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Planting the Foundational Roots in Co-Teaching between Secondary ELL Teachers and Mainstream Content Teachers

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By

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank my mom, Ruth, and my dad, Patrick, from the bottom of my heart, who have made so many sacrifices to ensure my success and well-being while I was growing up. I would not be anywhere without their constant support and encouragement to follow my educational dreams and life goals. I would also like to thank my grandma, Norma, whose sacrifices, generosity, and life accomplishments as head of the family led me into this field and guided me into this direction of graduate-level work. I would also like to thank my sister, Priscilla, and her loving family, including Jason, and my nieces and my nephew- Marianna, Myla, and Zaden, who have always seen and recognized the good and the potential in me. I hope I did a great job at encouraging all of you to follow your dreams. Lastly, I'd like to thank my fiancé, Tristan, who always kept nudging me forward and staying positive, even during the times where there was no hope within myself. Thank you for everything and for always believing in me, even when I did not believe in myself. I would not be here without you. I love all of you deeply.

EPIGRAPH

"The learning process is something you can incite, literally incite, like a riot."
-Audre Lorde

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Overview

Within my years in education, I could not help but ask myself– *In what ways can building early collaboration between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers positively impact student learning?* I remember my first day as a fully licensed teacher walking into my new school in St. Paul, MN for teacher orientation. It was early August 2020. I was filled with excitement, and nervousness, and had expandable energy to give. I was ready to impress, try my best, and be the English Language Learner (ELL) teacher I knew I could be. I was brand new to teaching, the school was still virtual at the peak of COVID-19, and I was one of the three ELL teachers working in the building. I was hired as the main elementary ELL teacher. I sat down at a desk that was lined up in rows in the back of the gym and I only knew two familiar faces from my previous interviews. I remember thinking to myself, "I don't know anyone here. Nobody here has ever seen me teach. I never actually taught before. I have to get to know the students…and my coworkers. What if they don't like me? What if I have to teach in the same room as them? Like, teach together? But…how? I don't know..."

The following in this chapter will provide an introduction including information, background, and insight into my capstone project and research question. This question was developed around my pre-teaching and professional teaching experiences, attained insights, reflections, question developments, brief evidence for the capstone project need, goals for this capstone project, and a look into future chapters.

Pre-Teaching Professional Experience

Long before I became an ELL teacher, I served as a Junior High School Coach and a Senior High School Coach for an Americorps program called College Possible from 2016-2018. I served in the Milwaukee area, which was my hometown. This is where I got my first true experience of collaboration with other colleagues within my organization, the high school buildings, and with higher education personnel. As a Junior High School Coach, I created after-school lessons based on the ACT, essay and resume writing, and soft skill lessons. As a Senior High School Coach, I acted as a mentor for college admissions, and FAFSA/scholarship help, and also acted as the middle person and advocate for students, families, and higher education programs.

Although I served in two Milwaukee Public Schools, it was clear to me that collaboration, strong communication, and genuine relationships were the keys to achieving student success within the program. Each person played a role and brought to the library tables a wealth of knowledge, different connections, and ways to best assist students getting to and through college. More than half of the schools I worked at were for refugee, first-generation students who were also ELL students. Even though I was planning after-school ACT lessons, at the same time, I also realized that I was planning academic English lessons. I found myself growing irritated at the higher education process and barriers placed on these students. I knew I was working with extremely talented students, who spoke two to four languages, who were getting denied higher education opportunities because of inequities and barriers of standardized test scores and grades. After I completed my two years of Americorps service and tried out a few more jobs, I enrolled in the MA-TESOL program at Hamline University, where I also added courses to get my K-12 teaching license.

Minnesota Professional Teaching Experience

I took my first ELL teaching job in August 2020, where I was the 1st-3rd grade ELL teacher at a small, Title 1 charter school in St. Paul. Being brand new to the field of ELL, I was grateful to be paired with a great coordinator and to have an established team of three other ELL teachers throughout K-12. Although it was great to have a team, I quickly realized that elementary, middle, and high school were very different. I felt supported, but I also realized I was alone in creating and navigating my schedule with over 100 ELL students to serve. The school wanted to move towards a collaborative, co-teaching environment and I was tasked to figure it out at the early elementary level. Not only was I a brand new ELL teacher, I had to co-teach with six mainstream teachers (2 per grade level), and start school virtually since it was peak COVID-19.

I was eager to begin and jumped into scheduling meetings right away with mainstream teams. Within those meetings, I struggled as I found out there were teachers who were unsure of the WIDA Consortium, not familiar with ELL teachers, and brand new to co-teaching. The feedback I received from the mainstream teachers ranged from, “I won’t share any lessons with you, you can only take students for this hour” to “Yes! Let’s do this! Do what you want!” Although I had some mainstream teachers excited, neither of us knew where to start, especially virtually. Co-teaching needs consistency, and within that school year- from virtual, in-person, to virtual, staffing shortages- it was incredibly difficult. That school year, we reverted from being open to co-teaching and collaborating back to what was the norm- targeting small groups of students and pull-outs.

I moved to a different school the following year, which was another small, Title 1 charter school in St. Paul that served a similar population of students in Pre-K-10th grade. Although the

previous school year was tough and co-teaching was disbanded, I was hopeful that I could try again in a new environment. Instead of teaching elementary students, I went to 6th-8th grade and was the only ELL teacher for middle school. I was serving about 75 students out of 125 students. Like before, there was excitement about doing something new in the classrooms– co-teaching. There was one professional development our staff had about co-teaching, which introduced the six types of co-teaching and basic communication skills for teachers. All staff left the professional development extremely excited about co-teaching.

As the school year progressed, I noticed there was no other professional development about co-teaching. Due to more staffing shortages, switching between virtual and in-person, I found my position switching multiple times. I went from co-teaching with the Science teacher, to co-teaching with ELA, and went to co-teaching with Social Studies within a month. This is where I noticed the differences in teaching secondary. In elementary school, there was a lot of foundational skill-building and exploratory learning. In secondary, it was strictly content-focused. The mainstream teachers were specialists in their content fields and knew the materials. As mentioned before, co-teaching requires consistency, open communication, willingness to try, and genuine relationship building. It was not anyone's fault, but co-teaching was not working out, due to the lack of co-teaching accountability, staffing changes, distrust, closed communication, and the flip between virtual/in-person teaching. Mid-year, there was an ELL department meeting, where we found out mainstream teachers had been addressing concerns about co-teaching and wanted to go back to strictly pull-outs and small groups. There were comments about how collaboration has always worked better separately. For the remainder of the year, I taught 6th-8th grade sheltered Social Studies classes. There was little collaboration and communication between the mainstream Social Studies teacher and me.

For the 22-23 school year, I was once again determined to bring successful co-teaching to the classrooms in my school. Similar to the year before, one co-teaching professional development was presented before the school year officially started. Due to staffing changes, creating a strong foundation for secondary mainstream teachers was proving difficult. Since there was little ability and planned time to build and sustain a strong foundation with other mainstream teachers, it led to multiple incidents– such as being reported for intruding and plotting to take a colleague's job and having co-teaching colleagues lock my students out of classrooms. I felt baffled– I wanted to collaborate and I knew I had different roles and responsibilities for serving students than a mainstream teacher. My schedule kept switching until I ended up doing both– teaching my own mainstream ELA classes and still co-teaching with other secondary teachers.

Attained Insight

I took over two mainstream ELA classes with little notice and suddenly, I found myself in the position of both a mainstream teacher and an ELL co-teacher. Up until then, I only had experience as an ELL teacher who was eager to collaborate. I was aware of my growing frustration with mainstream teachers and the resistance/hesitation to collaborate with me. I was eager to be a team. However, as the school year progressed, I took notice of my feelings surrounding my mainstream ELA classes– and the keyword was *my*. As weeks carried over, I realized that time wasn't on my side as an ELA mainstream teacher. There was so much to do- from lesson planning, modifying, grading, finding materials, and much more. There was pressure from standardized testing. The ELA curriculum was incredibly complex, and I did not have time to wait for someone else in the school to learn it or take the time to teach another colleague. I found myself growing possessive of *my* classroom and *my* lessons. It was *my* space. I developed *my* ELA teaching style and *my* routine, and I disliked any interruptions within my little free time.

It took the previous school year being a mainstream ELA teacher to realize how much effort a co-teaching relationship takes to build and develop. In the final school quarter and last novel unit of ELA, I was assigned a co-teacher from the ESE department without notice or any time to properly plan together. Although I knew this colleague and we worked together well, I could not stop myself from thinking about how much *I didn't want a co-teacher.* Upon deep reflection on the school year, I realized I became the mainstream teacher and adopted the thoughts and mindset that I was previously frustrated at.

Seeking the Answers

From my professional experience, my negative experiences with co-teaching seemed to outweigh my positive ones. I have heard many times from others around me, especially with seasoned teachers, that co-teaching just does not work, but small groups and doing your own thing do. I still hold the hope and excitement that co-teaching can be incredibly successful, but it all starts with having a common understanding of each other's teaching roles, and responsibilities, and the willingness to build and maintain a strong relationship foundation. I like to compare it to getting to know your students at the beginning of the school year and building that relationship and classroom expectations together. I realized that even mainstream teachers who were open to co-teaching didn't know where to start. Although I came to this realization, I was still left with unanswered questions about the structure of building a co-teaching relationship. What roadblocks are in secondary teachers' ways for successful collaboration and co-teaching? Is co-teaching even beneficial for ELL students to pursue? What are the best co-teaching practices? Lastly, another question was: *in what ways can building an early collaboration between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers positively impact student learning?*

Context

Relationship building is often said to be the key to success in teaching and learning instruction. It is uttered all the time at the beginning of the school year, at various professional developments, and is said to be a key tool for classroom management. In the few years that I have been teaching, I have found the majority of the professional developments held are focused on building genuine relationships with our students. This is especially true, as relationships are the heart and foundation of classroom learning. However, building genuine relationships is also the key to establishing successful working relationships with our colleagues. From my college courses as an ELL teacher, I quickly realized that I was in a very collaborative teaching position and had to wear multiple hats. From all aspects of my learning, I realized that ELL teachers are often sent anywhere in the school and perform sheltered instruction, push-ins, pull-outs, co-teaching, individual instruction, and the list goes on and on. This is often true in smaller, Title 1 charter schools, where I took my first job as an elementary ELL teacher.

