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ORAL ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: HOW IT SUPPORTS EDUCATIONAL EQUITY
FOR ELS IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM – A PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR MAINSTREAM TEACHERS OF ELS

By

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A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in English as a Second Language.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction.....	5
Introduction	6
Personal Connection.....	6
Background of researcher.....	6
Approaching planning.....	7
Recognizing areas of concern.....	8
Connection to oral language development.....	9
Teacher misconceptions regarding English language learning	10
Research focus.....	13
Equity Considerations	14
Summary.....	16
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review	19
Introduction.....	19
Guiding Questions.....	19
Chapter Overview.....	20
Oral Academic Discourse.....	21
Definition.....	21
Supporting language and content development.....	22
New Approaches to Professional Development.....	25
Limitations to strategy-focused professional development.....	26
Background knowledge regarding second language acquisition.....	27
Oral language development.....	28

Connection to second language acquisition.....	29
Differences between social and academic language.....	29
Academic language.....	30
Educational Equity Considerations	32
Definition of equity.....	33
Teacher misconceptions and beliefs.....	33
Tracking practices	36
Long-Term English Learners (LTELS)	37
Professional Development Implications.....	38
Strategies and background on second language acquisition.....	39
Addressing beliefs and misconceptions.....	39
Collaborative discourse.....	39
Socio-constructivism.....	41
Strategies for classroom implementation.....	43
Conclusions.....	44
Chapter Summary.....	46
CHAPTER THREE: Project Description.....	46
Introduction.....	46
Context.....	46
Setting.....	46
Observed needs	47
Project	48
Project goals	48

Presentation structure	49
Learning objectives.....	49
Key Topics	49
Rationale.....	51
Assessment regarding effectiveness of project.....	53
Summary.....	54
CHAPTER FOUR: Project Reflection.....	56
Overview.....	56
Reflection on the Capstone Learning Process.....	56
Revisiting the Literature Review	57
Implications and Limitations	58
Implications.....	58
Limitations.....	59
Communicating results and benefits to profession	59
Summary	60
REFERENCES.....	62
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms.....	70
Appendix B: Professional Development Pre- assessment	73
Appendix C: Professional Development Post- assessment	75
Appendix D: Talk Moves	79
Appendix E: Oral Academic Discourse Continuum	80
Appendix F: True/ False Statements	83

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

English language learners (ELs) are one of America's fastest growing student groups. In Minnesota the number of ELs has increased over 300% in the past 20 years alone (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015). ELs, who come from a variety of home cultures and backgrounds, have the added challenge of learning language and content simultaneously. As the number of ELs grows, teachers of these students will need to be increasingly prepared to meet both the content and language demands of these learners, as well as knowledgeable about how to incorporate effective strategies for oral language development into their lessons.

Through my own personal experience as an English Language Development teacher, as well as shown through current research (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Ross, 2014; Villegas, 2018), mainstream teachers often find themselves inadequately prepared to effectively support EL students' language and content needs within their content classrooms. This area of growth for teachers can be due to a number of factors which will be discussed in this chapter. Providing professional development for mainstream elementary educators that addresses and clarifies EL students' distinct learning needs is a crucial component in the equitable education of EL students. Further research is needed on this topic in order to provide ELs with equal opportunities for access to learning and promote positive student outcomes. This paper seeks to address the following research question: *how can oral academic*

discourse be included into mainstream classrooms to address issues of educational equity for ELs? The rest of this chapter explores my personal connection to the research question, outlines key terms and prefaces issues of educational equity in the instruction of ELs.

Personal Connection

Background of Researcher. As an English Language Development teacher, my role is to support EL students' language learning development and needs. Other educators outside my field are not always certain what the term *language* entails or what exactly I do to support students. Mainstream teachers may also not recognize their role within the language learning process of EL students in their content classrooms. Misconceptions regarding the role of language-focused instruction, along with perceived misunderstandings regarding the need for language support within the co-taught content classroom are ultimately what led me to this area of research. This led me to wonder how mainstream teachers can be best prepared to support EL content and language learning across a range of content areas.

In ideal co-teaching situations, I work closely with my general elementary education teaching partners with the ultimate goal of planning purposeful instruction to effectively address both language and content needs. This type of purposeful planning requires working collaboratively to identify connections between the content concepts and the language needed to successfully perform grade-level tasks within the content area of focus. During this process, I rely on my co-teacher and their content knowledge background to support me when planning for language instruction. I draw on their knowledge of the content area to elicit not only the language that students are expected to

produce, but also the language students need in order to be an active participant in content-based discussion and discourse.

In my employment at an urban elementary school in the Midwest, I was tasked with co-teaching and supporting the language development needs in the area of mathematics for ELs in intermediate elementary grades for the past two years. This was a growth experience for both me and my co-teachers, serving as the impetus for my research and professional development project focus.

Approaching Planning. When I first learned that I would be co-teaching mathematics to support ELs in several intermediate elementary classrooms, I quickly recognized that this would be an area of growth for me. When approaching instruction, I wondered how my own learning experience as an elementary student would impact my current teaching style and beliefs.

Reflecting on my own learning experiences as a child, I recognized several key elements that influenced my initial approach to teaching in the area of mathematics. While I was able to complete the procedures required for mathematical problem-solving and was academically successful, I did not have a deep-level knowledge of math concepts and had not been expected to verbally explain the interconnection of relationships at a mastery level. Once the right answer had been provided in class, the teacher moved on. Additionally, I do not recall an emphasis on the explicit teaching, or a metacognitive awareness, of the academic language of mathematics beyond specific academic terminology. My recollections of my own learning experiences in a traditional mathematics classroom consisted of procedural tasks that included mathematics drills and repetition of basic facts with a limited need for language use. At that time, I did not

recognize the nuances within the language of mathematics and was unaware that an academic language existed within the area of mathematics.

Recognizing my own need for growth in teaching the language of mathematics, I began by drawing on my own instruction as a child as a starting point, while simultaneously seeking out information regarding current best practice in mathematics and language instruction. Despite my concerns that this approach failed to address the deeper conceptual language of the content, I began by focusing on the language of mathematical procedures, key vocabulary terms, and supporting students with word problems. Despite my concerns, I found that this approach was still considered acceptable in the eyes of my co-teaching partners and aligned with their expectations of perceived EL language needs.

Recognizing Areas of Concern. While this approach was seen as appropriate in the eyes of my co-teaching partners, I observed my EL students struggling to demonstrate content knowledge. I was concerned that pedagogical practices had not evolved significantly since my own experiences as a student and I wondered if the language elicited by the mainstream teachers was sufficient to effectively address my EL students' content-based language needs.

Preparing for lessons and units, I would review the content material and pull out applicable language structures at the word- and sentence-level [see Appendix A for definitions of these terms]. Through co-planning discussions, I expressed my desire to incorporate opportunities for oral practice and shared problem-solving where students had an opportunity to express their thinking. My ultimate goal was to team-teach with my elementary classroom teachers. Doing so would allow us to collaboratively build on our

shared teaching knowledge to scaffold content learning around key mathematical concepts and provide high-level linguistic support through student-centered approaches.

Despite my enthusiasm, some teachers expressed hesitancy in ‘giving up control’ of their classrooms to focus on collaborative peer speaking activities and cited concerns with taking time away from direct instruction. The preferred teaching style often emphasized a traditional teacher-centered approach which emphasized procedural tasks and the memorization of facts. While I recognized that these are vital components in mathematics content learning, this teaching approach was not adequately preparing my EL students to communicate their thinking. Through this approach, EL students did not have access to participate in high-level classroom discussions, nor were they able to share and refine their thinking regarding mathematical concepts and ideas.

Connection to Oral Language Development. It appeared that my elementary teaching colleagues did not recognize or were unaware of the crucial role oral language development plays in the acquisition of a second language or how it supports the development of academic language and academic concepts. Through a desire to expand my knowledge base in teaching practices, I explored the benefits of including oral academic discourse, which is centered around the exchange of ideas within academic learning. Drawing from the work of Fisher, Fry and Rothenberg (2008), Graff and Birkenstein (2006), and Zwiers & Soto (2017), *oral academic discourse* in this paper is defined as a connected academic conversation where individuals are verbally expressing their thoughts, beliefs and justifications regarding content-area concepts in order to negotiate meaning and refine new understandings. While I had not yet explored opportunities for how to incorporate these practices into instruction, I could see the

benefits this approach could offer to both ELs and other students from diverse backgrounds.

Teacher Misconceptions Regarding EL Learning. Facing a reluctance on the part of several colleagues to shift the classroom culture and preferred teacher-centered approach, my concerns regarding students' academic progress and retention of information increased. I observed a range of students, both EL and non-EL, struggling to keep up. As the year continued, I noted that students were not having sufficient time to discuss their thinking or use the linguistic structures and vocabulary they were learning in context. As a result, students were not fully solidifying concepts in their brain before having to move on. My concern continued to increase as we moved onto new units of study during the course of the year and attempted to build on previous knowledge and concepts. I realized that a number of students were not retaining a deep conceptual knowledge of mathematical relationships to draw from as we advanced through the curriculum. I also noted that many struggled with recalling isolated vocabulary terms and sentence frames that we had studied earlier in the year. Moreover, many students did not have ample opportunities to apply their higher-level cognitive skills during class time, nor were they provided with opportunities to fully access the language required to discuss and explain their mathematical thinking in connected classroom discussions.

Ultimately, while some of my co-teachers were open and willing, I found that most were unsure how to support ELs in simultaneous language and content development within their classrooms. Based on my observations of student needs, my goals were to work towards a more student-centered instructional approach and seek a deeper knowledge base of mathematics in order to more effectively support student language

needs in this area. Through coordination with teachers, I attempted to incorporate more time for students to use the language frames we were learning in small groups. I also asked my elementary co-teachers for clarification of the concepts students would be expected to describe and explain, and asked them to detail what students were expected to say when performing content-specific tasks.

As I asked questions and further explored areas within mathematics for language use with mainstream teachers, I observed the need to raise awareness regarding oral language development practices to support EL language needs. I also saw that the academic language structures within mathematics were often not recognized beyond content vocabulary or when solving word problems. I noted that teachers made well-intentioned attempts to reduce the language used through simplified written or oral elements and frequently accepted one-word answers. These attempts by teachers to ease the linguistic load for EL students, however, were, in fact, lowering their expectations of what students could do and reduced students' exposure to challenging, grade-level content and language. This practice of reduced exposure raised concerns regarding educational equity for these EL students, which is discussed in further detail in the following section of this chapter.

