Fall 2017

How Mainstream Teacher Attitudes Affect English Language Learner Student Learning In The Mainstream Classroom

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by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of the Master of Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota
December 2017

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This work is dedicated with love to my husband, Ryan. Thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement.
And also, dedicated with love to my parents, Dan and Kim Lippert for teaching me the value of education and lifelong learning.
Without you all, this work would not have been accomplished.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

English Language Learners are a growing, heterogenous population that represented 9.4 percent, or an estimated 4.6 million students, in our nation's public-school system, during the 2014-2015 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). In rural areas of the U.S., English Language Learners accounted for an average of 3.5 percent of the public-school student enrollment. In Minnesota, that population accounts for 7.2 percent of public-school student enrollment. Locally, our school district has 40 classroom teachers in a K-12 setting. English Language Learners make up about 11 percent, or 58 students, of our entire student population of about 550 students. Of the 40 licensed teachers, three teachers hold an English as a Second Language (ESL) license.

Some teachers perceive English Language Learners (ELLs) or minority students as inferior to the majority, and therefore needing correction (Sullivan, 2016). Often teachers misinterpret the potential advantages when a student is able to use their first language to navigate their second language (Kibler, 2010). Mainstream classroom teachers need professional development regarding best practices, useful classroom strategies, and information about language backgrounds to avoid misinterpreting linguistic or academic needs so that they can provide all students an equitable education. These tools could facilitate learning and improve teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners.

In this Capstone, I am studying teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom and the effects on student learning. As a result of the study, I want to

create professional development educating teachers on best practices for teaching English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom. Ultimately, the goal of this training is to improve student learning by giving teachers confidence in teaching ELLs and demonstrating the value of positive relationships with ELLs.

This chapter introduces the issues associated with mainstream teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, training for mainstream teachers, accommodations for ELLs, and language backgrounds. In addition, this chapter discusses several theories, strategies and concepts that mainstream teachers need to know as it will likely affect their attitude towards teaching ELL students.

Educational Equality

We have a growing English Language Learner population for whom educators need an advanced understanding of linguistic and academic needs. In addition to our moral obligation, there are laws in place that require English Language Learners to have access to equitable educational experiences. Several cases have fought to define what constitutes an equitable education. In reference to the Supreme Court case, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), it can be argued that we may be preventing our English Language Learners from meaningful learning experiences by merely providing our ELLs with the exact same materials, teachers, and facilities as every other student. Equality of treatment does not equal meaningful education. Similarly, the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOE) mandates that schools must overcome the language barriers that may impede student learning (Wright, 2010). In addition to the materials we provide to our students, we must also give them the means to access learning. This access to learning may require additional training for classroom teachers in order to understand what an

equitable education looks like for English Language Learners. Significant research exists that shows the connections between student learning and teacher attitudes as well as the identification of teacher attitudes towards ELLs. The literature review provided in Chapter Two will highlight research that demonstrates a need for classroom teachers to undergo high-quality, on-going professional development to ensure all students have equal and equitable access to learning.

The following are common acronyms used in this research study:

ELL: English Language Learner; the acronym used in this paper regarding any student who is learning English in the mainstream classroom

L1: a child's native tongue; the first language they acquire

LEP: Limited English Proficiency; a student's English is not yet native-like

ESL: English as a Second Language; referred to as the specific language class for ELLs

Mainstream Classroom: Any K-12 classroom inclusive of all students, including ELL and Special Education students

Background and Role of the Researcher

I began my teaching career in 2012 as a preschool teacher in a small, rural, and diverse school district in southern Minnesota. A majority of my class came from Spanish-speaking homes. The Hispanic culture was not a new concept to me as I grew up in a similar setting. In that district, we did not service second language learners until kindergarten. Therefore, none of my students were considered ELLs. Regardless, I quickly began to see how the educational needs of my second language learners were quite different than those of my native English speakers. One year later, I began working as an ELL teacher in a rural Minnesota district that had

a high ELL population. At first, I worked under a variance while obtaining my ESL license. This particular district was proactive in professional development for all staff regarding our ELL population; i.e., differences in culture, educational backgrounds, and best practices in teaching ELLs. Administration, specialists, and classroom teachers were all well-trained in working with a diverse population. In addition, due to the district's large size, there were many resources available to teachers. The ELL department chair regularly led professional development trainings for the district. Overall, there were requirements for modifications in the classroom, and teachers were trained in facilitating those modifications. The district held teachers to a high standard in regards to meeting the needs of all students. In turn, teachers held all students, ELLs included, to a high standard of learning. While working in this district, I was under the impression that all schools held teachers and students to those same high standards.

In 2016, I left the district for a much smaller, less diverse district in rural Minnesota, also my alma mater, to teach in the mainstream classroom. At my new district, I soon realized that there was a significant need for more professional development for all staff in order to better understand our ELL population. In the new district, there is a long-term ELL issue where students enter ELL in kindergarten and fail to exit before graduation, which suggests we educators need to develop a deeper understanding of the educational and cultural backgrounds of our ELL students. In the district, there are several concerns surrounding the ELL program. One of the primary concerns is that the ELL classes are currently regarded as study halls for ELL students instead of language focused classrooms, where teachers send worksheets with their ELL students to complete. In addition, there are no expectations from the administrative team that outline what teachers should adopt as appropriate ELL strategies in the mainstream classroom. In

addition, walking the district's halls as a student and now as a teacher, I have witnessed our graduating classes diminish to less than half the size they used to be. However, the ELL population continues to grow. As a result, to retain the small population we have left as well as provide the most equitable services possible, it is essential that we learn how to provide the best learning experiences for all students. My background has led to my research question about studying teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom and the effects on student learning.

Guiding Questions

Do mainstream teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners affect student learning and how? The project following this research will address the needs of mainstream teachers to more effectively teach English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom and improve student learning experiences. The primary topic being investigated in this chapter is the attitudes of mainstream teachers towards ELLs. The ultimate goal is to create a professional development opportunity that will help mainstream teachers provide more targeted instruction. The following are the guiding questions that will help frame the project 1. What is the correlation between mainstream teacher attitudes and student learning? 2. What variables affect mainstream teacher attitudes? 3. What do mainstream teachers need to know about teaching ELLs?