Throughout my years of teaching ELL, the word *building* has always been in my vocabulary. From *building* on a student's academic English levels, *building* on WIDA objectives, *building* on curriculum, *building* genuine relationships with students, *building* materials, and *building* something was always on my mind. After attending a limited number of professional developments, I wanted to learn more about co-teaching and genuine collaboration with my colleagues. I started thinking about the gaps in building successful co-teaching relationships and I wanted to learn more about how others did it. The more I reached out and asked- mentors, administration, instructors, Google, current ELL teachers– the more questions I had. Being mindful of the tragedies and stress on individuals and society, I also saw COVID-19 as a way to rebrand ELL and mainstream teaching and saw a lot of room for a more collaborative

opportunity. I also noticed that there was a lot of hesitancy and unsureness about collaborative classroom co-teaching.

This hesitancy and unsureness surrounding co-teaching followed me as I left elementary education and entered secondary teaching for my next few years. I took notice of the collaboration gaps in elementary, but it was glaringly obvious in secondary. Although I found out where I belonged in education and found a home teaching secondary ELL students, I also found out that secondary teachers often lived on their islands. Many have never collaborated with a co-teacher, much less ever worked with an ELL teacher. The collaboration felt less and less, the time to meet felt strained, and I noticed defenses went up surrounding mainstream teaching and collaboration- also within myself at times. Even colleagues who were interested and open to co-teaching had no idea how to begin the process. I was inspired to research the reasons and the barriers behind co-teaching. What makes co-teaching so difficult? What exact barriers are in the way of co-teaching, especially at the secondary level? Is it even as beneficial as everyone says? There is a large push for collaborative co-teaching between educators, yet there is a notable lack of resources on *how to begin.*

I also want to take a look at the layers and dynamics of educator relationships from a social level. I want to acknowledge how I navigated my career as an educator– queer, transgender non-binary yet feminized, Mexican and Caucasian, in the late 20s, middle class, first generation college student, and early in my teaching career. While we can talk about building co-teaching relationships from an academic perspective, it is also important to acknowledge the social aspect- such as the backgrounds and cultures of the people behind the educator role and validate their experiences. Our personal history, personal and professional experiences, beliefs, and values all play a role in collaborating with other educators. The types of secondary schools

educators teach at and the amount of resources available also play a huge role in promoting successful, collaborative co-teaching. I am keeping this in mind as I continue research and planning for my capstone project.

Rationale

Secondary ELL Student Gaps

Secondary ELL students are usually classified into two groups: long-term English learners (LTEL) or newcomers to the United States. LTELs are usually students who have been in the ELL program since elementary school and have not tested out of programs (such as WIDA) to be considered English proficient. Newcomers are considered students who have been in the United States for less than three years (Santibañez & Gándara, 2018). It is also not uncommon for secondary ELL students to have limited or interrupted education, often known as SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education). Secondary LTELs or newcomer students struggle academically in their mainstream classes due to multiple reasons out of their control. In research conducted by Laurie Olsen, these challenges include a complete lack of an ELL program, ELL students being given elementary curriculum and materials, a lack of consistency in rigor or staffing in ELL programs, social segregation and linguistic isolation, and limited access to the full mainstream curriculum- unlike their peers. Olsen also notes that secondary ELL students are often placed inappropriately within their mainstream classes or kept in sheltered classes for far too long. Another large factor is being taught by unprepared teachers who received little to no training in working with ELL students, large student caseloads in intervention classes, and students missing out on elective classes due to scheduling (Olsen, 2010). Secondary ELL students not only have to learn mainstream content, but also learn foundational and academic English skills in the 4 models (listening, reading, speaking, and

writing). By the time LTELs, SLIFE, and newcomer students reach high school graduation and may want to pursue higher education, students unfortunately become aware that they do not have the academic skills, records, or support needed to succeed and reach their goals (Olsen, 2010). While examining just the basics of secondary ELL students, there is much at stake both academically and personally with the gaps in their education that should be addressed with the right support and resources. As a former college access coach, I saw firsthand the outcomes and reactions of talented students who could not take the path they wanted for themselves.

Barriers to ELL and Mainstream Co-Teaching

With inclusive education on the rise in mainstream classrooms, students' needs are often more diverse, and expansive, and need to be personalized for them to meet academic content, standards, and goals. With classrooms becoming more diverse academically and linguistically, professionals have looked to co-teaching, which is putting two or more licensed teachers in the same room, as a way to meet all students' needs and increase inclusivity. The co-teacher, such as an ELL teacher, is embedded in the mainstream classroom to target a group of students and use instructional strategies to assist the mainstream teacher and meet the needs of students in the least restrictive environment (Chitiyo, 2017). There has been a plethora of research studies that show co-teaching is beneficial for both students and educators.

Although co-teaching has shown to be promising and produce great benefits for students and teachers, much of the co-teaching research has been done within the field of Special Education. According to Pappamihiel, within the last 10 years, the ESL (English as a Second Language) field has turned to co-teaching, but there are few studied accounts of how co-teaching is implemented school-wide in mainstream classrooms with ELL students (Pappamihiel, 2012).

With the little research that has been done, educators have listed challenges such as choosing a model from the six available, inadequate training in content for the mainstream classes or ESL criteria, unbalanced classroom power structure, time constraints for planning, lack of buy-in, and personal uncomfortability in collaborating. In the study conducted by Pappamihiel at an elementary school in North Carolina, almost all of the teachers who participated preferred the pull-out model of co-teaching, as it was easier to navigate. The educators also compared co-teaching to an "arranged marriage", and personality played a huge factor. If the teachers liked each other, co-teaching would work. If not, there was no hope to collaborate. In much of the research, foundational relationship-building and time to plan were lacking and contributed to the lack of co-teaching success (Pappamihiel, 2012).

I found the educator's comments and experiences with ELL co-teaching extremely relatable and mimicked many of my own professional experiences. The school presented in this study has been similar to the schools I worked at– where more than 50% of the students are ELLs, is a Title 1 school, and has a small, culturally specific student population. Many of the educators, both mainstream and ELL teachers, wanted to try out co-teaching due to the large number of ELL students in the school but resorted back to the pull-out method of co-teaching. Within the study, administrators were also confused about how to make collaborative co-teaching work. There seems to be a lack of guidance and foundational building in the beginning stages of co-teaching, where time and planning are crucial to success.

Significance to Stakeholders and Teaching

There is much at stake when it comes to adequately co-teaching secondary ELL students. As mentioned above, there are large gaps in secondary ELL students that can unfortunately have negative effects on their professional and personal future. Oftentimes, families are not made

aware of the gaps their children have until it is too late and near graduation. The lack of professional development for mainstream teachers is critical for adequately teaching and meeting the needs of ELL students, especially mainstream teachers who teach at schools with a large number of identified ELL students. There needs to be more guidance and support for building and sustaining the foundations of co-teaching and for fostering the relationships between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers. Although there are many barriers to collaborating in co-teaching, there are many researchers and educators such as myself who believe that it can truly benefit ELL students and the educators who teach them. For example, Andrea Honigsfeld and Maria Dove concluded in their article that "...co-teaching can become an effective support for inclusive practices to accommodate the needs of diverse English Language Learners…and help all students meet national, state, and local standards" (Honigsfeld and Dove, 2008, p. 8).

Summary

Throughout this introductory chapter, I took a deeper look into my pre-teaching and current professional teaching experiences– as a College Access Coach, an ELL teacher, and a mainstream ELA teacher. I was able to see positives and areas for improvement from multiple perspectives and job roles regarding teaching secondary ELL students. It allowed me to provide context and follow reasoning as to why I had certain thoughts and feelings toward co-teaching. This deeper understanding has reinforced my excitement and passion to continue examining best co-teaching practices and taking a critical look at how building a strong foundation, establishing open lines of communication between educators, and focusing on developing a solid understanding of roles can benefit not only secondary ELL students but the educators as well. It

led me to ask the biggest question– *In what ways can building early collaboration between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers positively impact student learning?*

The brief context introduced some of the biggest reasons and challenges for co-teaching. It confirmed that stakes are incredibly high for secondary ELL students who are nearing the end of their K-12 education, identified some key challenges and struggles that are common for mainstream and ELL teachers, and also provided a small insight into the potential positive benefits of co-teaching. These insights will be expanded and explored more in-depth throughout the literature review, along with other co-teaching factors, such as the history of co-teaching, the six co-teaching models, research for best secondary strategies, and evidence for beneficial student support. I will also be examining the barriers in-depth, limitations for co-teaching, and accessibility of resources. This has all led me to be interested in creating a capstone project specifically for secondary co-teaching. My ultimate goal is to create a series of professional developments and a starting point workbook for mainstream and ELL teachers who are co-teaching together. With this capstone project, I plan on building time-conscious handouts with manageable implementation strategies to provide a foundation and starting point for a collaborative co-teaching model. This capstone project will be designed in mind for high-needs schools with a large amount of ELL students representing their student population. I hope that these professional developments and the co-teaching workbook will provide tools to build a strong, genuine communicative relationship and foundation for mainstream and ELL co-teachers.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Co-teaching, otherwise known as cooperative teaching, was designed as a new method to create inclusivity and be able to teach students without removing them from the mainstream classroom. Co-teaching was originally designed and implemented for students with diverse abilities, admitted into the Special Education program, and as a way for students to be in their least restrictive environment (LRE) to best accommodate them for learning (Pappamihiel, 2012). In co-teaching, two teachers equally share classroom roles and responsibilities regarding not only teaching but also student discipline. Ideally, the two teachers collaborate, plan, and implement lessons and ideas within the shared classroom space.

