Fall 2017

Introducing Non-EL Teachers To Visual Learning Strategies For Beginning English Learners: A Proposal For Workshop Study

Jillian Magnusson
Hamline University

INTRODUCING NON-EL TEACHERS TO VISUAL LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR

BEGINNING ENGLISH LEARNERS: A PROPOSAL FOR WORKSHOP STUDY

by

Jillian Magnusson

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

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

December 2017

Primary Advisor: Bonnie Swierzbin
Secondary Advisor: Debbie Hadas
Peer Reviewer: Marian Gagliardi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Learning languages has always been a passion of mine. I believe it all began when my 3rd grade teacher brought in an Eiffel Tower she had made out of pipe cleaners to show us an example of what we could do for our end of unit culture project. I was immediately hooked on exploring other cultures and soon discovered I was hooked on learning other languages too. I was eager to know more about the world and couldn't wait until my schooling offered a foreign language class. Of course, I chose French! It was throughout my own journey as a second language learner that I discovered I was actually learning more about my first language as well. I studied French through high school and then decided to pursue a degree in International Studies. For my third year in college I was lucky to have the opportunity to study abroad in the south of France. While I was there, I wanted to take advantage of all the French practice I could get, so the University matched me with a bright and determined pediatrician who had a heart for languages and wanted an English conversation partner. It was during these language lessons that I soon realized how much I loved this collaborative partnership as well as the feeling I got from helping someone learn through language. I found it really inspiring that we could go on for hours just talking about the similarities and differences between our two languages and cultures, and break down any language and cultural barriers merely by sharing words. By helping to explicitly teach this doctor about some of the grammar and syntax of English that he was otherwise unaware, I was able to better my own understanding of both English and French. I had to stop and ask myself how many times did I think about

why the adjective comes before the noun it modifies? Did I even realize there was a

significant reason for this? Or why is it that English doesn't use gender-specific nouns

that must be in accordance with the subjects and adjectives within the sentence? These

are the kinds of questions that inspired me to become a language teacher. I felt a certain

satisfaction in puzzling all the linguistic features together and I loved talking to others

about it, so why not teach it? I knew I had to continue this thought experiment when I

returned home from my studies abroad.

After I graduated college, I had a great desire to continue this language learning

journey so I applied and was accepted to the LanguageCorps program for teaching

English abroad. Of the countries accepting this program, I chose Costa Rica because I

wanted to embark on a new language learning journey and introduce myself to Spanish. I

quickly packed my bags and moved down south to Central America! Again, I wanted to

take advantage of all the opportunities and exposure to Spanish I could get, so I searched

out a conversation partner and built another partnership in conversation with a banker

who was looking to improve his vocabulary and speaking skills in English. It was

through this experience that I solidified my passion for teaching and learning language.

So I asked myself, how could I make this my job back home? I soon realized that the best

way to do this was to become an English Learner (EL) teacher because then I would get

to explore other languages and cultures by interacting with students from all over the

world, as well as help support them in their journey of learning English. This is when I

found the MAESL program at Hamline.

As I moved through my licensure program, learning how to apply best strategies

for teaching English Learners (ELs), I soon began to realize that this was a population yet

to be truly discovered and universally recognized. I had assumed that all teacher training programs offered some type of course in English as a Second Language (ESL) strategies and cultural diversity, only to find out that the majority of classroom and content teachers I met had never before received any sort of training or coursework in working with ELs. For example, I remember in my student teaching, which was at a large public school just north of St. Paul, MN, my first collaboration meeting with a 7th grade science teacher turned into a 30 minute lesson on what exactly it means to be an EL and why they need accommodated learning strategies and specific vocabulary support. He even asked me if it was his job to incorporate those types of strategies or if it was solely my responsibility. I was very taken aback by this because I had never imagined my job would also be to teach the teacher. It wasn't long before I became a sort of 'ESL consultant' and my classroom became the center for all things cultural. As I built relationships with staff and administration they began to feel more comfortable asking me about how they could help their EL students. I wondered how many of these teachers had never received any sort of formal training in working with ELs, yet had encountered them in their classrooms. Hence, I made it my personal goal to learn how I could become a better consultant and collaborator who could advocate for the needs of my students, as well as the staff that I work with. I decided that continuing my education through a Master's program would not only enrich my background knowledge and understanding of second language acquisition, but also give me the tools and resources to support these mainstream teachers in their learning of how to adapt their practice to the language learning process. As I sat down to compile a list of essential strategies for ELs, I quickly became overwhelmed and realized that it would take years before any classroom teacher would understand how to use them.

After some deliberation, I was able to scale it back to the beginning basics of language acquisition. I then decided that the idea of making information more comprehensible and accessible to the learner was in making it more visual for them. Therefore, I was determined to learn everything I could about the idea of comprehensible input and using visuals to accompany text, as well as making it a strategy and accommodation that classroom teachers would find manageable and applicable to their everyday practice.

In the following sections I will outline the call for education to adapt to the growing population of ELs, the lack of proper training for pre-service and in-service teachers, the claim that all teachers are language teachers, as well as my objective for this study and how it can enhance the field of educating our English Learners. First, a quick review of who our English Learners are will help create our base perspective.

Who Are English Learners?