Summary

In this project, I will provide information regarding teacher attitudes in the mainstream classroom towards ELL students. Chapter One provided background information concerning the need for this research, defined vocabulary, explained of the background and role of the researcher, and identified the research questions that will be addressed in this study. Chapter

Two will explore the research regarding the importance of classroom teacher attitudes toward ELLs and how they can positively or negatively affect student learning. I will discuss the correlation between mainstream teacher attitudes and student learning. Secondly, I will identify four variables that affect mainstream teachers: attitudes towards ELL inclusion, attitudes towards ELL training for mainstream teachers, attitudes towards modification for ELL students in the mainstream classroom, and attitudes towards language backgrounds. Lastly, I will identify what mainstream teachers need to know about second language learning in the classroom including theories regarding SLA and learning. In addition, I will address many research-proven strategies for mainstream teachers with ELLs in their classroom that reinforce those theories. Chapter Three is a description of the methodology used in this research and project design. Chapter Four is a reflection and conclusion of the capstone project. This research pertains to all classroom teachers who teach ELLs and will help provide high quality professional development that will enhance learning experiences for our ELLs.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The goal of this research will be to examine the correlation between mainstream teacher attitudes and student learning, discuss variables that may affect teacher attitudes, and identify what mainstream teachers need to know about teaching ELLs in the classroom. Based on this information, a list of best practices will be put together that can be used for professional development. In this chapter, a summary of relevant research is presented, and will identify the gap in research, along with the need for further research regarding professional development for mainstream teachers teaching ELLs.

Guiding Questions

The research question intended for this capstone project is: do mainstream teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners affect student learning and how? The project following this research will address the needs of mainstream teachers to more effectively teach English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom and improve student learning experiences. The literature review presented below is in conjunction with the guiding research questions that outline my research: 1. What is the correlation between mainstream teacher attitudes and student learning? 2. What variables affect mainstream teacher attitudes? 3. What do mainstream teachers need to know about teaching ELLs?

Correlation Between Mainstream Teacher Attitudes and Student Learning

Student learning is affected by a number of variables. Teacher attitudes are one of those variables that can influence student academic performance. According to Griffin (2008), motivation for academic and social success is strongly influenced by the teacher's expectations and conduct towards the student. However, teacher attitudes or perceived attitudes towards students are difficult to measure as teachers may not be aware of their biases or behaviors towards students or student groups. That said, research may show quantitatively a correlation between student performance and teacher attitude. Teachers' attitudes and perceptions can largely affect an ELL's educational opportunities (Griffin, 2008).

The tone of the classroom is inherently set by the demeanor and modeled behaviors of the classroom teacher. Regardless of teacher preferences, teachers can approach equality by being self-aware of judgements and bias towards students (Mitchell, 1976). As the ELL population continues to grow, it is important to address the relationship between the teacher and the ELL student and how that affects student academic performance in the mainstream classroom.

ELL students pose a new challenge for classroom teachers, especially those who use traditional strategies not geared towards a variety of learning styles. In turn, ELL students may remain isolated and be unintentionally denied their richest source for intellectual and second language development—social interaction with their native-speaking peers which can give access to linguistic input (Penfield, 1987).

Marlin (1991) studied the correlation between teacher attitudes towards economics and student performance.The results of Marlin's study can be applied to our nation's current situation as our ELL population is growing and there are such few requirements for classroom teachers to

learn how to work with them (Marlin, 1991). This could, as Marlin found, lead to negative teacher attitudes towards the education of ELLs and directly affect student learning. As of 1991, twenty-eight states required economics be taught and fifteen states required successful completion to graduate (Marlin, 1991). Many of those states did not enforce laws that required actively teaching economics teachers to be certified in economics or have any measurable amount of training in economics. As a result, many unprepared teachers who potentially had no aptitude and possibly no interest in teaching economics were placed in economics classrooms. Marlin (1991) presumed that the ill-prepared teachers could easily develop negative attitudes towards economics which could affect student learning and result in economically illiterate students who may distrust and dislike economics. The research showed a relationship between teacher attitudes and student learning, as well as increased education for teachers in economics training may have a positive effect. The rationale for this study is parallel to the situation our nation is in with few states requiring pre-service teachers to be trained in teaching ELLs. Wixom (2014), in her comparison article on the website for the Education Commission of the States, notes that more than 30 states have no requirements for ELL training, beyond the federal law, which states,

> School districts must provide research-based professional development to any teachers, administrators, and staff who work with ELLs. The training must focus on methods for working with ELLs and be long and enough and offered frequently enough to have a positive and lasting impact. (¶3)

From an alternate perspective, Richards (2006) conducted an ethnographic study surveying student perspectives of how teacher attitudes affect student learning. The author

randomly selected survey results from 27 students between grades nine and twelve. Participants defined a caring teacher as someone who helps students with both educational and personal issues, listens to them, and understands their background. Equality, kindness, and encouragement were also descriptors when defining a caring teacher. Overall, the high school students responded that a teacher's attitude towards a student could significantly enhance or limit their learning. In contrast, when a student perceives that a teacher has negative feelings, students responded that they shy away from the teacher, work independently, and do not ask for help. Additionally, students feel that relationship becomes mutual; when it is perceived that a teacher does not like a student, the student does not like the teacher or the class. This can lead to students shutting down and not participating in class, dropping out of the class, or possibly dropping out of school. Overall, Richards reported that teachers who encourage students and make them feel successful prompt students to want to actively participate and do well (Richards, 2006). Although this research was not conducted exclusively with ELLs, it applies to ELLs. Mainstream teachers need to take these factors into account for all individual students, not only the majority population of the classroom.

It is evident that teacher attitudes affect student learning both positively and negatively. When a teacher does not understand the academic, social, or linguistic needs of their ELL students, it can be perceived that the teacher does not like a student. As Richard's participants explained, this may inhibit student learning and cause a student to shut down. The entire ELL population is at-risk of feeling this way and it is imperative for teachers to, at minimum, understand the concept that their attitude will affect student learning.

Variables that Affect Mainstream Teacher Attitudes

Griffin (2008), among others, found that female teachers have more positive general attitudes towards ELLs than males and less experienced teachers have a more positive attitude than seasoned teachers. Given that these variables cannot be controlled, and that the goal of this project is to improve teacher attitudes through professional development, this research project will highlight the independent variables that can be influenced, including attitude towards inclusion, ELL training for mainstream teachers, modifying coursework, and language backgrounds.

