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Implementing Effective Instructional Reading Settings for English Learners

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IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE INTRUCTIONAL READING SETTINGS FOR

ENGLISH LEARNERS

by

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To my husband, Allan. You inspire me to do better, be better, and search for better ways to teach our English Language Learners.

To my son, Marcos. The world is endless with possibilities. I encourage you to take the road less traveled whenever you are able to. Love, Mom.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Teaching and advocating for English Language Learners has become a passion of mine. Not only am I an English Language teacher at an elementary school, but also I am an informal English teacher at home for my husband who came to this country as a native Spanish speaker from Costa Rica. My dedication and passion for those who are learning English comes from seeing the daily struggles of my husband who did not have access to adequate English instruction in his native country prior to coming to the United States. There are countless challenges and barriers that stem from not being proficient in the English language as students, then later as adults, regardless of whether you were born in the United States or immigrated here. Therefore, I have a dedication and commitment to English Learners to helping them become successful in the English language in their primary education years which will be a catalyst to help them become successful in their careers and continuing education here in the United States. Part of doing this research is to be a voice for those English Language Learners who are not able to advocate for their own needs due to language barriers. As a teacher and advocate of English Learners, this Capstone will address specifically the issue of: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?*

This chapter will describe why this research resonates with me as a teacher, and provides rationale for why this research is important for all English Language teachers

when making decisions in regards to the instructional reading setting for their students. Working in education in Minnesota as a teacher, the elementary school where I teach is filled with students from diverse backgrounds and who also are learning English as a second language. I am witness to students who are often new to the country and face incredible adversity in their daily education with social and academic language barriers. There is a vast array of experiences of English Learners, from zero formal education to very high-quality education in other countries as well as a wide spectrum of varied English proficiency levels. In the education field and for purposes of this study, the current acronym used in most schools for students is ELs, which stands for English Learners. I will also refer to the language teachers in this study as EL teachers. The term ESL is being replaced in most areas of education with the term EL, as many students are not learning English as a second language, but often a third or fourth language or learning languages simultaneously.

As a teacher, I want my students to be as successful as possible in their education. Specifically as an English Language (EL) teacher, I know that there are many approaches to instructing English Learners (ELs). However, there are countless variations to how each teacher, school and district approaches teaching their English Learners. There seems to be little consistency in the methods or settings for ELs within schools and even within a district; different schools in the same district may have vastly different approaches to instructional settings. As an EL teacher, it is often difficult to make decisions on the best setting to instruct learners, especially when classrooms have students of varied English proficiencies and schools have limited instructional space. My school teaches English Learners in EL only groups, also called sheltered instruction, in

some content areas such as writing, phonics and new to the country English classes, but not for other subjects such as math or science. However, as stated previously in this paragraph, the instructional settings for content areas are not consistent across schools or districts.

Regardless of which approach schools and teachers use to instruct their English Learners, the overall goal for English development remains the same. Once a student is identified as being an English Learner, usually via the parents or from the enrollment center, they are tested in the four English domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Kindergartners are only tested in listening and speaking. If their scores in each domain and as a composite fall below the Level four (Level five for kindergarten and first grade), the students qualify for the English Language Program. The goal of the English Language Learner Program is to help students acquire the academic language skills in English and build background knowledge to participate fully and be successful in their grade-level content area classes. The four areas that English development focuses on are reading, writing, listening and speaking. For purposes of this study, the reading domain of English development will be the focus.

Reading is currently a content area that our district is focusing on for overall improvement in our school. Currently, there is debate and concern in regard to the most effective way for ELs to be instructed in reading. This school year, our school is teaching reading in mixed classes with ELs and non-ELs with the same curriculum called Benchmark Literacy. However, in the previous several years, our school had sheltered reading instruction for EL students taught by an EL teacher. Non-ELs were also taught the same curriculum, called Success for All, but with a classroom teacher. In order to

make informed and effective decisions in regard to the best reading settings for my

English Language Learners, the Capstone seeks to address the question: *How do English*

Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for

their students?

Instructional Settings

In order to make informed decisions about the best instructional setting for

reading, first I am interested in exploring varied instructional models for students. The

two instructional models that are the most common for English Learners are either

sheltered instruction, commonly called pull-out, or push-in instruction which also

includes co-teaching in a homeroom classroom. I am interested in comparing these two

instruction models and how they directly relate to the English proficiency growth data of

students in both methods. In this chapter, I will present how my interest in this topic was

sparked and my rationale for studying these methods for English Learners.

Sheltered instruction (pull-out model)

For English Learners, sheltered instruction (also called pull-out instruction)

typically is small-group instruction that occurs for about 30-45 minutes of the school day.

There are typically anywhere from three to twenty students in a sheltered instruction

setting. Sheltered instruction is often during a WIN (what I need) block in the classroom

schedule and the EL teacher uses an EL or language curriculum for English language

development. However, there are times that sheltered instruction occurs during a block of

core content instruction, such as social studies or writing, and the EL teacher is asked to

also incorporate standards from the content learning that the student is missing in their

classroom instruction. This often requires EL teachers to meld content curriculum and language development resources on their own. This can be a challenge if the English language curriculum does not have the exact social studies or science standards that the grade-level must meet. Students in a sheltered instruction setting receive grades for their work and assessments in the EL classroom. This can be a weight off of classroom teachers or not ideal to classroom teachers depending on how their preferences to their grading systems as well.

As a teacher who has experience in sheltered instruction, it can be a challenge to physically transition students out of their room and resettled into a new classroom space. There are some areas of teaching, such as working with new to country student, where sheltered instruction is ideal to working with students in a quiet space. One of my experiences was over the 2013-2014 schoolyear when I taught a sheltered instruction reading class of English Learners. At that time, the school was focused on teaching reading via sheltered instruction with English Learners in place of their previous classroom reading block. My interest in this subject developed from the struggle and successes that I experienced and witnessed in this sheltered class. The students seemed to feel comfortable in the environment being with other ELs, but I still remain curious as to whether it is the best instructional setting for them to have the most growth in their reading proficiency and English development. Through this experience of teaching this reading class, my interest and curiosity grew in regard to the best possible setting for these students.

Co-teaching instruction (push-in model)

Co-teaching instruction is structured by an EL teacher coming into the classroom to support instruction with the classroom teacher in a variety of content areas. Some schools structure their classes so that many English Learners are clustered in a classroom to help with ease of language service, while other schools do not cluster students and evenly distribute ELs across the grade-level teachers. These distributions of ELs within classrooms often weigh heavily on the type of service the EL teacher is able to provide and whether this model is the best option for teaching.

An EL teacher in a push-in setting may work collaboratively with the classroom teacher to co-teach. Although only some of the students in the classroom may have language development needs, the EL teacher still concentrates on language development, additional scaffolding, and word power (vocabulary) during co-teaching for the entire class while the classroom teacher typically focuses on content standards.

Another teaching scenario that also occurs is where the EL teachers push-in and work with students in small groups or 1:1 within the classroom setting during work time. Some districts prefer co-teaching as their method of EL instruction for students in order to have two licensed teachers working with one group of students. During the 2014-2015 schoolyear, the elementary school where I taught restructured the reading program to teach ELs only through co-teaching and a push-in model. This change was in order to follow the district in one common reading program, therefore there were many teachers and staff upset by this sudden change. This research will serve as a catalyst to help educators compare the two models used in my elementary school for reading instruction.

The research will also help EL teachers advocate for their students regarding the most appropriate and beneficial instructional settings for their students. The following diagram gives a visual representation of the possible models that are common in a sheltered instruction setting. Models can vary by classroom, school and even within the day to effectively co-teach and manage student needs. However, all the models are considered co-teaching if both licensed EL teacher and classroom teacher are teaching in the same classroom setting. In the list of figures at the end of this Capstone, Figure 1 shows a diagram of various co-teaching models within classroom space where two teachers are within the same classroom setting and have several different configurations to choose from in regard to teaching as a team to meet the needs of the students.

Challenges in Determining Instructional Settings

My interest in this topic of English Language instructional models stemmed from several challenges and concerns over the course of the last few schools years in determining instructional settings. As an EL teacher, one of the biggest challenges at the beginning of the year is to organize and schedule English instruction with each English Learner in each grade.   In our school, all of the English Language teachers are tasked with grouping ELs into classes based on several factors such as proficiency and grade levels. My interest in instructional settings was also from my experiences participating in meetings where we piece together EL schedules for teachers and students like a giant puzzle. In the list of figures at the end of this Capstone, Figure 2 shows The EL Program Service Guide for Elementary Schools for the district in which I am teaching showing the minimum number of instructional service minutes dependent on proficiency and grade level of the ELs. When a student qualifies in the district for English Language services,

this chart is referenced in order to determine how many minutes of direct English language instruction that they need to receive. This is a service model that is specifically for the district that this study takes place and is may not apply to other school districts. The EL proficiency level listed on the left side of the pyramid is their score taken from the annual ACCESS test that will be explained in the following section of this Capstone. The definition of "small group services" for the purpose of this chart is any group that is less than twelve students.

One thing contributing to this challenge is taking into consideration these proficiency levels of students in grouping for instruction. Typically, in a sheltered instruction model or in a co-teaching small group mode,l the students are grouped with students of similar proficiency levels. With limited resources in schools, EL programs often do not have adequate instruction space or technology in rooms for this type of focused proficiency instruction. For example, in my school, five EL teachers share two small classrooms for sheltered EL instruction. In 2014-15 there were five EL teachers who serviced 172 students who needed English Language instruction varying from 30-90 minutes per day in four WIDA English domains (reading, writing, listening and speaking). With limited space for instruction and roughly 1/3 of the student population in the school being English Learners, it is imperative that we use both sheltered and push-in methods to be able to support and teach each English Learner in the daily schedule. Determining which students will benefit the greatest from which sheltered instruction or push-in support is the overall challenge.

Depending on proficiency levels, it often seems that ELs may benefit from small group language instruction rather than the push-in model. However, even those students

that we feel would benefit from sheltered instruction may not receive it due to limited EL classroom space and staffing resources. Therefore, these constraints limit the EL teachers to co-teach or do 1:1 support in classrooms. Decisions for how students receive language support from an EL teacher stem from a variety of variables such as English proficiency, knowledge of the student's skills and challenges, classroom teacher preference and EL teacher preference are just to name a few. Although this section gives a snapshot of the EL services provided by EL teachers at my school overall, this research project specifically will focus on reading instruction and the setting decisions currently in place in my elementary school, previous models and options for the future.

Instructional Reading Setting Overview at the Focus School

In 2013-2014, all English Learners in the focus school for this study were taught reading in sheltered instruction (pull-out) with an EL teacher. In the upper grades, fifth and sixth grades, the class only included English Learners with two EL teachers and followed the reading program Success for All in a 90 minute block daily. In the primary grades, first through third, they were split into two classes also for 90 minutes daily of instruction in a sheltered setting.

In all classes of only English Learners, there are varied English proficiencies and first languages of students. For example, in the 2013-2014 school year in a fifth and sixth grade ELs only reading class there were proficiency levels from newcomer/beginning Level One through Level Four (out of six levels on the WIDA language proficiency scale). WIDA is an acronym used by English Language teachers from World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment. The WIDA language proficiency scores are

determined for each EL by an annual summative test called an ACCESS test, administered to all English Learners in grades kindergarten through twelfth grades in the four domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking. ACCESS is an acronym for Assessing, Comprehension, and Communication in English State-to-State. According to WIDA, the national organization which oversees ACCESS tests, the purpose of the ACCESS testing is to help students and families understand their current level of English development and whether the students have obtained a language proficiency level in each language domain to continue in school without EL program support (WIDA, 2014).