Following my observations, I spoke with my co-teachers in an attempt to address students' conceptual and language-based needs. I encountered resistance from a few and comments that demonstrated a lack of understanding regarding language learning processes. Misconceptions regarding best practice models for scaffolding academic, content-based instruction for ELs emerged, and at times I encountered comments that portrayed a negative perception of ELs' cognitive capabilities. When discussing my

experiences with other EL colleagues, my EL counterparts shared that they had had similar experiences with mainstream teachers in their own settings. This helped me recognize that these types of scenarios were perhaps more common than I originally anticipated. Through my co-teaching experiences and my conversations with other educators, I began to realize that beyond instructional practices, and perhaps at the heart of teachers' teaching styles are the beliefs they hold about learning. This led me to consider the potential impact teacher beliefs, attitudes and misconceptions regarding language development could have on equitable teaching practices for ELs.

Through further discussion with my mainstream colleagues, I found that, like me, many approached their teaching as they themselves were taught through a traditional mathematics instructional approach. This approach lacked both an awareness of and an explicit emphasis on language usage in this setting. Classroom practices were teacher-centered with students in a more passive role. Drawing on my knowledge of second language acquisition and research from sociocultural theory (Collier, 1995; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Krashen, 1985; Long, 1981; Swain, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017), I recognized that this classroom model did not allow adequate time for students to discuss and share their thinking with others. I knew that a key component in the language acquisition process is the development of oral language (Colliers, 1995). Providing discussion opportunities for students using oral academic discourse practices allows students to utilize the language in order to strengthen and build their content understanding through explaining their thinking and clarifying ideas (Bresser, Melanese & Spar, 2009; Chapin & O'Connor, 2007; Coggins, Kravin, Coates, & Carroll, 2007; Moschokovich, 2013; William & Soccoro-Herrera, 2007;

Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017). The traditional mathematics instructional approach being used was not conducive to fostering oral language development or collaborative discourse, as the focus is teacher-centered and emphasizes the recall of facts and procedures (Moschkovich, 2013). Drawing on research (Bresser et al., 2009; Chapin & O'Connor, 2007; Coggins et al., 2007; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2005; Moschokovich, 2013; William & Soccoro-Herrera, 2007; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017), I knew that in order for my student to benefit, they needed to be given opportunities to talk and discuss their thinking with their peers.

I recognized that my mainstream colleagues needed to further understand the role of language and the importance of oral academic discourse when working with ELs in the content area classrooms. Given this area of need, I sought ways oral academic discourse strategies could be incorporated into instruction to support students' language and content development. These experiences were the impetus of my research, which will be discussed in the following section. The importance of this research topic is presented along with the connection to educational equity for ELs.

Research Focus. My personal experiences co-teaching in mainstream content classrooms served as the impetus for this research. The purpose of this research is to improve elementary education teachers' understanding of the importance of providing opportunities for oral academic discourse in their classrooms and identify research-based strategies that have been shown to effectively support the academic language needs of ELs in content-areas classrooms. Goals for my research included exploring the benefits of oral academic discourse, variables that impact the inclusion of these strategies within a

mainstream classroom and educational equity considerations surrounding instructional practices with ELs.

The next section explores issues of educational equity within the education and instructional practices of teachers who work with ELs. The important role teachers play in the long-term educational outcomes of EL students is highlighted.

Educational Equity Considerations

Equity in the education of ELs and other marginalized populations is an important issue in our current educational system; yet the ways in which inequities are perpetuated for these populations and the long-term effects educational approaches can have on these students often go unrecognized by educators (Rousseau Anderson, 2007). The basic tenet of educational equity is to provide the resources and knowledge necessary for underprivileged students to gain equal access to future educational and professional opportunities (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Equity issues are at the forefront of educating and working with ELs as students' access to educational opportunities can be heavily influenced by teacher beliefs, attitudes and misconceptions regarding ELs (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Villegas, 2018). These beliefs and attitudes guide individual teacher practice. Deficit-based beliefs regarding student capabilities and backgrounds as well as misconceptions regarding second language acquisition can negatively impact students' growth and unintentionally serve to further marginalize these students (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Molle, 2013; Villegas, 2018).

There are a number of common teacher misconceptions that can lead to issues of equity. A short list is provided below, while each of the following will be explored

further in the following chapter. As I learned through my own co-teaching experiences, one common teacher misconception includes a deficit-based approach based on a belief that EL students ‘can’t do it’ at the expected level, effectively equating cognitive aptitude with the students’ language proficiency in English (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Molle, 2013; Villegas, 2018). Another common misconception results in a reduction in the amount of language and the complexity of grade-level content in an effort to ease the difficulty or cognitive load for students (Harper & de Jong, 2004). This modification, in fact, decreases a student’s opportunity to interact with higher-level cognitive tasks, grade-level content and classroom discourse (Harper & de Jong, 2004). Reducing the complexity of higher-level content for ELs is a disservice as students who do not have access to rigorous instruction and high-level language input will fall farther and farther behind, making it more difficult to catch up to their grade-level native-English-speaking peers (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Rosseau Anderson, 2007). Educational opportunities provided in the elementary years serve to build a foundation for future educational outcomes (Zwiers & Soto, 2017). The absence of language-focused instruction and well-intentioned but ineffective practices to support language-learning at the upper-elementary levels are contributors to the development of long-term ELs (LTELs) (Hanover Research, 2017; Oakes, 2005) which are discussed further in Chapter Two.

Given the role that misconceptions can play in the instructional practices of mainstream teachers and the impact these practices can have on future educational outcomes for students, additional professional development opportunities that address these misconceptions and promote equitable instruction for ELs are needed (de Jong & Harper, 2005; de Jong, Harper & Coady, 2013; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Oakes,

2005). Drawing awareness to educational equity is an important component within effective professional development delivery for mainstream teachers. This issue will be explored in further detail in the following chapter.

Summary

In this chapter, I share my experience supporting EL students' language development needs in a co-taught mainstream classroom, my own learning experience as a child and the impact these experiences have on my instructional practices, as well as my experience collaborating with general elementary education teachers and the subsequent challenges encountered. These experiences have been the foundation of my research and the stimulus for developing a professional development workshop for mainstream elementary teachers of ELs. My research seeks to address the following question: *how can oral academic discourse be included in mainstream classrooms to address issues of educational equity for ELs?*

Following my recognition that EL learning needs were not being adequately addressed through traditional teaching models, I wondered about the ways that professional development could address equitable teaching practices of mainstream teachers of ELs. This paper includes the results of my research.

The purpose of this paper is to focus on areas of growth for effectively supporting EL student language and content learning within the mainstream classroom. My project seeks to accomplish three goals in the professional development of elementary education teachers:

1. provide background information to mainstream teachers on the importance of academic language and oral language development for second language learners
2. provide strategies to support oral academic discourse practices in mainstream classrooms
3. bring awareness to issues of inequity for ELs.

Understanding the important role second language acquisition plays when working with ELs will allow mainstream educators to purposefully plan their instruction to more effectively address students' language and content needs. The professional development workshop emphasizes the importance of oral academic discourse and presents research-based practices that can be implemented in mainstream content-areas classrooms to support the equitable instruction of ELs.

Chapter Two reviews relevant research regarding oral academic discourse practices and issues of educational equity within the instruction of ELs. Key terms are outlined and background is provided on the important role oral language development and academic language play in the second language acquisition process. Areas of growth for mainstream educators within current professional development approaches are explored, including the long-term impact that teachers' misconceptions, attitudes, beliefs and practices can have on EL student outcomes. Research-based strategies to incorporate oral academic discourse into a mainstream classroom are presented, together with a discussion of the professional development project developed based on the conclusions reached in this paper.

Chapter Three outlines details of the research project developed from the findings of this paper. The project seeks to empower mainstream elementary educators in supporting ELs' academic language and content development through the use of research-based, oral academic discourse strategies. The chapter provides context for project, an outline of learning objectives and key topics, followed by a rationale for the project and summary.

Chapter 4 provides an overall reflection of the project in its entirety. The chapter revisits the research question: *how can oral academic discourse be included into mainstream classrooms to address issues of educational equity for ELs?* Reflections from the project are provided. Limitations are discussed, as well as how the project may influence future research regarding professional development of mainstream teachers of ELs within the field of education.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The goal of this research is to examine best practices regarding the inclusion of oral academic discourse within the mainstream classroom, explore issues of educational equity, as well as identify variables that may impact the inclusion of these strategies for ELs within a mainstream classroom. Identifying areas of need within current professional development models for elementary education teachers who work with ELs will inform a professional development workshop based on the conclusions reached in this paper.

In this chapter, a summary of relevant research is presented as it relates to the equitable education of ELs, along with an identification and discussion of the need for further research regarding the professional development of mainstream teachers in the instruction of ELs.

Guiding Questions

The research question addressed by this capstone project is: *how can oral academic discourse be included into mainstream classrooms to address issues of educational equity for ELs?* Drawing on the research from the field, this chapter will explore key topics in promoting educational equity for ELs through the use of oral academic discourse practices. The roles oral language development and academic language play within the second language acquisition process are presented, followed by

limitations within current professional development models for mainstream teachers who work with ELs. Research-based practices that have shown academic gains for ELs and other marginalized students are also provided. The professional development project following this research addresses areas of growth for mainstream elementary education teachers regarding oral academic discourse strategies that can be implemented in a mainstream classroom.

Chapter Overview

With the increase of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, mainstream teachers need to be increasingly prepared to address a range of needs within mainstream classrooms. However, teacher training programs and traditional professional development approaches are not adequately addressing or preparing teachers to simultaneously support the language and content needs of ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Additionally, by not providing students with the academic language support needed to be successful within the content areas, educators are doing a disservice to these students (Roberts, 2010). This result has implications for future life opportunities for these students and ultimately, creates or sustains existing issues of inequity for ELs and other marginalized populations (Hanover Research, 2017; Oakes, 2005).

This chapter presents relevant research regarding oral academic discourse practices and issues of educational equity within the instruction of ELs. Key terms are outlined and background is provided on the important role oral language development and academic language play in the second language acquisition process. Areas of growth within current professional development approaches for educators are explored, including the long-term impacts teachers' misconceptions, attitudes, beliefs and practices can have

on EL student outcomes. Research-based strategies to incorporate oral academic discourse into a mainstream classroom are presented, together with a discussion of to the professional development project developed based on the conclusions reached in this paper.

Oral Academic Discourse

This section defines oral academic discourse and discusses how it supports ELs' simultaneous language and content development. Understanding these background elements will aid mainstream teachers in recognizing the importance of including this style of discourse within the mainstream classroom. Future sections will address each component in more depth.

Definition. *Oral academic discourse* is an abstract term; therefore, examining the discrete parts of this term will be helpful in developing a deeper understanding of its meaning.