Attitudes towards ELL inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Significant research has been done regarding teacher attitudes towards ELL inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Teachers have been portrayed as having warm and hospitable attitudes or unreceptive and hostile attitudes towards their ELLs. Some studies argue that the latter is more commonly found (Reeves, 2006). In her 2006 study, Reeves used previously collected data concerning secondary teachers' attitudes and perceptions of including ELLs in mainstream classrooms to help guide new research questions. The author found certain themes within the data and developed four new questions about teacher attitudes in mainstream classrooms regarding ELL inclusion, modification of coursework for ELLs, ESL professional development, and second language acquisition. Reeves (2006) anonymously surveyed participants with direct and indirect probes about attitudes and perceptions to prevent rhetorical answers. Data was analyzed using a Likert-type scale, and it was found that most of the participating teachers responded that they welcome ELL inclusion in their classroom (Reeves, 2006). Furthermore, nearly 75 percent of respondents reported that they felt ELL inclusion helped build a positive classroom atmosphere

(Reeves, 2006). However, 40 percent of respondents believed that not all students benefit from ELL inclusion and 75 percent felt that ELLs should not be mainstreamed until a certain level of linguistic proficiency was met (Reeves, 2006). This data suggests that although most teachers like the idea of ELL inclusion, they do not necessarily want it in their classroom until the English Language Learner has some level of proficiency. Teachers may feel this way because they do not know how to incorporate strategies or differentiate to lower-proficiency ELLs. Teachers would likely feel more comfortable including all ELLs, regardless of proficiency level, if they were aware of the linguistic needs and were given more strategies to use with ELLs via professional development.

Lastly, Reeves (2006) found that 70 percent of respondents felt that they did not have enough time to deal with the extra demands of ELL students. Griffin (2008) had similar findings in her research study examining elementary teacher attitudes toward ELL inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Overall, Griffin reported that teachers have a generally positive feeling towards ELL inclusion and the environment created from ELL inclusion, but, again, felt strongly that they did not have enough time to deal with the extra demands of ELL students (Griffin, 2008).

Wilken (2015) conducted a research study about elementary teacher attitudes concerning ELL inclusion in the mainstream asking four guiding questions regarding: teachers' attitudes toward ELL inclusion, attitudes towards coursework modification for ELLs, attitudes towards ELL professional development, and teachers' perceptions of the SLA process. In a sample size of 35 classroom teachers, Wilken (2015) found that a majority of respondents had an overall positive feeling toward the environment of an ELL inclusive classroom; however, 39 percent felt

unprepared to work with ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This research seems to indicate that negative teacher attitudes may not actually be the problem; teachers need training to be able to provide ELL students with the educational experiences they deserve.

Attitudes towards ELL training for mainstream teachers. Recently, professional development regarding the education of ELLs has become a high priority for many school districts due to the influx of non-English speaking students. Schools are also acknowledging the absence of previous training our teachers have in working with ELLs. However, minimal research has been done regarding attitudes towards this particular kind of professional development (Reeves, 2006). In order to ensure our ELLs needs are sufficiently met, teachers need opportunities to develop pedagogical skills in teaching content and language concurrently. This will improve cultural competence and attitudes that will support ELLs (Tran, 2015).

According to Zehr (2005), teaching ELLs requires a different kind of training than is typically offered in general teacher preparation programs. ELLs are linguistically and culturally diverse, therefore demanding more understanding of their linguistic and cultural differences, as cited by Miles, McCann, and Mitchell (2009). For example, mainstream teachers may incorrectly diagnose shyness or silence as low growth when, in actuality, the student may be going through a pre-production stage where they are silent, a natural part of language acquisition (Krashen, 1981). In summary, teachers may be culturally and linguistically unprepared if they have not received prior training explicitly directed towards working with ELLs, which in turn may inhibit student learning. This is not to say, however, that teachers do not want training. Dekutoski (2011) found, in her research examining mainstream teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners, that 81 percent of the respondents wanted more training in teaching ELLs in the

mainstream classroom. Reeves (2006) found very similar results, in that 82 percent of the respondents felt ill-prepared to work with ELLs and 53 percent of all participants wanted more training in working with ELLs. Similarly, Griffin (2008) found a majority of teachers have positive feelings towards ELL professional development; however, they have strongly indicated that they have not had sufficient training to work with ELLs.According to Penfield (1987), teachers addressed the necessity to understand academic learning for ELLs, but demonstrated little knowledge of integrating content and language development in the classroom. Also following Reeves' survey, Wilken (2015) reported a majority of mainstream teachers felt they were adequately equipped to teach ELLs, but 80 percent still desired more training regarding ELLs. This data all supports the necessity for teacher professional development regarding how to teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Generally, teachers desire training and feel under-equipped to teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Advanced training for all mainstream teachers is likely not the only answer to improving student learning for our ELLs, as found in a research study in a large mountain west urban-suburban school district, where 276 elementary mainstream teachers agreed to complete a two-year advanced training to acquire an ESL endorsement (Tracy, 2009). The study compared IDEA Proficiency Test results of students in the classrooms with teachers who had completed an ESL endorsement to results of students in classrooms with teachers who had no ESL endorsement (Tracy, 2009). The analysis of the results showed that teacher endorsement did not prove a significant difference in student test regarding language acquisition, mathematics, or language arts. Although it appears that a solid attempt was made to educate teachers, Tracy (2009) questioned the quality of professional development as well as the accountability measures

teachers held for ELLs. Training needs to be presented in a user-friendly manner, yet consist of high-quality, research-based theories and strategies.

In her 1995 study on teacher attitudes towards educating ELLs, Clair followed three classroom teachers for one year, two who received professional development and one who did not. Throughout the course of one year, Clair (1995) conducted interviews with the three teachers and found that the teachers were frustrated and desired pre-made materials instead of professional development. The study suggests that the inclination for quick-fix solutions is a sign that our mainstream teachers truly need professional development to understand that teaching ELLs is a complex task. Clair (1995) proposes the need for high quality professional development as an alternative to short-term workshops to avoid teacher's inclination for seeking quick-fix solutions to complex tasks.

Although attitudes towards professional development are generally positive, it is imperative that the professional development be of high quality for teachers to effectively use new strategies. In addition, accountability measures must be taken by both administration and teachers to enforce the use of effective strategies and for teachers to hold their ELLs to the same academic standard as their native-speaking peers.