Co-teaching is not a new concept and has been around since the 1960s when it was recommended as a strategy for secondary students in the United States (Cook & Friend, 1995). Although it was semi-embraced throughout secondary schools, many leaned towards a variation of co-teaching called team teaching, where two teachers still collaborated on the same lessons and materials, but then taught in separate classrooms (Cook & Friend, 1995). Cook & Friend (1995) have outlined a few criteria that educators should meet for co-teaching. Firstly, there should be at least two teachers involved in the co-teaching process. One teacher must be a general education teacher (content) and the other teacher must be specialized (example: Special Education). These two teachers must be licensed to be recognized as a co-teaching pair. Next, the two teachers must co-teach during a designated block of time/same class. Lastly, the teachers share educational responsibilities, such as the mainstream teacher being the content expert and the other teacher providing instructional learning and delivery methods.

Since co-teaching was originally designed and implemented for Special Education students and educators, there has been very little research on co-teaching for ELL (English Language Learner) students (Chitiyo, 2017). ELL programs are still a relatively new field of teaching and learning, as co-teaching with ELL students started being prioritized with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2002, which was then replaced with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 (Baena, 2016). Even though the ELL field has much less research on co-teaching and collaboration, *especially* at the secondary level, it has great potential to work with high-needs schools with a high percentage of ELL students (Pappamihiel, 2012). Co-teaching is said to be a way to unite ELL students with academic content learning and enhance their English language skills (Chitiyo, 2017).

Within the following literature review, there will be further examination of the reasons behind the focus of ELL education, the process of co-teaching, including the six styles of co-teaching, the examination between roles/responsibilities of the mainstream and ELL teacher, and relationship-building between teachers and administration. In the second section, there will be a discussion of the types of ELL students that secondary serves– LTELs (Long-Term English Learners) and newcomer students and their perceived outcomes. In the final section of this literature review, there will be an examination of co-teaching challenges, limitations, positives and benefits, and the impact of professional development. This will all lead up to answering the research question- *in what ways can building early collaboration between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers positively impact student learning?*

Why Focus on ELL Education?

ELL education has an extremely controversial background that stemmed from the early to mid-1900s. While there was evidence that education in content other than English was taught,

the truth was that all languages were not accepted and/or treated equally to English (Bybee, Henderson & Hinojosa, 2014). Even up until the 1960s, there was a "sink or swim" policy that was initiated and many schools converted back to "English-only" lessons. There were very few remedial services provided for multilingual students (Bybee, Henderson, & Hinojosa, 2014). Post-1980s, this began to change as education pushed to reform for better equity and inclusion, with many cases going to court for ELL students such as *Lau vs Nichols (1974)* and the *United States vs Texas (1971/1981)* that marked milestones for ELL education, such as ELL students receiving equitable education and school districts being held accountable to implement proper language programs. Unfortunately, cases such as the *San Antonio Independent School District vs Rodriguez (1973)* and *Castañeda vs. Pickard (1981)* provided some setbacks for equity in ELL education, which included funding inequities with resources for ELL students.

Although there have been efforts to improve ELL education with future acts, NCLB claimed to minimize the gap between ELL students, but only widened it (Baena, 2016). Since then, ESSA replaced NCLB in 2015, which provided K-12 schools with measurements, criteria, and guidelines for ELL students. Although not without controversy, schools have been looking for many ways to get ELL students to meet content standards and English language proficiency for years. Although not a new concept, K-12 schools have been looking toward co-teaching methods to assist ELL programs to become less isolated, more inclusive, and equitable in content classes and English language proficiency. As ELL student populations continue to increase across K-12 schools in the United States, the answer to becoming more inclusive and equitable can lie within collaborative classroom co-teaching.

Six Models of Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is not linear. There are multiple ways to utilize co-teaching practices and schools are often known to have their co-teaching program. To understand the co-teaching process, it is important to discuss the six most common co-teaching models, which have all been common practice since the 1990s (Cook & Friend, 1995). By understanding the co-teaching models, it is possible to determine which models may be the most beneficial for certain types of learners, school populations, and educators. It is important to note that each model of co-teaching comes with their unique positives and challenges for educators.

Three Models of Co-Teaching (Whole Groups)

One Leads, One 'Teaches on Purpose.' In this model, one teacher is assumed to be in the lead position, in charge of the classroom, and the other teacher often falls into a supportive role. The supportive teacher, who is often the specialist, might also be seated around the core students they are working with. The main teacher will be giving the main content lesson and the co-teacher will be walking around the classroom checking on students' understanding, comprehension, supporting instruction with individual/small group help, or re-teaching. For positives, there are more people having eyes on the classroom and learning gaps can be more quickly spotted. With negatives, this style of teaching often leads to the co-teacher becoming "the helper" or "the assistant teacher", and roles/responsibilities are often unequally distributed (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018).

One Group, with Two Teaching the Same Content. This is arguably one of the hardest ones to navigate, since this style requires both teachers to be up at the front, or various places around the classroom, and teaching at the same time. For example, one teacher might deliver the content instruction, while the other teacher will reinforce the concept while using different

manipulatives such as charts, vocabulary, simplified explanations, and total physical response (TPR). For positives, this allows teachers to scaffold language and lesson objectives quickly and efficiently (such as one uses content language and the other uses scaffolded language). This style of teaching faces a lot of challenges, especially through confidence in content from the specialist teacher, and requires a lot of planning time and willingness to share the classroom spotlight (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018).

One Teaches, One Assesses. While an older version of co-teaching, this model is where the lead teacher (often the content teacher) teaches the main lesson of the day and then the co-teacher is more hands-off and spends time collecting data about the students with diverse abilities in the classroom. This model gives the two teachers an advantage in collecting proper data (such as student understanding, accommodations, and baseline testing). By having another licensed teacher observe, teachers can see if teacher styles need to be adjusted accordingly. Some challenges that face this model include an unequal balance of responsibilities (such as one teacher mostly planning the content and the other teacher collecting and assessing the data). Out of all the models that will be described, this is often the least favored among educators (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018).

What makes these co-teaching models so difficult to navigate is that they all require purposeful and intense conversations in collaboration in order to justify the actions and make these models successful. Since the level of communication is so high, both educators truly need to be on the same page with these models.

Three More Models of Co-Teachings (Two Groups)

There are three additional co-teaching models that involve two teacher groups. Separate groups while co-teaching are often more popular than whole groups, especially since teachers

can still navigate their own teaching styles, classroom expectations, and without stepping onto other colleagues' spaces.

Two Teach the Same Content. This model is where the two teachers divide the class into two groups to reduce the student ratio and teach the same content, but by making sure ELL students are still getting their academic needs met for the content standards. This is often in collaboration with newcomer and sheltered instruction (classrooms where students who are new to the country or have low level English skills are taught content separately from their mainstream peers), which can be extremely helpful for ELL students and programs. Additionally, some teachers know about this teaching style under *team teaching.* Some of the advantages have been mentioned above, while some listed challenges include promoting segregation of ELL students, either intentionally or unintentionally, and promoting the stigma of intelligence levels, especially at the secondary level (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018).

One Pre-Teaches, One Teaches Alternative Information. This is where the co-teachers split the class time and take turns teaching different background knowledge or material of the daily lesson. For example, an ELL teacher can take the first portion of the whole class [or a small group] and teach background information, such as key vocabulary content, and definitions, and work on enhancing background knowledge/schema. Then, the other co-teacher can take time teaching the actual content from that lesson, with the co-teacher reiterating and explaining other key information throughout the lesson.

One Re-Teaches, One Teaches Alternative Information. This model also works in conjunction with the model above. There are multiple advantages to this approach, such as these teaching models do not just apply to ELL students– as it can be beneficial for ALL students. That way segregation can be avoided and all students can receive pre-teaching or re-teaching support.

However, these teaching models require a large amount of planning time, collaboration, and willingness from both co-teachers. This also requires a dedicated schedule and the same planning time (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018).

Although known by different names, these six co-teaching methods have been around for many years, and teachers in public, private, and charter schools have utilized these co-teaching styles. Even though they were briefly described, it is important to note that sharing, willingness to collaborate/cooperate, and communication are the keys to making all of these co-teaching models work, especially at the secondary level (Murawski, 2009). These six co-teaching models also offer autonomy for the teachers and decide what model works best for their schedules, expertise, student population, and themselves. However, as briefly mentioned, there are several positives and challenges to each model and one question that is frequently brought up is– what exactly are the roles and responsibilities of an ELL teacher?

Defining Roles and Responsibilities of an ELL Teacher

One of the most difficult tasks of co-teachers that often lead to a pitfall in successful co-teaching is defining, discussing, and evaluating teacher roles and responsibilities as a co-teaching pair. Teachers are often left to their own devices when figuring out how to work together and adopt a "sink or swim" mentality when co-teaching (Keefe & Moore, 2004). There is often little guidance on how to equally split up responsibilities when co-teaching, which can severely limit the roles of both educators (Keefe & Moore, 2004). This also falls on a lack of understanding of both ELL teacher and mainstream teacher roles, as historically, most mainstream teachers are underprepared to teach ELL students in their classroom (Stairs-Davenport, 2023). Often one of the most common concerns of ELL teachers in schools across the United States is regarding the lack of awareness about the role ELL teachers play in

students' education (Stairs-Davenport, 2023). This has contributed to the common misconception that ELL teachers are often "helpers" or "assistants."