Discourse has a wide range of definitions; however, within the context of this term, discourse is meant to express the use of language for purposeful, extended, back-and-forth communication used to create and clarify knowledge (Zwiers & Soto, 2017). Language is not merely used as a tool for the transmission and reception of static ideas and knowledge but involves “a dynamic and evolving mix of resources and flexible tools used to communicate, build and choose ideas at any given moment,” (Zwiers & Soto, 2017, p. 12). Graff and Birkenstein (2006) use the term discourse as the “entering a conversation of ideas” (p.ix), while Fisher, Fry and Rothenberg (2008) describe discourse as reasoning through conversation, argument or explanation. Therefore, discourse is a means of communication to clarify, elaborate and refine ideas.

Analyzing the word *oral*, this type of communication is centered around oral expression and involves listening and speaking (Lesaux & Harris, 2015). With the inclusion of the term *academic*, the focus then narrows to the more formalized vocabulary, abstract concepts and language functions used in content-specific areas, such as science, mathematics, history and language arts.

Oral academic discourse in this paper is defined as a connected academic conversation where individuals are verbally expressing their thoughts, beliefs and justifications regarding content-area concepts in order to negotiate meaning and refine new understandings. A deeper analysis of both discourse and academic language components are provided, along with specific examples, in subsequent sections of this paper.

Supporting Language and Content Development. It is important for all educators to understand the complex connection between language and content development for ELs and other marginalized groups in order to avoid perpetuating inequities within the classroom and provide students with equitable access to cognitively challenging learning across the content areas (de Jong & Harper, 2005). By shifting the lens to more student-centered approaches and engaging students in collaborative discussions, students are allowed the opportunity to share and explain their ideas with others, co-construct content understandings and provide justifications for their reasonings (Zwiers & Soto, 2017). Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, which views learning as a social process (Vygotsky, 1978), illustrates the need for ELs and other marginalized groups to be immersed in language-rich classrooms where discussion and negotiation of meaning is the norm. These students need purposeful opportunities for structured

discussion on high-level, content-based tasks. Doing so creates engagement with the material and supports the acquisition of higher-level academic language and content (Fisher et al., 2008; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017).

As oral academic discourse draws on precise knowledge, vocabulary and purposes within specific academic content areas, this can present a challenge for students learning an additional language as they must acquire language and content simultaneously (Collier, 1995). While traditional teaching models have focused more on students as individuals or a direct-instruction and teacher-centered approach, more recent models have shifted toward the social dimension of learning and collaborative learning (Rousseau Anderson, 2007). ELs, who may come from backgrounds or communities with differing communication practices or discourse styles than those valued in higher education, need explicit opportunities to practice and develop these skills (Zwiers & Soto, 2017). Classrooms that provide opportunities for learners to express their ideas, clarify their thinking and co-construct their opinions through meaningful classroom dialogue support the development of these key oral academic discourse skills (Zwiers & Soto, 2017). Oftentimes, in traditional K-12 classroom models emphasizing a teacher-centered approach, opportunities for practice and interaction amongst students of all levels within the classroom are limited (Lingard, Hayes & Mills, 2003). Research shows that in these classrooms, teachers dominate classroom talk time (Lingard et al., 2003).

As an educator, it is important to remember that “telling does not equate to learning” (Fisher et al., 2008, p. 9) and simple exposure to a new word or concept or immersion in an English-speaking classroom will not ensure student mastery. Students need to have multiple opportunities to hear and use content-specific language in

meaningful contexts, which in turn aids the development of content understanding (Coggins et al., 2007). Additionally, within traditional models, classroom talk often does not center on the clarification or elaboration of ideas, but instead is largely used for monitoring the recall of facts and definitions (Fisher et al., 2008). The amount of purposeful planning often needed to ensure that rich-academic language and critical thinking skills are present and thoughtfully incorporated into instruction may go unrecognized by mainstream teachers. Surface-level planning alone, such as simply having students turn to a partner and share, will not suffice to address EL's oral academic language needs. While teachers may make well-intentioned attempts to include general opportunities for student talk time within the classroom, the cognitive level of tasks, quality of discussion and amount of time on-task can vary greatly (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Lingard et al., 2003; Arreaga-Mayor & Perfomo-Rivera, 1996). A study by Arreaga-Mayer and Perfomo-Rivera (1996) found that ELs spent only four percent of their day engaged in school talk and two percent of their day discussing the content focus. Ineffective practices that contribute to situations such as these have profound implications on the content learning and absorption, rate of language acquisition and future life opportunities for these students (Hanover Research, 2017; Suarez-Oroczo, Suarez-Oroczo & Todorova, 2008).

New approaches to professional development for mainstream educators of ELs are explored in the following section, including the potential long-term impacts teacher misconceptions, attitudes and beliefs can have on EL student outcomes. Background information is provided regarding second language acquisition, as well as an analysis of oral language development and academic language.

New Approaches for Professional Development

Recognizing the need for addressing both language and content simultaneously within classroom instruction is only one half of the professional development equation. Other professional development considerations exist, including addressing misconceptions about the process of language acquisition for ELs, as well as the deeply-ingrained beliefs and attitudes teachers hold regarding these students and their families (Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

Current teacher training programs are not providing sufficient preparation for mainstream teachers to implement simultaneous language and content development within their classrooms (Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Molle, 2013; Villegas, Saizdelamora, Martin & Mills, 2018). Therefore, educators are entering the teaching profession without a strong knowledge base for supporting the distinct learning needs of ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). With current professional development approaches not effectively addressing these gaps in knowledge, new approaches for professional development need to be explored in order to address these issues.

While even seasoned educators may exhibit an interest in learning instructional strategies for incorporating oral academic discourse in their classrooms during professional development sessions, a lack of foundational information regarding second language acquisition and a deeper level of understanding regarding factors affecting ELs language and content development can hinder well-intentioned efforts (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; de Jong & Harper, 2005; de Jong, Harper, & Coady 2013). Research has shown that teacher attitudes, beliefs and misconceptions can play a large role in the

instructional inequities experienced by ELs (Harper & de Jong, 2005; Ross, 2014; Villegas, 2018).

The beliefs that teachers hold about students from marginalized groups often impede their effectiveness with these students (Zwiers & Soto, 2017). According to Karabenick and Clemens Noda (2004), teacher attitudes towards educating ELs are an important component in the professional development of mainstream teachers. “Attitudes are important because they affect teachers’ motivation to engage with their students, which can, in turn, translate to higher student motivation and performance,” (Karabenick & Noda, 2004, p.56). In addition, beliefs about marginalized groups can impact a teacher’s receptivity to professional development efforts toward instructional practices that are directed toward those student groups’ success (Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Molle, 2013). While traditional professional development models may emphasize strategies that can be incorporated to support ELs, teacher attitudes and beliefs can be pervasive and inhibit effective long-term changes to teaching practices (Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Villegas, 2018). Therefore, a reframing of current professional development approaches for mainstream teachers of ELs is needed. Further information regarding teacher beliefs is provided in the following section.

Limitations to Strategy-focused Professional Development. Traditional professional development for mainstream teachers of ELs often focuses on instructional strategies for supporting ELs’ content and language development (Molle, 2013). Research-based strategies and techniques can provide mainstream teachers with the tools to scaffold student learning; however, this strategies-only approach can actually limit the effectiveness of these practices in the long term (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Molle, 2013).

The benefits of using only a strategies-focused approach to professional development are limited if teacher misconceptions and beliefs are left unchallenged (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Molle, 2013). Dispelling misconceptions regarding the abilities, backgrounds and learning needs of ELs, as well as addressing deficit-based beliefs and attitudes of mainstream teachers are crucial components in promoting the effectiveness of any instructional strategies presented.

A number of prevalent misconceptions by teachers are related to the process in which a learner acquires a second language (Molle, 2013), which will be discussed in the next subsection. Definitions of terms will be provided regarding second language acquisition, and connections to equity will be discussed, in order to provide background information for teachers. Having this background information is a key component in the effective implementation of instructional strategies into mainstream classrooms and further highlights the role oral academic discourse plays in providing equitable access to content knowledge for ELs and other marginalized students.

Background Knowledge Regarding Second Language Acquisition. As indicated by research (de Jong & Harper, 2005; de Jong, Harper & Coady, 2013; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Molle, 2013), background knowledge regarding the second language acquisition process is an important component in the professional development of mainstream teachers of ELs. The crucial role that language acquisition plays in the academic development of ELs is often unrecognized by mainstream teachers (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Receiving additional information regarding this complex process will aid mainstream teachers in better understanding both the process itself and the challenges ELs may face as they acquire English. This

subsection will provide an overview of the literature to provide background information on oral language development and academic language. These two aspects will be discussed under the lens of second language acquisition theory and examples will be provided on how these elements play a key role in the language and content development of ELs.

Oral language development. Oral language development is a key component in the development of literacy skills (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017). This language development process is closely associated with the domains of listening and speaking, which can precede development in the domains of reading and writing. Oral language development, as defined by Lesaux and Harris (2015) is the ability to communicate and learn through conversation and spoken interaction. Learners use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas and feelings (Lesaux & Harris, 2015).

Oral language development is an important factor within language acquisition. According to researchers (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1981; Swain, 2000), the development of language includes three vital processes: input, output, and feedback. Input is received through listening, output through speaking, and feedback is provided through the negotiation of meaning and interaction with others (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1981; Swain, 2000).

In many of today's mainstream classrooms, students, in particular ELs, have limited opportunities for interacting with peers to explain and refine their thinking. Understanding the role oral language development plays in EL learning is crucial to developing a deeper understanding of students' language development and academic

outcomes. Research indicates several ways to promote oral language development within the mainstream classroom including the use of structured academic conversations, the use of questioning techniques, and the use of discussion groups and cooperative learning (Coggins et al., 2007, p.83). Examples of these approaches will be provided later in this chapter.

Connection to second language acquisition. While some similarities do exist between first and second language acquisition, both involve complex and unique linguistic processes. First language acquisition is characterized by developmental stages and is seen as a universal process (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Second language acquisition is fundamentally different than learning a first language. Second language acquisition is often heavily influenced by an individual's first language (Collier, 1995). While second language acquisition can also occur in developmental stages, the rate at which a learner moves through those stages is highly variable and dependent on a number of factors, such as socio-cultural context, age, proficiency and literacy skills in the learner's first language, motivation, personality, learning style, and self-esteem (Collier, 1995; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Differences between social and academic language. Social language, also known as Basic Interpersonal Skills (BICS) (Cummins, 2005), focuses on social communication and vocabulary acquisition at a basic level. Social language involves language used for everyday greetings, conversations and simple requests. According to researchers, social language proficiency can take one to three years to develop (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2005). ELs often develop social language at a faster rate than academic language. While social language proficiency is beneficial for communicating and interacting on

generalized topics, academic language proficiency is of vital importance for long-term success in school (Fisher, Rothenberg & Frey, 2008; Hanover Research, 2017; Moschkovich, 2013; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Zwiers & Soto, 2017). Academic language, also known as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), includes the ability to use language and communicate effectively in academic contexts (Cummins, 2005). Research indicates that it can take ELs a minimum of five to seven years to develop academic language proficiency (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2005). A deeper analysis of academic language and its unique features are provided below.