Attitudes towards modification for ELL students in mainstream classrooms. The attitudes of mainstream teachers towards modification are slightly ambiguous. The research discussed in this section does not necessarily complement each other. As noted previously, Reeves (2006) found, in her survey regarding secondary mainstream teacher attitudes towards ELLs, that classroom teachers niether strongly agreed nor disagreed with statements about modifying coursework for ELLs. More than half of the respondents disagreed that work should

be simplified or lessened; however, 80.7 percent of respondents agreed that it was good practice to give ELLs more time to complete coursework. Beyond coursework modification, Reeves questioned grading procedures. Most participants showed unwillingness to allow for effort to impact grades. Lastly, 60 percent of participants felt that modifications would be justifiable to other non-ELLs (Reeves, 2006). In contrast, Griffin (2008) found that overall respondents had positive feelings towards modification, including: simplifying coursework, allowing ELLs more time, not giving a failing grade if effort is present, and justifying modifications to other non-ELLs. However, a majority of respondents had negative attitudes towards lessening workloads and believing that effort is more important than achievement when grading ELLs. Wilken (2015) used a similar survey to measure teacher attitudes towards modification for ELLs. Wilken (2015) reported 82.8 percent of respondents had positive feelings towards simplifying work, lessening the workload, and allowing ELLs to use their L1. 100 percent of respondents agreed that it was good practice to allow ELLs more time and 77.1 percent agreed that effort played a role in grading. In accordance, 78.6 percent agreed that effort is more important than achievement.

It is difficult to find meaningful trends in this data. All studies used the same basic outline that Reeves created. There are many variables that may have affected the results; location, student population, age, gender, and language background of the studies all varied greatly. In addition, it is possible that attitudes are changing as Reeves completed her study in 2006, Griffin in 2008, and Wilken in 2015. One major difference between Reeves, Griffin, and Wilken was that 65.7 percent of Wilken's respondents reported they felt they had enough training to teach ELLs in the mainstream, as previously mentioned (Wilken, 2015). Interestingly,

62.8 percent reported never having any ELL specific training (Wilken 2015). The confidence of capability could easily have made for more positive outlooks on modification.

Attitudes towards language backgrounds. It is common practice to group ELL populations easily into one homogenous group as their social and cultural backgrounds differ from those of non-ELL populations. This erroneous practice must be avoided and mainstream teachers must learn to recognize the characteristics of the highly heterogeneous ELL groups without stereotyping. Mainstream teachers should make an effort to be aware of cultural, linguistic and personal personal history of each ELL (Hausler, 2010).

According to Sullivan (2016), teachers who have culturally diverse experiences, such as teaching overseas or other long-term exposure to the culture of their student population, are more prepared and more likely to teach in a culturally effective way. Sullivan (2016) conducted a research study among secondary mainstream teachers to assess their overall knowledge of language acquisition, language use within content area and language backgrounds of their students. Also, Sullivan wanted to understand her participants' understandings of linguistically responsive teaching practices. Through surveys and observation, Sullivan found that teachers understood a significant amount about the language required within their content; however, there was a notable gap in their understanding of second language acquisition.The participants reported that that they were unlikely to look at student records to collect background information that holds valuable information about a student's former education, grades, coursework, and personal information.

Sullivan's analysis revealed that a relationship does exist between quality of instruction for ELLs and what teachers know about their students and the language required for content. In

addition, knowledge of the ELLs was found to be the strongest predictor for quality instruction. Sullivan's observations revealed that teachers were more likely to modify language and provide extra support for ELLs than they were to support the native language and background. Sullivan discovered that the teachers who used more linguistically responsive teaching strategies had engaged in fieldwork with ELLs at some point. Bilingual teachers were also more likely to use linguistically responsive teaching strategies in their classrooms more frequently. Overall, Sullivan recommends that teachers need more professional development in order to adequately support language backgrounds. She suggests the current pre-service teacher model be restructured to include coursework on ELLs and effective strategies. In addition, include a foreign language requirement so teachers understand the second language acquisition as well as empathy towards ELLs who are struggling to develop linguistic and content skills concurrently (Sullivan, 2016).

Teachers are better able to prepare and address cultural and linguistic needs of the students when they are knowledgeable of all students' backgrounds (McCann, Miles, & Mitchell, 2010). Teachers who are unaware of cultural backgrounds may unintentionally create barriers between themselves and the ELL students. Thus, students may perceive that their cultural background is not accepted in the mainstream. Ultimately, this may create barriers to learning for the ELL student.

What Mainstream Teachers Need to Know about Teaching ELLs

Mainstream teachers are not necessarily qualified to teach ELLs based on the fact that they know how to read, write, and speak English. In fact, as stated earlier in the Reeves (2006), Griffin (2008), and Wilken (2015) studies, a majority of classroom teachers actually desire

specific ELL professional training. Mainstream teachers need to comprehend the functions of how and why they read, write, and speak. Furthermore, teachers need to understand the need for academic and interpersonal language (Hausler, 2010). According to Yang (2008), professional development is required for teachers to gain understanding of second language acquisition (SLA) in the classroom. The professional development should encompass SLA theories, stages, and strategies that can easily be facilitated in the classroom.

Understanding second language learning in the mainstream classroom. ELLs are simultaneously learning content and language in a mainstream classroom. An understanding of second language learning principles is crucial for mainstream teachers to effectively teach content to ELLs. Significant research has been done to identify effective strategies and hypotheses for teaching language embedded in content.

Cummins (2000) explained that conversational language and academic language are vastly different. Proficiency in conversational language does not equate proficiency in academic language. Reeves (2006) found 71.7 percent of respondents agreed that ELLs should be able to acquire English within two years of beginning school in the U.S. According to Wilkins (2015) nearly half of the respondents reported the same. Teacher expectations are unrealistic and need to be adjusted to reflect what data shows is actually possible. In addition, not all students will learn at the same rate as language acquisition and learning is a gradual process and dependent upon several different factors. This is supported by Cummins who indicates that ELLs need a minimum of one to three years to acquire Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and up to seven to ten years to acquire Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1980). In addition, Cummins (2000) found that ELLs who are more proficient in

their L1 are more likely to achieve proficiency like that of a native English speaker than ELLs who are less proficient in their L1.

Krashen (1981) developed the Input Hypothesis suggesting that a second language learner who progresses in the natural order will improve language when input is presented in *i+1* formula. In this formula, *i* is the learner's current acquisition level and +1 is the comprehensible input provided by the teacher that is one step beyond their current linguistic stage (Krashen, 1981). According to McCann, Miles, and Mitchell (2009), the teacher's lack of awareness towards SLA may affect their responses towards an ELL and can reduce the ELLs likelihood of oral communication. With a lack of comprehensible input, learning may be inhibited. Another hypothesis that Krashen explains is the Affective Filter. He suggests that there are three variables that may inhibit language acquisition: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Students with high motivation, strong self-confidence, and low anxiety are better prepared to acquire language. Adversely, students with low motivation, poor self-confidence, and high anxiety can block the comprehensible input and act as an affective filter that prevents language acquisition (Krashen, 1981). Griffin (2008) found that a strong majority of teachers in her research study did not have positive attitudes towards language acquisition regarding providing L1 materials or using L1 language in class, in which Griffin suggests that alone may be reason for students not wanting to speak in the classroom. Reducing the affective filter is pivotal in promoting second language learning and can be done by providing a safe classroom.