According to the ACCESS results of that school year for the English Learners, there were not enough EL teachers to be able to separate into smaller groups of more concentrated proficiency levels. Without the resources to split the class into more specific proficiency levels, teachers are constantly differentiating in order to meet the proficiency level differences among students in the same class. Students are able to use their first language with other students in some circumstances to fill in comprehension gaps, but there are also students who do not have a peer with their same first language. My observations lead me to believe that some students seem to feel isolated from other students in their grade, and do not have proficient readers as role models within this sheltered setting. However, in a sheltered class of only English Learners, it is also an opportunity for EL teachers to incorporate additional language instruction within the daily lessons. For example, this may include using cognates between languages to help teach in a more meaningful way to our ELs. An additional example would be to include more visuals for vocabulary work and additional Thinking Maps. There are many successful aspects as well as challenging ones in a sheltered instruction reading class that

this study will address through qualitative and quantitative data findings. Because of the complexity in regards to which instructional settings are most beneficial to English Learners, I continued to be intrigued with this topic.

In 2014-2015 and through today, our school underwent a reading curriculum change to use Benchmark Literacy instead of the previous Success for All program which was used for sheltered instruction in 2013-2014. This curriculum change also brought a shift in the way that English Learners were grouped for instruction. For Benchmark Literacy, the EL teachers used the co-teaching push-in instructional model where all English Learners remained in their classrooms and were not pulled-out for sheltered EL reading instruction. For grades kindergarten through sixth, EL teachers pushed into the classroom and worked at stations in small groups. The groups were varied with a blend of English Learners and native English speakers, which both were a challenge and an opportunity for ELs to have fluency role models among them. The challenges also included not having quiet, language-focused reading instruction time and space, but rather a larger classroom setting with more students. Additional challenges included not having the entire time dedicated with EL teacher using scaffolding to assist them throughout the entire reading time since they were in rotations.

With all these observations, differences and challenges, I wondered which instructional reading setting would be the most beneficial for English Learners to develop their reading skills and English proficiency? What settings do ELs and EL teachers prefer? Is it necessary to separate English Learners into proficiency levels for reading to achieve growth in their skills? These are among some of the questions that are connected and imperative to the central research question addressed in this Capstone study.

Motivations

One of the reasons that I am interested in researching this question is to have improved communication and understanding with classroom teachers and literacy coaches surrounding the best reading setting. The opinions of the classroom teachers, administration and literacy coaches also affect annual scheduling for the English Learner department, so it becomes an even more complex issue with many staff members with invested interest. Classroom teachers may not want their ELs pulled out of homeroom instruction to receive sheltered reading instruction, as it creates segregation from their peers. Also, classroom teachers may have many ELs in their homeroom and having pull-out instruction creates commotion with students transitioning in and out of their room during the day. On the opposing side, some homeroom teachers are not accustomed or trained in co-teaching with EL teachers and would rather have their students pulled out for specialized language instruction or bilingual reading instruction. For both settings, I have found both support and opposition within the school from staff, administration and parents for a variety of reasons. It is an ongoing debate that could use some clarity as we tackle the scheduling puzzle in my school annually. My concern also started growing that this variety of challenges and opinions from an array of different sources was dictating how students receive EL instruction, yet growth of the student's English proficiency was rarely being addressed as the primary motivation. Were students being scheduled into instructional settings for reasons such as room space and transitions, rather than educational success?

Frustration among students and teachers is also a motivation for researching reading settings for my English Learners. My frustration, along with other EL teachers, in

2013-2014 stemmed from students that were not showing English reading growth through reading comprehension and vocabulary tests through sheltered instruction. It is difficult to pinpoint its source, which could range from the lack of proficiency grouping, to the type of curriculum used. It could also be pinpointed to the type of license of the teacher carries and the teaching style used in class. The ESL license that EL teachers carry in Minnesota is a different teaching license than a classroom teacher license, with differences in focus of instruction and strategies. EL teachers do not carry a core reading license, however are still put in the position to teach core reading curriculum due to the high number of English Learners in the school. Therefore, I began to speak to other EL teachers from a variety of different elementary schools in my same district.

After speaking with them I determined that there is not a streamlined process for how ELs received instruction, but rather that they received instruction in whichever method was possible at their school.   Some schools were doing sheltered reading instruction for all their ELs and had several classrooms dedicated for this instruction while other schools did mostly co-teaching with very little sheltered instruction. However, the common theme among all the teachers was that the EL instruction is often based on classroom teacher preferences, EL teacher preferences, and restraints on classroom space rather than analyzing student needs. Also, it seemed that the number of sheltered EL instruction classrooms in a school varied widely and was often determined by the administrator's vision of the school schedule. The same was true with whether EL classrooms had access to instructional and engaging technology.

As my interest in this topic grew, so did my concern that students may not be showing significant growth in their English proficiency and simple changes to

instructional setting might be one answer to this problem.   The variance in EL methods between schools was intriguing. This sparked my continued interest to see whether some instructional settings showed higher proficiency growth than at other schools. As our school also discussed a curriculum and reading program change for the 2014-2015 schoolyear, it felt like a great opportunity to research English Learners and their instructional reading setting, along with some of these factors contributing to such variances among schools.

Continuing through the school year, I began to notice the increased interest in the news and articles on how teachers were instructing our diverse population in Minnesota. As the English Learner population grows in Minnesota, so does the concern for how to service their English instruction needs. From MN Public Radio (MPR) to local news, it is a topic that often is discussed in the educational sector. The reason for the interest is justified as currently only 55% of ELs in my school district are graduating from high school according to the district English Learner program coordinator (Minnesota Department of Education, 2016). When ELs students are enrolled and qualify for English Language services in my district, their parents receive a letter (Figure 2) stating this fact to encourage EL services for their student. This graduation rate is a concern that English Learners continue to lag behind in the achievement gap. It is imperative that English Learners receive foundational English instruction in their elementary school years in order to help them be successful academically going forward into their secondary education and then onto graduation. My interest in this research is professional but it is also personal, as I have a bilingual home and my son is also an English Learner. He

propels me to look for better ways to teach our English Learners daily and to advocate for their best interest in educational issues.

Finding the most beneficial way to educate our English Learners is also imperative as we strive to close the education gap. Although as professionals, we have the discretion to choose the best way to deliver language instruction to students, my experiences and observations are that as EL educators, we are not looking at student data to make these decisions. Rather, these decisions are often dictated by other factors such as classroom space, convenience, scheduling constraints and teacher preference. I hope who need to make decisions and advocate for their students on the best instructional settings of reading instruction.

Conclusion

By researching the methods of teaching English in the elementary schools both with quantitative data and qualitative surveys, we hope to discover patterns of English proficiency growth among our English Learners in reading and answer the question: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?*

With polarizing views and opinions of how English instruction and reading should be delivered for elementary students, my hope is that this research can help determine which method is cultivating success and growth for our students. We hope that this research helps EL teachers as we strive to determine the best ways to instruct our English Learners in order to build the reading foundation that is imperative for their future academic success. With increased knowledge of reading settings and English

language growth, the goal is that this will help teachers become better advocates for their English Learners and create stronger partnerships with each other as educators.

For the last twenty years, there has been varied literature and research written on the subject of instructional setting for English Learners. In Chapter Two, academic and professional literature in regard to instructional settings for English Learners, reading settings and strategies for ELs and challenges and successes of co-teaching were reviewed. This literature reviewed in Chapter Two will serve as a springboard into the research for this Capstone moving forward.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Teachers are in the midst of changing educational times, in which the linguistic demographics of our students are becoming more complex and being an educator is equally complicated and stressful. Schools across the country are seeing many languages represented in their schools, with each school and state unique in its language and culture diversity. Schools, districts and teachers are educating students in a variety of ways to meet the needs of their English Learners. The opinions on the best ways to meet the needs of English Learners are as diverse as the EL population itself. This chapter dives into the educational literature and research that currently exists in regards to current and past practices of educating English Learners. This literature review intends to build a framework around the research question: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?*

The challenges to selecting literature in regards to the educational needs of English Learners are the vast array of approaches to the topic. Although my research is focusing on the English development of elementary age students, the literature available spans a much larger age range from elementary age students through adult learners. Therefore, it is important to know that the literature that was selected and represented in this chapter mostly focuses on younger students in elementary grades. However, in addition to younger students, the literature represented in this chapter also included

journal articles and resources that refer to English Learners in general, not citing a specific age group. Also note that all the literature reviewed for this chapter was from schools and educators throughout various parts of the United States. However, my research focuses specifically on the state of Minnesota, where I currently reside and work.

The research question specifically focuses on the development of reading skills in English Learners (ELs). English Learners are students who have a home language other than or in addition to English and show a need to develop English proficiency to be successful in school (Minnesota Department of Education, 2016). ELs often come from non-English-speaking backgrounds and cultures, and who typically require modified instruction to learn academic content and the English language. Often, English Learners (ELs) are referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs) or English as a Second Language students (ESL students). In the following articles and journals, teachers of ELs are referred to in a variety of ways as well, such as EL teachers, ESL teachers or ELL teachers. The varied acronyms come from changing titles and variances by state through the last few decades.

The language development of English Learners is divided into four domains: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The majority of the literature available does not focus on only one of the domains, but instead gives an all-inclusive viewpoint and analysis in regards to the development of English and the approaches to education. Therefore, the literature that is cited in this chapter does not focus specifically on reading, but instead on all four of the English language domains. Although the research will focus on reading as it is often a sheltered setting where English Learners are removed from the

mainstream classrooms, reviewing literature on other English domains was not a hindrance as the domains are interconnected and fluid in language development.

This literature review is divided into four sections in order to effectively describe the different approaches to educating English Learners currently across the country and the research already done in regards to these approaches. These sections are as follows: sheltered instruction, mainstreaming, co-teaching, and strategies for the EL student. The literature mainly reports on the attitudes and implementation of the approaches, rather than give statistics regarding the proficiency growth of ELs in regards to the setting used. According to Crawford, Schmeister & Biggs in 2008, research on the type of instruction provided to ELs in full-inclusion models is rare to find. All of these approaches to EL instruction are part of the main research question and will play a large role in the quantitative and qualitative research. Therefore, analyzing literature in each of these areas helps to set a foundation of current practices for English Learners and also current perspectives from the student, educator and the government on why certain instructional models are in place.

Sheltered Instruction for English Learners

Sheltered instruction for English Learners is an approach used to provide language support to English Language Learners who are learning academic content in English (Macias, 2012). The origin of sheltered instruction came from the work of Stephen Krashen in the 1980s (Macias, 2012). English Language Learners are removed from their mainstream classes and taught in an English-only environment only with other ELs and an EL licensed teacher. This may occur for the majority of the day or for a short

portion of the day, as it varies by school. Sheltered instruction uses language and context to teach content based material and vocabulary to make information comprehensible (Crawford, 2008). Sheltered instruction has been a common model to teach ELs because of these reasons.

According to Macia (2012), what makes sheltered instruction unique is that the instruction features adapted content, additional vocabulary instruction, language development objectives and often times the clarification of concepts in their native languages. In general, sheltering English Learners helps to give them support in an English development refuge until the student is ready for their mainstream content or homeroom classes. Additional benefits of sheltered instruction include scaffolding content for comprehension, cooperative learning and hands-on activities. What defines sheltered instruction as a relatively new approach is that until the early 1970's, schools in the United States primarily adopted the 'sink or swim' model to educating English Learners, being provided no language support (Crawford, et al., 2008). A sink or swim model is where English Learners are put in mainstream classrooms and content classes without any additional language support. They were expected to "keep up" academically with the rest of the native English-speaking students and learn English through a full immersion model. The sheltered instruction is a divergence of the 'sink or swim' model, where ELs receive intense English language instruction as well as content instruction until they are ready to move into mainstream education classrooms.