The term English Learner, or EL, is used to describe a person who either first learned a language other than English, lives in a home where English is not the dominant language, and/or is determined by an English language proficiency assessment to lack the necessary English skills to be able to participate in academic classes (Definitions, 2017). An EL can be of any age, race, cultural background, or maternal language, and often times can be learning English simultaneously with multiple other languages. ELs that have influences from multiple languages at once will also have multi-cultural families, each with its own unique story. Ultimately, this indicates that ELs are an extremely diverse population and have extremely diverse needs. In fact, there are many reasons why ELs have come to this country and understanding their motivation is the first step to meeting their needs. Some of these families may have moved here because of a job, some

are here because of an international sponsorship at a college or university, some are here

because they're seeking asylum as refugees, and some families have moved here simply

to take advantage of the American opportunities provided from living in a democratic

nation. Moreover, a recent term called SLIFE, or Students with Limited or Interrupted

Formal Education, is now being used to identify students who speak a language other

than English, enter the school system in the United States after grade six, have at least

two years less schooling than their English speaking peers, function at least two years

below expected grade level in reading and mathematics, and who may also be preliterate

in their native language (Definitions, 2017). This type of interrupted background and

exposure requires a specific understanding of language acquisition more appropriate to

this subset of learners. Any specific reason aside, this highlights the fact that ELs are

culturally and linguistically diverse and bring many aspects to the classroom that need to

be addressed.

Not only are ELs linguistically and culturally diverse, they are also the fastest

rising population of students in the U.S. public school system. According to the National

Center for Education Statistics, there were an estimated 4.7 million ELs enrolled in an

ESL program across the nation in 2014 (English Language Learners, 2017). Furthermore,

it is now estimated that 25 percent of children in America are from immigrant families

and live in households where a language other than English is spoken (Samson & Collins,

2012). In addition, Minnesota has an estimated 7% EL population (about 68,000 students)

as of the 2016-17 school year (Schools, Districts, and Teachers at a Glance, 2017), which

is an increase from the estimated 6% (about 51,000 students) EL population from 2003

(Digest of Education Statistics, 2015). Also to note, since 2014 refugees have arrived in

MN primarily from Somalia, Burma, Bhutan, Iraq, and Ethiopia (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). These statistics demonstrate that the demographics of public school students and their families is rapidly changing and growing, making the classroom a place of necessary change as well.

<center>Lack of Proper Training for All Teachers</center>

Students from all different cultural and language backgrounds are entering our American school system every day and licensed professionals are there to teach them, whether or not they've had the proper training in language acquisition and development. Currently, there is not enough support or training for mainstream teachers who work with ELs, even though most will encounter them in their classrooms (Roy-Campbell, 2013; de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). ELs spend the majority of their day in the mainstream classroom which means the majority of their instruction is coming from a non-EL licensed teacher. Furthermore, EL students' poor performance on assessment data shows there is a clear need to improve the preparation of all teachers to support the achievement of ELs in U.S. schools (Coady, de Jong, & Harper, 2011). Learning this information caused some curiosity and so I wanted to dig a little deeper and find out what training, if any, is required of general classroom teachers in working with ELs. I was surprised to learn that as of 2014, the federal law stated only that the school district must provide professional development to any teachers, administrators, or staff who would work with ELs, but that there wasn't specific funding allocated for such training. They add that this professional development should be ongoing and frequent in order to have a lasting impact (Education Commission of the States, 2017). This federal law mandates that the school districts provide this training,

however, it doesn't necessarily require the teacher licensure programs at the colleges and

universities to mandate coursework in the specific strategies that support the learning of

ELs. As I looked into each state individually, I did find that some states have teacher

licensure programs that require coursework in ESL endorsement, no matter what area of

licensure the student was pursuing. However, of the 50 states, most of them had no

requirement whatsoever that a teacher seeking any type of licensure must also have

completed coursework in the instruction of ELs (Education Commission of the States,

2017). I also wanted to explore what requirements there were for Minnesota specifically,

and according to the Minnesota Administrative Rules, 8710.3200 *TEACHERS OF*

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, Sub Part 3, C:

> A teacher of children in kindergarten through grade 6 must have knowledge of the
> foundations of reading processes, development, and instruction, including
> opportunities across the curriculum to help students make connections between
> oral language and reading and writing, *particularly with **English learners***; and the
> interrelated elements of language arts instruction that support the reading
> development of **English learners**, including ways in which the writing systems of
> other languages may differ from English and factors and processes involved in
> transferring literacy competencies from one language to another"
> (Teachers of Elementary Education, 2017).

It can be inferred from this statute that 'a teacher of children in kindergarten through

grade 6' refers to all teachers who work with children of those ages, and thus all teachers

are then required to have knowledge of the foundations of reading and writing,

particularly with English learners, and instruction that supports their specific needs.

Although this study focuses mainly on elementary level staff, it would be interesting to

know if similar state requirements were made for secondary staff as well.

Moreover, in the fall of 2014, an important and essential piece of legislation

was passed, known as the MN LEAPS Act. LEAPS, which stands for the Learning for

English Academic Proficiency and Success, is an act of legislature that mandates the requirement of *all* teachers to be skilled and competent in the teaching of ELs (Leaps Act, 2017). This act brought to the forefront the lack of training that teachers in Minnesota were receiving and now mandates that state programs and public school districts offer professional development and support for all staff in specific strategies and best practices for working with ELs. These are clear expectations set forth by the state of Minnesota and further research into how these requirements are being implemented would be worthwhile. This information suggests that there is a discrepancy between the kinds of courses our teacher licensure programs offer and what the state is actually demanding of such licensed professionals. I plan to address this discrepancy in my district by preparing a training workshop for all teachers on strategies for working with ELs. Samson and Collins (2012) reiterate the fact that, "The reality is that most, if not all teachers have or can expect to have ELL students in their classroom and therefore must be prepared to best support these children" (p. 1). There is a rising urgency for our pre-service teacher licensure programs to align to the needs and demographics of the students they will meet in their classrooms.