ELL Teacher's Role

To have a co-teaching pair work, there needs to be a better understanding of an ELL teacher's role. Through an article by Platt & Wolfe (2015), published through MinneTESOL, there are three key pieces to an ELL teacher's role. It includes– 1) supporting systemic English language support, which includes teaching explicit grammar functions, vocabulary, intensive foundational English support, and academic English language, 2) supporting access to grade-level learning, which includes examining the skills needed to make the content standards and objectives accessible to ELL students, and 3) serving as advocates and local experts to support colleagues and the school in better meeting ELLs needs, which is advocating for appropriate student support in classrooms and training for other mainstream teachers and administration. ELL students require a different skill set since they are often grasping English foundational skills and content knowledge at the same time. This is where ELL teachers are experts and are specially trained in strategies and other teaching tools (Platt & Wolfe, 2015).

Mainstream Teacher's Role

It is also important to note that a mainstream teacher's job, especially at the secondary level, is incredibly difficult. Mainstream content teachers are often under pressure to maximize the content they teach due to rigorous curriculum, standards, testing, and timelines. This can often leave ELL students in the dust and expand the education gap further (Platt & Wolfe, 2015). By truly understanding the roles and responsibilities ELL teachers have, mainstream teachers may be able to recognize the level of support ELL teachers can offer by differentiating instruction and offering personalized learning in a specific skill set to ELL students. Oftentimes,

ELL teachers are not properly utilized within the school building due to a lack of understanding about their role. It is commonly asked– what do ELL teachers even do? For a co-teaching pair to work, there needs to be an explicit discussion about roles and responsibilities. This even comes down to handling difficult behaviors from students or even simple classroom procedures such as bathroom and hallway passes. All of these factors, even job descriptions, require open communication and collaboration between both of the teachers. By achieving the task of fully understanding each other's roles, mainstream and ELL teachers will be able to start building successful relationships.

Relationship Building Between Co-Teachers

In the educational field, it is common knowledge that relationships are the key to successful teaching and student learning. Without genuine relationship building, there would be little classroom success in multiple capacities. A co-teaching partnership between two educators is often compared to an "arranged marriage" (Murawski, 2009). Relationships can be both positive and negative, and can also have outlasting consequences depending on how the relationship works.

K-12 schools in the United States are not only looking towards relationship building, but they are also using the buzzword in conjunction with inclusivity and collaboration (Murawski, 2009). Both Murawski and her colleague, Claire Hughes, reworked the definition of *collaboration* as how it relates to relationships– "a style for interaction, which includes dialogue, planning, shared and creative decision making, and following up between at least two co-equal professionals with diverse expertise, in which the goal of the interaction is to provide appropriate services for students…" (Murawski, 2009, p. 6). They have come to determine that not only are co-teaching educators working on their collaboration, but they are also working on their

relationship building. They also state that both collaboration and relationship building are different and both need to be separately attended to. For educators to reach those benefits of co-teaching, they both need to be open to the idea of co-teaching and growing together.

Being open to the idea of co-teaching and growing together can often be seen as a problem, especially in secondary schools. There is usually a huge amount of pressure to teach content and perform well on standardized tests. Secondary teachers are also often more isolated than their elementary colleagues, and it is often compared to "teaching on their own island" (Giles & Yazan, 2020). Within co-teaching, not only is space shared, but so are ideas, students, content, language, strategies, and teaching styles. If a teacher feels their space, styles, or strategies are being threatened, defenses will rise and then that openness will be closed.

For ELL co-teaching to actually work with mainstream teachers, there has to be foundational relationship building. There has to be a level of understanding, mutual respect, open communication, and willingness to grow/make mistakes. There's been evidence that secondary teachers are more likely to *be paired* with co-teachers, rather than elementary teachers who *volunteer* (Asher, 2020). This leads to more hesitation and defensiveness with co-teaching in secondary, making it less likely to work.

To begin understanding the inner workings of a co-teacher partnership, there needs to be a discussion of the type of co-teaching relationship. According to Moschetti (2015), there are about seven different types of co-teaching relationships that can be evaluated.

Close Friend/Same Educational Philosophy

These teachers have relationships that are both friendly inside and outside of school. They spend time with each other because it is an all-positive experience for both.

Close Friend/Different Educational Philosophy

These teachers also have a friendship both inside and outside of school. They are loyal to each other but have differing views when it comes to teaching- which could include different teaching styles and classroom management.

Good Colleagues

These teachers only have a positive relationship inside of school. They usually spend some time with each other during the school day. They could be moving towards close friends, or staying content with their work-only relationship.

Colleagues/Bad Colleagues

These teachers have none [or only negative] experiences with each other. They usually do not spend any time with each other, or if they do, it is because they have to. If these teachers have to co-teach together, they won't be happy but may be able to make it work.

New Colleagues (No Work or Social Interaction)

These teachers have no experience with each other and sit right in the neutral relationship category. These often include new hires or different departments within the school. These teachers will be trying to form new relationships with each other.

Also, according to Pratt (2014), co-teachers experience one of three interpersonal relationships that were also mentioned above: positive, negative, or neutral. If the co-teachers have a positive relationship, then there is a high chance the co-teaching partnership will work out. Both teachers are more likely to be open-minded and see each other as strengths in the classroom. If co-teachers have a negative relationship, it is more likely that the co-teachers will have communication and more misunderstandings. There is more of a case for a "staff splitting" situation, which can lead to problems. Neutral relationships can be beneficial since the

co-teachers have no prior knowledge of each other and need to develop a foundational relationship. This co-teaching pair will then swing either way of positive or negative (Pratt, 2014). The main factors in these co-teaching interpersonal relationships are based on three criteria: inclusion, control, and openness (Pratt, 2014). If the teachers can be successful in these three criteria, then the co-teaching relationship will work.

In a co-teaching study based in New York City about co-teaching relationships (Asher, 2020), teachers who disliked the idea of co-teaching were less likely to have a successful co-teaching partnership, even after being told to co-teach with another teacher. Middle and high school teachers were also less likely to perform well in a co-teaching relationship. The research findings also showed the need for support to maintain and increase enjoyment in a co-teaching partnership and teachers need an average of 2-3 years of co-teaching with each other to be effective and successful (Asher, 2020).

Coupled with the multitude of options for co-teaching styles (ex: the six co-teaching methods), the amount of foundational relationship building that needs to be done for co-teachers (ex: teaching role responsibilities, willingness to be inclusive, openness, and control), and bogged down by everyday stressors of content classrooms (ex: standardized testing, content standards, classroom procedures), many secondary mainstream teachers feel as if they are on their island (Giles & Yazan, 2020). Also by adding in a lack of support or professional development, and a “winging it” mentality (Murawski, 2009), it is not shocking that many secondary teachers feel like co-teaching is an impossible hurdle to overcome and be successful. While many benefits to co-teaching will be discussed, it is important to also note that the stakes are higher for specific secondary ELL students to achieve their language and content standards/goals with a limited amount of time.

Roles and Responsibilities Summary

The different roles and responsibilities between an ELL teacher and a mainstream teacher are not properly identified by each other and often from administration. There is a cited lack of support for the entire co-teaching process, citing a lack of professional developments, to resources, and then follow through and guidance. Especially with secondary teachers, many feel like they are on their own island and feel like they are often told to "make it work" when it comes to co-teaching. There is usually a lack of buy-in from co-teaching and teacher's personalities play a large role as well.

Students Served in Co-Teaching Models

Since secondary co-teaching is being evaluated in this capstone project, it is important to look at which types of students are being taught at the secondary level. In middle and high school, ELL students are often divided into two identities: LTEL (Long Term English Learners), who have been in ELL programs for 6+ years, or Newcomers, who have been in the United States for less than two years. Especially at the secondary level, mainstream teachers are not adequately equipped with the resources or background knowledge to properly teach ELL students with potential gaps in their education, new to the country, or having limited academic English. Stakes are higher than ever with LTELs and newcomers who are in the middle or nearing the graduation of their K-12 journey. In secondary, ELL students are testing lower on scores, are often isolated, are not ready for higher education, do poorly in classes, and have dropout rates tend to be higher (Olsen, 2010). To close the gaps, co-teaching can be a viable option in secondary education, especially with a time limit (ex: graduation) and such heavy content classes. This section will evaluate the effects of inadequate teaching for secondary students and how co-teaching can assist.

Types of Secondary ELL Students

LTELs (Long Term English Learners). LTELs are students who have been in the ELL program for almost all of their K-12 educational journey. To be considered an LTEL student, they have to be in the program for six or more years and not be classified as English language proficient. The number of LTEL students is growing across the nation, as estimated by regional data from the cities such as New York City and Chicago, and states such as Colorado and California with large ranges from 23% to 74% of all students (Chen-Gaddini & Burr, 2016).On average, in California, LTELs are up by 20% and the percentage is continuing to climb (Chen-Gaddini & Burr, 2016).