Crawford et al. (2008) explained that research of sheltered instruction has findings stating that teachers in a district with a high number of ELs felt confident with their ability to teach, but they felt significantly less confident teaching students who are

English Learners. Therefore, the presence of sheltered instruction for ELs was welcome in the district. Originally, the teachers in the EL classrooms "used clear instructions with consistent use of step-by-step examples and directions" and the "…mainstream teachers did not use these processes" (Crawford, et al, 2008, p.329). Therefore, sheltered instruction has been and still is common, especially in situations or schools where teachers felt removing students from class would better meet their learning needs.

Although common, sheltered instruction with only English Learners in the class has been at the forefront of educational debates for the past several decades (Macia, 2012). The common theme among the debates is the use of native language support and clarification in sheltered instruction, and whether it should be used or not in the education of English Leaners. The use of native language support is especially evident in the instruction of English in Latino communities.

The persistence of the native language among secondary third-generation students reflects the resiliency and valuing of native language in many Latino communities. But it also reflects the long-standing failure of U.S. schools to educate and thus build upon that native language fluency in the ELL populations while at the same time developing their English language proficiency. Along with those that oppose native language support in sheltered English language development, there are those that support it. For example, in 2011, Ingerson discusses that "Research indicates that use of the native language in instructional setting by ELs does not interfere with or delay the acquisition of English Language Skills" (Macia, 2012, p. 5). Although there is debate in regard to sheltered instruction that provides support to the students in their native languages, not all sheltered instruction include this native language support. This is especially the case if the

sheltered setting includes students from a variety of native-language backgrounds rather than one native language amongst all the students. It is also the case if the English Language teacher does not speak the first language of the English Leaners, essentially making it difficult to support it in their classroom. Sheltered English Language instruction is varied in its makeup and approach, however the commonality is that this approach only includes ELs.

Mainstream Instruction of English Learners

Mainstreaming students is defined as being taught in a mainstream classroom where the ELs are expected to meet grade-appropriate standards and demonstrate achievement through standardized tests in English.   Mainstreaming students into regular education content classes has been a focus of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Varela states that mainstreaming students is like plunging many English Language Learners into the education mainstream like all other students, similar to sink or swim model (Varela, 2010). NCLB put a focus on accountability on the growth of English Learners by requiring that they meet the same academic standards that all children are expected to meet by the year 2014.   This pressure had administrators and teachers looking to progress ELs more quickly, moving them out of sheltered instruction after one-two years (Varela, 2010).   According to Harper & Jong, in the United States, nearly 50% of all ELs receive less than 10 hours or no special services in 2003, compared with 23% of the previous decade, which is evidence of this shift (2009).   Therefore, the sheltered instruction of the ELs is decreasing, while the mainstreaming of the ELs is increasing. Speaking with EL teachers among varied districts, the same pattern as Harper & Jong in 2009 discuss is found. In mainstreaming, EL students are in the mainstream

classroom and usually accompanied by English Language support for some portions of the school day, but the majority of the day do not have additional support. Clarified by Harper and Jong (2009), regardless of their level of English proficiency or academic preparation, English Learners worldwide are increasingly placed in mainstream classrooms for an entire school day which spans across all the content areas.

There are strong supporters of mainstreaming English Learners. According to Varela, supporters of mainstreaming believe that it can help ELs learning English more rapidly because they have English-proficient role models that they are learning with (2010). The supporters also believe that mainstreaming ELs helps them to feel included in their classroom and instruction, rather than be segregated into a different room for smaller group instruction of only English Learners. Therefore, mainstreaming helps with a sense of "belongingness" (Varela, 2010). This concern in regard to English Learners feeling included and part of their classroom peers is still a concern that is voiced by educators today.

According to Varela in 2010, Principal Cinta Johnson believes in the benefits of mainstreaming for English Learners and was quoted in 2010 as saying, "In my view, by including students in grade-level classes with English-speaking peers, we capitalize on the strengths and abilities these students bring to the learning experience. We raise the bar by having high expectations for all learners". Although there are many supporters of mainstreaming ELs such as Principal Johnson, there are those opposing mainstreaming as well.

For example, Joseph Provisor, former English Language teacher, commented that integrating a community of EL and non-EL learners is not as simple as putting kids together in a class (Varela, 2010). This indicates that you cannot just expect English Learners to learn the same way as their peers just being surrounded by native English speakers (Varela, 2010). If students are going to work and learn together, there needs to be unity created in the classroom which is often a challenge in mainstreaming. A research study by Reeves (2006) found that 86.7% of mainstream classroom teachers found that they were not modifying assignments or completely including ELs in the classroom (Ingerson, 2011). This is ironic in that English Learners were essentially not being included into their class when they were in the same physical room, which is also same reason why many sheltered instruction is also often avoided. In both settings, the English Learners were not included in the same group as their native English speaking peers. However, it was noted that the educators were not excluding the students purposely. They did not feel prepared to have the ELs in their classroom due to little professional development.

A challenge of having English Learners in the mainstream classroom is that the mainstream teachers often do not feel prepared for the ELs in their class. Teachers in the Midwest (such as Kansas whose EL population has increased 269% from 1993-2003) have little or no preparation in addressing the educational needs to these students that are in the mainstream classes (Ingerson, 2011). Not having the adequate training and preparation for such a dramatic shift in classroom language demographics does not lead typically to English Learner success. However, some opposing research according to Ingerson (2011) discusses a study of teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming ELs in the

classroom and the results showed that teachers surveyed showed a neutral to slight positive attitude toward EL inclusion. In summary, research is indicating that teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming students in their classroom is varied, with possible factors ranging from the number of ELs that they mainstream and the amount of support and training that the teachers receive.

An additional supporting factor of mainstreaming ELs into classrooms at the secondary level is that No Child Left Behind allows them to get credit toward graduation for content area classes only if they are taught by a "highly qualified teacher" endorsed in the content subject areas. In other words, mainstreaming helps propel ELs toward graduation at a faster pace than by being instructed in sheltered English classes where those credits may not be attainted if the EL teacher is not highly qualified in that content area. Mainstreaming is becoming more common in elementary schools, however it is also becoming more common in the secondary or middle schools as well for this reason of earning credits for graduation.

EL students are often placed in grade-level classes with EL teacher assistance, but with little or no opportunities for students to be pulled out for specialized instruction. The struggle for and moves too quickly. This is unfortunate for the ELs who need additional opportunities to study the language within the content in order for it to be comprehensible. One of the concerns in regards to mainstreaming is that seems to ignore what the research tells us in regard to the average length of academic English language acquisition of five to seven years (Varela, 2010). As an English Language teacher, those five to seven years are crucial to getting the students language support to increase their academic language skills. There are supporters both for mainstreaming and against

mainstreaming for many of the reason stated, and this varies from teacher to teacher. But regardless of supporters for and against mainstreaming students, it is happening often in many schools (Varela, 2010). Advocating for or against mainstreaming has become an integral part of the teaching profession.

The next section discusses another instructional model called co-teaching. Co-teaching has become more common to service the increasing population of English Learners in this country in their mainstream classrooms.

Co-teaching to Instruct English Learners

An extension of mainstreaming ELs is an approach called "co-teaching", in which a mainstream content teacher and an EL teacher work in tandem to provide instruction to a class of both English Language Learners and non-English Language Learners. Co-teaching, often called "team teaching" is when two teachers collaborate and teach alongside one another in order to instruct a classroom of diverse learners with diverse needs. According to the University of Minnesota College of Education website, co-teaching is when two teachers work together with groups of students sharing the physical space, planning, organization, delivery and assessment (2016).   The ELs learn mainstream content alongside their non-EL peers in a co-taught classroom. It is a professional relationship between two educators that needs mutual respect for each other, clearly defined roles, and opportunities for shared planning. As defined by Dove & Honigsfeld in 2008:

"Co-teaching is a collaborative partnership between a mainstream teacher and a service provider or specialist other than a SPED teacher, such as a remedial math

teacher, reading specialist, a teacher of the gifted and talented and, more recently, the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher" (p.8).

In co-teaching, the EL teacher is often focused on extension activities to promote language development that also can work with all the students in the class who are non-EL (Varela, 2010). ESL teachers can co-teach in any content area, such as math, social studies, or science. EL teachers are trained to incorporate language instruction and language clarification regardless of the content areas; therefore co-teaching can occur with an EL teacher in any content area.

The original goal of co-teaching was to accommodate the needs of ELs in the classroom and to help them meet local, state and national standards. However, there are limited specialized resources for ESL teachers on co-teaching in the mainstream classroom. Often, EL teachers must borrow program models from other disciplines. In turn, many different models have emerged in co-teaching (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2008). The following six models of co-teaching as listed in Dove and Honigsfeld (2008):

1. One group: One lead teacher and one teacher "teaching on purpose**".** The teachers take turns assuming the lead role, while the other teacher focuses on mini-lessons with individual students or small groups of students.
2. Two groups: Two teachers teach the same content. In this model, there are two groups and each teacher works with one group. The ELs are disbursed among the groups.

3. Two groups: One teacher re-teaches and the other teaches alternative information. Students are in one of the groups depending on their language proficiency level. The group that needs re-teaching typically has the ELs.

4. Multiple groups: Two teachers monitor and teach. There are usually learning stations, guided reading groups that are working on certain skills or content topics.

5. One group: Two teachers teach the same content. Both teachers are teaching the same content, at the same time while working cooperatively together. One teacher might present the lesson, while the other teacher interjects with examples and comments to support them.

6. Parallel teaching: two groups, same content. The class is divided in half and each teacher instructs using the same content. ELs in this model are able to receive more individual attention.

With so many co-teaching options, one might wonder why teachers or schools choose not to integrate the co-teaching model into their school and instruction. One of the reasons is that collaboration is difficult and requires the teachers to meet on an ongoing basis in order to plan each week. The most successful co-teaching situations are those where both teachers assume a lead role in instruction and share responsibility. A mutual respect for one another as educators is also imperative in order to effectively work and teach together. It is important for both teachers' talents to be used to benefit the students.

However, even amidst the challenges, co-teaching is unique in that it provides ELs with a teacher in the mainstream classroom that focuses on language instruction. In

support of co-teaching, Dove & Honigsfeld state "ELLs have different needs than do remedial students. An ESL program should enhance student understanding of English while learning classroom content." (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2008, p.9). While co-teaching, EL teachers can demonstrate strategies for the class that the ELs can carry over to other content areas. In addition, during co-teaching time teachers are able to share strategies and wisdom with one another, all while having ELs remain in the mainstream classroom.

Students who receive co-taught classes have stronger student to student relationships because the co-teaching model brings together diverse groups of students. This, in turn, also helps to reduce the isolation of language-minority students (Bahamonde & Friend, 2000). Integrated classrooms with co-teaching also can reduce the social stigma that comes from a traditional pull-out/sheltered instruction program. Co-teaching also provides teachers who would not usually work with ELs the opportunity to make those connections and relationships with students. Co-teaching has many opportunities and variations to include throughout different content areas. However, it takes both educators in the classroom to collaborate to make it a successful experience for all students and staff.

Reading Strategies for Teaching English Learners

Whether an EL teacher is co-teaching or teaching in a sheltered instruction setting, there are common reading instruction strategies that are used for teaching ELs in both reading settings. In this section, a variety of reading strategies used in both settings will be explained to give an overall picture of how EL teachers approach reading

instruction regardless of which instructional setting is used. According to DelliCarpini (2011), reading strategies in all reading classrooms are critical for the students to be successful in comprehension development. Students who are explicitly taught reading strategies and have practiced them with assistance are able to apply strategies and have reading tools at their disposal when needed on their own.