<p style="text-align:center">All Teachers Are Language Teachers</p>

Not only are teachers in need of proper training and professional development for strategies in working with ELs, they should also recognize that they are, in fact, language teachers too. Research has explored the field of teacher knowledge and what makes a successful classroom teacher of ELs. De Jong, Harper, and Coady (2013) found that there are three domains that make for effective teachers of ELs. These three domains are: knowing the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of each student, recognizing the

important role of a student's first language and culture in the school setting, as well as the teacher's ability to advocate for the needs and learning opportunities of their ELs. In addition, Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher (2015) have divided best practices for ELs into four areas. The first area recognizes the need for ELs to have equal and appropriate access to the curriculum, the second is creating a climate where ELs feel welcomed as well as included, the third is having equitable expectations for ELs as compared to their peers, and lastly, providing language instruction that supports the student's social and academic language development by paying special attention to language objectives within content teaching. These effective teaching guidelines would make *every teacher* a language teacher. Moreover, "Teachers must have a working knowledge and understanding of language as a system and of the role of the components of language and speech, specifically sounds, grammar, meaning, coherence, communicative strategies, and social conventions" (Samson & Collins, 2012, p. 9). The ability to specifically focus on how language interacts and provides meaningful communication is a part of every student's success. Furthermore, in his study of two 6th grade Language Arts teachers, Yoon (2007) found that the EL students that were placed in a classroom where the teacher took an active role in promoting language objectives and teaching content through language functions had a much higher percentage of participation, gave more positive results as to how they identified within the mainstream classroom during an interview, and had a higher number of minutes in peer interaction with native English speaking peers in their classroom. "The implication of this study is that reading teachers, and teachers of all content areas, need to be aware that they, not methods, are the most important factors in promoting ELLs' participation" (Yoon, 2007, p. 225). Also, in her research Beatty (2014)

claims that, "As each class and discipline has its own specific register and vocabulary, students cannot be punished for registers for which they have not been taught. This means every mainstream teacher is a language teacher" (p. 15). As language, and the ability to communicate, is a necessary skill practiced in every content area and domain of education, it then becomes essential for every kind of educator to be a language teacher.

A student's cultural and linguistic background provides great insight into a student's proficiency as well. Developing knowledge of bilingual students' backgrounds has a direct effect on the student, and teachers have a responsibility to learn about their ELs' personal linguistic background and cultural experiences, both within and beyond the school setting. This requires taking a deep and thorough look into the students' first languages and literacy levels, discovering more about the languages spoken in the home and by different family members, what kinds of exposure and experience the students have with their first language literacy skills, and their proficiency levels in both oral and written English (Coady et al., 2011). Ideally, all teachers working with EL students would be prepared and professionally trained to recognize these diverse background experiences and could use their training to celebrate the strengths these unique students bring to their education.

Some teachers making progress

We have just discussed the lack of proper teacher training in pre-licensure programs; however, it is also necessary to recognize that some mainstream teachers are currently implementing beneficial practices and offering language development support to their ELs. One study, that surveyed twenty elementary school teachers from a western state, suggests that many teachers are incorporating strategies that support the language

acquisition process and strengthen the potential for ELs (Leavitt, 2013). Moreover, this research found that some of these strategies include the ability to build on and extend their ELs' linguistic and cultural experiences, and scaffolding instruction to ensure ELs' access to grade-level content is possible and appropriate. These teachers are also adapting their instruction so that it becomes comprehensible for ELs at different proficiency levels, they're creating materials and modifying lesson plans to meet the individual language development needs of their students, they're providing multiple opportunities for students to use oral and written language skills, as well as considering their students' language proficiency levels when partnering ELs with other students (Leavitt, 2013). The field of education could benefit from looking into how some districts offer professional development and the implementation of the strategies some of these teachers are using to support their ELs.

My Purpose

Teachers need to be provided and equipped with the right tools to educate all the diverse learners they will encounter. As my curiosity about teachers' training experiences with ELs grew stronger, I wanted to take this 'background check' a step further and investigate how the mainstream teachers I work with would respond to receiving professional development and support in learning strategies for working with ELs. For control and time management purposes, I have decided to focus on providing teachers with the tools for implementing visual support as a first and most basic understanding of accommodating an EL's language development process. For the scope of this study I am going to focus on the strategy of using visual supports in order to make information more comprehensible for ELs. For this study alone I will define 'visual supports' as the

following: any visual image being added to text, using realia to demonstrate or illustrate a word, using graphic organizers to make information more visual, and acting out language through gestures and movement. A more in-depth explanation of what these types of visual supports are and how to use them will be discussed further on in chapter two. I have chosen the strategy of using visual supports because as students progress through the grade levels, the language necessary to process and produce English proficiently increases in difficulty and so the need for additional support becomes crucial. Offering visual supports can allow students the opportunity to infer word meanings without disengaging from the text (Wright, Eslami, McTigue, & Reynolds, 2015). Providing students with a visual support gives them the opportunity to access their prior knowledge and schema, which allows them to participate in the process of learning new information.

