like that, as a real battle is getting them to speak confidently in English and so, that is something we work towards so I try every day in my classes to have a small conversation with those students and to put them on the spot almost you know.	
So we are very fortunate in our district, with the new curriculum that we have selected, it has a built in vocabulary program that the students use, and I can set it for ELL students and .. so it helps pick particular words in a lesson that they are going to need to be familiar with in order to be successful.	-academic language/language acquisition -strategies for accessibility
… Also, like, I do not shy away from using those words with the students, they need to hear those words and I don't change them to make it more kid friendly; here's the word, we're going to use it and we need to learn what it means, and we spend a lot of time just working through that and modeling, questioning and letting them kind of go back through it and you know we use it over and over and over.	
[on professional development opportunities] Unfortunately, I mean, it is lackluster at best	-PD/support in place

unfortunately, once I've experienced what we still cannot get away from just the Can Do statements: here's what you can do at this level there's what your students can do at this level, and we really for some reason, It is probably just the lack of training and the lack of interest, I think , … we just can't get past that and there's more that has to be done. I would like to see actual practical ways to make that rigorous work accessible to the students because so many times we take that Can Do and we're like, 'Oh, they can't, they can't access this text about Frederick Douglass because look it's ... too high, they can't do that,' and it ... just means we have to come up with a different way to have them experience it and so there's not enough I don't feel I have enough of that practical here's how to do it, let's go through and model this and that's one thing that we attempted to do this year with that one training that we had is we actually put all that work into the standards... 'OK let's open up our curriculum, how would you modify the lesson that's coming up this week, how do you modify that lesson to make it more accessible to the students'. So I think just some more practical things that way to help students know and then also the students who like you were talking about who are 5, 6, 7 years into the transition into the levels so that we, because we need to understand, they still need support.	-desired PD/support
I think so many teachers are misinformed or misunderstand that, just because a student is out of our system, who isn't the labels are tracked or followed or whatever we want to call it. It doesn't mean we still can't offer them supports if they're struggling, we can offer them support	-MIS-identification of LTELL students
I think I did it to teach her how to, through verbal language, get them to understand the text that, you know, they didn't always have to interact with the text through the printed form and … we're able to do that and chunk the text and to work through it, to paraphrase as we went and talk about the meanings of words and cognates and what was similar What was it focus on the words you know versus don't get hung up on the words you don't understand those sorts of things,	-strategies for accessibility

[on teamwork and scaffolding and support for teachers] This is just me being honest, I don't think there are enough. … and we have address that it has gotten better, but is still a bit of a challenge, they do come and talk to you, they do… but again, unless you're actively helping, and helping them come to teachers and understand how to do this, then it kind of goes in one ear and out the other right, and so, then I think so many of the students are left there just to kind of sink or swim, so to speak… they will send you a reminder about those wonderful Can Do statements -- I'm so sick of seeing that sometimes -- You know they'll do that; they'll send you reminders about, you know, don't fail, a kid because of his language deficiency, you know that sort of thing, that I mean, again my opinion they're a little practical here, this is what you do, this is how you do it … and in a sustained way more than just the shotgun approach where I'm going to blast out there, grab what you can, and I'll see you next time	-PD/support in place -acknowledge students' funds of knowledge
… The ESL teachers, they didn't have enough confidence in those students, they did not believe that they could do the rigorous work, we were asking them to do, it was just too hard for them, they can't do it, you're asking them to do too much and that was a huge battle my first year…	-[lack of] PD/support in place
[on ACCESS test equivalency training] I think that we would have teachers who could have a better understanding of where the students are… we aren't trying either… a lot of what I know is through my own research and trying to get involved and that sort of thing. … I've also started, this year, pulling out WIDA, access, rubrics for writing… and so I think if teachers were able to do that, and understood how to do that and the importance, then students are going to have, you know, feel so much more success and they're willing to take more risks along the way. Again, I mean, a lot of it is just language; it's not their ability, it is just language, so if we can start looking through a different lens than what we're used to and being	-desired PD/support -importance of understanding students