Teaching reading to English Learners is complex, as the linguistic and academic background of each student is unique. For ELs, there is a wide range of literacy skills in their native language that can affect their success in English reading and comprehension development. "There are similarities between reading in a first language and reading in a second language, such as English" (Drucker, 2003, p 22). ELs that are successful readers in their first language are often times able to transfer those literacy skills in reading and writing to their English development. Some of these literacy skills include: guessing in context, ability to skim, and reading for the summary of a text (Drucker, 2003). Some English Learners have English proficiency with social language, but do not have literacy skills in English or academic language proficiency. Academic reading in school can include a wide variety of subjects from art to science. Some English Learners may only be developing their reading comprehension skills in these academic subjects, while other English Learners are new to the country and may be starting with letter and sound correspondence and phonics development.

There are many different possible scenarios possible in one reading classroom with a variety of English Learners. Due to the complexities and layers of each student's linguistic background, having strong instructional strategies in teaching is important to assist in the teaching of all proficiency levels of English Learners. In the upcoming

section, a variety of strategies will be described. However, teachers must consider a number of factors when selecting strategies to use with their students. DelliCarpini (2011) lists a variety of questions for English Language teachers to reflect on in regards to their students before implementing reading strategies in the classroom.   For example: Who are the students and what are their learning styles?, What are their past experiences with learning and the task at hand?, and What is manageable in the existing classroom context?

There are hundreds of reading strategies to choose from and this chapter will just describe a few. However, EL teachers make informed decisions on strategies that are the best fit for their students and the context of their teaching. Whether is in a sheltered setting or co-teaching, there are strategies that will work best for each English Learner.

Story Mapping and Anticipation Guides

Written templates such as story maps and anticipation guides can help lay a framework for ELs as a reading strategy. Story maps are diagrams that lay out in written form the characters, setting, main idea, problem and solution. Students create these one-page documents as they read. By engaging the students into the reading and introducing parts of the story such as characters and setting prior to reading helps to build their understanding (Drucker, 2003). Creating story maps of the text selection can help lay a foundation for the English Learner in regards to the type of text being read, the setting and the characters that they will encounter during their reading.

Another written template that is used by ELs is called an anticipation guide. An anticipation guide is a template with questions that targets the before, during and after

reading segments of the lesson (DelliCarpini, 2011). It is a strategy that helps students tap into their prior knowledge and make predictions while completing the anticipation guide before reading the text. During reading and after reading, the anticipation guides scaffolds discussion worthy questions as a whole group or individually. Using these types of templates can be a powerful visual for English Learners who need to have additional scaffolding in the written form while reading. They also serve as a way for ELs to discuss the parts of the text as they read.

Choosing Culturally Relevant Reading Selections

According to Drucker (2003), comprehension of text requires more than just linguistic knowledge, but also includes the interaction between the student's background knowledge intersecting with the text itself. Choosing texts that match some of the background knowledge and experiences of English Learners can assist and intrinsically motivate ELs with their reading development. It has been researched that students more accurately recall and comprehend texts that are most similar to their native cultures (Drucker, 2003). Folk tales or other culturally specific stories that are cross-cultural in which the English Leaners may have heard or been exposed to in their own language can be especially helpful. As Drucker noted, "In increasingly diverse U.S. classrooms, it is critical for books to reflect the cultural backgrounds of all students, "(Drucker, 2003, p. 26). Students will connect more to text which have characters that are similar to them as well. If new to the country students are learning phonics, another culturally sensitive strategy is to use culturally appropriate pictures to represent each letter and sound. Multicultural literature is especially important for English Learners to create a connection to text during reading development.

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary development is one of the basic foundational necessities in learning a new language and is a critical part of the reading process. This is also true for English Learners, who consistently need to work on vocabulary development which in turn will help with their overall reading comprehension skills. "The failure to recognize even 2% of the words in a specific text will limit comprehension" (Lei, S et al, 2010, p. 92). However, it is an extreme challenge to teach vocabulary with the amount of vocabulary words that an English Learner must acquire in order to be at a comparable reading level to their peers. Students between 3rd and 12th grade learn up to 12,000 new words per year (Drucker, 2003, p 27). For an EL teacher, this is an impossible task to accomplish with the daily time available for instruction. However, EL teachers still do as much as possible using a variety of strategies to ensure that ELs are being provided with new vocabulary development instruction from multiple subject areas on an ongoing basis. Vocabulary development often occurs prior to reading a text, as a manner of pre-teaching. For example, some of the vocabulary strategies are as follows: pre-teaching vocabulary, labeling words with definitions in texts, using TPR (total physical response) such as using actions and songs, and using read-alouds or choral reading within the classroom (Drucker, 2003).

However, another approach to vocabulary development was discussed by DelliCarpini (2011), where student studied academic vocabulary words after reading. Students nominate a word from their reading that they would like to learn more about, or one that they didn't fully comprehend the meaning. Students then work in groups to define and understand the word, and in turn teach it to the rest of the class. This is an

example of a verbal-visual word association strategy. "Verbal-visual word association strategies help students move beyond memorization of words and toward development of rich and personal associations" (Dellicarpini, 2011, p.110).

Another post-reading vocabulary strategy is to use the four-quadrant vocabulary square activity. A card with a vocabulary word is divided into four quadrants: definition, sentence, antonym and picture. Students complete the card in order to have practice using the word in many ways. This strategy helps ELs with written and visual practice of the academic vocabulary word and then can keep the card for future reference.

There are countless strategies to teach vocabulary to English Learners and this section described only a few. All English Language teachers, regardless of which level or grades that they are teaching, approach vocabulary instruction with structure and intent and focus within a reading class.

Paired Reading

Paired reading, matching an EL with a "skilled reader," is when the skilled reader reads aloud as an English Learner tracks in the text, or follows along. Then the EL rereads that same portion of the text aloud after they had been modeled the reading. The researchers found that paired reading was an effective intervention that improved the students' fluency in reading aloud as well as their pronunciation (Drucker, 2003). Paired reading works best with students in grades three to eight and can help students read more fluently and accurately with a partner to help model for them.

Utilizing the paired reading strategy is common when the English Learners remain in the homeroom for reading instruction, however it is more challenging to use

this strategy in a sheltered instruction where all student are struggling readers. This also can work with two English Learners, as long as the proficiency levels between the two students is significant enough for one of the students to be the model reader for the lower proficiency student. This modeling would be necessary in reading settings where is a sheltered instruction setting with only English Learners.

Additional Strategies in the Reading Classroom

There are hundreds of reading strategies that can be used to help teach English Learners. Besides the few that have been discussed in this chapter, additional reading strategies for English Learners according to Everts, Danielson, K. & French, M. (1990) include the following: reading and writing limericks for syllable and rhyming pattern practice, story creation with sight words and using shadow puppets to act out a story and practice their retelling skills. These are among some of the more creative strategies to incorporate into reading instruction. However, using differentiation of strategies within the reading classroom is important to meet the needs of the varied backgrounds and proficiencies of the English Leaners. There are many strategies used by EL teachers in a variety of settings and is differentiated depending on their student needs. According to Drucker (2003) "Second Language Learners benefit from reading programs that incorporate a range of contexts, both social and functional, and in which reading begins, develops and is used as a means of communication" (p. 28). In all the instructional settings that were described throughout this chapter, there are countless reading strategies that EL teachers incorporate into their daily instruction. As Drucker described (2003), effective literacy instruction is a not just simply a collection of strategies and approaches, but the classroom environment that ELs study and learn is at least as important as the

methods, strategies and approaches. Regardless of which instructional setting is the foundation for teaching English Learners, it is important to incorporate structured strategies in all of the settings to best teach reading to English Learners.

Conclusion

As the demographics of our country and education system continues to diversify culturally and linguistically, it is evident that there are varied opinions regarding the best instructional setting to teach English Learners. These opinions and preferences have adjusted and changed around the three main settings of sheltered instruction, mainstreaming, and co-teaching over the last few decades. English Learners across the country are experiencing a vast array of instructional settings, with no clear answer regarding which is the best setting for language development. There are English Learners that may have all or part of their day in sheltered instruction with other ELs, and on the opposing side there are English Learners that are mainstreamed, and others that experience co-teaching.   The question remains: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?*

In Chapter Three, the research project and methods are described in detail. The chapter will describe how the data will be collected and analyzed in effort to find more answers in regards to this research question.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

After reviewing the literature, I was able to adjust and confirm my action plan of research in order to explore the question: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?* The literature that was examined in Chapter Two gave me insight that there is not a large amount of current academic literature available in regard to instructional reading setting for EL students. Therefore, it confirmed that this Capstone has researched an infrequently addressed area of education, which felt exciting and necessary. Addressing the instructional setting of EL students is a current issue facing many teachers and schools today, and it was somewhat surprising to find limited literature on this specific topic.

Additionally, by examining other literature on EL settings, it was clear that using qualitative data to survey teachers and staff on the instructional setting was a key part of this research project. Most of the literature that I reviewed was qualitative, confirming that qualitative research captured opinions and experiences of both educators and students. However, there was also an opportunity to strengthen the literature on EL settings through quantitative methods by examining end of the school year reading scores from a variety of reading scores for English Learners.

In this chapter, I will explain the logistical route to capturing both the quantitative and qualitative data for this research. It will also set the backdrop from whom and from where this data is being collected. It will give the reader a general vision of the types of students who are being surveyed and whose data is being analyzed.

Quantitative data was gathered from yearly district-wide reading assessments and qualitative data was gathered from teachers and staff within the district. The qualitative data was the gathering of opinions of teachers on instructional settings, EL achievement, successes and challenges and advocacy for our English Learners. The quantitative data compared the proficiency growth of district assessments in correlation to the instructional setting. Overall, this chapter is to give the reader a vision and roadmap of how, when and from whom the data was collected and analyzed.

Research Paradigm

This research study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2009). Both qualitative and quantitative data contributed to the conclusions in regards to instructional reading settings for English Learners. The research was conducted in a sequential manner, with qualitative data collected and analyzed primary and quantitative data collected secondary. The mixed methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data, was selected for this project as there are important elements in connection with the research question that reside in both types of data. Qualitative data was able to fill in the gaps of personal preferences of the subjects and opinions that quantitative data is unable to capture. Quantitative data was able to give numerical proof and insight of reading proficiency growth or challenges that may be supported by the

quantitative data. Combining and comparing these two types of data for this research was imperative to get an overall picture with education English Learners.

Instructional Settings of the Research Collection

The research was focused on one elementary pre-kindergarten-sixth grade school and all quantitative and qualitative data was from students and staff of the same school. This school was the focus of this comparative research for two consecutive school years, 2013-2014 and 2014-2105. I selected this school, as it is the current place where I work and it has a large English Learner program in the district with around one-third of the students as English Learners. I also selected the school based on my knowledge of staff, students, and my experiences with its reading instructional settings and programs which took a dramatic shift between the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years.

The school in this study was located in a large suburb in Minnesota and serves pre-kindergarten-sixth grade learners. This school was selected because it has a rich mixture of cultural and ethnic backgrounds which includes a high percentage of English Learners. For purposes of this study, the school will be referred to as Focus School. Focus School has four full-time EL teachers in the building and an additional part-time EL teacher. They also have four EL Educational Support Professionals dedicated specifically to assist English Learners in the school.