Academic language. Academic language has specific features and contexts in which it is used. Academic language is defined as the “specialized language, both oral and written, of academic settings that facilitates communication and thinking about disciplinary content” (Nagy & Townsend, 2012, p.92). It is the language used in classroom lessons, textbooks, tests and assignments to discuss abstract ideas and concepts that includes technical vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. The acquisition and use of academic language is essential for success in U.S. schools and ultimately, future life opportunities (Fisher, Rothenberg & Frey, 2008; Hanover Research, 2017; Moschkovich, 2013; Oakes, 2005; Zwiers & Soto, 2017). When students don't master academic language, they're at greater risk for falling behind or even dropping out of school (Hanover Research, 2017).

This complex level of English language is more challenging to learn than conversational English, especially for those who are English language learners. According to Collier (1985), students who acquire a second language in the context of schooling need to develop full proficiency in all language domains. This includes the

structures and semantics of phonetics, phonology, inflectional morphology, syntax, vocabulary, discourse, and pragmatics. This proficiency requires language skills in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and metalinguistic knowledge of the language (Collier, 1985). This is an enormous task and requires the detailed support and collaboration of all mainstream teachers and language specialists. Therefore, in order to be successful within the content areas, students need explicit instruction and practice with the social norms and specialized language associated with these contexts.

World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), which provides resources for a consortium of states and publishes standards for English Language Development, breaks down the features of academic English into three levels: the word level, sentence level and discourse level (Gottlieb, Elizabeth Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2009). When examining oral or written text, these features can be analyzed to determine differences in production and mastery along the range of English proficiency. Word-level features emphasize the specificity of vocabulary usage within a given context or topic. Sentence-level features include the language forms and conventions used, as well as the types and variety of grammatical structures present. Discourse-level features refer to the linguistic complexity of the language which includes the quantity and variety of oral and written text (Gottlieb et al., 2009). As mentioned in previous sections, discourse includes expressing one's thoughts, beliefs and justifications in an organized manner in academic contexts. Sociocultural considerations, such as wait time within oral discussions, agreeing or disagreeing respectfully, using vocabulary and phrases that are appropriate to the context, or the use of transitions when writing are also factors within this language feature (Collier, 1995; Gottlieb et al., 2009). Discourse is the most complex feature

within academic English and can be challenging for EL students if they are not given the tools to be successful through explicit modeling, practice and feedback (Collier, 1995; Gottlieb et al., 2009; Zwiers & Soto, 2017). Additionally, academic discourse is highly valued and characterizes the bulk of language use in mainstream U.S. schools (Zwiers & Soto, 2017).

The following section examines issues of equity regarding teacher practices and provides an in-depth view into the long-term effects of mainstream teacher misconceptions and beliefs for EL students.

Equity Considerations

As highlighted throughout this chapter, issues of educational equity are an important consideration in the instruction of ELs in mainstream classrooms. When oral academic discourse is absent in mainstream classrooms, a number of educational equity concerns arise. Emphasizing an instructional-strategies-only approach in the professional development of mainstream teachers who work with ELs does not effectively address concerns regarding long-term equitable outcomes for these students. Without a sufficient background in second language acquisition or oral and academic language development, mainstream teachers may not fully grasp the important roles that these processes can play in the mainstream classroom. Furthermore, failing to address teachers' own beliefs, attitudes or misconceptions and the ways in which these mindsets can influence instructional practices in the classroom serve to diminish the effectiveness of the instructional strategies employed for the very populations that these strategies are seeking to support (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). These considerations will be discussed in more detail in the following subsection.

Definition of equity. Equity in education means "providing underserved students extra experiences, resources, knowledge, skills and language so they may gain equal access to future educational and professional opportunities" (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011, p. 21). ELs, along with other marginalized groups, need structured opportunities for oral language development and explicit teaching of academic language, as many EL students come from backgrounds or communities with different language and communication styles than those utilized and valued in mainstream schools (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). In order to promote future success for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students need to be explicitly taught the communication and discourse styles valued in formal education in the United States (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). The misconceptions and deeply-held beliefs of mainstream teachers serve to impair the learning and teaching of academic language and the provision of adequate opportunities for oral language development for ELs.

Teacher misconceptions and beliefs. Teacher misconceptions and beliefs regarding student backgrounds, abilities and learning needs can negatively impact teacher methodologies and approaches to these learners (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Molle, 2013). Misconceptions can serve to limit student growth due to a lack of understanding both about individual language development needs and expectations regarding academic and linguistic development over time (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Molle, 2013). While traditional professional development models may emphasize strategies that can be used to support ELs, unchallenged negative teacher attitudes and beliefs can be pervasive and inhibit effective long-term changes to teaching practices (Molle, 2013). These attitudes and beliefs are not being effectively addressed within traditional models of professional

development and professional development that is focused on strategies alone will not effectively address the existing issues of inequity (Molle, 2013).

Mainstream teachers that possess expertise in areas such as science, social studies and mathematics are often not accustomed to viewing themselves as language teachers. By not recognizing the important role that mainstream teachers play within the academic and language learning of ELs, the language demands of the content area often go unrecognized (de Jong and Harper, 2005). As described earlier in this chapter, language is a crucial component in learning academic content. Not taking this important element into account within instruction can directly impact both the language and content development of students. As demonstrated by research (Darling-Hammond, 1997; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Molle, 2013; Oakes, 2005), beliefs such as those listed previously, when coupled with the various misconceptions of educators, can negatively impact EL student educational outcomes.

Common teacher misconceptions regarding language learning can lead to issues of inequity in both students' oral language development and their academic development in schooling (de Jong and Harper, 2005; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Molle, 2013). One common teacher misconception is the oversimplification of the similarities between first and second language acquisition (de Jong and Harper, 2005). Educators may equate the same processes in learning a second language as that of learning a first language, despite distinct differences (Collier, 1995; de Jong & Harper, 2005). Other factors, such as age, proficiency and prior schooling in a student's first language, socio-cultural context and self-esteem can potentially impact a student's rate of acquisition in a second or additional language (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Harper & de Jong, 2004).

Another misconception is the assumption that mere exposure, immersion and interaction in English is sufficient to promote EL students' language development (Harper & de Jong, 2004), under the premise that large amounts of input in English will create English-proficient students. While EL students can benefit from observing, listening and participating in discussions with their native-English speaking peers, ELs need structured opportunities for interaction and growth in language complexity, as well as specific linguistic feedback to guide their progress (de Jong and Harper, 2005; Molle, 2013).

A lack of understanding regarding students' academic language needs is another misconception that can occur. Teachers may not recognize or value the connection between oral language development and academic language development (de Jong and Harper, 2005; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Molle, 2013). While educators may attempt to promote opportunities for discussion and oral language practice within the classroom, these attempts may, in fact, be inadequate in effectively addressing students' individual linguistic development and academic language needs (de Jong and Harper, 2005).

Another misconception that teachers may bring to the classroom is equating a student's language level with their level of cognitive functioning (Harper & de Jong, 2004). While this misconception is detrimental to all learners, it is especially problematic for older students who possess the cognitive aptitude to access more complex tasks and utilize higher level critical thinking skills yet are given lower-level tasks due to their language level. Deficit-based beliefs, such as equating a student's language level to a lower level of cognitive functioning, discount the ways in which the context of learning for ELs differs from native-English speakers (de Jong & Harper, 2005). The context of

learning for ELs differs due to the cognitive load required to simultaneously attend to both the content concepts and the language being used (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

Ultimately, these groups bring different needs to the ‘learning table’, but it is important to note that ELs’ cognitive processes and thinking capabilities remain intact.

Tracking Practices. Several researchers have outlined the negative impact tracking practices in secondary education have on students placed in low-track courses, and how placement within low-track courses serve to exacerbate the inequities experienced by marginalized groups such as minority students and ELs. In *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*, Oakes (2005) outlines ways that tracking practices contribute to differences in students’ academic outcomes and preparation for future educational pursuits. Oakes’ research demonstrates that students placed in low-track courses frequently results in exposure to less rigorous content and fewer learning opportunities than high-track placement. Low-track coursework often emphasizes lower-level intellectual demands, such as memorizing, basic comprehension of facts, concepts and procedures. As a result, low-track students fall further behind. Due to the omission of content in low-track courses, students are effectively denied the opportunity to learn. This difference in opportunities to learn also impacts access to higher-level coursework and future educational endeavors. Low-track students, specifically minorities, have lower attendance rates and are more likely to drop out before high school graduation (Oakes, 2005). Differences in opportunities to learn are also documented in the work of Darling-Hammond (2002) and Suarez-Oroczo, Suarez-Oroczo, and Todorova (2008). Despite schools’ best intentions, tracking practices effectively serve to further disenfranchise students and contribute to the creation of long-term English Learners (LTELs).

Long-Term English Learners. Deficit-based thinking, when coupled with tracking students into lower-level content courses at the intermediate levels, promotes the creation of long-term English language learners (Molle, 2013; Hanover Research, 2017). LTELs are generally defined by state and federal agencies as students who are particularly at academic and linguistic risk and constitute the majority of secondary school ELs (Hanover Research, 2017). In Minnesota, LTELs are students who are classified for five or more years as ELs or Limited English Proficient (LEP) and qualify to receive EL services because they have not shown achievement of English Language Proficiency as determined by exit criteria outlined by the state (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015). This specific group of students generally struggle academically and have distinct language issues (Hanover Research, 2017). While they may be able to function socially in their first language and in English, their proficiency with academic language is weak and they may experience significant gaps in reading and writing skills (Hanover Research, 2017). Ultimately, their academic language is imprecise and insufficient for the deeper expression and communication necessary for academic success (Hanover Research, 2017). It is important to note that this may be due to teacher instructional practices and systematic inequities rather than students' innate abilities (Molle, 2013; Oakes, 2005).

A large factor in either the creation or prevention of long-term EL status is the quality, quantity and consistency of programs and instruction ELs receive (Molle, 2013). Regardless of students' language proficiency, they should be exposed to high-level cognitive content that is appropriate to their grade-level (Hanover Research, 2017; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). If a student is at a lower level of English proficiency, additional

supports or scaffolds may need to be provided in order for the student to participate in higher level academic language tasks. However, it is important to ensure that the content is not diminished due to a student's language proficiency level (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

Misconceptions and deficit-based beliefs such as these can negatively impact teacher methodologies and their approach to second language learners (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Molle, 2013). A lack of understanding regarding ELs' language development needs and expectations regarding development over time can serve to limit students' growth and impact their long-term educational outcomes (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Hanover Research, 2017; Molle, 2013).