Guiding Questions

As I evaluated my own teaching practice, I came to the conclusion that in order for me to feel I had done my best job advocating for the rights and accommodated needs of my ELs, I needed to learn more about how I could support the mainstream teachers that I work with in giving them applicable strategies to help modify their practice. Therefore, my experience as a collaborative teacher has led me to design and implement a professional development workshop in which I offer strategies for using visual supports to accommodate the needs of ELs. For the terms 'teachers' or 'teaching staff' I am specifically referring to the K-5 classroom teachers, specialists (i.e., art, physical education, media, and music), special education teachers, gifted and talented teachers, and all support staff teachers who work directly with EL students in the classroom. Going

forward throughout this paper, I will use the term 'non-EL teachers' to refer to all these different teaching areas.

The significance of this topic to both my profession as a teacher, as well as the field of second language acquisition, will serve to bring awareness to teacher-student interaction among all types of classrooms. My purpose in this study is to create materials for a professional development workshop that focuses on guiding non-EL teachers through the language learning process and how to incorporate visual support in order to make the content and English instruction more comprehensible. This paper will discuss research in using visual learning strategies for ELs, specifically in the areas of accommodating text and instruction by adding visuals. In regards to these research findings, this study will seek to answer the following:

1) How can a professional development session be created to help make non-EL teachers more aware of visual learning strategies intended to offer comprehensible input for English Learners?

2) How can I make the materials adaptable and relevant to non-EL teachers with low levels of experience in working with ELs?

This chapter has described my own journey as a second language learner and what drives my passion for the advocacy of my students. I have highlighted the need to further investigate this topic in the field of education, the lack of proper training and professional development in order to support a growing demand, as well as the recognition that all teachers are language teachers. This next chapter will discuss current research in support of these guiding questions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this capstone is to create materials for a professional development workshop in which non-EL teachers are introduced to the idea of comprehensible input and using visual learning strategies to support the content and instruction of ELs. In regards to this focus, this study aims to answer the following questions.

1) How can a professional development session be created to help make non-EL teachers more aware of visual learning strategies intended to offer comprehensible input for English Learners?

2) How can I make the materials adaptable and relevant to non-EL teachers with low levels of experience in working with ELs?

First, this chapter will review the research on what some United States non-EL teachers currently receive as prior training and professional development in the area of supporting EL strategies. Secondly, this chapter will discuss what some teachers are currently using in the classroom as strategies to support the language learning process of their ELs in order to gather some information on what strategies they find useful and effective. Examining the professional backgrounds and current practices of a mainstream teacher will provide a basis for creating the materials that will be applicable in the workshop. Next, this section will discuss the effects of professional development and its indirect benefits to the students. Lastly, this chapter will review the research on each of the visual supports as introduced in chapter one, exploring their uses, as well as a brief discussion on guidelines for what makes a good visual. As a result, this chapter will then

introduce the goal of this study in providing the staff that I work with an opportunity for staff development with a model training session introducing them to the concept of comprehensible input through the use of visual supports.

<div align="center">The Professional Development Background of a Non-EL Teacher</div>

Even with the high percentage of growth among the EL population, most non-EL teachers have little to no prior training in how to support language acquisition or language development. For example, over 4,000 classroom teachers in California were surveyed on their past training experiences. Even though every teacher surveyed had ELs among their students, the results found that those with 50% or more English Learners had received no more than one in-service professional development day that focused on the instruction of ELs (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). In another study, de Jong and Harper (2005) found that almost half of the teachers they surveyed indicated that they had English Language Learners in their classroom, but very few of these teachers had received more than eight hours of professional development specifically related to ELs. Additionally, studies have found that most non-EL teachers lack the basic foundational knowledge related to supporting the needs of ELs, even though most of them are educating these kinds of students (Coady et al., 2011). If non-EL teachers are not equipped with, or even exposed to, the kinds of strategies that support language development for ELs, then the requirement of students meeting grade-level standards becomes very difficult to achieve. Hence, if these non-EL teachers are not being provided the adequate training and resources, then the question becomes what are they doing to support their EL students? This next section will discuss what strategies for ELs some studies have found common among non-EL teachers' practices.

What Classroom Teachers Are Currently Using as EL Strategies

There is very little research available that investigates the use of accommodated practice made by mainstream teachers working with ELs (Hite & Evans, 2006). However, of the research that is available, it is important to highlight what some states and programs are doing to support and implement a better practice for non-EL teachers working with EL students. As a state, Florida passed a requirement mandating that all teachers working with ELs, and especially those who have a responsibility for Language Arts and English instruction, demonstrate they had completed 300 hours of district training or five college courses to earn an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) endorsement (Hite & Evans, 2006). To evaluate the impact and validity of this mandate, a study was then conducted investigating its effects in which twenty-two first grade teachers in Florida were surveyed across multiple districts that had an EL population of 15% or greater. These first grade teachers had a minimum of 60 hours of ESOL training and, when asked about strategies they continuously use in the classroom, they noted that they used word/picture cards, graphic organizers, computers, books, videos, body language, and role playing in order to support their ELs. Furthermore, manipulatives were used for both math and language arts instruction in order to provide a more hands-on interactive approach to the content. Finally, the participants reported using word simplification and a slower rate of speech, as well as reinforcing the spoken word by writing on the board (Hite & Evans, 2006). The researchers then compiled a list of modifications the classroom teachers reported using specifically for their ELs. This list included examples such as the need to watch their own use of idioms and to be more aware of figurative language in the materials they used, the importance of modeling as

essential to the instruction for ELs, and attention to the cultural backgrounds of the students. Lastly, some participants remarked on the need to avoid making assumptions about what students should already know about a given topic (Hite & Evans, 2006). It is evident from these findings that some non-EL teachers are modifying their practice to reach all learners and understand from their professional development and state mandated trainings that these modifications are beneficial and necessary to support the needs of their ELs.