School Demographics

Focus School is a Title 1 school with 387 students from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Title 1 schools receive extra federal financial assistance for to use for lower class sizes ranging in size from 11-25 students, small group tutoring and lower

class sizes specifically during reading. Focus School's student population that has free and reduced lunch status is 95%. According to 2015 MCA assessments, Focus School is behind the state average in all areas of math, reading and science. Focus School's Reading MCA proficiency for 2015 was 22% compared to the Minnesota proficiency of 60% and a district proficiency of 57%. (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015)

At Focus School in the 2013-2014 schoolyear, there were 172 English Language Learners with a variety of English proficiencies from Level one (newcomer to the country) to Level five (transitioning out of EL programming). Students who were a composite Level five or Level six did not receive any EL program support. During the 2014-15 schoolyear, there were 191 English Language Learners. The school serviced EL students in a variety of settings ranging from one to one, small group sheltered (pull-out) or push-in co-teaching instruction depending on the scheduling availability, teacher preference and room availability. Focus School followed the district standards in regard to service minutes for English Learners depending on English proficiency. English Language Program determine minutes for each student depending on their ACCESS proficiency score (scores range from 1.0-6.0). All ELs took four English language assessments annually in reading, writing, listening and speaking called the ACCESS tests. Students that had an average score of 1.0 receive sixty minutes of EL small-group instruction per day. Students that had an average score of 2.0 received forty-five minutes of small group instruction per day and students that had an average score from 3.0-4.0 received 30 minutes per day. The content area in which the service takes place was varied, as language instruction can take place within any content area. For many ELs, their only English Language service minutes fell into the 90 minute reading block due to

staffing restraints. When this occurred, these students did not receive an extra 30 minutes of English Language support at another time during the day. When an English Learner received a 30 minute block for English development in a sheltered instruction setting, the skills that are developed are within any of the four language domains: reading, writing, listening and speaking, depending on their needs.

Reading Programs

Success for All

The reading program in Focus School for 2013-2014 was entitled Success for All. The Success for All reading program is described as a:

Research-based reading curriculum that provides ninety-minute daily lessons over a period of five days and targets the needs of students reading on a second-through sixth-grade level who have successfully learned to decode but need to develop more sophisticated reading skills. (Success for All website, 2016)

Success for All included four core comprehension strategies: clarifying, questioning, predicting and summarizing using trade books or basal readers. These strategies were developed through different parts including routine, targeted skill building, fluency practice, word power development, book clubs and writing components. Cooperative learning was a large component of this program. "Learning in isolation can pose significant challenges, especially for students coping with the stresses of poverty or English as a Second Language" (Success for All, 2016). The program focused on learning to read being a social activity such as reading in groups and supporting each other to think critically to achieve their goals. It was a team-focused curriculum in which

students sat in teams in class, answer questions as teams with a representative, and learned through cooperative activities. There were three classroom levels within the program; Reading Roots, Reading Wings and Reading Edge. All students in this research study were part of the Reading Wings program. The curriculum had a point-motivation system in which teams earn points based on working together while focusing on reading skills and strategies.

In Focus School, both the EL and classroom teachers were using the Success for All program for core reading instruction for the 2013-2014 school year. The English Learners were pulled-out or "sheltered" for the 2013-2014 school year and taught by an EL teacher for 90 minutes. The native languages and English proficiencies of the ELs were not taken into consideration when putting them into a mixed-proficiency class for sheltered instruction. The English Learner reading classes were diverse classes, grouped only by grade level and whether or not the students were English Learners.

In the 2014-2015 schoolyear, Focus School switched reading programs from Success for All which was sheltered English Learner instruction, to Benchmark Literacy which uses a co-teaching model. With Benchmark Literacy, English Learners remained in their homeroom classroom for the 90 minute reading block, however the difference with this program is that EL teachers pushed into the class to support within the main classroom rather than using sheltered instruction.

Benchmark Literacy

According to the Benchmark Literacy website, Benchmark Literacy is a program that focuses on precisely leveled books for each student's needs as well as learning in small group stations every fifteen minutes for one hour. Students moved

through a rotation of reading stations that included: independent reading, writing, phonics and word study, and differentiated small-group guided reading. The program also began each day with whole class mini-lessons that incorporate reading strategies. Each classroom may have structured their rotations and timing to meet the needs of their class, but generally most classes were organized with a similar basic structure. It was within these rotations that the EL teachers instructed English Learners in a small group within the classroom, working with both EL and non-EL students. Like Success for All, Benchmark Literacy focused on comprehension of text but with more independent reading time than Success for All. Another difference is that Success for All taught phonics in entirety in the beginning Reading Roots program, whereas Benchmark Literacy incorporates phonics development as part of a mini-lesson or in a fifteen minute rotation.

Focus School was chosen for its unique circumstance of switching from one reading program using sheltered instruction to another program using co-teaching within a two-year period, which led to being able to compare quantitative reading data. With its high percentage of English Learners in the school, it offered a unique opportunity to research the proficiency growth for these students with language development needs in relation to instructional setting.

Research Participants

From Focus School, both quantitative and qualitative data was gathered in order to compare reading growth of two school years. Two classroom teachers, four English Language teachers and one literacy coach were surveyed from the Focus School for its

qualitative data. The following section describes the participants that were part of this research.

All teacher participants were highly involved in reading instruction for either English Learners or mainstream students and have a significant amount of knowledge in the area of reading instruction and were selected for this research for those reasons. All staff that was online surveyed had worked at the Focus School for three or more years. The purpose of gathering qualitative data from teachers is to gain insight regarding successes and challenges regarding English Learners in comparing and contrasting each reading program. It also is to gather their observations in regards to proficiency growth in their students with each program setting.

All four EL teachers are female with Masters degrees in teaching and an ESL K-12 teaching license. In addition, all four teachers had experience in the Focus School setting teaching sheltered reading to EL students with the Success for All program. In the 2013-2014 schoolyear, all four teachers were instructing ELs in a sheltered instruction for 90 minutes daily. The classes that the four teachers taught were made up of 17-22 English Learners, whom ranged in English proficiency from Level 2-Level 4 (out of 6 Levels in the ACCESS scale).

All four of these teachers also remained at Focus School for the switch to Benchmark Literacy and taught students in a push-in instructional model in the 2014-2015 schoolyear. It is a unique situation that all four teachers were able to give perspective on both models in the same school. The grades that these teachers taught were varied from second to sixth grade.

For the purposes of this study, these Teachers were called ELTeacher1, ELTeacher 2, ELTeacher 3, and ELTeacher 4. ELTeacher1 and ELTeacher 2 taught the fifth and sixth grade class for both school years being analyzed. ELTeacher 1 also taught the same program to the same grade levels the year prior in 2012-2013, therefore bringing additional experience to the study. ELTeacher 3 taught the second grade sheltered class for 2013-14 and Kindergarten for 2014-15. ELTeacher 4 taught the second /third grade blended class for both school years being analyzed. All the EL teachers also had additional experience in other schools supporting English Learners in a mainstream classroom reading setting.

Two female classroom teachers from Focus School were interviewed as well. For purposes of this study, they were called Classteacher1 and 2. Classteacher1 is a third grade classroom teacher and Classteacher2 is a fifth grade classroom teacher. In the 2013-2014 schoolyear, neither classroom teacher had English Learners in their 90-minute reading classes. In 2014-15, both classroom teachers transitioned to Benchmark Literacy and had a blended EL and non-EL class of students with an EL teacher as a co-teacher. A literacy coach for the school that coordinates the reading program for all students also participated in a survey. She has experience teaching the Success for All program for over ten years before becoming the literacy coach, and also has significant training on the Benchmark Literacy program. Her insight into the structure of both programs and success for students was invaluable as she has been integral into implementing both programs at Focus School.

Quantitative Assessment Data of English Learners

For all quantitative research data, a selection of ten English Learners was made from grades third/fourth and fourth/fifth to have their reading proficiency growth analyzed in both ACCESS and MAP reading scores over the course of two years. The purpose of quantitative data on students is to compare the growth in reading between school years and the different instructional settings that they experienced as English Learners. Students below third grade were not selected, as they do not take the MAP Reading assessment. Students were referred to as Student A, Student B, etc for the purpose of this study and did not have their names used in this study. The students came from a variety of English proficiency levels, however all students had a first language of Spanish. Focusing the study to one language group logistically was convenient should the need arise to have any documents translated to students' parents in English and Spanish. Students selected for this study have remained at Focus School for both the school years of 2013-2104 and 2014-2015 and participated in both Success for All sheltered EL instruction and Benchmark Literacy inclusion setting.

Quantitative Assessment Types

ACCESS Reading Data

The quantitative data that I gathered and analyzed on the student participants will be from the ACCESS testing results from May 2013, May 2014 and May 2015. The ACCESS assessment for ELs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is an annual large-scale English proficiency assessment for all EL students in the district. The ACCESS tests were

divided into grade-level clusters. For example, the fifth graders take the assessment in the 3-5 grade-level cluster. The sixth graders take the assessment in the 6-8 grade-level cluster. Each cluster had assessments that had different topics that correlate to the grade-level standards. Students were also clustered and assessed into proficiency tiers of A, B, or C in order to target each student's range of language skills.

The ACCESS tests were written from the model performance indicators of WIDA's five English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards: Social & Instructional Language, Language of Language Arts, Language of Mathematics, Language of Science, and the Language of Social Studies.

The purpose of the ACCESS tests for ELs are to identify the English language proficiency in regard to reading, writing, listening and speaking. For purposes of this research, only the reading scores were analyzed for the selected students. The students were given numerical results ranging from 1-6 on the English Language Proficiency scale. A score of 1 is beginning English proficiency, while a score of 6 would indicate that a student no longer needed English Language support. Typically, students annually gain an average of .5 points in each domain of proficiency growth until they reach a composite score of 5 to exit the EL program.

During both the 2013-2014 and 2014-2105 school years, all ACCESS assessments were delivered in a classroom setting with an instructor on paper-based tests. The ACCESS reading assessment was delivered by an EL licensed and trained teacher to small groups of EL students and the assessment duration was sixty minutes and had three main reading selections with comprehension questions.

MAP Reading data

The second source of quantitative data for this research was derived from scores from the Measures of Academic Progress assessment (MAP). This is a computer-based adaptive reading assessment that adjusts the reading proficiency level as the student answers comprehension questions based on fiction and non-fiction passages. This was an assessment that was not timed, but generally takes around sixty minutes.

The MAP test was given in reading classes to grades three to six for both school years in the month of May. As English Language Learners, some students completed the computer-based test within the sixty minutes, but they were allotted as much time as they needed to complete the test. The scores that they received were given to the students immediately upon finishing the test and ranged from 167-209. A quantitative comparison was completed in this study to compare student scores in both 2014 and 2015. Generally, growth on the MAP tests from year to year rise on average around ten points for a student making average growth. Refer to Figure 3, found at the back of this capstone, for a table with MAP scores goals for third-sixth grade students.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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Moving forward to Chapters Four and Five, this research analyzed the correlation between reading scores of English Learners in relation to the types of instructional setting in which their learning took place. Although the reading settings implemented by Focus School is different between in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, the strategies implemented in both school years by EL teachers should have been similar, as strategies carry across content areas and within reading instruction. Therefore, rather than looking at the

specific strategies in relation to the student's reading proficiency growth, I concentrated on analyzing the instructional setting of the reading instruction and how this impacted the reading achievements and growth for the English Learners. Comparisons of quantitative data were made for both school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 of each English Learner's assessments and growth and whether instructional setting possibly had any impact in achievement.

Comparison of teacher perceptions, opinions and experiences in regard to the success of English Learners in each particular setting were made via qualitative data using an online survey system with questions. Using both the qualitative and quantitative data, I anticipate that both types of data will bring insight to the question: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?*

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

In this chapter, I will be analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data to gain insight through a comparative lens in regard to the successes and challenges of English Language students and teachers in two different reading programs. In 2013-2014, the reading program used was a sheltered instruction model and in 2014-2015 the reading program use was a co-teaching model. Quantitative data collection offered insight into opinions, stressors and thoughts about program implementation and daily logistics, while qualitative data offered insight into a final assessment of reading proficiency growth from a year of each program implementation. Compiling both of the types of data together in an analysis helped me as an English Language educator to better understand: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?*

Qualitative Data Results

English Language Teacher Results

Electronic Surveys were given to EL teachers to gain insight into their experiences and opinions in regard to teaching with both push-in and pull-out models for their English Language students during the reading instruction block. This survey was given with all open-ended questions in a comment-style survey. See Appendix B for a list of the questions administered to EL teachers. The questions were focused on comparing

successes and challenges for both reading programs and also on gathering opinions on preferred programming for their English Learners.