Newcomers. Newcomers are students who have been in the United States and the K-12 school system for less than 2 years. The U.S. Department of Education also identifies newcomer students as "any foreign-born student and their families who have recently arrived in the United States" (U.S. Department of Education, 2023, para. 1). Challenges are incredibly high for newcomers since students and their families are not only new to the country and need to navigate a new culture socially, but also the academic and educational system that is different from their own (U.S. Department of Education, 2023, para. 4). The number of newcomer students [and their families] is expected to increase as the years go on. In 2014, an estimated 1.3 foreign-born individuals moved to the United States, which was a 13% increase compared to 2013. The largest number of newcomer students came from India, China, and Mexico, and this number also includes international adoptions (U.S. Department of Education, 2023, para. 6). Also according to 2014 numbers, there were 42.1 million immigrants ages 5 and older, and 50% of them (20.9 million people) were not fluent in English (U.S Department of Education, 2023, para. 6). Lastly,

newcomers are identified differently, depending on their circumstances- such as refugees, SIFE (students with interrupted formal education), asylees, and unaccompanied youth.

Outcomes of LTELs and Newcomers in Secondary Schools

Since ELL students (both Newcomer and LTELs) have such drastic gaps in their education, the outcomes for students can be severe during their K-12 journey and also post-graduation. LTEL students have the lowest predicted outcome of any other student group. In a high school study across Arizona, LTELs had an average graduation rate of 49%. Not only do LTELs have low graduation rates, but there are other characteristics, such as limited literacy skills in multiple languages (including English), and feeling/being "stuck" with limited proficiency levels of English, LTELs are also more likely than any other student group to be diagnosed with learning disabilities, and have a high dropout rate (Chen-Gaddini & Burr, 2016). LTELs also often have unrealistic expectations and views of higher education and have significant gaps in background knowledge, reading, and writing (Olsen, 2010).

As for Newcomer students, the stakes are also incredibly high. Newcomer students often have limited or interrupted gaps in their education, which puts them behind their secondary fluent-English-speaking peers. Since the language barrier is so high, Newcomer students often assume a position of passivity in the school environment– leading to an invisible presence in the classroom. Also, due to high language barriers, Newcomer students are often easily discouraged from participating in classroom norms, discussions, and activities (Olsen, 2010).

Reasonings Behind the Gaps

With stakes being so high for secondary LTELs and newcomer students, many educators and administrators are seeking the answer "How did the scores get so bad?" There are a multitude of answers and not one is held more responsible than the other. The reasonings behind heavy academic gaps can be contributed to receiving weak English language development

throughout K-12, experiencing a too narrow of a curriculum during school (where students can progress but they are instead "stuck" at being proficient and are instead reclassified), students attending multiple schools with different teaching styles, practices, and curriculums, or by students having gaps in their education (Chen-Gaddini & Burr, 2016). More factors are inconsistency with ELL programs (ex: ELL teachers are often pulled to sub or for other duties), social and linguistic segregation, unprepared teachers, and having weak language development models. Also, in some schools, the ELL student-population-to-teacher ratio is just too high for effective teaching (Olsen, 2010).

What also makes learning so difficult for secondary students is the material that ELL students have to learn in the classroom. Especially in secondary content classrooms, students are required to be able to juggle and have a comprehension of different vocabulary for the same meaning, such as *act* and *bill* in Social Studies. Not only is the vocabulary more tier 2 and tier 3 (such as complex words not used in everyday life), but students are also required to know different backgrounds and cultural knowledge, teaching styles of many different teachers, and in secondary school, there is usually less time for teachers to get to know the students on a personal level (Santibañez & Gándara, 2018).

Breaking the Cycle

With the high stakes of secondary LTEL and newcomer students, there is always the question of how to move forward with so many factors moving the gap back. To keep stakeholders informed about possible solutions, co-teaching is a viable solution to strategically implement in the classroom to assist secondary ELL students. In a study within California school districts, ELL students populate 38% and 31% of all middle and high schools, averaging fewer than 2.5 qualified teachers per 100 ELL students (Santibañez & Gándara, 2018). Within this

study, there was also evidence that secondary mainstream teachers in content classrooms do not have enough time to dedicate to ELL students' learning alongside their traditional content teaching and mainstream teachers also lack training on how to do it (Santibañez & Gándara, 2018). If conducted properly, co-teaching can alleviate a lot of the stress that comes with teaching high amounts of ELL students, a lack of training that mainstream teachers have, and can add to dual support in the classroom. Another qualified teacher can also assist with the time constraint secondary ELL students have to graduate and beyond.

Types of Secondary ELL Students Summary

There is such little knowledge of the different types of ELL students that schools serve and that is doing a disservice to them. With a more comprehensive understanding of Newcomers and LT-ELs and how to work with them, teachers will be able to see the benefits of co-teaching and understand why collaboration would be more beneficial. The stakes are incredibly high for these students and the students need all the support they can get. Also, by learning about the different types of ELL students, teachers will be able to understand and utilize better fitting teaching strategies.

Co-Teaching with ELLs: Challenges and Limitations

Even though co-teaching sounds like a foolproof plan to ensure inclusive and equitable education access for ELL students, some multiple challenges and barriers take place that do not involve students, especially at the secondary level. As mentioned in the previous section(s), for secondary teachers there's a lot of hesitancy, defensiveness, and a lack of relationship-building that happens with co-teachers. There have been issues cited from both environmental and individual factors. Environmental factors can include scheduling, lack of planning time, classroom sizes, limited access to resources, co-teaching professional developments, school

policies, lack of admin leadership/support, and lack of key implementation. For individual factors, these can include, lack of knowledge, trust, communication with their co-partner, or lack of overall buy-in surrounding co-teaching (Chitiyo, 2017). All combinations of these factors can conclude a failed co-teaching experience.

For many, co-teaching is easier said than done and looks almost foul-proof on paper and in theory. In the survey done by Chitiyo, most teachers cited certain factors that made co-teaching challenging to manage. In the survey distributed to educators in the Northeast states, 44% of mainstream teachers have only heard of co-teaching through university courses and have not seen it properly put into practice and 62% have affirmed that they do not have the foundational skills to properly co-teach with an ELL teacher. Also, anonymously within the survey, many educators noted that some of their colleagues would be difficult to work with as co-teachers, and a few of them did not believe in it (Chitiyo, 2017).

Through further research in another study, mainstream teachers in K-6th were more likely to be favorable to co-teaching policies and practices, rather than high school teachers (Keefe & Moore, 2004). A lot of these challenges have echoed similar concerns in this literature review- high stakes testing, the academic demand and intensity of high school curriculums, self-starting student independent study, and the inconsistent co-teaching strategies that were implemented at the secondary level, but only worked for the elementary level (Keefe & Moore, 2004). Educators also commented on concerns such as lack of communication issues between co-teachers, compatibility between co-teachers, large class sizes, lack of administration support [for access to co-teaching resources or accountability], lack of co-teaching professional development, staffing issues, and time [to plan and collaborate] was often reported to not be on the educator's sides (Keefe & Moore, 2004). Many of these limitations have already been discussed throughout this

literature review, but it is important to revisit them since there have been many common issues with co-teaching for K-12 schools across the country. Educators seem to keep battling these recurring issues.

There is also the matter of funding with K-12 public and charter schools that need to be addressed. In a dissertation completed which focused on the financing of ELL students across the states, Ajay Srikanth deduced that state funding for ELL students wildly varied, but the national average was about $8,500 per student, which was concluded that it is not enough to provide solid supports for ELL students (Srikanth, 2022). Due to the lack of funding, many educators are teaching the WIDA test, which is an examination of the four English modules- Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing). Many ELL students are being taught the yearly WIDA [World Class Instructional Design and Assessment] test. With a lack of funding for ELL students, resources, materials, appropriate curriculum, and professional development for mainstream content teachers are often on hold (Srikanth, 2022). Co-teaching is a viable way to have professional developments stay in-house and continue to build the relationship between educators (Srikanth, 2022).

Lastly, teachers have remarked that administration can play a huge role in co-teaching being successful within the schools. In the survey done by Keefe & Moore (2004), the teachers believed that the administration needed to listen to teachers' voices more and allow them to have more input for their co-teaching partnership. When looking at inclusive teaching, the teachers in this study also believed that administrations needed full school-wide commitment to co-teaching. If co-teaching will work, then administrators need to not overfill classrooms [with co-teachers] of students who need support, to give adequate planning time to the co-teachers, and develop a plan for all teachers to not only learn about inclusive teaching but ways to improve and be better

co-teachers. The teachers reported in the survey that they want the administration to be more hands-on (Keefe & Moore, 2004).

Positive Impacts of Co-Teaching

In this literature review so far, there has been an extensive evaluation of the challenges and limitations of collaborative co-teaching and exactly how secondary ELL students are impacted by the widening gaps in ELL education. With so many hurdles to overcome, many administrators and teachers question if co-teaching is worth pursuing and if it is even effective. With an effort to understand and properly collaborate, co-teaching is an effective tool for ELL students.

In research conducted within middle schools, many positives were reported by educators. Shared co-teaching can have multiple benefits such as better preparation of content and increased opportunities for students, better focus on the needs of middle schoolers with another set of eyes, increased respect for colleagues, and increased time (such as having an easier planning time and having more resources and strategies presented by others) (Hurd & Weilbacher, 2017). Throughout the entire study, the educators participating in the research kept referring to the increased time of planning, collaborating, teaching, and assessing students with other educators around. Teachers were also able to reflect and make improvements in lessons to target students in the classroom with each other.

In recent research, studies, and articles, there are almost no downsides for students in co-teaching classroom environments. In Andrea Honigsfeld and Maria Dove's most recent book, they interviewed current ELL elementary students. The reactions were all positive and met with excitement from the students about co-teaching and having two teachers in the classroom. The students reported that they were able to receive more attention- both for social/emotional needs

and for academic needs. Students also reported that they were able to get help faster and there was less wait time for help (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2022).