trained how to look through that… you know, their confidence would definitely go up	
[on supporting students with academic vocabulary, specifically on tests] we talked about okay so look at this instruction circle, the most important words, okay now, this is what I would have circled and I showed them and then we go, then we read and we stopped through each chunk of text and we talk about okay, mark what words you understand, now let's write a little short one sentence summary of that chunk based on once you understand your our would have written. So we just kind of go through, and then we go through the questions, okay here's the question, what's the most important word in the question. Now let's look at the possible answer choices, what words, do you know and we started, you know we just started walking through and just doing some test taking strategies. ...and again, it boosts their confidence...	-academic language -strategies for accessibility
[on student teachers] Prompt: Did it seem like they had much confidence or awareness in how to reach ESL needs? >> NO.	-teacher prep programs
If there's going to have to be a change in those teacher prep programs to where those kinds of things, working with ESL students is not embedded in another class it's not a part of the curriculum and instruction class, it is a class and it may be two to three classes depending because we are in a world now in a culture where in most places you're going to experience this … everything is just embedded in like in one of those curriculum classes and you may have a chapter on it, … and then, if they spend the first two, three years or their career, not working with an ESL population they don't look at that again, then, all of a sudden that year they're going to get ESL kids in their classroom…	-teacher prep programs

and it's just, you know, you mentioned it already, just the sustainability -- getting it started, but then sustaining it through your career and, unfortunately, with all the other things that we have, it just doesn't seem like it is as big of an interest or importance as it probably should be	
I think you're exactly right and we even see that I think in the tier program and RTI program is all the same -- we're not, middle school teachers, are not prepared to teach language acquisition. And with the RTI tier program, … we're trying to remediate kids and and build that language acquisition, I mean the typical classroom teacher has zero clue how to do that… how to use phonics, … how to, you know, to build strong vocabulary, other than here's your vocabulary list and let's practice a little bit… So definitely I mean, I think, understanding and being able to pick out the words that students are going to need and how to build those words and how to break those words apart, so they can then use that knowledge to understand ... and comprehend other words as well. And then, also the misunderstanding that reading is very different from comprehending and middle school teachers, we don't get that sometimes we think if you can read it, then you can comprehend it, and that is not true. So that is something that a few of us are definitely on the path to try to impress upon people and we're definitely trying to work toward being able to understand that there is a difference.	-language acquisition/academic lanaguage
And our guidance department, for example, they have no clue, so they get put into a class... … so like we even need to educate our guidance people who make schedules of how to interpret data and how to do a quick assessment those sorts of things so that we're not shoving them into places that they really don't belong, and then it takes me the classroom teacher, two, three weeks, sometimes to figure out what's going on and then another week or two to make a change happen, because then they've already built those relationships those friendships they're comfortable and then I'm pulling the	-identifying LTELL students -language acquisition (understanding the stages)

rug out from under them and making another change for them	
I still worry, I still am concerned that sometimes I'm not able to give them that language acquisition, like they really need,... You know, I'm trying, I'm doing my best, I see progress yet I still don't have enough understanding of how it happens and how it works…	-self-reported level of preparedness
I do think it's just important for teacher prep programs to understand that the classrooms of today are not the classrooms of the 1990s, not even 2000s and, in that we, as a world are changing and our classrooms are becoming more diverse and, in order to truly support students as well, I went into business to support students and that's all students, then I have to adapt and my classroom has to adapt and to do that, we have to have a better training and better understanding as we go through.	-teacher prep programs -understanding students
I don't know what LTELLs are. If they come in and cannot speak English, then they go to a specific class that works with them all day in learning to speak/read English; by the time they get to me, they have been promoted out of the program so I don't have any LTELLs in my classroom.	-definition/identifcation of LTELL students
I have some students that struggle with English but they haven't been in the program for more than 3 or 4 years They [ELL students] will usually not be in general education; most of their time is with the ESL team to work on English immersion; they may attend band or PE or even science/social studies.	-definition/identifcation of LTELL students -PD/support in place
[You can also] immediately tell 1.) if the student was literate in their own language before coming here, and the process is simply "converting" that understanding to English or 2.) those who were not literate in their own language before coming here, so now we have to teach them both English AND how to read.	-language acquisition

THEMES:

Awareness of definition/identification [or not] or LTELL students	The limited understanding/knowledge of LTELL classification leads to insecurities about how to best support LTELL students
PD/Support currently [or lack thereof] in place & Desired PD/support	There is a disconnect between the support currently in place for teachers working with language learners and the support that teachers would find beneficial
Strategies for making coursework more accessible for students Importance of: ● cultural competency ● incorporation of students' funds of knowledge ● understanding students [and their experiences/perspectives]	Teachers rely on their own funds of knowledge and experiences to read the audience in order to make appropriate instructional decisions and create an environment that's conducive to learning for all students in the classroom.
Academic Language, Language Acquisition Teacher prep programs & Self-reported level of preparedness	Therefore, teachers need to be prepared for the diversity found in the 21st century classroom, which includes having sufficient training in the process of language development and the unique needs of language learners.

Appendix B

Field Notes – Fall 2020

FIELD NOTES

TOPIC:

Long term English Language Learners are a specific group of students who have been enrolled in an Emergent Bilingual program for an extended period of time and, for a variety of reasons, has yet to test out as proficiently having mastered the English language enough to succeed independently in the general education classroom. Though these students are classified under the broad scope of English Language Learners, their needs are much different from newcomer Emergent Bilinguals and thus require structural change to the curriculum and support they receive in school; however, due to limited resources for ELL programs, this specific group of students is often overlooked and unable to receive the specialized support they need.

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INTERVIEW: SCARLETT KNIGHT

Date/Time/Location	October 19, 2020 *(10:30-12:00)* Interview via Zoom
Focus	To gain administrative insight about general LTELLs in school
Participants	████████████████ ████████████████████████████████

General Notes	Specific Quotes
• LTELLs are distinctly different from EBs • ACCESS scores and 4 domains of language allow teachers to target where students need support (reading, writing, speaking, listening) in language acquisition (tests for academic lang.); testing environment is also faulty (tech. difficulties, pressure to speak in front of others, one chance, etc., distraction of other test takers) • MTSS process in identifying learning difficulties does not address differences between language and learning difficulties; a child labeled as EC is noted to have an *intellectual processing and cognitive* disability rather than a need to learn *the language* • ESL teachers have a huge caseload and the field is underresourced so differentiated service, specifically for LTELLs, is often impossible • More training on co-teaching to address *academic language* in content areas • Inaccurate grouping of students in middle school based on the need for language support rather than by what	• "The average teacher doesn't understand language acquisition and the stages of language acquisition; they don't know what is normal and what is not" (2:48). • "More so at the elementary level because teachers -the average teachers- are not aware of what the stages of language acquisition are, so they assume that kids don't know things, and even when tests are given in their native language, I have a hard time believing that every single non-native speaker of English is testing into EC, and I just feel that there is an overidentification of ELL in the EC population" (4:46). • "The accommodations that we're giving them aren't realistic or helpful; to give them a translation dictionary is just antiquated" (11:45). • "The service time, because of the nature of scheduling, really focuses on newcomers...where if they are incoming 9th graders it is assumed that they have received years of instruction and those kids probably wouldn't even get any accommodations; they would just not be addressed at all even though they still need domain specific instruction--that is going to be the most effective form of instruction" (15:30).

domain students need lang. support (all ELLs in one English class when some are newcomers and other just need support in speaking/writing)

- Students in K-2 are scoring similarly, despite the grade level difference; they are learning at a developmentally appropriate pace for academic language >> it would be easy to address their needs because they have similar needs but scheduling alignment makes that very difficult

- Differentiated instruction works best when the master schedule has a designated period of time for targeted intervention

- Perhaps if bilingual ed was promoted as a brain research thing, there would be more support and motivation to look at how multiple parts of the brain are used when we process multiple lang.

- Most LTELLs are Spanish speakers because they are not forced to learn the academic language to test out since there are usually support systems in place for Spanish speakers

- Two different fields of research:

  - English-only curriculum enforces that sink/swim mentality and speakers of other languages are, in fact, picking up English more quickly

  - Other studies suggest that English-only curriculum is harmful; intellectually stifling, causing students to hate school, etc.