The next section discusses ways to combat these inequities through professional development approaches that have been shown to positively influence student academic outcomes. Professional development implications are presented, along with specific strategies for promoting oral academic discourse within the classroom.

Professional Development Implications

Due to the inequities present in the current education of ELs and the gaps in traditional professional development models for mainstream teachers of ELs, an inquiry into effective practices to combat these inequities is needed. One avenue to reducing disparities in the mainstream classroom for ELs, as evidenced by research is the inclusion of oral academic discourse practices through collaborative discourse (Coggins et al., 2007; Genesse, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017).

Strategies and background on second language acquisition. One goal for effective professional development of mainstream teachers is to recognize the role that

oral language development and academic language play in EL learning. This background knowledge allows teachers to reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs surrounding ELs in order to address teachers' pre-existing beliefs and misconceptions (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Without examining the influence that these beliefs and attitudes have on individual teacher practices, existing inequities for EL students will fail to be addressed (Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

Addressing beliefs and misconceptions. As the research demonstrates (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Hanover Research, 2017; Molle, 2013), teachers' beliefs can impact equitable instructional outcomes for ELs. Therefore, it is critical to provide opportunities for reflection and clarify misconceptions in order to avoid perpetuating current instructional inequities.

Collaborative discourse. Collaborative discourse, which can include peer to peer discussion, explanation and clarification on a given topic, is a research-based strategy that can effectively incorporate oral academic discourse into mainstream classrooms (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Research on collaborative discourse within content settings has shown benefits for promoting oral language skills in English as well as positive academic implications for ELs (Coggins et al., 2007; Genesse et al., 2005; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017).

Socio-constructivism. Collaborative discourse is based within socio-constructivist theory which maintains that learning is a social process (Vygotsky, 1978). This instructional approach serves several purposes and can be beneficial to students of all backgrounds. Collaborative discourse has also been shown to be successful in promoting

positive student academic outcomes (Anderson, Chapin & O'Connor, 2011; Fisher et al., 2008; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011).

One study by Chapin and O'Connor (2007) that incorporated the use of collaborative discourse into mathematics classrooms in a low-income urban school district detailed striking achievement gains on the California Achievement test. By the end of the four year-project, students who had stayed in the program, known as Project Challenge, were reported as performing better than 90% of the national sample (Chapin & O'Connor, 2007). Teachers within the program credited the intensive use of classroom talk and collaborative discourse to support mathematics learning (Chapin & O'Connor, 2007).

Collaborative discourse supports academic achievement because it allows students to share their thinking and reasoning (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). This process of negotiating understanding allows participants to build their knowledge base around new concepts and vocabulary, further solidifying content-based understanding (Fisher et al., 2008; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). High-level communication skills such as elaborating, clarifying, synthesizing and paraphrasing are desired in higher education, employment settings and beyond (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). In addition, collaborative discourse provides opportunities for multiple exposures to academic language and concepts, as well as language use in context for students (Fisher et al., 2008; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). In this setting students have the opportunity to influence the thinking of the classroom community, as well as receive feedback on their ideas (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Ideas for implementation within mainstream classrooms are detailed below.

Strategies for classroom implementation. The research on collaborative discourse and oral academic discourse presents several instructional strategies that can be incorporated into classroom practice. Several key strategies for incorporating oral academic discourse are discussed below.

In *Academically productive talk: Supporting students' learning in Mathematics*, researchers Chapin and O'Connor (2007) highlight five discourse-based talk moves, drawn from the results of the Project Challenge study. These teacher-initiated talk moves were shown to promote productive classroom discourse and increase student-to-student interaction.

The first talk move is *revoicing*, which is used to repeat some or all of what was previously shared and can be used to clarify or highlight an idea. The second move is *repeating*. A request for repetition is given for the purpose of clarifying or focus on important ideas. The third move is *reasoning*. Students provide their justifications for either agreeing or disagreeing with a partner's statement. The fourth move is *adding on*, which involves adding on to an idea that has been presented in the discussion. The fifth move is *revising*, which provides an opportunity for oral reflection following a shift in thinking.

In *Intentional talk: How to structure and lead productive mathematical discussions* Kazemi and Hintz (2014) cite Chapin & O'Connor's talk moves while adding two of their own. The first is *wait time*, which allows time for thinking after a question has been asked or prior to a student sharing. The second is *turn-and-talk*, which allows students to share their thinking with a partner.

Using the discourse-based talk moves outlined above allow for the creation of a connected academic conversation amongst students, thus creating opportunities for oral academic discourse in the classroom. While teacher-mediated discussion may be a preliminary way to implement these strategies in the classroom, the ultimate goal is for students to be using this language to request and communicate information with their peers independently. Providing multiple opportunities for repetition, elaboration, discussion and reflection on the academic topic allows increased exposure, practice and usage of the academic language in context. Students are able to share their thinking orally, provide reasons with evidence and co-construct ideas through peer discussion. The foundation of gaining proficiency in oral academic discourse practices is to have the students using these talk moves themselves to navigate an academic conversation with their peers, in lieu of a teacher-guided discussion.

Anderson, Chapin & O'Connor (2011) provide four steps to setting up productive discourse in *Classroom Discussions: Seeing math discourse in action, grades K-6*. These steps connect directly to the talk moves presented by Chapin and O'Connor (2007) and allow for a long-term approach to shifting the role of talk within the classroom.

Step 1: Help individual students clarify and share their own thoughts

Step 2: Help students orient to the thinking of others

Step 3: Help students deepen their reasoning

Step 4: Help students engage with the reasoning of others

In addition to specific discourse-based strategies, researchers provided recommendations for creating a conducive learning environment (Chapin & O'Connor, 2007; Fisher et al., 2008; Zwiers & Soto, 2017). Effectively implementing talk moves

into the classroom requires a classroom environment that is set up to support student-based discussion. Chapin and O'Connor (2007), Fisher et al. (2008) and Zwiers and Crawford (2011) provide recommendations to create such a classroom. First, teachers should create a respectful setting where everyone's input and ideas are valued. A safe space is required in order to explore ideas and theories without judgement. The purpose of these discourse-based practices is for students to share their thinking, not necessarily as a mode to provide the correct answer. Second, teachers should provide explicit expectations for students' role in the discussions are provided. Clear expectations reduce off-task behavior and sets the expectation that everyone is participating. Third, teachers should provide metacognitive awareness of why talking is important. Having this type of discussion with students highlights the role oral language can play within cognitive development and emphasizes the value derived from oral academic discourse practices.

Conclusions

Due to the increase of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, it is essential for mainstream teachers to be prepared to address a range of needs within mainstream classrooms. However, traditional professional development approaches and teacher preparation programs are not adequately addressing or preparing teachers to simultaneously support the language and content needs of ELs. By not providing students with the academic language support needed to be successful within the content areas, educators are doing a disservice to these students and potentially holding these students back from reaching their full potential. An additional component is the impact teacher misconceptions, attitudes and beliefs can have on the long-term educational outcomes of ELs. New professional development approaches that include opportunities to challenge

teacher misconceptions and beliefs are needed in order to combat issues of equity for these students.

Research on collaborative discourse within content settings has shown benefits for promoting oral language skills in English as well as positive academic implications for ELs (Anderson et al., 2011; Chapin & O'Connor, 2007; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Instructional strategies on incorporating oral academic discourse into classroom practice can support mainstream educators in providing equitable access to ELs. Through a new approach to professional development that incorporates background knowledge on second language acquisition and strategies to develop oral academic discourse, mainstream teachers can be better equipped to address issues of educational equity for ELs in their classroom.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented relevant research regarding oral academic discourse practices and issues of educational equity within the instruction of ELs. The following question was explored: *how can oral academic discourse be included into mainstream classrooms to address issues of educational equity for ELs?* Key terms were outlined and background was provided on the important role oral language development and academic language play in the second language acquisition process. Areas of growth within current professional development approaches for educators were explored, including the long-term impacts teachers' misconceptions, attitudes, beliefs and practices can have on EL student outcomes. Research-based strategies to incorporate oral academic discourse into a mainstream classroom were presented, along with a connection to the professional development project developed based on the conclusions reached in this paper.

Chapter Three outlines details of the research project developed from the findings of this paper. The project seeks to empower mainstream elementary educators in supporting ELs' academic language and content development through the use of research-based, oral academic discourse strategies. The chapter provides context for project, an outline of learning objectives and key topics, followed by a rationale for the project and summary.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

Chapter Three draws on the research outlined in the literature review in Chapter Two regarding oral academic discourse and strategies for implementation within an intermediate elementary school setting to support English language learners (ELs). This project seeks to address the following question: *how can oral academic discourse be included into mainstream classrooms to address issues of educational equity for ELs?*

The chapter begins by providing context for the project, an outline of learning objectives and key topics, followed by the rationale. A conclusion is provided with a summary of findings.

Context

The purpose of my project is to empower mainstream elementary educators in supporting ELs' academic language and content development through the use of research-based, oral academic discourse strategies.

Setting. This project developed from my personal experiences as an English Language Development teacher working within a high-need urban elementary school setting in Minnesota. More than 80% of students in this setting qualified for free or reduced lunch and over 70% of students school-wide classified as ELs. Predominant student languages included Hmong and Karen. Teacher backgrounds were predominantly white, middle-class and teachers had on average four years or less of experience teaching.

While teachers had previous experience working with diverse student populations, the need for a deeper understanding and knowledge base regarding language development and academic discourse was observed.

Observed Needs. Through my work team-teaching with mainstream teachers in the intermediate elementary grades, specifically in the content area of mathematics, I observed a need for incorporating additional language supports and opportunities for collaborative discourse to support ELs' content and language development simultaneously. The traditional mathematics teaching approach used by many of my co-teachers did not provide adequate opportunities for students to participate in high-level classroom discussions, nor share and refine their thinking regarding mathematical concepts and ideas. Drawing on my knowledge of second language acquisition and research from sociocultural theory (Collier, 1995; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Krashen, 1985; Swain, 2000; Long, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017), I recognized that some of the approaches utilized, while well-intentioned, were in fact limiting ELs' access to high-level content and did not effectively support their language development.

Drawing on research (Bresser et al., 2009; Chapin & O'Connor, 2007; Coggins et al., 2007; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2005; Moschokovich, 2013; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017), I knew that in order for my students to benefit, they needed to be given opportunities to talk and discuss their thinking with their peers. Given this area of need, I sought ways oral academic discourse strategies could be incorporated into instruction to support students' language and content development. Providing discussion opportunities through oral academic discourse practices would allow ELs to utilize the

language in order to strengthen and build their content understanding by explaining their thinking and clarifying ideas (Bresser et al., 2009; Chapin & O'Connor, 2007; Coggins et al., 2007; Moschokovich, 2013; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017). These experiences were the impetus of my research and project.