Leavitt (2013) also explored the mainstream classroom in her qualitative case study conducted at an elementary school in western United States. Through surveys, interviews, and observations, data was collected from 20 teachers in grades K-6 looking at what research-based EL methods were being implemented in the mainstream classroom. The data from the surveys indicated that a large percentage of the participants were familiar with beneficial strategies such as partner work, music, poetry, and games. A few participants indicated additional research-based methods and strategies for teaching ELs that they were familiar with, such as pre-teaching vocabulary, peer review, using the students' primary language, and total immersion of English speaking opportunities. Of these methods and strategies, most often used are partner work and games. Highlighting the interviews, Leavitt (2013) remarks, "During the interviews, all of the teachers mentioned allowing extra time for the English language learners, and that they understood that learning English "wouldn't all happen this year." When asked, "What makes an effective teacher for ELLs?" one participant responded with, "having patience." (p. 85). Leavitt (2013) also observed the classroom environment and noted that the classroom walls were covered with visual supports such as: posters, vocabulary word

walls, checklists, rubrics, and photographs. These examples provide a basis for what *some* teachers and programs are doing to accommodate the needs of their ELs.

In regards to the use of EL strategies, it is still unknown how generally these supports are being implemented nation-wide and further investigation into other districts and their elementary and secondary level teachers' accommodations and strategies would be of great interest to the field of secondary language acquisition. If more teachers were exposed to the kinds of strategies that support the language acquisition of ELs, it is possible that these strategies could also benefit the native English speakers. Many researchers have found that the approaches used to support the language acquisition process can be useful for all students, both EL and non-EL, because the teacher is targeting the relation of sounds, words, and meaning to an experience in which all students can benefit (Drucker 2003). A teacher's commitment to scaffolding, building onto prior knowledge, and not assuming that students come to the classroom equipped with cultural and language backgrounds consistent to their own, provides a model for just good teaching. Teachers could benefit from modeled examples of how to incorporate these strategies, specifically the use of visual supports, to enhance their teaching practice of all students. This next section will focus on the effects of offering and participating in professional development in order to support the growing needs of a diverse population.

<center>Effects of Professional Development for Teachers</center>

Professional development has long been a common practice among a variety of professions due to its ability to instruct and share knowledge among a large group of people. This sharing of knowledge between peers creates a community in which each learner has the opportunity to play a part. Professional development can help staff

increase their understanding of knowledge and principles they may have previously never been aware of, nor had experience with. Especially in the field of education, where trends and best practices are always changing and evolving, the practice of professional development is a common vehicle to spread new theories and research out among large groups of teachers. Authors of the website and organization, Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association, posit that "For most educators working in schools, professional learning is the singular most accessible means they have to develop the new knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to better meet students' learning needs" (Standards For Professional Learning, 2017). Each group of teachers involved in this kind of collaboration brings with them their pre-existing knowledge, as well as their identities and former experience (Musanti & Pence, 2010). Teachers with different specializations, strengths, and background knowledge can participate together in a shared learning event and find common ground on which to support their peers and integrate each others' perspectives and skills into a new and collaborative practice.

Ongoing and meaningful professional development keeps teachers up to date on new research for how children learn and strategies to help them, which provides great benefits to instructing teachers how ELs learn. For example, as part of a three-year intervention study, both kindergarten and fourth grade teachers were surveyed, observed, and interviewed on how they engaged in collaborative planning and teaching with EL teachers as part of their professional development. Within this study, Peercy, Martin-Beltrán, Silverman, & Nunn (2015) found that when teachers were given time for collaboration on strategies for working with ELs they were able to engage in meaningful discussions and reflection in order to determine how best to support their students'

learning. Together with the EL specialist, the mainstream teachers were able to build a shared understanding of how to work with texts and identify what the students would struggle with. In fact, this study also found that the learned results from the professional development opportunity were effective even when the teachers were not in the same space together. In other words, the shared learning that derived from the collaboration transferred from the meeting into their own teaching practice (Peercy et al., 2015). Furthermore, collaboration among classroom teachers and ESL teachers was demonstrated to be effective when done with purpose, given careful thought and attention over multiple exposures, and when relationships were able to be established. Edstam & Walker (2013) conducted a two-year long study that observed and explored the collaborative efforts of seven mainstream teachers, ESL teachers, as well as speech clinicians and paraprofessionals from a suburban public school in Minnesota. The focus of the study was to gain access into what creates and sustains an effective staff development process and what sort of outcomes resulted in EL student success. The study found that staff development yields best results when it is long-term, school-based, and focuses on student learning through collaboration. The participants within this study formed a learning community that would work together over the next two years to find ways to support their ELs through monthly on-site meetings, three two-day sessions within the academic year, as well as two summer institutes provided by the district. Over the course of these two years they were able to design an action plan that integrated the use of language objectives, strategies for improving family involvement, as well as content instruction appropriate for all levels of ELs. There was an overwhelming response from these participants that "this kind of staff development – long-term,

ongoing, and sustained- was both personally and professionally rewarding" (Edstam & Walker, 2013, pg. 354). When given the time, the resources, the access to collaborate and weave through the challenges together as a team, these teachers were able to navigate and reflect upon the professional development experience.