- Use Word Walls that are interactive and evolving to reinforce academic

- "In this area of 'We speak English here,' ...English-only practices are culturally harmful and intellectually harmful and ...until there is a champion for biliteracy and bilingual education [NC will not adopt that sort of program]" (20:12). >> programs will just remain, at most, a 50/50 model

- "The reality is that it (non-native English speakers of languages besides Spanish) is a much smaller population of students because our native Spanish speakers have so much language support..so there are some critics that say that that's a detriment to learning English and that is the reason why students are and have become LTELLs because they have been scaffolded for years rather than quickly mastering the language because it's sink or swim" (26:30).

- "Know your students' data. Know what areas they're most proficient in and do what you can in the classroom-- to differentiate, accommodate, modify- because if they've gotten to the HS level and they are still a LTELL, chances of them having any contact with an ESL teacher is very slim so just realistically it's gonna be on you" (31:27).

- "A typical profile: their listening and speaking is going to be pretty good, pretty close to proficient, but what's usually going to be the lowest is going to be writing and/or reading...if you know that data, you can better set them up for success to address whatever their deficiencies are or to be able to modify some of their assignments so that they can have better access to the core [content]" (32:32).

- "Most often, it's our most marginalized students who get the least and our master

language; maybe translated/illustrated • Use academic language (rather than casualizing the language) in discourse and model how to use word wall; rephrase casual language using academic language ("hard" > "challenging") • PD about interpreting ACCESS scores and what the numbers mean; like how a profile will look like walking into the classroom; led by ESL teachers addressing what accommodations are relevant for different scores • ELL progress is calculated in the school report card (not meeting progress marks impacts school report cards, just like EOG/EOC scores); so administrators and ESL teachers know the data but it doesn't trickle down to core content teachers	schedule is created for high achievers who don't need a lot of support" (39:34). • "Use of visuals is always going to be my number one [accommodation]. One of the things that I am most frustrated about HS instruction is that everyone wants to lecture...think about all of that oral language being processed and the machine gun firing of words for 90 minutes" (44:27). • "You want somebody to know what this means, help them feel it, touch it, not just hear it...use realia, visuals, posters, manipulatives…and reduce oral language!" (45:02). • "The benefits of reading aloud: **1.** It fosters a love for reading. **2.** It gives students access to reading material that may not be their own readability level, so maybe it is a higher readability level so if you just gave them this book, they would not be able to process it and interact with it in the same way as when you are reading it aloud and modeling that excitement and questioning and discussion that you generate with them. **3.** Especially for ELL, it models fluent reading. With our reading voice, we model inflection, and excitement, stopping at periods, and how your voice changes. So students, as they're independently reading, that voice in their head that they hear can mimic that and hopefully over time they can do it on their own, but they can't do that if they've never heard it done" (49:00).

10.19.2020

Interview: SCARLETT KNIGHT

1. Free Response: Give me an elevator pitch outlining your general thoughts about LTELLs based on your collective experiences.

2. In your experience, what are the most common misconceptions about LTELLs?

3. In your opinion, what do LTELLs need from the high school in order to succeed? Why do you think this has yet to be implemented and/or what about this do you think meets the most resistance from teachers/administrators?

4. I have been reading about the implementation of Spanish Native Language Arts courses (NLA) and the incredible benefits that such a program provides for Spanish LTELLs. What needs to happen in order for this to become accepted and advocated for in high schools?

5. What about LTELLs who are native speakers of other languages? What might we do to support them and would this have to look different from curriculum designed for Spanish LTELLs?

6. How do you see a general ELA teacher supporting LTELL students in high school if there is not a cross-curricular approach for co-teaching/co-planning?

7. Given the reality of the resources available for public high schools, describe what/how you would address the needs of LTELLs and, as an administrator, initiate programming/planning that focuses on this specific group of students?

8. What are your go-to accommodations?

INTERVIEW: JAKE HYDE

Date/Time/Location	October 21, 2020 *(9:00-11:00)* Interview via Zoom
Focus	To gain educator (ESL teacher) insight about general LTELLs in school
Participants	███████████ ████████████████████████████