According to Reeves (2006) in a study of mainstream teacher attitudes towards the education of ELLs, 82.5 percent of the teachers surveyed agreed that legislation should make English the official language of the U.S., which somewhat contradicts the fact that 58.4 percent

of respondents disagreed that ELLs should avoid using their L1 at school. Wilken (2015) had very similar findings using the same survey: 71.2 percent agreed that English should be the official U.S. language, but Wilken found that most teachers allow for students to use their L1 some if not most of the time. Overall, teachers may be teaching ELLs with misconceptions about second language learning by believing that students should be able to acquire English in two years and that their L1 should be avoided at school. By misinterpreting language acquisition and not allowing students to use their L1 to at least monitor, teachers and other school professionals may misdiagnose a student with a learning disability or incorrectly assume a lack of effort on the student's behalf. With negative attitudes towards second language learning, ELL students will suffer and this will inevitably affect their motivation to continue learning. Mainstream teachers need an understanding of second language learning in order to understand the needs of their students and develop empathy towards the process that second language learners go through while learning content and language concurrently.

Second language learning strategies in the mainstream classroom. In addition to understanding second language learning in the mainstream, teachers must also employ strategies to accommodate the needs of ELLs. Tran (2015) discusses several strategies for an improved mainstream classroom. Teachers must give students an appropriate amount of wait time. ELLs may require more time to process language and, in turn, require more time to respond. Teachers also need to enhance vocabulary instruction by defining not only the content vocabulary but also highlighting any other academic language that may intervene with a student's understanding of a concept. Tran (2015) also suggests that visuals must be used to avoid ambiguity and give students an opportunity to absorb the information in another learning mode. Finally, scaffolding

techniques that merge content and language are essential for making content comprehensible to ELLs. This strategy is not specific to any learner subgroup, nor is it a new concept to mainstream teachers (Tran, 2015). Teachers must provide supports and all language needs to help ELLs complete the difficult tasks they are unable to complete alone.

Linguistically responsive teachers. Lucas et al. (2008) clearly summarizes the purpose for having knowledge of second language learning in the mainstream classroom and explains how teachers can be linguistically responsive to their ELLs. The authors explain that all students in U.S. schools are expected to communicate with peers and teachers in English (Lucas et al., 2008). They are also assessed in English based on English text, reading academic English, and writing academic English. Language cannot be separated from teaching; it must be embedded into the content in order to do our ELL students justice by teaching them the language needed to access content. Lucas et al. (2008) also define three essential areas of pedagogical expertise: understanding language backgrounds, identifying the language demands of the expected tasks, and employing the necessary scaffolds so ELL students can successfully partake in class.

Linguistically responsive strategies. Lucas et al. (2008) continue on to identify six essential understandings in order for teachers to be linguistically responsive to their students. The first understanding is that academic language and conversational language are not equal. They do not develop at the same rate and a student cannot be expected to understand academic language merely because he is proficient in conversational language. Second, second language learners require access to comprehensible input, just beyond their current level of academic proficiency. Third, social interactions encourage continued development of conversational and academic proficiency. Fourth, ELLs who have strong L1 academic language are more likely to develop an

equivalent level of proficiency in their L2. Fifth, ELLs require a safe classroom environment free of factors that may cause anxiety about performing in English. Sixth, attention to form and function is essential for ELLs to access language. These six strategies intertwine several of the SLA theories previously discussed and showcase the necessity for understanding second language learning.

Analyzing characteristics. Yang (2008) identified several strategies to help create a classroom environment that encourages second language learning. The strategies embody much of what SLA theories attempt to explain. The following are some of the strategies most relevant to this study. Teachers must analyze the learning characteristics of the learners. It is important to take note of their learning characteristics in order to provide quality education and modify lessons as needed. The following is a list of components particular to language acquisition that may be important to consider: active or passive, use of monitor language, ability to practice language, ability to use prior linguistic knowledge, ability to use memorization techniques, ability to ask for clarification, amount of anxiety associated with using second language, ability of being influenced by negative emotions in the classroom, possibility of associating negativity to second language use, and identifying confidence towards second language use (Yang, 2008). Analyzing learning characteristics is not a new concept and is very likely already in-practice by many mainstream teachers. The idea of addressing language and feelings towards second language use when analyzing learner characteristics may be a new concept that mainstream teachers are not taking into account.

Learner-centered. Another of Yang's (2008) strategies is to develop a learner-centered classroom. Learners must set goals for themselves, and that will lead to motivation. As part of a

learner-centered classroom, students need to identify the reasons they want to learn a language. This will ultimately increase motivation as they are increasing the stake that they hold in their own learning process (Yang, 2008). Most teachers require students to be able to identify the content and language objectives prepared by the teacher, but it is equally as pertinent for a student to identify why the want to learn.

Integrating theory. Yang also recommends integrating theory of SLA into the classroom. In order for teachers to understand why learners respond to curricula in a certain way, it is crucial to understand the basic theories in SLA, such as that of Krashen's. Intertwining theory with teaching will help develop a developmentally appropriate and academically demanding environment.

Learner motivation. Yang mentions learner motivation. Learner motivation includes feelings of value, self-efficacy, and attribution. Students are more likely to be motivated by tasks that they find interesting, are culturally relevant, or in general, are valuable to them. Students who have a strong self-efficacy have confidence that they can achieve and understand that their mistakes are just a part of the learning process. Teachers can develop self-efficacy in learners by encouraging the correct learning tools to solve problems. Attribution of student learning depends on where a student attributes their successes and failures in learning. For example, learners may attribute failures to lack of natural ability, or bad luck, and achievement to good teachers and good luck. Attribution develops over time and teachers can encourage healthy attribution by providing meaningful learning experiences through authentic and challenging tasks that allow for success (Yang, 2008).

Linguistically responsive teachers, as previously defined by Lucas et al. (2008), requires that teachers be aware of the unique needs of second language learners and employ specific strategies that meet those needs. Lucas et al. (2008) and Yang (2008) closely follow the theories of SLA and learning, as previously discussed in this literature review. Chapter Three will discuss how to best implement these strategies in the classroom by initiating teachers to first theory and then the many strategies that will help put theory into action in the mainstream classroom.