In other research, there were other positives on ELL students in the classroom. Two co-teachers discovered that by combining their expertise as a secondary mainstream ELA teacher and ESL specialist, ELL students were participating more in the classroom when their learning needs were being personalized, met, and accommodated. ELL students were participating more in class, turning in more completed work, and both teachers noticed that self-motivation for learning was increasing (Giles & Yazan, 2020).

Lastly, a school district in Colorado saw that by adopting a collaborative co-teaching model, ELL students were progressing faster in English language development and were self-reporting that they were feeling less isolated by being able to stay in content classrooms (Kimani, 2018). It was also reported in another Colorado school district that it was easier for ELL students to collaborate in small groups, ELL teachers shared great techniques and strategies with the mainstream teachers that they were able to use, and ELL students were able to learn more closely alongside their English-speaking peers better from not being isolated (Kimani, 2018).

Professional Development and Its Impact

In almost all states, teachers often need to have continuing education credits to stay within education. Earlier in this literature review, the results of teacher surveys were discussed concerning teacher preparation. Many mainstream teachers felt that preparation was lacking surrounding ELL students and best practices. Alongside those survey results, many mainstream teachers said that they were not adequately prepared to teach ELL students (Platt & Wolfe, 2015).

Within Georgia, it was discovered that most of the ELL and mainstream content teachers learned about ELL best practices and strategies from workshops or in-services rather than ongoing professional development or courses. It was also argued that by improving teachers' professional development, teachers could better help ELL students. However, these professional developments need to be designed with both content and language objectives/standards (Enyinnah, 2014). With ELL students rapidly expanding populations across K-12 education, teachers and administrations are often required to adapt quickly without access to the most recent and newest resources. Almost every mainstream teacher will likely come across at least one ELL student in their classroom, yet only 29.5% of mainstream educators have the proper training and access to professional development to help educators properly teach them. Not only that, but only 20 states require background knowledge in how to teach diverse groups of students (Enyinnah, 2014).

Mainstream educators need to have professional development opportunities for second language acquisition, diverse cultures, and instructional strategies for ELL students. Although professional development is sometimes offered within schools, it is common for professional development to be short-term and only at the beginning of the school year, with little follow-up (Enyinnah, 2014). Many secondary mainstream educators are upfront and honest about their lack of preparation and training in working with ELL students and how this affects the achievement and learning gap (Al-Sharafi, 2015). There has been evidence that mainstream teachers are asking for more support and professional development from qualified ELL specialists and teachers, to continue their learning about best practices, strategies, and cultural competency for ELL students (Al-Sharafi, 2015).

Co-teaching can assist in this need for more professional development for mainstream teachers in a multitude of ways. For one, ELL teachers are specifically trained in best practices for ELL students. In secondary, ELL teachers can freely collaborate and hold department meetings with other secondary teachers, can offer support and reflective practices, and model strategies. (Giles & Yazan, 2020). It is also common for ELL teachers to conduct professional development for mainstream teachers, which is a way to bring consistent professional development training in-house (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Throughout this literature review, co-teaching and professional development can go hand-in-hand.

Summary

This literature review discussed many important aspects of co-teaching- from original definitions of co-teaching, types of colleague relationships, co-teaching models, challenges/limitations, and even positives. Since this capstone project is focused on secondary ELL co-teaching, it was important to focus on a brief historical review and laws of ELL education in the U.S and what types of ELL students are at the highest stake in secondary– which are LTELS (Long Term English Learners) and Newcomer students. This literature review discussed the outcomes of these students' educational gap and *why* it was happening.

All of this important background information contributes to the overall research question– *In what ways can building early collaboration between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers positively impact student learning?* Andrea Honigsfeld and Maria Dove say it best throughout their many books– that there are two types of relationships that make teaching successful– relationships with students and relationships among colleagues (Honigsfeld, Dove & González, 2021). Throughout this literature review, it has been evident that teachers want assistance in instructing ELL students and many have self-reported that they can see the

benefits of co-teaching and collaboration with an ELL teacher. However, there needs to be foundational work and a mutual understanding between a mainstream teacher and an ELL teacher. Successful co-teaching relationships are built on genuine trust, mutual respect, honesty, understanding, and loyalty (Moschetti, 2015). Without a positive co-working relationship, co-teaching will not work.

In Chapter Three, there will be a thorough description of the capstone project that takes into consideration foundational relationship building and professional development. For this capstone project, there will be a series of professional development sessions built to hold accountability and support secondary content mainstream teachers and ELL teachers who are co-teaching together for the school year. There will be an emphasis on the six types of co-teaching models and a guided manual to establish strong foundational relationships and continue to build the relationships throughout the year.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Overview

As discussed in the literature review, for there to be effective co-teaching within the classrooms, it is of utmost importance that the colleagues who are paired together (either voluntarily or more commonly, volunteered) establish a foundational understanding and a genuine co-working relationship with each other, especially at the secondary level. Secondary ELL students– both LTELs and newcomer students– need adequate support without isolation in our content classrooms. Successful co-teaching can be the key to building these academic content and English language acquisition gaps if the educators can get along and become a strong co-teaching pair. There has to be foundational relationship work put in between the educators, which can only be done with a sense of understanding of each other regarding roles, responsibilities, trust, and open communication with each other.

Now, many schools are looking towards inclusive teaching practices, and co-teaching is frequently brought up as a solution for students and teachers alike to have solutions for large classrooms and so many students with diverse needs, learning styles, and abilities. Co-teaching is known to have many benefits, including increasing engagement in student learning, more student support, different types of lessons, and access to different student resources and knowledge (Ferguson & Wilson, 2011). On the other hand, co-teaching can bring up multiple issues and barriers to work through– such as power struggles between teachers, understanding of each other, consistent communication (between each other and in front of students), sharing roles and responsibilities, and logistics within teaching and planning, such as classroom management, grading policies, teaching styles (Ferguson & Wilson, 2011). Although many mainstream

teachers are open to co-teaching, there are a lot of questions and hesitations about co-teaching with an ELL teacher, whereas limited research has been done in that field (Chitiyo, 2017).

With so many barriers affecting the co-teaching process, it is an important reminder that genuine relationships between students and teachers are what makes classroom teaching successful, but that genuine relationships between [co-teaching] staff and administration can make the school successful. Throughout the research and realizing that the biggest roadblock to co-teaching is developing genuine co-teaching relationships between educators, it has all led to this research question– *In what ways can building early collaboration between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers positively impact student learning?*

This chapter presents a framework needed to complete this capstone project- a series of PD sessions-, as well as potential outcomes for this capstone project. This chapter will also take a look at the intended audience and potential setting for this project, details of the series of professional development sessions, the rationale behind their creation, and a potential timeline.

Framework

As inclusive practices throughout K-12 schools in the U.S. continue to grow, there needs to be dedication and focus to solving a huge barrier- developing foundational skills and knowledge to be a successful co-teaching pair. This capstone project will focus on a series of social and professional development sessions that are meant to be presented to the co-teaching pairs. These co-teaching professional development sessions will primarily focus on secondary ELL teachers and mainstream content teachers (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies). Although the focus is on specific secondary co-teaching pairs, it will not be limited to just teachers. Administration and stakeholders will be able to benefit from the knowledge of

foundational co-teaching practices and relationship building. With the hopeful evolution of this capstone project, it will be able to reach more individuals outside of classroom teaching.

These professional developments will be made for adult learners and educators to grow their knowledge of co-teaching and ELL teaching. The framework that will be utilized will be based on the *Effective Teacher Professional Development* by Linda Darling-Hammond, Maria Hyler, and Madelyn Garner from the Learning Policy Institute (2017). This series of professional development presentations will be guided by the elements described in this PD manual, which include the seven elements: content focus, active learning, collaboration, uses of models and modeling, coaching and expert support, feedback and reflection, and sustained duration. It will be heavily focused on active learning, coaching, and reflection. Also, since this professional development will be focused on relationship-building between co-teachers, a lot of the *Equity by Design* framework will be utilized by Mirko Chardin and Katie Novak (2020). These professional developments will include communication, understanding of self as educators, and even recognizing bias of underserved student populations and collaboration. This framework will be incredibly helpful in keeping equity and social justice at the forefront of these professional developments. These frameworks will be incredibly helpful in creating accessible professional developments that will reach many people, not just teachers or administrators. For applying these principles, the entire first PD will focus on buy-in and setting the groundwork of why co-teaching with ELL students is a framework and model worth pursuing. It will be backed up by research that will help reinforce buy-in. The goal, as these professional developments continue to evolve, is to create separate PDs by focusing administrative support and research based evidence for administration and stakeholders.

Setting

This series of professional development sessions are meant to take place before the school year starts and also have follow up time during the school year (after school), in a coaching style. Since this is a series of interactive, professional developments and a longer-term commitment, there will be plenty of consideration if teacher planning time is used. Primarily, the goal will be to take place after teaching hours, but before contract time ends. These professional developments will be flexible and can take place nearly anywhere. Ideally, the location will be in classrooms or school meeting spaces, since this professional development will be catered towards a smaller group of educators (no more than 10, 5 co-teaching pairs and a minimum of 2 people, 1 co-teaching pair). It is not necessary to utilize large gym spaces. Since professional developments are flexible, online Zoom or Google Meet meetings can be held as well. This capstone project will ideally start getting presented in August before school starts, and lead into December, followed by co-teaching sessions.

Audience

The intended audience of this capstone project will be created with the co-teaching pairs in mind. They will be all adult learners and can range from seasoned, veteran teachers to first-year teachers or student teachers. Specifically, the teachers this professional development will have in mind are secondary ELL teachers and mainstream content teachers (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies). Although these professional developments will include general knowledge of ELL students and strategies and general co-teaching knowledge, they will work best for co-teaching pairs who are actively co-teaching [or about to] together. Ideally, this is a voluntary professional development, since it will be longer-term. If the co-teaching pair did not

volunteer and was instead mandated to these professional developments, it will still be catered towards them as well.