Project

The resulting project is a 2-day professional development workshop. The workshop presents participants with a knowledge base regarding elements of academic language and specific strategies that can be incorporated into a mainstream elementary classroom to develop and enhance students' oral academic discourse.

Project Goals. This project seeks to accomplish three goals in the professional development of mainstream elementary education teachers who work with ELs:

1. Develop an understanding of the importance of academic language and oral language development for second language learners.
2. Provide strategies to support oral academic discourse practices in mainstream classrooms.
3. Bring awareness to issues of equity for ELs.

Aspects of second language acquisition theory, oral language development and equity issues are included to help mainstream teachers critically reflect on their assumptions, beliefs and misconceptions in order to further their professional development. The underlying premise is for teachers to understand why utilizing oral academic discourse in the mainstream classroom is a crucial component to support the academic success of ELs and other marginalized groups, as demonstrated by research

(Bresser et al., 2009; Chapin & O'Connor, 2007; Coggins et al., 2007; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2005; Moschokovich, 2013; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017).

Presentation Structure. I will use a Powerpoint presentation, along with the inclusion of a variety of interactive grouping and collaborative activities to model specific discourse strategies in action. A reflection booklet, which includes the corresponding resources and handouts, along with worksheets for reflection, will be provided to participants. Time for reflection, as well as opportunities for application to participants' own teaching contexts will be provided.

While my intention is to publicly share this professional development, the results of the pre-assessment (Appendix B) and post-assessment (Appendix C) would not be shared publicly. I will anonymously collect the pre-assessment data from participants via Google Form using a participant ID number in lieu of names. I will review this information prior to the workshop, in order to effectively personalize elements of the training to address participants' areas of interests, goals and self-identified areas of need. The project will be completed during a professional development training in the Fall of 2019.

Learning objectives.

1. Participants will be able to identify and justify why opportunities for communication are important to EL students' learning and academic success.
2. Participants will increase their knowledge regarding second language acquisition, in addition to recognizing the range of factors that have the potential to impact a student's rate of English language acquisition.

3. Participants will be able to challenge misconceptions regarding EL learning and instructional practices with evidence.
4. Participants will increase their knowledge regarding the elements of academic language and learn ways to incorporate opportunities for practice into their instructional settings.
5. Participants will be able to utilize research-based instructional techniques through modeling and practice that can be applied in their own classrooms.
6. Participants will self- evaluate using the Oral Academic Discourse Classroom Continuum to set individualized goals for their classroom setting.

Key Topics.*Day 1.*

1. Second language acquisition
2. Social vs. Academic language
3. Oral language development
4. Academic Language overview
5. Discourse
6. Educational Equity

Day 2.

1. Oral academic discourse continuum
2. Video Clips

3. Talk Moves
4. Self-reflection on oral academic discourse
5. Goal-setting
6. Classroom application

Rationale

As demonstrated by research, the biggest barrier to providing equitable instruction to ELs is a mainstream teacher's lack of knowledge regarding best practices to simultaneously support language and content development in the content classroom (de Jong & Harper, 2005; de Jong, Harper & Coady, 2013; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Molle, 2013). Informed by the research findings outlined in Chapter Two, the rationale behind this project is to provide resources for teachers to expand their background knowledge regarding the importance of building oral academic discourse skills for ELs. Identifying the impact that teachers' own beliefs and practices can have the long-term educational outcomes for their EL students is an additional component within this professional development project.

The delivery of this professional development workshop is centered around Malcolm Knowles' Theory of Andragogy. Andragogy, as defined by Knowles, is the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1984). Children and adults differ in their ways of learning and have different needs. Adults bring prior knowledge, skills and opinions as learners and want to be able to apply their learning in context. The main premise of this theory is that learners should be active participants through the use of an inquiry process in lieu of passively receiving content through transmission from the presenter or instructor. When planning, Knowles asserts that the process should build on

the “backgrounds, needs, interests, problems and concerns of the participants” (Knowles, 1992, p. 11). The goal is to create connections and relevancy to the participants’ own situations in order to promote retention and facilitate the application of the new information.

In addition, the project draws on Jack Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory (2000). According to Mezirow, we view the world through a web of assumptions and expectations described as a *frame of reference*. Our *frame of reference* includes our way of learning, sociocultural background, moral and ethical views, and worldview which can be absorbed from our family, community and culture. Beliefs, assumptions and expectations arise from these viewpoints and can influence an individual’s perception, how he or she interprets events, and can guide future actions. Our sense of self and our values are deeply interwoven and can be challenging to untangle. Each individual views the world differently through his or her own unique lens. Therefore, an individual’s perception of events may differ based on his or her worldview or personal experiences.

For example, two people viewing the same scenario may in fact walk away with very different ideas of what occurred and the meaning behind those events. This example candidly brings to light the basis behind many interpersonal misunderstandings. Regardless of the situation, we, as educators, have our own biases and beliefs that we bring into our teaching and our work with diverse students and families. However, in order to address issues of equity within the classroom, it is important to put aside our own personal feelings, draw awareness to practices that will support positive change and

ultimately make those changes to our practice to support the academic success of marginalized groups.

Mezirow emphasizes the need for critical reflection on our assumptions to determine whether the beliefs we have adopted through cultural assimilation align with our values and current practices. This project seeks to push mainstream educators towards critical reflection on their practices and provide tools to support educational equity within the classroom.

Assessment regarding effectiveness of the project. The effectiveness of the project will be measured through pre-assessment (Appendix B) and post-assessment surveys (Appendix C) that focus on participants' prior knowledge of second language acquisition and elements of academic language. These surveys were drawn from the work of Fenner, Segota, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (2014). Formative assessments, including self-reflection activities will be provided at various points throughout the workshop. Following the presentation, participants will identify goals and areas of needs regarding future professional development efforts towards supporting ELs' content and language development through oral academic discourse practices.

The inclusion of the Google Form as a pre-assessment tool allows for participants to anonymously display their current level of knowledge regarding second language acquisition and their understanding of the features of academic language prior to the workshop. It also allows participants to personally identify their areas of interest, goals and perceived needs regarding this area of professional development. Having this information prior to presenting will aide in the application of Knowles' Theory of

Andragogy and will allow me to personalize my presentation, thereby promoting engagement with my adult learner audience.

At the beginning of Day 1, participants will answer a set of True/False questions regarding EL students and instructional best practices. These statements serve to address common teacher misconceptions which connect to the key topics outlined in Day 1 regarding second language acquisition, academic language learning and issues of educational equity. The purpose of drawing attention to these common misconceptions is to push mainstream educators towards critical reflection on their own beliefs and practices, a key component in Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory.

Additionally, the post-assessment survey allows for participant reflection following the workshop to measure participants' growth on the learning objectives. This self-evaluation will provide feedback regarding participants' feelings of self-efficacy for implementing academic oral discourse strategies within their individual teaching contexts and allow them to identify areas where they may need further coaching and support.

Summary

The 2-day professional development workshop outlined above seeks to empower mainstream elementary educators in supporting ELs' academic language and content development through the use of research-based, oral academic discourse strategies.

The main goals for this project are to support mainstream elementary teachers in developing a deeper background knowledge regarding academic language and oral language development for second language learners, to provide strategies to support oral academic discourse practices in mainstream classrooms and to bring awareness to issues of educational equity for ELs.

The framework for this presentation is focused around Knowles' Theory of Andragogy (1984) regarding the way adults learn, emphasizing participants' inclusion in the learning process and contextualizing the material to build relevancy to their own situations. The project also draws heavily on Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (2000), in an effort to push mainstream educators towards critical reflection on their practices and create a paradigm shift in approaches to the equitable instruction of ELs.

This project will be implemented through a Powerpoint presentation, along with the inclusion of collaborative activities that provide interactive modeling of the instructional strategies to promote academic oral discourse.

Chapter 4 provides an overall reflection on the project in its entirety. The chapter revisits the research question: *how can oral academic discourse be included into mainstream classrooms to address issues of educational equity for ELs?* Reflections from the project are provided. Limitations are discussed, as well as how the project may influence future research regarding professional development of mainstream teachers of ELs within the field of education.

CHAPTER FOUR

Project Reflection

Overview

In this concluding chapter, I discuss my reflection on the Capstone learning process and new learnings that have emerged along the way. Implications and limitations to the project are discussed, as well as how the information will be shared with the professional community, followed by a summary of the chapter.

This project sought to answer the research question: *how can oral academic discourse be included into mainstream classrooms to address issues of educational equity for ELs?*

Reflection on the Capstone Learning Process

My Capstone project developed from personal experiences co-teaching in an intermediate mainstream mathematics classroom. Through the traditional mathematics teaching approach of my mainstream colleagues, I recognized that ELs in our classes did not have access to participate in high-level classroom discussions, nor were they able to share and refine their thinking regarding mathematical concepts and ideas. I wanted to create a shift within the culture of the classroom in order to allow more time for students to participate in small group or structured class discussions about the content concepts.

My project included creating a professional development workshop for mainstream intermediate elementary teachers. The goals of the project are to provide background information to mainstream teachers on the importance of academic language and oral language development for second language learners, provide strategies to

support oral academic discourse practices in mainstream classrooms and bring awareness to issues of equity for ELs.

The focus of the workshop is to promote positive academic outcomes for ELs by increasing the use of oral academic speaking in the classroom. Strategies that shift the classroom culture towards high-level discourse about content concepts in order to benefit all students are provided. In addition, the importance of teacher attitudes, beliefs and misconceptions on instructional approaches are explored. The goal of the professional development workshop is to enable teachers to provide ELs with equitable access to the type of discussions and topics valued within mainstream and higher education.

Through the creation of this project, many new learnings on a personal level have emerged. The research and exploration of literature in the field, specifically the work of Anderson et al (2011) and Zwiers & Crawford (2011), has highlighted the importance of discourse and purposeful communication within the classroom to promote equitable learning opportunities for ELs and other marginalized students. Chapin and O'Connor's talk moves provide concrete actions I, and other educators, can make to deepen the level of discourse within our classrooms. Utilizing these resources was invaluable in promoting an understanding of what oral academic discourse looks like and in providing guidelines for effective implementation in a classroom setting.

My instructional beliefs have always supported deeper-level learning, as it fosters critical thinking skills that are truly applicable both in school across the content areas and in life. This project reinforces the benefits of supporting this type of learning and provides concrete steps that I and other teachers can use to embed it in their practice. The creation of my oral academic discourse continuum, drawn from the research (Chapin,

O'Connor & Anderson, 2013; Fisher, Rothenberg, & Frey, 2008; Hufferd-Ackles, Fuson, & Sherin, 2004), Kazemi, & Hintz, 2014; Resnick, Asterhan & Clarke, 2018; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Zwiers & Soto, 2017), provides a visual reference of the shift towards a more student-centered approach through observable behaviors at each level. This resource can be used to share what I've learned through my research with future colleagues and stimulate discussion regarding supporting EL's oral academic discourse needs.