Considerations for mainstream teachers. According to Fillmore, Snow, & Center for Applied Linguistics (2000), teachers also need solid knowledge of oral and written English along with a deeper understanding of student backgrounds and classroom environment. Fillmore et al. identified what all classroom teachers should know by asking questions regarding oral and written English. The following is a listed summary of the ten considerations for all classroom teachers (Fillmore et al., 2000):

1. Identify the basic units of language: phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences, and discourses. It is important to understand that sounds alone have no meaning and phonemes vary by language. Morphemes, in the English language, feature many irregular forms and can change the function of a word from a noun to an adjective, for example. Teachers need to be aware of the rhetorical structure a question might have and understand that students may be unaware of expected academic discourse pattern: teacher question, student answer, and teacher evaluation.
2. Identify regular and irregular forms and their relationship. For example, shyness and embarrassment are correct but shyment and embarrassness are incorrect. An

understanding of word formation and the rhythm of English speech will encourage vocabulary development.

3. Understand lexicon acquisition and structure. Teachers must give meaningful definitions of vocabulary. Also, teachers need to allow for multiple encounters with the vocabulary in a meaningful context to expect acquisition. Group vocabulary words into related groups to provide a more meaningful context of the language.
4. Understand vernacular dialects. Vernacular dialects are dialects associated with different geographical regions and social classes. Standard dialects are more highly respected, but not necessarily better. Teachers need to support the English required for academic development. It is not worthwhile to disrespect the language or dialect families use at home.
5. Define academic English. Academic English is a wide range of language proficiency and an understanding of basic units of language, not only vocabulary. Teachers must know that all students need to develop their academic language through purposeful teaching using rich text and classroom discussion.
6. Understand the SLA process and why it is not universal. Not all ELLs acquire English in the same way or at the same rate. ELLs must interact frequently with those who know the language well and can provide access to the language at an appropriate level. ELLs must also receive direct language instruction and corrective feedback to prevent stagnation. Teachers must be knowledgeable of the SLA process to provide the materials, resources, and strategies appropriate for their learners.

7. English is complicated. Understanding English orthography will help a teacher sensibly approach spelling. Spelling errors can reflect an insufficient exposure to written English, lack of orthographic system instruction, or transfers from their L1. In addition, it is vital for teachers to explicitly explain the correlation of phoneme (sounds) and graphemes (letters) for learners to connect sound and print.
8. ELLs may struggle developing narrative and expository writing. Different cultures place emphasis on different aspects of a story. For example, the narrative of a Latino child may emphasize relationships more than plot as that culture places importance on relationships.
9. Understand how to judge quality and correctness of an ELL's text. Teachers must have a solid understanding of grammar in order to teach grammar and provide constructive feedback. In short, teachers must explicitly teach the features and structures of effective writing.
10. Understand what qualifies text as easy or difficult. Simplified text may be choppy, unnatural, and ultimately a poor resource to convey meaning. They do not serve as an exemplar model of sentence structure or vocabulary for the reader. With a teacher's help, an ELL can access the grade-level vocabulary and grammar structures in less-simplified text. (Fillmore, Snow, & Center for Applied Linguistics, 2000, p. 5-32)

In conclusion, the ideas presented from this research indicate that teachers must provide the environmental setting and have a strong knowledge of language acquisition and strategies to effectively teach ELLs in a mainstream classroom, much as Lucas et al. (2008) and Yang (2008) suggest. The list provided above, and adopted in the current study, provides multiple ideas and

reasoning for such strategies; however, this is not a complete list, as many resources are available regarding ELL strategies. These strategies will be implemented into chapter three in order to develop a streamlined professional development for mainstream teachers to utilize.

Gap Statement

With the influx of second language speakers in Minnesota, it is essential that teachers learn how to teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom to provide equitable education to all students. A lack of understanding in how to teach ELLs can lead to teacher frustration, poor attitudes, and ultimately a negative learning experience for our ELLs. Research shows that teacher attitudes are affected by age, gender, attitudes towards inclusion, attitudes towards ELL training for mainstream teachers, attitudes towards Second Language Acquisition, attitudes towards modification for ELLs in mainstream classrooms, and attitudes towards language backgrounds. Despite expressed desire by teachers to welcome and even understand their ELLs, there is a gap in the type of professional development that will best meet the needs of our teachers who are struggling to make sense of multilingual classroom settings, a complex situation, and how quality professional development affects teacher attitudes towards ELLs. With this information summarized above, it is my goal to take this research to the next step by creating quality professional development for classroom teachers that may affect the independent variables: knowledge of inclusion, second language acquisition, modification for ELLs in the mainstream classrooms, and students' language backgrounds. The goal of my professional development is to increase classroom teacher awareness and confidence, share classroom resources, applications, and strategies that may facilitate teaching ELLs in the classroom. Overall, the purpose is to highlight how teacher attitudes and teacher-student relationships affects learning experiences.

Summary

This literature review explored classroom teacher attitudes towards ELLs, how attitudes may affect learning, and what teachers need to know about the SLA process in order to provide a proactive learning environment for ELLs. The question guiding this research is: do mainstream teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners affect student learning and how? The project following this research will address the needs of mainstream teachers to more effectively teach English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom and improve student learning experiences. The following questions have helped guide my literature review and will help develop my capstone project: 1. What is the correlation between mainstream teacher attitudes and student learning? 2. What variables affect mainstream teacher attitudes? 3. What do mainstream teachers need to know about teaching ELLs? By answering these questions, I will help fill the gap in professional development necessary for mainstream teachers who have ELL students in their classroom.

In this literature review, I discussed the correlation between mainstream teacher attitudes and student learning. Secondly, I identified four variables that affect mainstream teachers: attitudes towards ELL inclusion, attitudes towards ELL training for mainstream teachers, attitudes towards modification for ELL students in the mainstream classroom, and attitudes towards language backgrounds. Lastly, I identified what mainstream teachers need to know about second language learning in the classroom including theories regarding SLA and learning. In addition, I included many research-proven strategies for mainstream teachers with ELLs in their classroom that reinforce those theories. In chapter three I will discuss the methodology of the capstone project by introducing the project, explaining the context in which it takes place,

procedures followed, rationale for the chosen format, logistics of using the project, and a summary of findings.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

In Chapter Three I will explain the project that has resulted from the following research question. Do mainstream teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners affect student learning and how? The project following this research will address the needs of mainstream teachers to more effectively teach English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom. I will explain the context, procedure for the training, and rationale for the format of the project. Lastly, I will conclude with a summary of findings.