However, it must also be recognized that not all professional development and training courses are beneficial. The evaluation of its purpose, process, and effectiveness must be undertaken. For example, in North and South Carolina, a program was initiated to help prepare mainstream teachers for working with ELs and one participant teacher reported that the professor-trainer found it to be more efficient to combine the strategies used for accommodating the needs of special education students with ELs. This professor-trainer stated that this was beneficial since they all have the same needs anyhow and it would save time during the workshop (Kolano, Dávila, Lachance, & Coffey, 2013). Although some teachers reported this staff development to be helpful, most declared the time spent was futile in respect to the lack of follow-up that prevented them from being able to implement what they learned (Kolano et al., 2013). Keeping in mind that not all educators find professional development useful, these examples still highlight the widespread lack of understanding and awareness that ELs have their own unique needs and mainstream educators should be provided with the correct tools in order to deliver equal access to the curriculum.

Along with research supporting the effects of professional development, some states have legislation requiring them to provide these types of learning communities. The Minnesota Department of Education 2015-16 English Learners in Minnesota Report specifically mentions the use of professional development as a tool for ensuring

appropriate instruction for all teachers working with ELs. Specifically, it states that a "district that enrolls one or more English Learner must implement an educational program that includes professional development opportunities for ESL, bilingual education, mainstream, and all staff working with ELLs" (General Requirements For Programs, 2017). This requirement continues by specifying that these professional development opportunities should be related to the needs of English learners and that they be ongoing. Taking these requirements into consideration, this study aims to provide materials that are useful and applicable for a professional development workshop that accounts for the teachers' needs and concerns for appropriately understanding their ELs.

This section has so far discussed the implications of effective professional development among teachers working with ELs. The central purpose of this capstone is to explore how to create materials for a professional development workshop that will introduce non-EL teachers to the idea of comprehensible input and visual learning strategies in order to attempt to minimize this lack of experience most teachers have in learning about and using effective second language acquisition strategies. Although it could be useful to create a series of workshop materials that would introduce these teachers to all of the second language acquisition strategies, I decided to focus on one major foundation for this study in order to begin the process of meaningful professional development specifically for the staff that I work with. The main focus will be introducing them to the idea of comprehensible input and visual learning strategies. This next section will discuss the idea of comprehensible input through the use of visual supports, including a more thorough description of each of the visual strategies.

Strategies for Comprehensible Input

This capstone aims to explore how to create materials that could introduce non-EL teachers to the idea of comprehensible input strategies, and more specifically how to implement the use of visual aids, to support the second language acquisition process. My personal experience as an ESL teacher has shown that by making information visual it becomes more accessible to the learner and therefore more comprehensible. In order to gain a better understanding of this idea of making information more comprehensible an introduction of the Input Hypothesis will now be reviewed.

"The Input Hypothesis states simply that we acquire (not learn) language by understanding input that is a little beyond our current level of (acquired) competence" (Krashen & Terrell, 1995, p. 32). The idea of input being 'a little beyond' is more formally known as Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis of i + 1 where the "i" is the level of competence (or understanding) that the learner is currently at, and +1 means information that is just above that level (Krashen & Terrell, 1995). In other words, providing comprehensible input is making new information more accessible to the learner by giving them the chance to use what they already know and apply new knowledge just beyond their current level of acquisition. There are many ways in which a teacher can provide comprehensible input for ELs, and providing all teachers with the practice and understanding of how to use comprehensible input begins with professional development and training so they can learn how to apply these strategies to their practice in the classroom. For the purpose of incorporating this idea of making information more accessible, or comprehensible, as best practice for working with ELs, this study will focus on the effects of providing multiple visual supports. These next sections will

discuss these strategies for making input comprehensible and why they are important for every teacher to use when working with students, as well as understanding that ELs have specific challenges in regards to what is comprehensible based on their native language and exposure to English.

<center>The Use of Visual Supports</center>

A key component to making input more comprehensible for ELs is by providing some type of visual support to the information being drawn from both written and oral communication, such as text or spoken word. The information the learner is seeing or hearing can be made more readily available by providing context and extra-linguistic information, and good teachers do this by adding visuals (Krashen & Terrell, 1995). When a person is listening to information, or reading on their own, they are taking in language as receptive information. Visuals, then, can be used to organize complex information and represent processes that are too difficult to describe only with words. This means visual support can offer students the ability to retain information gathered from association of prior knowledge and experience, as well as improving students' self-confidence, comprehension, and concentration (Cook, 2012; Halwani 2017; Vinisha & Ramadas, 2013). There are many ways in which a teacher can add visual support to text or instruction. As briefly discussed earlier in chapter one, this study will refer to the term 'visual supports' as the following: any visual image being added to text, using realia to demonstrate or illustrate a word or concept, using graphic organizers to make information and the process of language more visual, and acting out language through gestures and movement. A more thorough description of these visual support strategies will now be discussed.