Benefits

Qualitative data and responses collected from EL teachers in regards to reading programs varied; however, the answers seemed to have several common themes among EL teachers. Throughout all the questions asked, one of these commonalities was that every EL teacher participant in this research mentioned the benefit of small group instruction that is part of the Benchmark Literacy program that is currently in place and was during the analyzed 2014-15 schoolyear. The Benchmark Literacy program uses a station model, where each station had around six or seven students and the stations last for around fifteen minutes. These groups were mixed groups of both ELs and non-EL students. ELTeacher1 was supportive of the Benchmark program for EL students, as the stations allow the students to be instructed in small groups based on reading ability level. ELTeacher4 had a similar response, but also added that using small groups in guided reading is helping her English Language students to gain confidence with others at their same level. ELTeacher3 also commented that the small group rotations allowed EL teachers to use a rotation at times to work on writing development as well. ELTeacher3 added that by having the flexibility at times to convert your station to a writing station, it gave the English Learners the extra writing instruction that they need in a very small group setting.

Although this answer came as a surprise, it gave insight into the way that EL teachers are using the station model currently and in 2014-15 to get their English

Learners any additional language skill building they need. After all, reading and writing development go hand in hand in language development. ELTeacher2 answered that in her perspective, the current reading setting for her ELs feels more successful and "in control" than in past reading programs with large groups of English Language students. As quoted, "It feels more manageable to work with students in small groups for a short, targeted amount of time. Although the workload to work with all students has increased, the benefits of the small groups and working as a team with classroom teachers feels more successful."

Challenges

When instead asked about challenges in regards to the current reading program in place with Benchmark Literacy and from 2014-15, the answers were quite varied. Some of the variations could be due to the grade level differences that each teacher is experiencing accompanied with the challenges that each English proficiency level brings. Some EL teachers also have the added pressure and responsibility to accommodate the curriculum and lessons to meet the needs of new to the country Level one students in their reading rotations. New to the country students, also called newcomers, are students that have been in the United States for less than one year and who did not speak English as their native language. ELTeacher2 answered that she has currently four new to the country students in reading class and had the same challenge in 2014-15. Scaffolding for new to country students in quick fifteen minute station poses a challenge to get those students enough phonics instruction and also to teach and to speak slowly so they can process the language. In 2013-14, new to the country students were in sheltered instruction at their own level for 90 minutes of only phonics instruction with Reading

Roots taught by an English Language teacher. ELTeacher 2 said that in addition to the reading block, EL teachers needed to find additional reading instruction for their new to the country students as the current Benchmark Literacy does not offer enough phonics and roots instruction time.

In addition to accommodating for new to country English Learners, survey results from EL teachers indicated that in 2013-14, the sheltered instruction Success for All program was a team approach to learning. Now, since the program switch in 2014-15, one of the reading stations that students are expected to do is Independent Reading. As stated by ELTeacher1, "Independent Reading time can be a challenge for the EL student if they do not have sufficient base knowledge in the language." When students are expected to be self-directed in a reading station, it is quite difficult for student who are struggling either with basic phonics or comprehension gaps.

ELTeacher3 was upfront in her frustration with a reading program shift that has EL teachers co-teaching as support rather than instructing their own classroom of English Learners as done in 2013-14. As an EL Teacher, she has felt in constraints to get EL students extra scaffolding that they need when it isn't her own classroom. "I see that classroom teachers do not spend enough time activating students' prior knowledge, defining key vocabulary terms and providing enough modeling or scaffolding in helping EL students understand a given text." Additional frustration also included that often classroom teachers make assumptions about English Learners, their abilities and holding English Learners to the same grade-level standards as their native English speaking peers.

In regard to teaching English Language learners in a pull-out, sheltered instruction class, ELTeacher2 had many years teaching English Learners with Success For All. In her survey, she answered that having EL-only classes creating a safe learning environment, especially for those students new to country with low language proficiency. Pull-out classes were an opportunity for ELs to have additional practice speaking in class and feel comfortable asking questions in English or another language when possible with a teacher. ELTeacher1 also added in her survey that having an EL-only sheltered reading class with Success for All also gave opportunity for language development lessons to happen in tandem with reading instruction during the long 90 minute block. Overall, this qualitative survey offered in-depth insight into the challenges and successes that EL teachers experiences with varied instructional models with the goal and pressure to support English Learners' reading success.

The qualitative data overall showed preference for the small group stations of the current program, but that the previous Success for All program of sheltered instruction offered opportunity as English Language teachers to scaffold and incorporate language skill development at the same time as reading instruction. Therefore, there was positive and negative feedback from EL teachers on both programs and their experiences teaching in both instructional settings.

Literacy Coach and Classroom Teacher results

Compiling and analyzing qualitative results from classroom teachers revealed additional insights in regards to instructional settings for English Learners and what the classroom teachers prefer. Including the literacy coach with the classroom teachers in the

qualitative data collection was decided as the instructional coach was previously a classroom teacher as well for many years in Focus School. Refer to Appendix C for a list of the questions administered to the literacy coach and classroom teachers in an online survey.

Successes

For question 2 regarding successes for English Learners in a push-in setting, Classteacher1 responded that the native English speakers can be good models when learning new vocabulary and working on reading comprehension for the English Learners in a push-in instructional setting. "I've been pairing the native English speakers with ELs for fluency practice and comprehension work if the reading ability gap between them is not too large." Also for question 2, the literacy coach responded that a success for a push-in program such as Benchmark is that they English Learners feel part of their main classroom for the entire day, and seem happy to be with their peers, rather than segregated into another room with only English Learners. As an English Language teacher, I do also agree that as students get older, there is a stigma that starts to develop internally for students to go to specialized sheltered instruction as they do not like to appear different than their peers. Classteacher2 responded that they are enjoying the push-in setting rather than the sheltered instruction because having English Language teachers push into the class helps with having controlled, small group lessons. "Two teachers can get more done with students in a reading class than just one teacher."

In response to question 6, all three of Classteacher1, Classteacher2 and the literacy coach said that their preference is for English learners to remain in their

classroom for reading instruction, rather than go to a sheltered instruction class for ELs. The survey results give a variety of reasons for this preference. Focus School has consistent behavior challenges, so additional transitions of students throughout the day to classes can be hectic. The literacy coach said that transitions in school have become more controlled since all students remain in the class for reading. Classteacher2 also stated that "it is better to have the English Language teacher push-in to the class, so that we are all on the same page with curriculum and grading." This answer is in regard to collaboration of grading which is necessary when students leave for a sheltered instruction core content subject. With Benchmark Literacy, the collaboration is seen as more convenient as both teachers work side-by-side during reading. Classteacher2 also discussed that having an English Language teacher push into reading class helps with having an additional teacher in one room to work with different levels of students. Grouping students by ability was much easier with several teachers to be at rotations working on reading skills. This was a similar answer to ELTeacher1 in the previous section, as she talked about a success of Benchmark Literacy is that it is easier to group students into small reading proficiency levels. This is evidence that both this ELTeacher1 and Classteacher2 find some similar benefits in and prefer using the push-in model to group students within the classroom.

Concerns

The Literacy Coach and Classteacher2 responded to question 3 with concern in regard to the current push-in model for the new to country English Learners. Classteacher2 is a fifth grade teacher and the fifth grade curriculum does not have a phonics component for students who need to learn phonics before comprehension, as a

new to the country student might need. Therefore, both the Classteacher2 and the literacy coach voiced concern over not having adequate materials for English Learners or enough time to work with students who need more basic reading skills, such as phonics. The literacy coach states "in a push-in model, the English Language teacher often needs and had to bring additional materials for students or use pieces of another phonics curriculum to supplement into instruction." In comparison, the Success for All sheltered instructional setting did not have this issue when working with new to country students on phonics development because it had a much stronger base 90 minute daily phonics program taught by an English Language teacher. As mentioned in the previous section, the ELTeacher 2 shared similar comments and concerns in regards to the limitations to accommodate new to country students with enough phonics instruction using the Benchmark program with such short fifteen minute rotations.

English Language teachers, classroom teachers and the literacy coach gave meaningful insight into their preferences and experiences in regards to reading programs and instructional settings for English Learners. Analyzing quantitative data through annual reading scores is the next step to understanding reading growth of our English Learners in the Focus School. By merging the qualitative and quantitative results in this study, we can get an overall picture of statistical growth in reading proficiency of the English Learners in addition to the teachers' professional opinions and experience in both settings. It is with this mixed methods approach to this research that we are able to see the challenges and successes from both the quantitative and the qualitative side of the reading development and instruction.

Quantitative Data for English Language Students

Data was collected and analyzed for ten English Learners at the Focus School who were in third/fourth and then fourth/fifth grades in both schoolyears of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. Five of the students being analyzed were in the third/fourth grade cluster and the other five students were in the fourth/fifth grade cluster of students. Students are listed in Figure 4 at the back of this Capstone and referred to in this chapter as Student A-J to protect anonymity. All ten students that are part of the data collection have the first language of Spanish; however, the students are varied with their proficiency in their first language literacy skills. For example, some of the students are able to read and write in their first language and some of the students are not literate in their first language. Students were only selected as part of this data group if they were available for all ACCESS and MAP testing at the Focus School for consecutive school years of 2013-14 and 2014-15. For the next section analyzing qualitative assessment data, refer to Figure 4. When analyzing the below data in regards to reading scores of English Learners, growth in data points made between 2013 to 2014 and from 2014 to 2015 was calculated. The average growth in the annual MAP Reading test is ten points annually in the Focus School. Average growth in an ACCESS annual test is .5 in the reading domain annually, for example, from 3.5 to 4.0 in an ACCESS reading score. These are average growth targets for English Learners annually, but any increase in the raw score is seen as positive growth on these reading assessments.

ACCESS Assessment Data

Analyzing the data for English Language students in regards to their annual ACCESS assessment, there appears to be some trends among English Learners in the reading growth data. Based on the ACCESS results from 2013-2014 during the Success for All program, nine of the ten students who received sheltered Reading instruction taught by an English Language teacher had improvements in their ACCESS reading assessment that year. Out of those nine students with growth, six of the students actually met their growth target of .5 points for the schoolyear. Student B was the only student whose score remained the same proficiency level without noted growth; however, it was not a negative score, meaning that their Reading proficiency via this test remained the same.

However, the ACCESS results are much different the following year in 2014-2015. The change in growth for the English Learners is evident when analyzing column 6 in Figure 4. As the instructional setting at Focus School changed to Benchmark Literacy, the growth indicated on the ACCESS test for 2015 took a definite turn for the worse. Out of the ten students analyzed, seven had negative growth in their reading score on the ACCESS test. This means that their scores did not go up, but actually went backwards over the course of the year of push-in reading instruction. Only Student A met their growth target for the year with push-in instruction on the ACCESS test. As the students remained in their classroom with the blend all EL and non-EL students for reading instruction, it appears through the assessment data that their language development in reading decreased for over half of these English Learners.

This is insightful data to examine and to compare with the qualitative survey results as well. In the qualitative survey, the majority of the English Language teachers expressed that the small group rotations in the push-in model benefitted the English Learners compared to the larger group with the Success for All program. However, the results of the quantitative data show that these English Language students made more English language development growth in reading from the larger sheltered instruction setting, compared with the push-in instructional setting in the classroom. Sometimes as teachers what we perceive as a positive impact for students may not correlate in the same way with data and assessments.