Context

This project will reflect findings from my literature review by explaining what teachers need to know about teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom in regards to understanding second language learning and incorporating strategies that will enhance ELLs learning experience in a mainstream classroom. I will create an online professional development tool that can be shared with and easily maneuvered by any classroom teacher or administrator seeking information about improving learning experiences for ELLs. As Wilken (2015) reported, 91.4 percent of mainstream teachers do not feel adequately supported by their administration to teach ELLs. Not only do our mainstream teachers need training, it appears that our administrators need the information as well, to ensure our teachers are receiving what they need to be effective.

I will use Google Slides to present the information. The following is a description of the professional development training I will be leading. I intend to publicly share this professional development; however, the pre-test (Appendix A) and post-test (Appendix B) would not be shared publicly, as that information is useful only to me, the presenter. At the beginning of the training, I will use Google Forms, an online data and information collecting tool that provides immediate feedback to the presenter, to administer pre-tests and post-tests to all class participants. The pre-test questions will be submitted anonymously and reviewed before the training begins. As I am the creator of these specific Google Forms, the tests are automatically generated back to me. I will display the results for the class to see and address any discussion that results from the posting. The results from the pre-test will help me identify the needs or frustrations of the teachers and determine which areas of the presentation I may need to emphasize. Teachers will have full access to the presentation as I present.

The Google Slide outline will be presented as follows. Each slide contains presenter notes, not necessarily an exact script to follow.

1. Introduction- introduce the topic and build anticipation for the topic, including statistics and common questions regarding ELLs
2. Pretest- administer an anonymous pretest to gain insight on my audience's current level of understanding, interests, and needs
3. My background- my teaching background, why I am presenting this information, and what I want teachers to know at the end of the presentation

4. Second Language Learning- what it means, what it looks like, and why we need to understand it. This slide will include visuals and videos explaining theory surrounding second language learning and teacher tips to incorporate theory in the classroom.
5. Background Language Information- what it means, why we need to understand it, introduce culturally responsive classrooms and how to embrace culture in the classroom. Lastly, the audience will self-evaluate regarding their culturally responsive classroom.
6. Modification Strategies- define modification, show what it might look like for ELLs and identify modification strategies. In addition, this section will include non-examples of appropriate modification strategies.This slide will include links to useful blogs, free resources, and online articles further discussing modification.
7. Inclusion- define what it means, present teacher tips for classroom teachers, address the statistics surrounding attitudes towards inclusion, and explain the significance. As a group we will add inclusion strategies to a single document for the audience to use a resource. Lastly, videos and articles are listed for teacher reference after the presentation.
8. Inspirational Stories- links to YouTube videos and blogs of teachers and students sharing inspirational stories of teaching and learning.
9. Posttest- After the presentation the audience will take a posttest. The purpose of the posttest is for me, as the presenter, to understand my audience's learning, what the audience would like more information on in a potential future training, and also for the audience to reflect on their learning.

Professional development needs to be ongoing and teachers need to feel supported as they take their next steps towards improving learning experiences for ELLs. It is my hope that this project is the first step in a series of trainings that will support classroom teachers.

Rationale

I am using Google Slides because my school district, like many others, have Google-based email addresses, which facilitates sharing information within Google applications. My school district has transitioned to exclusively using Google products and all staff have been extensively trained in using Google. Teachers will be well-versed in using Google Forms and Google Slides and will effortlessly navigate the information after the training. Google Slides is an online application that can be posted, much like a website link can be shared. Therefore, once public, anyone can have access to the professional development and view it in the same organized, sequential manner that it was presented in. This presentation could easily be recreated using other platforms, such as PowerPoint.

Summary

This professional development is intended to strengthen teacher understanding of teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom, with the hope that an understanding will ultimately improve teacher attitudes, thus, enhance student learning. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2017) as of the 2014-2015 school year, we have 4.6 million ELL students in public schools who deserve a quality education taught by teachers who are prepared to teach them. However, less than one third of our nation's classroom teachers are formally trained to meet the specific linguistic and academic needs of our ELLs (Dekutoski, 2011). Professional development for classroom teachers teaching ELLs is vital and

time sensitive as our ELL population is growing (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Teachers feel inadequate, desire more training, but feel a constraint for time when it comes to meeting the needs of our ELLs (Dekutoski, 2011; Griffin, 2008; Wilken, 2015). High-quality, on-going professional development will help to fill the void in our mainstream classrooms.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Introduction

The project following this research will address the needs of mainstream teachers to more effectively teach English Language Learners in the mainstream classroom. The primary topic being investigated is the attitudes of mainstream teachers towards ELLs, specifically, do mainstream teacher attitudes towards English Language Learners affect student learning and how?

Chapter Four begins by discussing the learning process that I went through while developing this capstone project as a researcher, writer, and learner. I will also highlight the research and articles that played a vital role in developing this capstone projects. Those research studies and articles helped me to determine what I needed to do with my new information; develop professional development. They laid the groundwork of my understanding of what mainstream teachers need and how to help. I will also discuss the limitations and implications in this capstone project. I created this professional development based on research, and I am aware that I may not meet the needs of all mainstream teachers. However, training should be ongoing in order to be effective. This leads to the fact that my research and professional development training is not complete. I will also discuss related projects and further research I feel is

necessary in the area of teacher attitudes towards ELL students. In closing, I will discuss how I plan to communicate my results and how this capstone project will benefit the profession.

Reflection

The learning process. I started this process thinking that I knew quite a bit about how classroom teachers felt about ELLs. As I read, I learned that there are so many more factors behind classroom teacher practices and opinions than I ever considered, my own included. I was passionate about the subject I wanted to research, teacher attitudes towards ELLs, but it was the research process that really opened my eyes to wanting to share my findings with other teachers through a professional development.This capstone process has forced me to position myself in different perspectives throughout my research and writing; as an ELL student, classroom teacher, ELL teacher, and administrator. As I read through thousands of pages of studies, research-based strategies, and personal testimonies, it allowed me to analyze my own practices in teaching and how it is affecting my students and co-workers. While researching and writing my literature review, I recognized a need to share this invaluable information purely to empower classroom teachers and ultimately create better learning experiences for ELL students.