Additionally, this project and research has impacted not only my own teaching practices but has also aided in recognizing how my worldview and experiences can contribute to equity within instruction for my students. Recognizing that our own views, perceptions and experiences contribute to how we as educators approach our instruction is vital to understanding ways inequities are either perpetuated or inhibited within our classroom practices. It also serves to highlight the ways that even well-intentioned efforts may contribute to further disenfranchising particular groups of students.

Revisiting the Literature Review

In Chapter Two, I reviewed literature that was relevant to oral language development and second language learning, outlined instructional strategies to support the implementation of oral academic discourse in mainstream classrooms and acknowledged equity considerations for ELs and other marginalized student groups.

The work of several researchers was integral to the development of this project. When drawing on resources from the literature review, de Jong and Harper (2005), Harper and de Jong (2004), de Jong, Harper and Coady (2013), Molle (2013) and Villegas (2018) highlighted specific areas of need within the professional development of

mainstream teachers of ELs. Specific recommendations included building teachers' understanding regarding second language acquisition and dispelling misconceptions regarding the abilities, backgrounds and learning needs of ELs. Current professional development approaches are limited in their effectiveness because they do not address the deficit-based beliefs and attitudes teachers may hold regarding ELs, which can inhibit the effectiveness of implementing strategies to support these learners.

Equity issues were brought to the forefront through the work of Bresser, Melanese and Sphar (2009), Darling-Hammond (2002); Oakes (2005), Rousseau Anderson (2007), Zwiers and Soto (2017). Pinpointing the ways inequities are being perpetuated within the classroom served as an eye-opening reminder of our integral role in the equitable education of ELs and other marginalized groups.

Instructional strategies that embody and promote the use of oral academic discourse were drawn from the following researchers: Anderson, Chapin and O'Connor (2011), Chapin and O'Connor (2007), Chapin, O'Connor, & Anderson (2013), Michaels and O'Connor (2013) and Zwiers and Crawford (2011).

Implications and Limitations

Implications. The implications for this project include the relevance to current state standards, equity within education and the shift towards student-centered discourse in the classroom. With the revision of state standards, high-levels of understanding as demonstrated through the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are now the norm. Ensuring that students reach these high-levels of understanding requires a paradigm shift in teaching practices. Educational reform encourages the use of student-centered approaches, moving away from recitation to reasoning in order to prepare students for 21st century skills. This

shift supports issues of equity by allowing elementary teachers to better prepare ELs and all students through access to and practice with the forms of talk valued in higher education and beyond.

Limitations. While the benefits of this project are apparent to teachers, students and administrators, there are limitations to the scope of this project. The scope of this project is a preliminary approach to implementing changes in teacher practices at the classroom level. Indeed, in order to support teachers and sustain the practices introduced, teacher coaching, additional professional development and dedicated time, energy and funding would need to be allocated by the school administration to fully engage with a larger-scale shift towards inclusion of oral academic discourse. The issues of time, energy and funding are crucial components because they would require the buy-in not only of administrators, but of mainstream teachers as well. Schools or districts may not be willing to allot this much time to implementing these changes, which in fact would hinder the effectiveness of these practices. Continued professional development utilizing the oral academic discourse continuum and Talk Moves would be needed in order to promote a deeper understanding behind the need, purpose and benefits these approaches provide to students. Additionally, adjustments would need to be made to further tailor to individual school or classroom settings.

Communicating Results and Benefits to the Profession

Throughout this process, I have collaborated and drawn on the feedback and support of colleagues, including both EL and mainstream elementary teachers. This collaboration has been invaluable to my process and has continually reinforced both the interest and need for oral academic discourse at all levels of instruction. Colleagues have

commented on the relevancy of this approach for all students, not only for ELs, and have been eager to learn more and engage with the materials I have created. To this end, I will continue to work with colleagues to further refine and tailor ideas to their individual classroom settings. I will also meet with administrators in order to share my findings with the hope of disseminating on a larger scale within the school setting. Colleagues have also encouraged me to pursue this topic further through additional research and have urged me to share with others at professional conferences in the future.

Ultimately, public access to materials will be available through Hamline Digital Commons and I will consider the potential to present on the topic in the future at individual, local or district teacher professional development workshops.

Summary

Along this journey, I have deepened my own understanding of discourse and why it is crucial to provide access to this form of communication for ELs. This project has solidified my understanding of not only what constitutes oral academic discourse within the classroom but has also helped me to purposefully find my voice to articulate the importance of and need for this form of communication within mainstream classrooms. Through the process of negotiating meaning, explaining and refining my thinking, and discussion with others on this topic, I now have a deep-level understanding of the equity issues surrounding this topic and have developed ways to communicate and support other educators in its implementation with students. My hope is that others can use what I have researched and developed to implement oral academic discourse practices into their own instructional settings. It is my hope that the supports I have developed are just the beginning and push mainstream teachers to reflect not only on their own beliefs, attitudes

and practices, but understand the importance of taking measures to increase equitable practices within their classrooms to improve EL student outcomes.

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APPENDIX A

Glossary

academic language

The language used in classroom lessons, textbooks, tests and assignments to discuss abstract ideas and concepts that includes technical vocabulary and complex grammatical structures.

collaborative discourse

Working collaboratively to discuss, explain and clarify questions regarding a given topic (see glossary entry for **oral academic discourse**).

discourse-level

This feature of academic language as described by WIDA (see glossary entry) refers to the linguistic complexity of the language which includes the quantity and variety of oral and written text. This includes expressing one's thoughts, beliefs, and justifications in an organized manner within a given context or area of study.

EL

English language learner is term used for students that qualify under this category for English language services as defined by English language proficiency criteria from the state.

equity

The premise that providing underserved students extra experiences, resources, knowledge, skills and language will allow equal access to future educational and professional opportunities.

LTEs

Long Term English Learners (LTEs) are students who are classified for 5 or more years as ELs or Limited English Proficient (LEP) and qualify to receive EL services because they have not shown achievement of English Language Proficiency as determined by exit criteria outlined by the state. This specific group of students generally struggle academically and have distinct language issues

oral academic discourse

A connected academic conversation where individuals are verbally expressing their thoughts, beliefs, and justifications regarding content-area concepts in order to negotiate meaning and refine new understandings.

oral language development

Oral language is the ability to communicate and learn through conversation and spoken interaction. Learners use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas and feelings. The development of this language process is closely associated with listening and speaking and involves three vital processes: input, output, and feedback. Research has indicated that oral language development can be a key component within the development of literacy skills.

second language acquisition

The process in which an individual acquires a second or additional language. This process is not linear and can be influenced by a number of factors, including

socio-cultural context, age, proficiency and literacy skills in the learner's first language, motivation, personality, learning style, and self-esteem.

sentence-level

This feature of academic language as described by WIDA (see glossary entry) refers to the language forms and conventions used, as well as the types and variety of grammatical structures present.

WIDA

World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) provides support to a consortium of states and publishes standards for English Language Development.

This organization breaks down the features of academic English into three components: the word-level, sentence-level, and discourse-level (see glossary entries for additional details).

word-level

This feature of academic language as described by WIDA (see glossary entry) emphasizes the specificity of vocabulary usage within a given context or topic.

APPENDIX B

Professional Development Pre-Assessment

EL Professional Development Pre-assessment questionnaire

This assessment will be used to gather information to personalize the upcoming professional development session. It will help identify your prior knowledge on the key topics and identify ways that you are already supporting ELs in your instruction. We will reassess our learning at the end of the session and revisit the results. In lieu of recording your name on this questionnaire, you will be provided with a participant ID number that can be used to gauge growth following the presentation. All answers will be anonymous.

Background Knowledge

Self-Rating

Please rate your background knowledge in the following areas. Additional spaces for comments are provided.

1 - I am not familiar with this topic

2 - I have heard about this topic

3- I have a basic background knowledge on this topic

4- I have a moderate background - would be able to provide details to someone else

5 -I have a strong background - would be able to explain in depth to someone else

6 - I consider myself highly knowledgeable on this topic - would be able to teach someone else

_____ 1. Knowledge of how students learn a second or additional language

_____ 2. Knowledge of academic language and the challenges it might pose for English language learners

_____ 3. Knowledge of how language influences learning

_____ 4. Knowledge of oral language development and how it impacts students learning a second or additional language

_____ 5. Knowledge of the difference between social language and academic language

Short Answer

What does discourse mean to you?

Describe what you know about academic language and why it might pose challenges to EL learners.

Application

1. Are there ways you modify your classroom instruction so that ELs are successful in both content and language?

2. How is your classroom community and environment set up to elicit EL student success? (physical space, instructional routines, types of differentiation). Please be specific.

3. Which strategies do you use to support the academic learning of ELs in your classroom?

4. What classroom routines do you use to encourage student-to-student conversations and classroom discourse around academic topics?

Adapted from: Fenner, D., Segota, J., & Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. (2014). *Advocating for English learners: A guide for educators*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

APPENDIX C

Professional Development Post- assessment

EL Professional Development Post-assessment questionnaire

This questionnaire will allow us to reassess our learning following the professional development workshop. Please use your participant ID number in order to compare and gauge growth between your pre and post assessment questionnaire. All answers will be anonymous.

Background Knowledge

Self-Rating

Please rate your background knowledge in the following areas. Additional spaces for comments are provided.

1 - I am not familiar with this topic

2 - I have heard about this topic

3 - I have a basic background knowledge on this topic

4 - I have a moderate background - would be able to provide details to someone else

5 - I have a strong background - would be able to explain in depth to someone else

6 - I consider myself highly knowledgeable on this topic - would be able to teach someone else

_____ 1. Knowledge of how students learn a second or additional language

_____ 2. Knowledge of academic language and the challenges it might pose for English language learners

_____ 3. Knowledge of how language influences learning

_____ 4. Knowledge of oral language development and how it impacts students learning a second or additional language

_____ 5. Knowledge of the difference between social language and academic language

Adapted from: Fenner, D., Segota, J., & Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. (2014). *Advocating for English learners: A guide for educators*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

Short Answer

What does discourse mean to you?

Describe what you know about academic language and why it might pose challenges to EL learners.

How does the inclusion of oral academic discourse relate to educational equity for ELs?

Application:

What is your goal going forward to promote educational equity in your classroom?

What are perceived challenges that may impact your goal?

What are some concrete ways that you are considering adjusting your instruction in order to more effectively support ELs' in both language and content going forward?

Reflection:

What are some elements you will continue to use and reinforce going forward?

What is your biggest take-away from this process? (or top 3!)