This data, which show more growth with a sheltered reading model, leads us to ask ourselves some questions regarding how these results happened. For example, are English Learners more comfortable in an all English Learner reading classroom and therefore had more significant growth on their ACCESS test? An additional possibility to explore may be that with the sheltered instruction program, an English Language teacher instructs all the English Learners, therefore possibility using additional language learning strategies that are helpful to the English Learners in reading development. Do English Learners use their first language more frequently to clarify questions and assist them in their reading development in a sheltered setting? This group of students' first language is Spanish. Therefore, one possibility might be that the sheltered setting assists them with cognates and first language transfer that is not as accessible to them in the push-in setting as it is a less language focused classroom and mixed small groups.

An additional possibility is that with the Benchmark program, the English Learners only spend fifteen minutes with their English Language teacher compared to the

sheltered reading instruction where the ELs spent 90 minutes with their EL teacher in the sheltered setting. In a push-in setting, students are in several stations throughout the 90 minutes but do not get the speaking practice that they would have with sheltered instruction. ELTeacher3 had mentioned that in a sheltered instruction, there is opportunity to speak and feel comfortable in class. English development is fluid, in which reading, writing, listening and speaking all work together to build language development. Perhaps those missed opportunities for language development had an overall decreased effect on the ACCESS scores. It is always important to remember that one size does not fit all, however. Student A met her reading language growth with both settings, while Student G showed almost a two point growth with the switch to a push-in model. Student G may have benefitted greatly from having additional student models as fluent readers or from having several teachers within a classroom in the Benchmark setting. The push-in program will work for some students better than others. For example, having two or three teachers in a co-teaching setting can be the differentiation and variety that some students need to be successful. Overall, the ACCESS scores showed more positive results with the Success For All sheltered reading instruction, however as mentioned previously that each student is unique and so there will always be variation from student to student. In the next section, an analysis of the MAP assessment and any observations of proficiency growth in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 is presented.

MAP Assessment Data

Looking at the MAP assessment data for both school years, there is a similar trend, but not as strong, to the ACCESS data analyzed in the previous section. In column 10 of Figure 4, seven of the ten students improved their MAP reading scores and six of

those met their reading growth target of ten points for the school year through sheltered instruction using the Success for All Program.

However, it is important to note that Students D, E and H struggled with the sheltered instruction program in 2013-14 and either made no growth or negative growth in their reading scores according to the MAP data. Of those three students, Student E and Student H also were the students with the lowest growth in the ACCESS test. It is possible that Student E and Student H struggle with reading comprehension in general regardless of which reading setting that they are learning in, but it is difficult to know all of the factors from just quantitative data.

Using Benchmark Literacy for co-teaching instruction, six out of the ten students in the push-in program had MAP growth on their assessment from the previous schoolyear. However, unfortunately only three of these students reached their ten point growth target for the year, compared to six of the students in the Success for All sheltered instructional setting that had reached their growth target. Again, the sheltered instructional setting of the Success for All program indicated that more students reach their reading goal via the quantitative data collection. This was quite a surprise for me as I was anticipating the opposite with the quantitative data.

As discussed previously, some students are unique in their learning needs and it could be from a variety of factors. For example, Student I had a clear trend in their assessment data, showing their growth target met with both assessments during sheltered instruction in 2013-2014, however had both negative growth point for their Benchmark Literacy assessments in 2014-2015.

As an EL teacher, seeing this data which overall shows more positive results in a sheltered instruction setting for English Learners poses some questions and concerns in my mind. One of the concerns is that the trend of teaching English Learners is moving toward push-in models over sheltered instruction as discussed in the literature review. Collaboration and push-in instructional models are becoming more common for English Language programs as schools look to be more inclusive with English Learners and less divisive in the instruction through the school day. The qualitative data also showed that the classroom teachers in this study also preferred having the English Language teachers co-teach in the classroom for a variety of reasons ranging from easier grading collaboration, behavior management, to less transition for English Learners. However, if this data holds true across a larger analysis of English Learner reading scores, then non-academic reasons are determining the reading instructional setting in ways that may not be benefiting the English Learner population who show in this data analysis that the majority of them thrive in a sheltered reading setting for instruction. One possibility would be to find ways that bring the benefits of sheltered instruction to the push-in instruction setting. For example, grouping students by first language in their rotations or finding additional time in the reading rotations to implement other language development, such as speaking and writing. As teachers, using creativity to bring what students need to our instruction is so important when other constraints exist or when a reading program is implemented in the school without taking into consideration data.

Conclusion

The qualitative and quantitative data analysis in this mixed methods study has been beneficial in analyzing the reading assessment results for English Learners in two

different reading settings. It has been insightful to gather professional opinions, experiences and data to examine two instructional settings and programs to teach reading to our English Learners. Although it is a small research group in a large generation of English Learners in our school system, it still helps us come one step closer to the question: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?*   Moving on to Chapter Five, I begin to ask myself how I can use this new knowledge as an educational advocate for English Learners and what further extensions of this research are possible for the future.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

My reasons and interest for choosing this Capstone topic and research question stemmed from my experiences in teaching English Learners in a variety of settings and circumstances. My passion for the topic of English learning comes from my personal life teaching my husband English and also my love of working with new to the country families and bilingual students. It is imperative in this job as an English Language teacher to be flexible and creative with scheduling, working with students from a variety of cultures daily and in a high-needs school. With each class that I have taught, I often questioned whether the push-in or pull-out setting was the most beneficial way for the students to learn English. Teaching in a school with roughly one-third of the students being English Learners, we consistently face scheduling challenges in determining how to group English Learners in sheltered instruction classes or to support them with classroom push-in instruction. By collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data in regards to reading scores and teacher opinions, we are beginning to close the uncertainty gap to help answer the question: *How do English Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students?* This chapter will explain my insights from the data gathered and how I can implement advocate with this new information regarding English Learners moving forward in my teaching.

Insights

Throughout this process of being a researcher as well as a teacher in the same English Language teacher field, I learned to look at my teaching position from an outside lens to see the wonderful growth occurring with the English Learners. On a daily basis it feels as though my English Learners struggle in their reading development and that the road to growth feels as if it is an unending struggle. Being an elementary school teacher is hard work and sometimes the exhaustion fogs the overall successes that are happening on a daily basis, but that are difficult to see while in the trenches. For example, I was pleasantly surprised and proud with the ACCESS scores for the researched students that made positive growth being taught in sheltered instruction with an EL teacher in 2013-14. It validates that as EL teachers, we do bring strategies and specialization in working with ELs that is helping them achieve in their reading goals. I also felt proud to see this success in the quantitative data because as an English Language teacher, we are not licensed in the same reading skills as a classroom teacher. This often is debated and discussed in the district on whether English Language teachers should teach core reading instruction. The data shows that indeed as EL teachers, our English Learners can definitely be successful in an all EL classroom. This research has also helped validate that although the progress in English development with students feels slow, that there is proof of success through data even when the daily struggle of teaching can feel frustrating.

Additional revelations from this Capstone were made from the qualitative data collected through surveys that gave insight into the opinions and experience of other teachers that I currently work with and have worked with in the past. Several of the

teachers mentioned that they see increased self-confidence and focus through working in small groups. Whether it is in a co-teaching setting or sheltered instruction, I am going to carry this reminder with me as I teach to use more small group practice and restructure how I utilize teaching assistants to make more small groups possible. Using small groups is an easy change to help English Learners in their reading development by using differentiation with each group. I can also apply this to the other content areas throughout the day. Small changes such as this can have big benefits to our English Learners.

<div align="center">**Revisiting the Literature Review**</div>

During the literature review of my research, I found that there were more articles and literature in support of moving away from mainstreaming English Learners in classes, and instead shifting to providing them with co-taught classes. This is a shift that is happening currently in many schools, including mine where co-teaching is often encouraged as much as possible. We often hear about the importance of moving away from the pull-out instruction and to do more co-teaching with classroom teachers. Although I see all the benefits of co-teaching for ELs, this research has also brought to light the benefits that still remain with sheltered instruction. It was definitely insightful and surprising to see how a lot of the data that was collected did not fully support this trend toward full co-teaching, and instead was split, and sometimes even in favor of, sheltered instruction. More growth on the ACCESS test was seen in reading data through the sheltered instruction than with the push-in model, which also came as a surprise. So, moving forward from this new insight, as a teacher it raises new questions and thoughts in regard to advocating for my English Learners and which settings will benefit each of

them. Our school is also moving to become a STEAM school starting in 2016-17.

Therefore, the entire school's schedule will be analyzed to accommodate this new

program. This can be a great opportunity for me to advocate for my English Learners

and implement some ways small groups and sheltered instruction can be used in their

reading of more difficult science-focused text.

Advocating for English Learners

Through the literature review and data collection, I definitely have further

questions and concerns as an EL teacher in regards to how and when to advocate for my

English Learners to have enough sheltered instruction time. Through the qualitative data

collected through surveys, sheltered instruction benefits some English Learners in very

specific ways. For example, it gives opportunities to use native language transfer in

vocabulary and comprehension development. Sheltered instruction also gives students a

full 90 minutes with an English Language teacher. Therefore, it is also imperative that I

examine which English Learners would benefit the most. New to the country students

who need additional scaffolding may need sheltered instruction more than students who

are at an ACCESS level 4. This research has motivated me to examine more closely

which students will benefit most from certain instructional settings. Although as a

teacher I do not decide or have control over which core reading program my school uses,

I can advocate for sheltered instruction or co-teaching for other subjects as well for my

English Learners. I can also begin to think outside of the box in regards to advocating for

my students. For example, if the reading program remains in the co-teaching model, it is

possible that I could incorporate some of the benefits of sheltered instruction into my

teaching. I could advocate implementing native language groups in one of the reading

stations with the Benchmark Literacy program to study vocabulary. I could also advocate for new to the country students to have two stations of phonics rather than one station in order to get thirty minutes of phonics instruction rather than just fifteen minutes. This research has propelled me to think about teaching in new ways and not to limit myself in possibilities that could benefits our English Learners in reading instruction and extending into other content areas as well.

Research Extension

There are some possible extensions that could be added to this research should I continue with this research interest of instructional reading settings for English Learners. The students that were selected for the ACCESS and MAP reading scores for the quantitative data collection were not new to the country students. New to the country students do not take state or district assessments for one year from when they arrived. If there is a way to collect reading data on new to the country students, this could add for a nice extension in the research and insight into quantitative data for these students. This could be insightful as one of the challenges that both the classroom teachers and the EL teachers answered in the survey was surrounding the issues with getting the students enough phonics instruction, which are typically new to the country students.

Another extension of this project would be to gather qualitative data from the English Learners in the form of a survey in order to get their insight into the preferred reading setting and their preferences in regards in sheltered or push-in instruction. My research did not include surveying students as many of them have moved since last school year or went to middle school. The school has a high moving and transition rate,

so finding students once they have left the district is difficult. However, it would offer another insight into what students prefer in regards to their learning environment as an English Learner. Another option would also be to survey both English Learners and non-English Learners to see if any preferences different between the two groups of students. Although this research was based on English Learners, the non-EL students also may be affected by the scheduling and instruction choices and it would be beneficial to have insight into their learning experiences with English Learners as well.

Further research could also dive more into the different types of co-teaching models as seen in Figure 1 at the back of this Capstone. Although I included this diagram in this Capstone, my research did not break down and compare the different ways that co-teaching is implemented in the classroom. It would be beneficial to observe and interview teachers (both EL and classroom) and students in regard to the various co-teaching models and which ones have proven to be successful or not. Even moving forward from this Capstone, as I look for ways to adjust reading settings to be most beneficial to my English Learners, I will take into account the different variations possible with co-teaching models.