Since secondary teachers are more likely to be volunteered or assigned to co-teach, these professional developments will aim to work at building buy-in and foundational co-teaching relationships. Although this is catered toward ELL and mainstream teachers, it is not just limited to them. To have co-teaching and inclusive teaching work in the schools, administration support and understanding of the inner workings of co-teaching are needed. That way, if there are issues that arise between the co-teachers, the administration can be aware and could be an asset in solving issues internally. The idea is to have more professional developments in the future catered toward administration and stakeholders.

Project Description and Timeline

The overall idea and purpose of this capstone project is to guide teachers (who are ideally new or inexperienced co-teaching pairs) and give a structure to the start of developing a co-teaching relationship. Many times, teachers are new to co-teaching, had negative past experiences, or are just hesitant to co-teaching. In my professional experience, even teachers who are open to co-teaching do not have any idea of where to start.

This capstone project will be a series of four professional developments that looks at the buy-in with evidence, foundations of co-teaching, and will also focus on evaluating co-teaching routines, communication, and best practices. It will also offer a guided opportunity and time for co-teaching pairs to have constructive conversations, such as expectations, understanding roles/responsibilities, and discussing non-negotiable rules. This capstone is designed with a focus on foundational co-teaching building and will offer a guided opportunity based on experience, modern research, and best practices for secondary ELL and mainstream content teacher pairs.

Utilizing the literature review, the professional development series will be planned to be conducted at the start of the school year and continue throughout the year, most likely ending towards winter break/early January. As mentioned, these co-teaching professional developments will be focused on where help will be needed the most at the start of the foundation and school year to help increase buy-in.

For the presentation of the capstone project, four PDs are already planned– the first being a school-specific introduction, evidence-based research on why co-teaching is beneficial, and discussing roles and responsibilities between mainstream and ELL teachers. It will also include an introduction to the hand-outs that will recap and further engage the professional developments presented. The second PD will include more specific information on co-teaching, such as the three co-teaching models that are the whole group, and stations will be set up for participants to evaluate advantages and challenges of each. It will also allow teachers to start establishing common ground- such as classroom rules, roles, discussing concerns, and other logistics. The definitions of collaboration and communication will also be discussed. PD three will focus on the final three co-teaching models, which focuses on teaching in two groups (either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms). The fourth professional development session will allow participants the opportunity to discuss their self-reflections, expectations, needs, and non-negotiable rules with their co-teaching partner. The final activity in the professional development session will tie everything together and have the co-teaching pairs actively plan a co-taught lesson together using the model of their choice.

In keeping with Darling-Hammon et al. 2017, for these professional development(s), the information will be presented in an interactive way. Alongside the professional development sessions, there will be an interactive notebook that will be utilized. It will have important pieces

of information, note-taking space, layout of activities, and visuals for participants post-sessions. In the interactive notebook, all the guided activities, templates, questions, and self-reflections will be available. While this will be given on paper, the interactive notebook was created for online use as well if the participant is more comfortable typing than writing. These professional developments are developed through Google Slides and Canva, and will be presented with plenty of hands-on activities and participant voice. These professional developments aim to instead of lecturing, place the presenter in a facilitator role. Question and Answer sessions will be embedded in the breakout sessions at the end. There will also be a small survey conducted and collected after every session to ensure proper and constructive feedback.

In order to make sure there was enough time allotted for the completion of this capstone project, this capstone was completed over the Summer and Fall months of 2023. As for the timeline of the professional development(s), this is designed for foundational work and to have these PDs completed over the course of a school year, including the check-ins and evaluating co-teaching relationships. Time will seriously be taken into consideration since teachers have limited time. In this capstone project, the first four professional development sessions will be completely laid out and each totaling an hour and a half (90 minutes).

Summary

As educators, we work hard to have students develop communication skills with their peers and we need to be able to model that as well. Inclusive education practices will continue to grow and so will our K-12 ELL student population. Teachers need to be able to adapt to the least restrictive environments. Teachers and administrators are always looking at communication and collaboration, and in the words of Audre Lorde (1984), is this quote– “How are you practicing what you preach–whatever you preach, and who exactly is listening?” (p. 144).

In conclusion, this capstone project aims to curb a gap that co-teaching pairs commonly mention; which is the lack of foundational relationship building and a basic understanding/starting point of co-teaching. Ideally, this professional development is set to grow and expand as the subject matter becomes more detailed. These professional developments are meant to be incredibly interactive and aim to help teachers model strong co-working relationships and communication skills to students. Even as educators, practice and effort are needed to make these connections work.

This capstone project is made for educators who are co-teaching together. The location and delivery will be flexible based on the need and location can be fluid (hosted virtually or in-person). In Chapter Four, there will be more details on the creation of this professional development series, limitations and barriers, and reflections on creating this project.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Introduction

I created this capstone project in order to seek the answer to my research question: *In what ways can building early collaboration between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers positively impact student learning?* This research question arose after a few years of teaching ELL students, especially at the secondary level. Throughout my educational journey, I had many experiences attempting to co-teach at the elementary and secondary levels. While all my experiences varied on a spectrum from successful to unsuccessful, there were a few key concepts that I kept noticing between colleagues that impacted my decision to create this capstone product. The capstone project that I created was four professional development sessions that focused on buy-in and giving a guide for building foundational secondary co-teaching partnerships. It was created for co-teaching pairs between mainstream classrooms (English, Science, Math, and Social Studies) and ELL teachers at high-needs schools. I will also be reflecting on the research that was conducted, and reflections on the project materials as well as analyzing the limitations of my capstone project and potential future impacts in K-12 education and the growing ELL field.

Major Learnings

My inspiration for researching and developing this capstone project came from my own experiences as a new ELL teacher in Title 1 charter schools with high populations of ELL students. I was sent off to create my schedules and was partnered with classroom teachers where the majority of their students were in the ELL program. It was difficult to think about providing services in a small group format, especially when nearly the entire grade was entitled to ELL

services. As a new elementary ELL teacher, I was excited to join the mainstream classroom and collaborate with the classroom teacher at the start of COVID-19 in 2020. It was obvious to me that co-teaching could be the best option to meet the needs of all our ELL students and the school I first started teaching at thought the same. I also thought, wouldn't two teachers in a classroom [or Zoom] be way better than just one?

Although I had these great visions of collaboration and co-teaching, that was not the truth for everyone. Even though I was eager to collaborate with many teachers, I noticed the resistance and unwillingness to be open to co-teaching, especially when I started teaching ELL at the secondary level. I would encounter teachers who would not share their lesson plans with me, lock "my" students out of classrooms if I was absent, and go as far as reporting to me for "stealing their job in the classroom." On the other side, I also encountered a lot of positivity- where I had co-teachers who wanted to collaborate with me and wanted to make co-teaching work. Unfortunately, that is where I also realized the next gap when it comes to co-teaching. Even if I had a co-teacher who wanted to work with me, neither knew where to start. How do we even begin forming a relationship with a colleague? How do we even get to that point where language learning and content learning can be combined? It seemed like nobody- from me, the ELL teacher, the mainstream teacher, and even the administration could give direction on where to start. It truly developed into that "sink or swim" mentality for everyone. Eventually, the school decision was to abandon co-teaching and go back to small groups.

When I switched schools in Minnesota, another opportunity for me to co-teach as an ELL teacher came through in a secondary school. Eventually, the Social Studies teacher and I were able to parallel teach and develop a great relationship after months of making it work on the fly. It was in my second year of teaching and I came to the conclusion that co-teaching *can* work

with effort, relationship building, and planning. Co-teaching was not easy, but the Social Studies teacher and I were proof that it could work.

My third year of being an ELL teacher at the same school was extremely tough. It was post-COVID and all students were officially back in the classroom. After staffing shortages, I ended up stepping into two roles– the secondary ELL teacher AND a mainstream secondary ELA teacher. Here I was, now dealing both positions as an interventionist teacher and a mainstream ELA teacher. Now that I was actually in a mainstream teaching position, I came to grow protective of my role. It was *my* classroom, *my* structure, *my* rules, *my* plans, and truthfully, I did not want anyone messing with my routine. About halfway through the year, I was given a SPED co-teacher and it dawned on me- *I didn't want a co-teacher either for my ELA classes.* I was shocked as I knew the SPED teacher and I already had a great relationship with him. I realized I developed a resistance mentality and felt protective over my classroom space. I became the mainstream teacher that I was frustrated with.

It was that self-reflection that led me to this research and project that came about today. Now that I have experience on both sides of the educational coin, as both a mainstream ELA teacher and an ELL teacher, I realize exactly what mindsets are needed to make co-teaching work. I was able to see what is needed from both roles and how vastly different the responsibilities are. The biggest conclusion I could come to is that nobody knew where to start in co-teaching, especially with large numbers of ELL students. Also, I came to realize that relationship building and trust are so important between co-teaching colleagues. We as educators stress the importance of building genuine relationships with students, but it feels like relationships between colleagues are left behind, especially when they are sharing a classroom or being volunteered to co-teach together by the administration.

While all of this experience happened when I was teaching in Minnesota, I ended up moving to Michigan when I started my Research Design class. ELL services are very new to Central Michigan, where I now live, and ELL services are very isolated from the rest of the school services. ELL services are mostly pull-outs, even at schools with 90% or more ELL students. ELL teachers and mainstream teachers do not speak often, especially at the secondary level. Based on the research, this is often true in secondary settings, where it feels like teachers are working and teaching on their own islands (Giles & Yazan, 2020). Even though I live in a new state, I still hold onto that co-teaching can be extremely beneficial and there is so much room to develop and build the foundations.