General Notes	Specific Quotes
- Long Term ELs can refer to a variety of cases, which makes it hard to design instruction for specific cases - Much of the NCDPI changes are targeted towards improving the practice of working with EBs to prevent students from becoming LTELLs - Hirsh research suggests that students must have the knowledge in order to understand the context and content that they are reading - Focus more on the assets and funds of knowledge that the student brings to the classroom and use those strengths as foundation for building/connecting new content; avoid "fixing" the student - SIFE students: (students with interrupted formal education) >> language barrier & school skills - Newcomer centers >> closed due to segregated perceptions … intensive English learning and academic language introduction - Target discourse strategies to help students be able to communicate what they do understand, what is confusing, etc. (sentence stems) - Some LTELLs remain in the program when they don't need to be, due to	"ESL is just under resourced, period" (00:23). "We need to put in more emphasis and time for science and social studies so that students have the background knowledge to understand the stories that they are reading because if students don't have the background knowledge, they don't have the cognitive hooks to hang new things on" (9:08). "Teachers get impatient and then they get worried...so classroom teachers need to become more familiar with the language development standards because their attitude is more so in the sense of 'can'...what the student *can* do, what do we have to do so that they *can* do the next step by the end of the year...so LTELLs need patience but the right kind of patience" (11:38). "EBs that are supported in both of their languages, regardless of what that language is says that bilingual programs are shown to be much more effective...like 'the rising tide lifts all boats' concept" (15:00). "Language skills, reading skills, at least for the syllabic languages, alphabetic languages, at least can cross...so students who have some

testing requirements/environmental factors ● Build context/connections: visuals, realia, guided practice examples/modelling	literacy skills, you can use those literacy skills to develop their English literacy skills" (16:32). ● "How can we explicitly help students be able to talk about academic topics using academic English?...We would take away some of the cognitive load of 'How do I talk about this' to saying 'Here's a structure we're always going to use'" (43:00). ● "Always use visuals and realia to build connections and give them as many touch-ons as possible so many parts of the brain are engaged" (1:05:00).

10.21.2020
Interview: JAKE HYDE

1. <u>Free Response:</u> Give me an elevator pitch outlining your general thoughts about LTELLs based on your collective experiences.

2. In your experience, what are the most common misconceptions about LTELLs?

3. In your opinion, what do LTELLs need from their schools in order to succeed?

4. Why do you think this has yet to be implemented and/or what about this do you think meets the most resistance from teachers/administrators?

5. What about LTELLs who are native speakers of *other* languages? How have you supported LTELL students who did not speak Spanish?

6. How do you see a general ELA teacher supporting LTELL students in high school if there is not a cross-curricular approach for co-teaching/co-planning? How might this differ from newcomers and emergent bilingual students?

7. Given the reality of the resources available for public high schools, what would you do if you were given the opportunity to initiate programming/planning that focuses on this specific group of students?

8. What are your go-to accommodations/advice for teaching LTELLs?

INTERVIEW: DR. MANEKA BROOKS

Date/Time/Location	October 23, 2020 *(2:00-2:30pm)* Interview via Zoom
Focus	To gain expert/researcher insight about general LTELLs in school
Participants	Dr. Maneka Brooks *Associate Professor of Reading Education @ Texas State University* *Primary research field in Literacy Development for LTELLs*

General Notes	Specific Quotes
• What is considered "academic literacy" • Recognize that students can and do learn what's being taught...so consider *what* is actually being taught (?) • Begin instruction from what students *can* do • Don't forget to recognize teenagers will react with a natural pushback to new things (PPT instruction to reading excerpts instruction) • There is a double standard for bilingual learners. To be considered Monolingual, that means you can communicate (at varying degrees) in one language. But to be bilingual, there is an expectation that you have mastered reading, writing, speaking, listening in full for both languages...but that's not realistic • There are assumptions that challenges for bilinguals are because of the English language barrier when in fact it might just be the content (lack of interest, new complex content material) • On the fact that there are more Spanish speakers identified as ELL: more so as	• "I've found that the students whom I have worked with have learned really well what they've been taught. There's been a lot of reading out loud, working with powerpoints...so the things they have practiced doing in school for an extended period of time, they are very successful at. So, I think that sometimes when people talk about students identified as LTELLs struggling with academic literacy, 'academic literacy' is relative because if that is what you've been asked to do in school, then that *is* academic literacy. So they are able to do what they've been taught and so I think that's important because oftentimes I think these students have been identified as failed learners but they could be learning very well what they are actually being taught" (3:53). • "Just because someone is classified as an English Learner doesn't mean they are learning English" (6:32). • "This student population often gets viewed as failed learners of English and as not knowing any language well and associated with negative things and as though they are 'disenchanted' with school because they don't really know English" (7:48).