Final Conclusion

I am privileged to have a teaching job in which I have a lot of interest and passion for my work. However, even though I enjoy being a teacher, working in a high-needs school can be exhausting and feel as though there are no answers to the struggles and challenges that face our schools and English Learners daily. At the beginning of this Capstone journey, my goal was to find answers the research question: *How do English*

Language (EL) teachers implement the most effective instructional reading setting for their students? I knew that as an English Language teacher, we needed to pay more attention to instructional settings that we teach our English Learners and analyze what was most beneficial for our English Learners to be successful readers.

Researching reading instructional settings was insightful and helped me gain knowledge and perspectives into the needs of my English Learners. From analyzing reading scores to learning about experiences and preferences of my fellow teachers, completing this Capstone helped me gain valuable knowledge of my school and position. Through analyzing these successes and challenges, I now have a renewed energy in my work and additional motivation to be a strong advocate for my English Learners. I feel confident in beginning to implement some changes into the English Learners schedule and to advocate for the needs of my English Learners in regards to their instructional settings. Moving forward, I can be an advocate for making decisions regarding English Learners on what is most beneficial to their learning, growth and long –term success.

Table 1

Qualitative Spring Reading Assessment Data for English Learners 2013-14 and 2015-15

at the Focus School

|	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Student	Grade	ACCESS 2013	ACCESS 2014	ACCESS 2015	ACCESS growth in points with sheltered setting	ACCESS growth in points with push-in setting	MAP 2013	MAP 2014	MAP 2015	MAP growth in points with sheltered setting	MAP growth in points with push-in setting
A	4	3.6	5	6	1.4, growth met	1.0, growth met	172	188	195	16, growth met	7, growth not met
B	4	5	5	3.7	no growth	-1.3, negative growth	164	174	178	12, growth met	4, growth not met
C	4	5	6	5.2	1.0, growth met	-.8, negative growth	180	191	190	11, growth met	-1, negative growth
D	4	5	6	5.8	1.0, growth met	-.2, negative growth	194	192	204	-2, negative growth	12, growth met
E	4	5	5.4	4	.4, growth not met	-1.4 negative growth	185	179	190	-6, negative growth	11, growth met
F	5	5	5.2	5	.2, growth not met	-.2, negative growth	182	200	208	18, growth met	8, growth not met
G	5	3.1	3.2	5.3	.1, growth not met	2.1, growth met	167	181	184	14, growth met	3, growth not met
H	5	3.9	5	3.2	1.1, growth met	-1.8, negative growth	186	187	209	1, growth not met	18, growth met
I	5	3.8	5	3.9	1.2, growth met	-1.1, negative growth	193	206	205	13, growth met	-1, negative growth
J	5	4.0	5.0	5.3	1.0, growth met	.3, growth not met	171	177	194	8, growth not met	17, growth met

Figure 1

CO-TEACHING MODELS
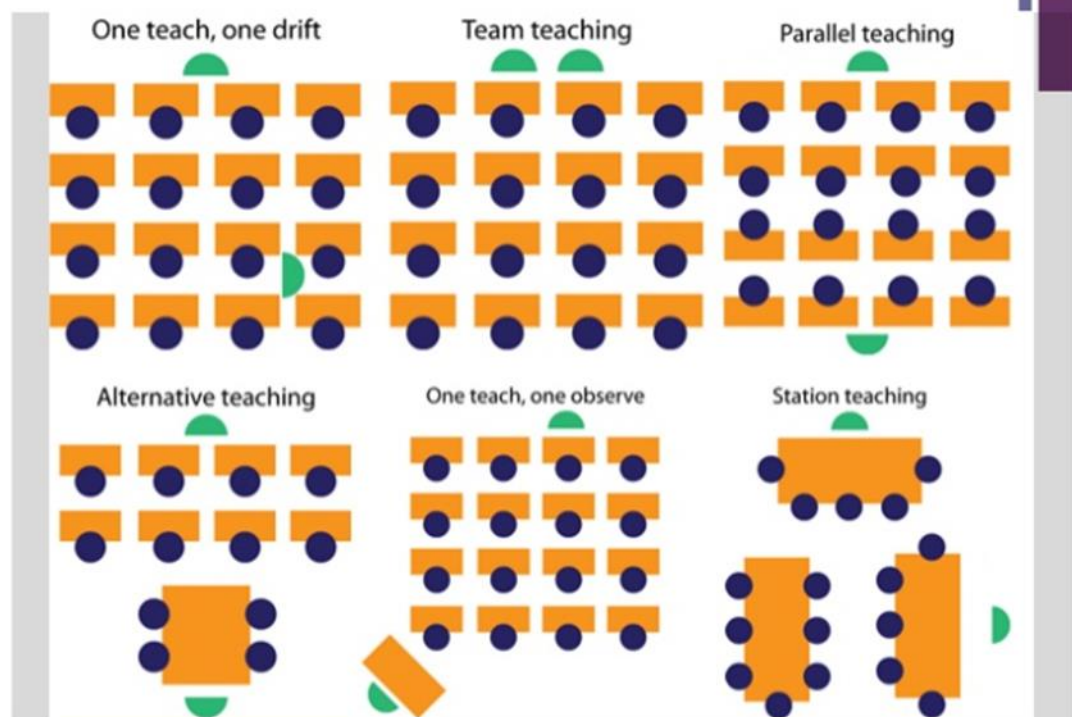
Figure 2

Overview of the EL Program at the Elementary Level

Students who are eligible for EL services are assigned an EL level (1-5) based on a language assessment. EL teachers provide supplemental English language development instruction for all students at levels 1-5 and collaborate with grade-level teachers to provide access to content and support language development.

EL Level 5: Bridging

English Language Development and Core Content Support: Provided through small group, co-teaching, or other collaborative services in Language Arts, Math, Science, and/or Social Studies
- Instruction focuses on the area(s) of language development that requires continued emphasis as indicated by a language assessment.

EL Level 4: Expanding

English Language Development: Focuses on area(s) of language development that needs most support as indicated by a language assessment. Instruction is aligned with language and content standards.

Kindergarten	Grades 1-2	Grades 3-5
Small group services 30 minutes a day 5 days a week	Small group services 30 minutes a day 5 days a week	Small group services 30 minutes a day 5 days a week

Core content support is provided in Language Arts, Math, Science, and/or Social Studies through small group, co-teaching, or other collaborative services.

EL Level 3: Developing

English Language Development Support: Instruction is aligned with language and content standards.

Kindergarten	Grades 1-2	Grades 3-5
Small group services 30 minutes a day 5 days a week	Small group services 30 minutes a day 5 days a week	Small group services 30 minutes a day 5 days a week

Core content support is provided in Language Arts, Math, Science, and/or Social Studies through small group, co-teaching, or other collaborative services.

EL Level 2: Emerging

English Language Development Support: Instruction is aligned with language and content standards.

Kindergarten	Grades 1-2	Grades 3-5
Small group services 30-45 minutes a day 5 days a week	Small group services 30-45 minutes a day 5 days a week	Small group services 60 minutes a day 5 days a week

Core content support is provided in Language Arts, Math, Science, and/or Social Studies through small group, co-teaching, or other collaborative services.

EL Level 1: Entering

English Language Development Support:

Kindergarten	Grades 1-2	Grades 3-5
Small group services 30-45 minutes a day 5 days a week	Small group services 30-45 minutes a day 5 days a week	Small group services 60 minutes a day 5 days a week

Core content support is provided in Language Arts, Math, Science, and/or Social Studies through small group, co-teaching, or other collaborative services.

EL services may vary slightly from one school to another.
Times listed are minimum direct EL service times.

Figure 3

PREDICTIVE TABLES
*MAP **2012** RIT Scores to MCA 2013 Achievement Levels*

Use this table in the fall to interpret student scores from last spring and find the most likely achievement level a student will reach in the spring if he or she makes typical growth in our district (higher than national average growth rate). For example, a third grade teacher would look at the grade 3 column to find the most likely grade 3 achievement levels using spring RIT scores from spring of grade 2. * For grade 10, calculations are based on 275 students with MCA scores who took the MAP in grade 9.

Spring READING MCA-III Achievement Level	Fall Grade						
	3	4	5	6	7	8	10*
Exceeds	209+	218+	224+	230+	234+	237+	240+
Meets	192-208	205-217	210-223	216-229	222-233	224-236	228-239
Partially Meets	183-191	194-204	201-209	208-215	214-221	217-223	217-227
Does Not Meet	< 183	< 194	< 201	< 208	< 214	< 217	< 217

Spring MATH MCA-III Achievement Level	Fall Grade					
	3	4	5	6	7	8
Exceeds	203+	214+	234+	245+	249+	250+
Meets	190-202	203-213	219-233	230-244	235-248	236-249
Partially Meets	182-189	195-202	209-218	218-229	222-234	224-235
Does Not Meet	< 182	< 195	< 209	< 218	< 222	< 224

Figure 4

ESL/Bilingual Education Program Description

_____   _____

(Name of Student**)**   (School Year)

The ESL/Bilingual Education program is designed for non-native English speakers who have difficulty with written or spoken English. The program provides an appropriate language instruction educational program to help students succeed in academic subjects and learn English.

Instructional Goals of ESL/Bilingual Education: To meet academic achievement standards for grade promotion and to become proficient in English.

Program Components

Your child will receive instructional support in the areas marked with an "X":

A.   Bilingual Education classes or tutoring in your child's native language in:
   _____Reading and writing   _____American History

   _____Mathematics   _____Consumer Education

   _____Science   _____Health

   _____Social studies   _____Driver's Education

   _____Civics

   _____(Other, please specify)_____

B.   English Language instruction, support, and/or tutoring in English in:
   _____English as a Second Language   _____American History

   _____Reading and writing   _____Consumer Education

   _____Mathematics   _____Health

   _____Science   _____Driver's Education

   _____Social studies   _____Civics

   _____Other (please specify) _____

   Exit Procedures Students remain in the ESL/Bilingual Education program until they reach proficiency in academic English. On average, it takes about 3-8 years for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the district to be exited from the program, depending on individual circumstances. Parents may remove their child from the program at any time by sending a written request to the school. The graduation rate of ELLs in the district from high school is 55%.

Special Education Special Education services: For students with disabilities requiring a language instruction educational program, ESL/Bilingual Education must be included in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Regular Instruction Programs

Regular instruction programs for students fluent in English: In regular instruction programs, instruction is in English at all times; native language is not used; and no English as a Second Language instruction is offered. The instructional goal is to meet grade appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation.

Figure 5

Electronic Survey Questions for English Language Teachers

1. How many years have you been teaching in your current position?

2. As an EL teacher, what successes do you see currently with how English Learners receive reading instruction with Benchmark Literacy?

3. As an EL teacher, what challenges do you see currently with how English Learners receive reading instruction?

4. In your current reading instruction, do you work only with English Learners or a blend of EL and non-EL students?

5. What benefits do you see for English Learners to be in an EL only reading pull-out program, such as Success For All?

6. What challenges have you noticed for English Learners to learn in a blended EL and non-EL reading class?

Figure 6

<u>Electronic Survey Questions for Literacy Coaches and Classroom Teachers</u>

1. How many years have you been teaching in your current position?

2. What successes do you see currently with how English Learners receive reading instruction with Benchmark Literacy?

3. What challenges do you see currently with how English Learners receive reading instruction?

4. What been your experience both positive and negative in regards to push-in or pull-out models for English Learners to receive reading instruction?

5. What is your comfort level with scaffolding reading instruction for English Learners?

6. Is your preference for English Learners to stay with your class or to receive sheltered instruction from an English Language teacher?

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