Adding Visual Images to Written Text

Though it may seem basic, simply adding an image to a word can spark a connection for a student and ultimately give them an anchor for storing new knowledge. Not only is an EL trying to decode a new vocabulary word, but they are also trying to associate a meaning to the new word by searching their existing memory to find an experience or an image that relates to this new word. By providing the image along with the new term, this processing time is alleviated and the student already has an instant connection. For a basic example, a teacher says to the learner '*elbow'* and they begin to search their memory for something related to the sounds they just heard. This may take a while, as it is very possible they've never heard this word before and can't recall it in memory just yet. However, if there were a picture of an elbow next to the word the student now has a visual to support their search process and can relate it to the term for elbow in their native language. On a more abstract level, simply adding an image to words like liberty, truth, or deceit, may not assist the learner at all because these notions are not concrete ideas that account for just one simple definition of which you can apply one image. For terms like these, explicit teaching of the definition and using the terms in context with multiple examples would accompany the visual image. Additionally, incorporating visual approaches into vocabulary instruction is a practical strategy that can be used to support literacy and vocabulary development by providing literacy experiences that stimulate students' interests. Miller (2011) investigated how eleventh grade EL students and their mainstream English teacher used and responded to visual approaches to vocabulary instruction. She concluded that by using visuals students could draw upon their prior knowledge to create personal connections that were relevant to their own lives,

therefore making the information more comprehensible. The visual prompts utilized in

this study aided in supplying the background knowledge necessary for students to

connect and therefore engage in the material more meaningfully. Students consistently

expressed that they saw themselves as being able to understand and remember vocabulary

because of the visual supports that were provided with the text (Miller, 2011). Similarly,

from a review of using visuals to enhance reading comprehension of expository texts,

studies of secondary students suggest that the spatial nature of illustrations opens a range

of learning possibilities not available when language is used alone. Using instructional

activities that involve visual aids can help learners attend to stimuli, access their earlier

knowledge and then restructure that knowledge, and place the new information into

memory (Rakes, Rakes, & Smith, 1995). Research has also been conducted on the

efficacy and beneficial support of adding visuals to assessments to not only engage the

learner, but to help make the content more accessible to them. Fairbairn (2006) conducted

a study of students among grades three through eight, grouped by differing language

proficiency levels, which served to find out whether or not questions with visual aids had

any affect on EL performance on multiple choice tests. She concluded that "images can

serve to spark the prior knowledge of ELs who are still struggling to draw meaning from

texts due to their developing, though not fluent, language proficiency" (p. 24). She also

found that in terms of student retention of information, students performed better on tests

that followed instructions using both words and pictures (Fairbairn, 2006). She

hypothesizes, then, that the addition of images can serve to reduce the reading demands

of tests through making the content more familiar by activating prior knowledge and

through making the language more concrete for the English learner (Fairbairn, 2006).

Adding an image to a word or concept can serve to support the language learning process by providing an additional support to acquiring the new information. However, it is important to mention that not all visuals, or images, will be received or understood in the same manner, and these notions will now be discussed.

Chapter one illustrated that today's classrooms will encounter students from all different types of backgrounds. This makes it necessary, then, for the teacher to provide instruction that takes into consideration all these different types of prior knowledge and exposure to language and home lives that students inherit. For example, a student with limited or interrupted formal education coming from Guatemala may have very different prior knowledge and experience to recall than a learner from Somalia, and therefore may create a different perspective when being offered a visual. Moreover, some students have had prior experience learning about basic needs such as water, food, or community living, whereas some students may have never had the opportunity to learn of these concepts because their living situation didn't allow for it or it wasn't apparent in their environment. To a classroom teacher, considering these differences could help the process in teaching the water cycle, for example, where some students may not have had access to water in their previous home. Providing a visual for this kind of process needs to be introduced, described, and then explicitly taught to the student before it is just offered next to the word on a worksheet. Furthermore, when language is too abstract to be offered alone visuals can often accompany a term or concept to support the meaning and context in which it is intended to be received. For example, terms such as 'liberty,' 'respect, 'or 'responsibility' may require specific contextual support. Teachers need to be careful not to assume all students have the same background experience or prior knowledge with

what some visuals may spark. For example, a student from South America may have a very different idea of what 'liberty' or 'respect' means compared to a student from Africa. These cultural backgrounds serve to offer students an exposure and relativity to concepts only of which they are familiar, therefore making it imperative on the teacher's behalf to first uncover what background the student is coming from. This means that teachers need to be aware of every student's background and clearly communicate what a visual may illustrate or imply in the American culture and education system.

This research has provided evidence that adding visual images to text has a positive effect and can be a beneficial strategy for teachers to use in the classroom. A discussion on guidelines for providing effective and accurate visuals will be presented further on.

Using Realia to Support Language Learning

Another form of providing visual support for new information is through the use of real and tangible objects. When a student is able to manipulate an object, the information and language being used to understand that object or concept is more readily obtained because the student is having a physical connection to the learning. Students are also able to express their understanding by using a tangible object, even when they may not have the words to do so orally. This can be very helpful especially in cases where students aren't ready to speak yet because they may still be going through the silent phase of language acquisition, or may simply have a shy character. Examples of using realia might be bringing in actual samples of rocks and minerals when describing the weathering and erosion process in science, giving students time to play with different kinds of cloth and material that cultures use around the world for goods and commodities

in social studies, or even just using the manipulative blocks to help the learner understand surface area and perimeter in math. Using tangible and relevant items allows students the opportunity to immerse within the study and practice hands-on learning through language (Bergman, 2011).