As a researcher, a major finding that I learned about myself was just how much I actually enjoyed the entire process. I always enjoyed writing and researching, but I did not realize I would like doing it this much. It has been stressful, but I truly enjoyed conducting research, creating a literature review, and watching it all come together. I also learned how to be precise and detailed in what I was researching since ELL research is limited. I learned how to better grasp keywords, and find authors, other related articles, or studies. In fact, much of the research on co-teaching is based on Special Education and mainstream co-teaching. There is also more research on elementary co-teaching than there is on secondary. Even during the research process, I noticed that teaching at the secondary level can truly feel like being on your own island.

Looking Back at the Literature

As mentioned above, the research process was extremely helpful and created the basis for my capstone project. It was a difficult topic to research since ELL co-teaching is such an understudied topic. A lot of my resources were based on and alluded to SPED and mainstream co-teaching. However, the more detailed and precise I got with researching, the more articles I

found. A lot of my feelings and original notices rang true as I began reading through the research. For example, it was confirmed multiple times that most co-teachers in secondary schools are often told to co-teach, unlike elementary teachers who volunteered to co-teach (Asher, 2020). Another researcher I leaned on was Pappamihiel (2012), whose research on elementary co-teaching in Title 1 schools created a large foundation for making the case for co-teaching with high ELL student populations.

Multiple sources also confirmed that with co-teaching, a lot of unfortunate situations that I encountered (such as refusing to share lesson plans, refusing to teach certain students, being reported, or being made to feel like a paraprofessional) was a common feeling among ELL teachers (Enyinnah, 2014). The research did confirm that mainstream content teachers and ELL teachers do not exactly know what roles and responsibilities each one holds. The most beneficial research that I found came from co-teaching books developed by Maria Dove and Andrea Honigsfeld (2018). They are both leading experts in the ELL field and are paving the way for successful co-teaching between mainstream and ELL teachers. One of their books, *Co-Teaching for English Learners*, is where I adapted many of the professional development materials from. The book they had written had excellent co-teaching strategies for developing the foundations of building a co-teaching partnership. Looking at the type of schools I always worked at, such as small, Title 1 schools with limited resources and a high number of ELL students, I wanted to adapt their materials to make them manageable and adaptable for extremely busy teachers who worked at similar schools. Maria Dove and Andrea Honigsfeld also gave a great foundational starting point for the logistics of co-teaching and introductions to the six co-teaching models.

Much of my professional development was focused on building positive, foundational co-teaching relationships. I followed a lot of Moschetti's (2015) research about co-teaching

relationships and the different models to evaluate all the outcomes. My professional developments were focused on building and starting to swing the new co-teaching partnerships in the positive direction and aligning with the same educational philosophy goals by setting common grounds and working to build strong communication skills.

I also felt it was very important to research what type of ELL students were in secondary school to give clarification on how important co-teaching is. Secondary is a completely different world than elementary, and it is important to recognize how limited time is for secondary students. There is a huge difference between a newcomer in kindergarten and a newcomer student in 9th grade. Time is limited for secondary students and it is very important to evaluate the two types of ELL students- newcomers and LTELs (long-term English learners). It was also important to evaluate the outcomes post-high school, the gaps in secondary education that stagnate ELL students' learning, and how co-teaching can help remedy that. Lastly, within my literature review, it was important to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of co-teaching and to reinforce what limitations teachers have when implementing co-teaching and the lack of follow-through with professional development that happens at the beginning of the year (Kimani, 2018).

The research from the literature review had a major influence on the direction I wanted my professional development sessions to take. Even though I had found a lot of research and materials, I wanted to focus on teacher buy-in with co-teaching, making it manageable to process information and bring it back to creating positive conversations and communications to grow co-teaching partnerships. A new connection that I made between the literature review and co-teaching was that the challenges of co-teaching were identifiable and across the board, no matter what state. The foundation of secondary co-teaching (both *how-to* and *relationship*

building) are large gaps that need to be addressed and research has proven a call to action. There needs to be a common starting point.

Limitations of Capstone Project

Even though there were hours and months of research put into this capstone project, it is still not without its own limitations. One limitation I can think of is that I do not have an administrator's perspective on how the implementation of this co-teaching professional development program would work. There are a lot of logistics from an administrative perspective, such as funding, dedication, resources, and time allotted for this program. Schools and administrators are very busy and limited at the start of the school year, so I do not know how this will fit in because I lack the administrator perspective. Also, all schools have their own personalities and student demographics. This program was designed for very specific schools with high ELL populations. This capstone project is very limited to schools or districts that only have a few ELL students.

Another limitation is the over-buy-in work that is needed to bring these professional developments in. For example, as mentioned before, working in different schools and even states have their own style of education. In Michigan, EL services are very isolated and separated from the rest of the school, so getting these professional development sessions within schools would need a buy-in pitch and success data of its own to appeal to a modern way of teaching. With that being said, there are a lot of systems in place that would need to change or adapt in order to even bring co-teaching in. My hope is that by having experience on both sides, as an ELA mainstream teacher and ELL teacher I can find a balance to prove the need for co-teaching in modern classrooms. I hope this project demonstrates the belief I have in co-teaching for ELL students.

A final limitation that I realized is that this is only the first four professional development sessions out of what I aspire to be a year-long coaching program with follow-through. Not all of the materials or professional developments are completed and this is only a snapshot of what I hope to accomplish with a year-long coaching program. Lastly, this capstone project was developed quickly, with research and project development happening within the course of about six months. There is still room for improvement and for more research to be implemented. The professional development slides and materials were developed during Fall 2023, and there may be people who will question the validity and reliability of this capstone project. However, this project is meant to be a starting point for co-teaching which is so critically needed and with plans to be developed more in the future.

Future Research

The need for a starting point in co-teaching has been mentioned in much literature, and in school hallways, and has been frequently noted in the lack of professional development, resources, and follow-through during the school year. Co-teaching seems like the perfect solution and is definitely easier said than done. Time after time, secondary educators have been told to co-teach and make it work without fully realizing the foundational gaps of not only building a trusted relationship with each other but also lesson planning and creating curricula together. There are so many logistical and different pieces to co-teaching that are not fully realized until two educators- the mainstream content teacher and the ELL teacher are building the plane as they are flying it.

Future research that can happen alongside this capstone project is looking into strategies for each of the co-teaching models and witnessing how they can work in action together. The six models are vastly different and certain strategies can be better for some than others. While

creating foundational relationship building, more attention to co-teaching strategies can take place. Future research can also include opportunities to witness and view co-teaching in secondary classrooms from all the content areas. Another glaring future research opportunity that I foresee is being able to gather evidence and data on successful co-teaching classrooms. Does it improve WIDA ACCESS and other state test scores? How do the students feel? Did the teachers change their minds and are roles/responsibilities equal within the classroom? Future research is definitely on the line and needs to be developed in the realm of secondary ELL co-teaching, not just data collection for success and academics, but also looking at social and emotional aspects of teachers, students, school administration, and school culture.

Communication of the Project

The first step after officially completing this project is getting the word out that the start of this coaching project exists. I know that this project will be published on the Hamline Digital Commons page, but that is not enough for how much this work is needed in secondary education. I have goals of someday presenting and implementing this project, so the goal would be to start small. Although I no longer live in Minnesota, I can begin in Michigan by introducing these professional development sessions to my own school next year. Possibly, I can introduce parts of this project and conduct an in-house professional development at the start of next school year. I also have an interest in showing this project to the Ann Arbor Public Schools district and mapping out my plan. I also want to return to Minnesota to teach in the future and hopefully work toward presenting this in the Twin Cities at conferences.

A lot of the communication will fall on me to convince administrators and stakeholders to even view this capstone project and increase their buy-in that co-teaching is a valuable and positive teaching model for everyone involved- for teachers and students. Although this is the

vision of a year-long project, I understand the need to start small and even internally, or even present parts to get the word out. I am a firm believer that co-teaching foundations are needed, especially as the ELL student population is expected to grow across the United States. With class sizes getting larger and there being more stakes to standardized testing, two teachers in the classroom with specialties can be extremely beneficial to not only ELL students, but ALL students to learn language and content objectives. I also recognize that there needs to be more data collection on the success of co-teaching in classrooms.

Summary

It is my hope that this entire capstone project gave a detailed starting point to answer the research question: *In what ways can building early collaboration between secondary mainstream teachers and ELL teachers positively impact student learning?* Even in all my personal experiences, teachers who want to co-teach together do not have a starting point, and the teachers who are told to co-teach often end with negative outcomes, with resistance and defensiveness. While educators are told to co-teach together, there is a need for a unified starting point for busy educators with a lack of resources. The research in the literature review gave great insight into the need for this work, clear advantages and challenges of co-teaching, a starting point for overall buy-in, the importance of relationship building between educators, and why it is important to have co-teaching as a viable solution for secondary ELL students. The implications of this project are that it potentially can lead to change and the realization of how effective co-teaching can be with a starting point backed by research and that will give teachers a foundation to be successful through co-teaching together. Although there are multiple limitations to this co-teaching capstone project, such as the lack of buy-in and the lack of an administrator's perspective on the project and the niche school demographics this project was created for, I

believe that with work and adjustments, these limitations can be overcome. There is also a need for more future research within the realms of ELL co-teaching and the effectiveness of co-teaching. My ultimate goal and hope is that this capstone project is a viable and reliable starting point for more collaboration, communication, and teaching ideas for secondary educators and ELL students.

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