What elements from the process were most helpful in understanding the background information regarding oral academic discourse prior to attempting to implement in your classroom? Is there something else that you believe would have been helpful to have or know? (some ideas: videos, scenarios, reflections, modeling, talk moves overview, oral academic continuum, learning activities during presentation)

Are there additional areas or topics that you would be interested in learning more about in the future to support you in implementing your goal?

APPENDIX D

Talk Moves

Talk Moves to Support Classroom Discussions	
Revoicing <i>"So you're saying . . ."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat some or all of what the student has said, then ask the student to respond and verify whether or not the revoicing is correct. Revoicing can be used to clarify, amplify, or highlight an idea.
Repeating <i>"Can you repeat what she said in your own words?"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask a student to repeat or rephrase what another student said. Restate important parts of complex idea in order to slow the conversation down and dwell on important ideas.
Reasoning <i>"Do you agree or disagree, and why?"</i> <i>"Why does that make sense?"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After students have had time to process a classmate's claim, ask students to compare their own reasoning to someone else's reasoning. Allow students to engage with each other's ideas. Student: "I respectfully disagree with that idea because . . ."; "This idea makes sense to me because . . ."
Adding On <i>"Would someone like to add on to this?"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt students, inviting them to participate in the conversation or to clarify their own thinking. Student: "I'd like to add on . . ."
Wait Time <i>"Take your time . . ."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait after asking a question before calling on a student. Wait after a student has been called on to give the student time to organize his or her thoughts. Student: "I'd like more time . . ."
Turn-and-Talk <i>"Turn and talk to your neighbor . . ."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate and listen to partner talk. Use this information to choose whom to call on. Allow students to clarify and share ideas. Allow students to orient themselves to each other's thinking.
Revise <i>"Has anyone's thinking changed?"</i> <i>"Would you like to revise your thinking?"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow students to revise their thinking as they have new insights. Student: "I thought . . . But now I think . . . because . . ." "I'd like to revise my thinking."

Source: Kazemi, E., & Hintz, A. (2014). *Intentional talk: How to structure and lead productive mathematical discussions*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse.

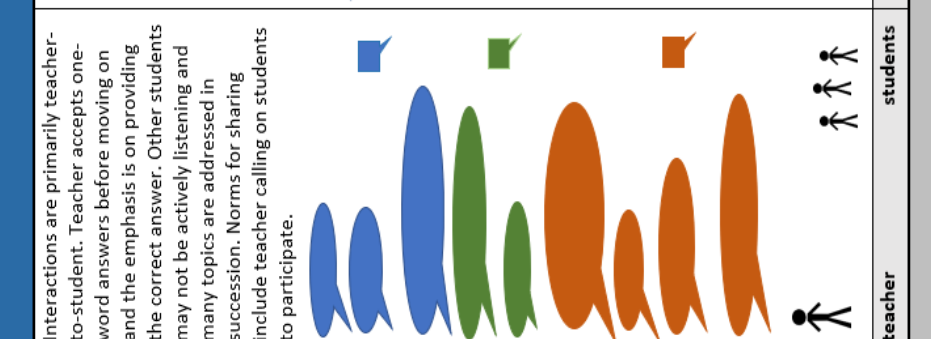

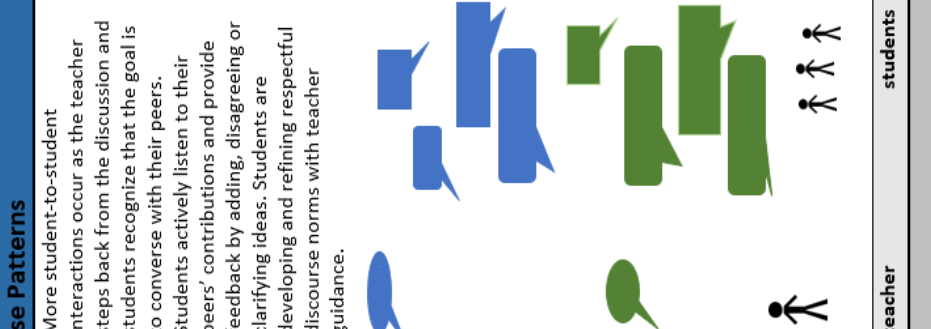
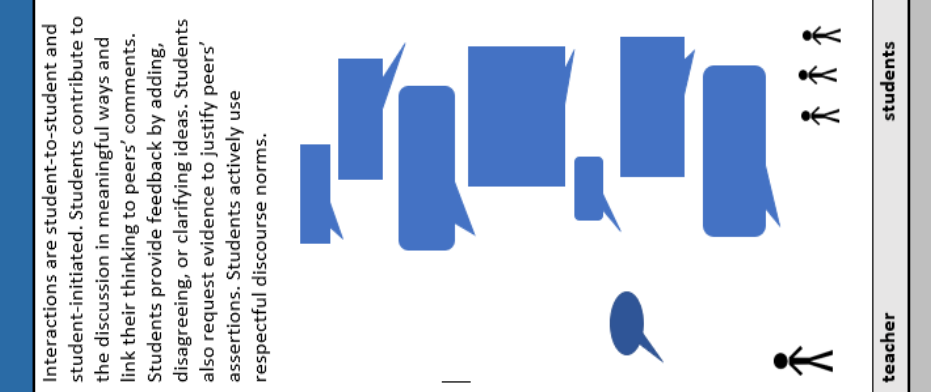
APPENDIX E

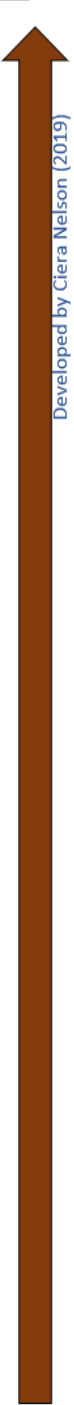
Oral Academic Discourse Continuum

Oral Academic Discourse Classroom Continuum			
Teacher-directed discourse	Moving from teacher-directed discourse to focus on students and their ideas	Approaching teacher-facilitated student discourse	Student-directed discourse
Engagement			
Teacher is at the front of the classroom and dominates the conversation.	Teacher encourages the sharing of ideas and directs speaker to talk to class or their group members, not the teacher.	Teacher facilitates conversation between students as a whole class or with group members. Teacher encourages students to share their ideas and be active participants.	Students carry the conversation themselves in a whole class setting or in small groups. Students are active participants who share their ideas and hold each other accountable.
Questioning			
Teacher is the only questioner. Questions serve to keep students listening to the teacher. Students give short answers in response to the teacher.	Teacher is the main questioner. Teacher questions begin to focus on student thinking and less on specific answers. Moving toward open-ended questions that are teacher-initiated.	Students ask questions of each other with prompting from teacher. Teacher asks probing questions and facilitates more opportunities for student-to-student talk. Open-ended questions that are initiated by both students and teacher.	Students ask questions of each other and listen to responses. Many questions ask "Why?" and call for justification. Teacher may ask advancing questions to guide discussion. Open-ended questions primarily initiated by students. Purpose is to further the discussion and group understanding.
Explanations			
Teacher questions focus on correctness. Students provide short answer-focused responses. Teacher may give or repeat answers.	Teacher probes student thinking somewhat. One or two strategies or ways of thinking are elicited. Teacher may fill in an explanation. Students provide brief description of their thinking in response to teacher probing.	Teacher probes more deeply to learn about student thinking. Teacher acts as a facilitator by eliciting multiple ideas and strategies from students. Students respond to both teacher and peer probing to volunteer their thinking. Students begin to justify their answers with evidence.	Teacher follows student explanations closely and only probes when necessary to foster higher-level critical thinking skills. Students actively volunteer their thoughts and provide in-depth responses. Students defend and justify their answers with evidence and receive minimal prompting from teacher.
Community of Learners			
Culture supports students keeping ideas to themselves or just providing answers when asked.	Students believe their ideas are accepted by the classroom community. They begin to listen to one another supportively and restate in their own words what another student has said.	Students believe that they are active learners and that their ideas and those of their classmates are important. They listen actively so they can contribute significantly.	Students believe they are leaders in learning and can help shape the thinking of others. They help shape others' thinking in supportive, collegial ways and accept the same support from others.
Reliance on teacher for validation of responses.	Moving away from a reliance on teacher for validation of responses.	Less reliance on teacher validation for responses.	Students do not rely on teacher validation for responses.


 Developed by Ciera Nelson (2019)

Oral Academic Discourse Continuum continued

Discourse Patterns			
<p>Interactions are primarily teacher-to-student. Teacher accepts one-word answers before moving on and the emphasis is on providing the correct answer. Other students may not be actively listening and many topics are addressed in succession. Norms for sharing include teacher calling on students to participate.</p> 	<p>Teacher encourages student-to-student interactions by guiding and inviting student contributions. Students begin to practice more active listening and connecting their thoughts to what others shared. Teacher provides guidance on respectful discourse norms through modeling.</p> 	<p>More student-to-student interactions occur as the teacher steps back from the discussion and students recognize that the goal is to converse with their peers. Students actively listen to their peers' contributions and provide feedback by adding, disagreeing or clarifying ideas. Students are developing and refining respectful discourse norms with teacher guidance.</p> 	<p>Interactions are student-to-student and student-initiated. Students contribute to the discussion in meaningful ways and link their thinking to peers' comments. Students provide feedback by adding, disagreeing, or clarifying ideas. Students also request evidence to justify peers' assertions. Students actively use respectful discourse norms.</p> 
teacher	teacher	teacher	teacher
students	students	students	students



Developed by Ciera Nelson (2019)

Adapted from:

Hufford-Ackles, K., Fuson, K., & Sherin, M. (2004). Describing Levels and Components of a Math-Talk Learning Community. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 35(2), 81-116.

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APPENDIX F

True / False Statements

True/ False statements:

- _____ 1. Learning a second language occurs in the same way that you learn your first language.
- _____ 2. Talking helps learners process their ideas and reinforces content concepts.
- _____ 3. Learners require a certain level of English proficiency before engaging in academic language instruction.
- _____ 4. Learners gain what they need in language simply through immersion in English.
- _____ 5. Out of the four domains (speaking, listening, reading and writing) reading and writing are the most important skills for ELs to work on.
- _____ 6. I don't want to embarrass students who are learning English by asking them to share in a class discussion.
- _____ 7. The main way to support ELs' language development is through visuals and graphic organizers.
- _____ 8. All ELs go through a progression of language learning and learn in the same way and at the same rate.
- _____ 9. Regardless of a student's age, an EL student who is not academically performing needs to focus on the basics.
- _____ 10. Once students can speak with reasonable fluency, they can quickly pick up the academic work.
- _____ 11. If the ESL teacher could take the student more often and just focus on teaching the English language, learning in all areas would occur faster.
- _____ 12. Until students learn English, there is no point in trying to teach them content area subjects.