Although I have researched for papers before, it has never been to the extent or depth that I have in this project. This was a humbling experience for me, as well. Extensive research on this topic has helped me form a well-rounded understanding of classroom teacher attitudes towards ELLs. I realized I was truly not understanding our classroom teachers, as I had significantly more training and experience in working with ELLs than any other classroom teacher at my school, as a former ELL teacher. This capstone process has allowed me to develop empathy for our classroom teachers.

Revisiting the literature review. The articles that proved to be the most important for my literature review were all developed from Reeves (2006) study of classroom teacher attitudes towards ELLs. Griffin (2008) and Wilken (2015) both utilized Reeves' framework to conduct similar studies. Although the data yielded from each study was not necessarily consistent from researcher to researcher, all studies proved a need for professional development for classroom teachers to better understand our ELLs and their specific needs. This research reaffirmed my personal concerns within my own school setting and reinforced my decision to develop a professional development as a project following the research.

In addition, as I was analyzing the theories and research-based strategies, I reread the work of linguists Jim Cummins and Stephen Krashen in their research studies. Although I have read this research and was familiar with the theories because of my Hamline coursework and work in the ELL classroom, my new understanding of mainstream classroom teacher attitudes put a new meaning to those theories and strategies. I was also able to understand those theories from a mainstream classroom teacher's perspective and understand that, in general, mainstream teachers may have very little exposure to theories associated primarily with second language learning. Also, this research helped guide my project. I summarized both Cummins' and Krashen's theories and added applicable strategies and resources for mainstream classroom teachers.

I switched districts this past year and also transitioned back into the mainstream classroom in my new district. The research that I read reaffirmed my initial thoughts about the classroom teachers in my current district; they do not understand ELLs and it affects their attitudes towards ELLs. A new connection I made to that research was the underlying factors

regarding why teachers have developed those attitudes. When I made that realization, I was much better able to empathize with our classroom teachers and start developing a project that would benefit teachers and ultimately students in a positive way.

Implications and limitations of this project. Possible implications of this project may be that it is not received well by my staff. I did not conduct a survey before developing the professional development that would help guide what teachers want to know. This information may not be what they think they want to know about their ELLs. I based this professional development off of what research says mainstream teachers need to know. Also, I understand that development needs to be ongoing in order for it to be effective. I do not have more professional development created yet. The outcome of this first round will determine whether or not I am allowed to present or develop further training. A limitation of this project is time. I understand that my project is not all-encompassing. I only have a limited time to present this information and I had to leave out information from the literature review that I would have liked to share with classroom teachers. My professional development is an optional session of many sessions offered during a training day. I cannot control how many people receive this information on the day I present. However, I plan to share it with my district's staff after the training. An implication of sharing it is how teachers interpret the information. I will not be there to discuss and explain anything. I have high hopes that my administration allows me to present to my whole staff this training or a different professional development based on the same information in the near future, so all teachers are receiving the same message.

Related projects and research in the future. As stated, I am hopeful that I am allowed to present this research to my whole staff. I am also hopeful that this professional development is

received well and I am asked to create a follow-up training. I would recommend that this training be split into an elementary and a high school training, if possible. Elementary teachers and high school teachers have different needs, and I want to provide specific resources for our teachers to use. In regards to research, primary and secondary data should be split. From my own personal experiences, I believe those attitudes vary and a researcher might find trends based on student age-level. It would also be a way to show more conclusive evidence of what professional development teachers need and desire.

Further research is necessary in regards to different language backgrounds. Language backgrounds was addressed in the research studies I reviewed, but there were a variety of language backgrounds in those studies. Many rural school districts have one or two main language backgrounds. A study using districts with only one or two language backgrounds would provide another dimension of understanding teacher attitudes. Also, more research is necessary regarding how teachers' attitudes and expectations of ELLs affects student performance, as assessed with standardized testing data. Once proven that a strong correlation exists, I believe more districts would act on developing teacher attitudes towards ELLs. Lastly, further research regarding cultural competence within our society would further people's understanding and possibly acceptance of other people's cultural, linguistic, and social practices. This is necessary not only within the educational system, but all of society.

Summary

Communicating results. I will be giving a pre-test and post-test in this professional development. From my post-test I hope to understand what teachers have taken away from the professional development and what they are still interested in learning. These results will

hopefully be the evidence I need to prove to my building administrators that further professional development is necessary and desired.

Benefit to the profession. This project is a simple example of how one professional can share their knowledge to benefit many. This project will be shared with a consortium of seven school districts to help mainstream teachers better understand our ELL population and have more confidence in working with them. The link to this professional development is available for viewing to anyone. It is my hope that this project is received well and will be just the beginning of a series of professional development trainings for teachers in our consortium. In addition, I hope that this training is viewed by teachers in other areas and it initiates a conversation of attitudes towards ELLs in their classrooms. Teachers need to have the knowledge and feel the empowerment and confidence before they can fully embrace their ELLs. This training will be the beginning of knowledge, empowerment, and confidence for mainstream teachers.

In final conclusion. My learnings from the literature review helped me to more clearly see a classroom of diverse learners through the perspective of a classroom teacher who has had no specific ELL training learning. My literature review guided the development of my project: a quality professional training for classroom teachers. It is my sincere hope that this training is well-received and I am asked to provide further professional development to help our staff better understand that our attitudes towards ELLs affect student learning and we have full control of creating a better learning experience for all learners in our classrooms.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

The resources listed on this page are found in the project that follows this capstone paper.

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Appendix A

The following questions will appear on the Google Form pre-test.

1. How many years have you taught?
2. What is the most challenging part of teaching ELLs?
    a. Not understanding them when they talk
    b. They can't do their work without help
    c. They don't complete their work
    d. No matter how many times I teach something, they don't seem to get it
    e. I don’t understand/agree with their culture
    f. Something else? Please share…
3. Choose the consideration that is the MOST important when working with ELLs:
    a. Understanding ELL inclusion
    b. Differentiating or modifying for my ELLs
    c. Understanding my ELLs language backgrounds
    d. Understanding how a student learns English
4. Explain what you enjoy most about having ELLs in your classroom.

Appendix B

The following questions will appear on the Google Form post-test.

1. Reflect on your own attitude towards teaching and how life's challenges may affect this attitude and your students' learning. Think of your ELLs and put yourself in their seat. How do you think they perceive your attitude towards them?
2. Write about one thing you learned today or one new resource that you want to try in your own classroom.
3. Please fill in these sentence frames regarding teaching ELLs.

    I am still confused about _____.

    I disagree with _____.

    I want more training or information about _____.