a result of inequities, race, ethnicity and access to quality education and school environment rather than the scaffolding/presence of Spanish speakers	• ==“It's insulting when you speak English on a daily basis to be put in a class with someone who is just learning English, but to say that these two groups of people are one and the same and that you really don't know something, especially when you're a teenager” (8:25).==
• Consider how students use their languages to influence how to structure instruction to meet their needs; know your students and design curriculum to target their specific experiences	• “The existence of a language other than English in the classroom doesn't prevent a student from acquiring English...giving students the opportunity to make meanings in all of their languages allows them to grow and expand and to learn different types of things” (12:12).
• Ask students what would help them (with regard to staying in class/pulled out)	
• Strategies: what's your goal? Is it supporting students in how to ask for help, ESL skills, or is it truly academic content language and communicating mastery of the standards?	• “Creating a space that is supportive of bilingualism...what's on your walls, what are you asking people to read, bringing in texts that are written in multiple languages, even if you don't understand the language that you are reading…” (25:04).
• Make an effort to normalize bilingualism...find examples that are in the “real world”/content areas and students can use their own language resources	

10.23.2020
Interview: DR. MANEKA BROOKS

1. What do you consider to be your most prominent/significant findings within your research about LTELLs?
2. What is your opinion about how to best meet the needs of Emergent Bilinguals given the divide in research suggesting:

   English-only immersion prevents LTELLs (with regard to languages other than Spanish); Bilingual Education (with regard to Spanish) and the general support available for Spanish speakers contributes to more LTELLs

   English-only education is intellectually and culturally harmful and biliteracy's ability to engage multiple complex cognitive brain functions

3. What advice do you have for a general education core content (ELA) teacher for meeting the needs of LTELLs, especially given the lack of a cross-curricular/bilingual program in place?

INTERVIEW: KATE MENKEN

Date/Time/ Location	November 9, 2020 *(9:00 AM)* Interview via Zoom
Focus	To gain expert/researcher insight about general LTELLs in school
Participants	Kate Menken *Professor of Linguistics @ Queens (CUNY) Research Fellow @ Research Institute for Study of Language in Urban Society (CUNY Graduate Center) Co-Principal Investigator of CUNY-NYSIEB*

General Notes	Specific Quotes
- More critical approaches since 2006/2010 - RacioLinguistics- critical perspective of the deficit perspective of ELs (Nelson and Brooks); this framework supports a racist mindset rooted in monolingualism - Former ESL teacher; approached by NY DOE to study why this population of students wasn't learning English quickly enough "as if it were a problem that needed to be solved" (11:24) - Schools need to be prepared for students who have been educated in the US but who use translanguaging fluidly--look at students holistically and the use of languages across their entire repertoire and build on that in their learning - Larger programs and larger populations of language learners are able to have more opportunities to tailor their	"I regret that we, at the time, weren't more critical of this framing piece…" (8:31) "What is language for academic purposes? What is this construct called 'Academic Language'? ...It's not even a measurable construct. We don't even have a clear definition of this thing, so how can we then frame students negatively for not having that? Could it just simply be that these are the students' home language practices that we're now marginalizing because they don't have this *other* kind of language practices that we call 'Academic Language'" (12:07). "It [the construct of academic language] becomes this sorting mechanism, and it is very effective in sorting into those who have it and those who don't, but you're much - more likely to have it if you are white and wealthier" (13:01). "Even if the test is of math, it is ultimately a language test for a student who is an Emergent Bilingual" (14:52). "A lot of our programs for English as a new language or Bilingual Education were modelled on the needs of brand new arrivals...but we have students who know a lot of English so it's really about also

- programs to students at different stages of their language learning

- Education of language education in urban context is different from that of education in rural contexts

- Bilingual education is intertwined with immigration policy and attitudes towards immigrants and their languages (Anti-immigration mindset → "We Speak English Here" → bilingual ed not likely supported or implemented); US has idealized monolingualism

- Multilingualism in other countries is highly valued; the US anti-immigrant sentiment "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" closes off spaces where students learn in ways where they see that their home languages and identities are valued

- Brain activity/mapping for students translanguaging; neurolinguistics, psycholinguistic research on translanguaging (?)

- Cultural expectations influence adaptation/immersion (?); "some groups invest a lot of effort in maintaining their home languages and some groups choose not to do that and focus on learning the dominant societal language for economic advancement purposes" (35:45).

- Putting an upper El Ed arrival into a monolingual course of study they will likely fall into

- having programs that will be suitable for them...Bilingual programs can engage students' entire linguistic repertoire" (16:07).

- "Emergent Bilinguals are overrepresented, yes, as are most black and brown kids are overrepresented, in Special Education programs" (22:35).

- "If we looked at this just pedagogically speaking, the research is really conclusive that educating students through the mediums of their home language is all for their benefit...but those things are often more politically decided rather than pedagogically decided" (24:12).

- "Immigrant students arrive in this country speaking languages other than English, typically enter a program in which they receive instruction only in English, so they don't have the opportunity to learn the literacy practices of their home languages, but then, ironically, they get to high school are are told they need to take a foreign language so that they can go to college, but at that point, so many students have oral language practices in their home languages but not necessarily those academic language skills in their home languages that are the only ones that are valued in school" (26:58).

- "Bilingual education has, historically, only been provided when immigrant communities have fought for their rights to have instruction in their home language in addition to English" (30:34).

- "Just because you are producing English, this named language that we call English at a given moment in time, doesn't mean that your home language disappears...It just means that you are repressing (say Spanish) to produce English in that moment and we do know that process involves a certain

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this LTELL group, especially if they arrived without a foundation in academic language; however if they are put through a dual language program, that will likely not happen because home language/literacy practices are central in curriculum

- Home language support & translanguaging pedagogy!!! (look at KATE SELTZER publications on classroom pedagogy)

- The key is to use both the home language and English as building blocks and extending them in such a way where students can express deeper/more complex thoughts/exercise academic language

- Allow students to draft and process by translanguaging and revising and working final drafts into "academic english"; anchor texts to see translanguaging as a literary device; value in oral practices in addition to writing

- *Nonwhite, non-native English speakers held to higher standard; white, native English speakers who don't speak correctly don't have to take an English proficiency exam and prove their abilities

- Gen ed teachers need the expertise to work with multilingual students (not just language teachers)

degree of mental flexibility which has all kinds of cognitive benefits" (32:21).

- "We have this population of students referred to as LTELLs because we created them systemically…" (36:27)

- "The ways that educators described the students was as having strong oral language practices, social language for everyday activities, and in those ways, students would be far more comfortable with English than the new arrivals. They faced challenges in school in reading comprehension and writing, which rely heavily on academic language, so their main need in school was educational programming that would support their learning of language for academic purposes" (39:18).

- "This is not a population of students for whom you need to give the directions in the home language. Instead, what we are really talking about then, is taking a look at students' home languaging practices and looking at the fluidity of their languaging and seeing what needs to happen to move to the next incremental stage…" (50:03).

- "Can we get over this framing of students as incorrect and this deficit framing and really look at what students are doing?!-- which is so creative and dynamic!!" (55:22).

- *"As a Native-English speaker, especially if you are white, you are much less likely to be told you don't speak English correctly" (55:57).

Comments:	*The Translanguaging Classroom* by Ophelia Garcia and Kate Seltzer

	Nelson Flores on raciolinguistics

11.9.2020
Interview: KATE MENKEN

What is your background in working with LTELLs and what made you interested in pursuing
your research?

What do you consider to be your most prominent/significant findings within your research
about LTELLs?

What is your opinion about how to best meet the needs of Emergent Bilinguals? And how does
this differ from EB accommodations?

How would you change fundamental practices (curriculum?) in the general education
classroom to better meet the needs of LTELLs (for both Spanish speaking and non-Spanish
speaking students)?

Opinions on push-in immersion vs. targeted study outside of the general ed classroom?

Appendix C

Pre-Interview & Interview Guide

Pre-Interview Prep

NAME: _____ SUBJECT/GRADE: _____

For confidentiality purposes, I will refer to you with a pseudonym that you choose. I will ask for your input during our interview :)

If you could so kindly fill out this survey before our interview, that would be great. There is no right or wrong answer, I am just trying to gauge how familiar and comfortable you are with the topic at hand. The following statements have been posed according to the Likert scale. Please be as honest as possible, your individual data will remain confidential.

I feel comfortable working with Emergent Bilingual students, as an overall population, in my [content area] classroom.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have been trained in interpreting an ACCESS (or other form of English Language Support Program Proficiency Report) student profile.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My teacher ed. prep program prepared me to understand the difference between Long Term English Language Learning (LTELL) students' and other Emergent Bilingual students' needs.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have prepared classroom instruction that targets LTELL needs before.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel I have the instruction/training/background needed in order to prepare classroom instruction that targets LTELL needs.				

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Do you have any questions, concerns, comments, etc. that you would like me to take note of before we meet for our interview?

Interview Guide

A Study about Teacher Preparation in working with LTELL students

The following questions will be used in a semi-structured format for interviews with teachers in the study:

1. How long have you been an educator and what has that journey looked like for you? *(Language acquisition expertise? Background? Education? Teacher prep?)*

2. Can you tell me about your experiences with teaching LTELL students as opposed to other Emergent Bilingual students and English-only speaking students?

3. Please tell me about the support in place that you find helpful when working with EB/LTELL students?

4. Is there an existing curriculum or program in place to guide you in supporting your LTELL students, specifically? *(Accommodations, etc?)*

5. Have you ever attended professional development or engaged in a course that helped you better understand the language acquisition process or ACCESS testing and interpretation of score reports? If yes, to what extent? If no, what is the closest instance where you formally learned about EB/LTELL students?

6. In what ways do you find yourself adapting content, curriculum, and classroom practices to best meet the needs of your EB/LTELL students?

7. When working with language learning students, about what are you most confident and with what are you most uncomfortable?

8. What would make you a better teacher when it comes to supporting LTELL students?

9. In what ways would you support a teacher in working with the EB/LTELL student population?

May 19, 2021

Member Check Email:

Good morning EVERYBODY!!

I just wanted to send out an email with an update for my thesis. First, I so appreciate everybody's contributions and I AM SO EXCITED about the whole deal. :) Second, I have listed out the themes and core conclusions that became evident as I went through the data; I would love your feedback and input, especially if I have misrepresented/misinterpreted anything from our conversations.

1. Teachers indicated that greater knowledge of the LTELL population would lead to more confidence in meeting the needs of these particular students. The lack of a formal classification/student profile for these students leads to insecurities about how exactly to best support these students with regard to classroom practices/lesson accommodations.

2. There is a disconnect between the support currently in place for teachers working with language learners and the support that teachers would find beneficial. Teachers would find professional development that worked closely with the ESL team to review what exactly test scores mean for the student sitting in the classroom, review accommodations and strategies that made lessons more accessible, and create a curricular document that better correlated what students are able to do and what the next steps/supporting steps are for instruction.

3. The teacher's ability to read the audience in the classroom affects their instructional decisions; some of the most prevalent understandings that teachers seem to rely on when interacting with LTELL students, especially, include cultural competency, incorporating students' funds of knowledge, and understanding students' individual experiences and perspectives.

4. Teacher preparation programs need to accommodate today's diverse classroom, which includes a course that addresses how to support language learners in the mainstream classroom. This course should be its own course and include topics such as those addressed in the above-mentioned PD opportunities, LANGUAGE ACQUISITION stages (what to expect as students acquire language/communication skills, what is natural in the timeline/progression, how to move towards the next stage), hands-on experience with language learners (if possible), etc.

Again, thank you so much for your assistance and willingness to work with me on this passion project of mine. I look forward to hearing from you!

Happy end of the school year!

Vita

Catherine Songey graduated from Appalachian State University with a Bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education and a Masters in Reading Education, specifically concentrating her studies in sociology and bilingual education in an effort to better understand how to support marginalized student populations. Though she is currently transitioning from being a student to being the teacher, her passion for advocating for communities who have been overlooked, misrepresented, and underestimated inspires much of her work in the high school classroom and in the field of academia. Her primary research interests center around the developmental and academic needs of marginalized student populations and the underlying theories that affect curriculum instruction practices.