Using Graphic Organizers to Support Visual Language Learning

Teachers can also make information more visual for the learner by providing graphic organizers. Specifically, Venn diagrams, sequencing events charts, concept maps, and vocabulary boxes help the learner to keep text and information more visually organized. This skill is essential to the beginning language learners as they navigate the writing process in English. By visually displaying and organizing the information, students can more easily see relationships among concepts (Dreher & Gray 2009; Weisman & Hansen, 2007). Another benefit of graphic organizers is that they can be very versatile and implemented throughout any content area. For example, semantic maps are a type of graphic organizer that can help students to identify important concepts or ideas and how they relate to each other, creating a more visual meaning of new words. By visually showcasing relationships among concepts and vocabulary, the student is able to access and deepen their understanding, as well as keep the new information organized and use as a reference for later on (Jackson, Tripp, & Cox, 2011).

In order to make sure these visual organizers are effective teachers must first model how to use and apply them. "Explicit instruction and teacher modeling are needed to show students how these texts work, and to demonstrate strategies that they can use as they interact with text on their own" (Dreher & Gray, 2009, p. 134). Teachers first model how to use the graphic organizer, which gives students the opportunity to hear and see

how the language is being used. Next, the teacher guides the students through a written

practice with the graphic organizer, still pointing out and modeling what kind of language

is being illustrated, and then offers students an individual practice to apply this new

language using the visual support of the organizer. This follows the 'I do, we do, you do'

model helping facilitate the teacher-directed learning to the student-led practice.

Acting Out Language Through Gestures and Body Movement

Another way to make information more visual to the learner is by not speaking at

all. The use of body movement, or body gestures, in itself is making information more

visual. A common practice for introducing new vocabulary or concepts is when a teacher

writes the word on the board and then verbally gives its definition, expecting students are

following along with oral comprehension based solely on hearing the word. One form of

making this new concept, or input, more accessible to ELs is through explicitly modeling,

or physically showing them, the new concept. For a simple example, asking students to

touch their elbows when learning parts of the body. Other examples could include:

showing students parallel arms versus perpendicular arms, asking students to jump when

they hear the emphasis on word syllables, or move their body to express a verb's action.

This physical connection and response adds a sensory-receptive meaning to the new word

or concept, which could make the new information more comprehensible for the student.

Furthermore, the learning becomes an experience rather than an intangible concept

because it involves physical action as the student interacts with the target language

(Harrasi, 2014). Asher (1969) explored the use of physical reaction through listening and

speaking exercises and found that comprehension of spoken Japanese and Russian could

be significantly increased if students were in action, touching and manipulating the

learning through physical movement. It was easier for the learners to associate meaning to the spoken Japanese when they were able to react physically through the use of their body. By associating a new word or concept with some kind of visual interaction, the language now becomes more accessible to the EL. These types of visual interactions can be especially useful for students at the beginning levels of learning English due to their limited vocabulary and exposure to practice.

Academic language can also be made more visual by using visual prompts and hand gestures. Zwiers and Crawford (2009) use what they describe as features, moves, and skills of academic conversations, where the student takes an academic concept, such as *elaborating* on a concept, and attaches a visual prompt and hand motion to accompany the skill in conversation. For example, the first partner will discuss why they believe the book was better than the movie. Next, the second partner will ask them to elaborate on their response by pointing to a visual cue card they have in front of them showing how to touch their thumb to their four fingers and move their hands apart as if making a visual gesture for cat whiskers. The student is now using a hand motion, or body gesture, to accompany their practice of hearing, interpreting, using, and producing academic language in partner conversation. By using hand motions and body movement, the information can be made more comprehensible, and the student may have a more meaningful interaction with the new concept or word from which they can recall the experience. Furthermore, students can become more independent thinkers and talkers, building their responses on other's ideas without depending on the teacher to prompt them to do it (Zwiers & Crawford, 2009).

Teachers should be made aware that the use of gestures and movement to create more comprehensible input is merely an additional support and by no means should be used as the *only* support when giving instruction to a language learner.

<u>Guidelines for Effective Visuals</u>

Offering an image with text, using realia, body movement, and graphic organizers are all tools that can support visual learning. However, visual support is only one factor among many that offer strategies for language acquisition. With this in mind, it is imperative to note that not all visual supports will be clearly understood and there are some guidelines for providing effective and accurate visuals as support. Cook (2012) studied the effect of visual images in science textbooks across grade levels and found varying results as to their effectiveness. The analysis concluded that often times the image was found on a separate page from the text it was illustrating, or the process diagram was left without any direction as to how to read it. She found that it was more effective to integrate small pieces of text within a visual rather than placing it below or next to the image. This is because the learner then receives the image and text together as one piece of information and can store it as a group in their working memory. She also found that it was necessary for teachers to provide guidance on *how* to read a visual, especially when being used to illustrate a process. "Students are unable to understand concepts by freely exploring visuals on their own. Therefore, teachers cannot assume students know what parts of a visual to focus on and the conventions for interpreting them. Students must be taught how to "read" visuals, much the same way they are taught to read text. Teachers need to be explicit about what the relevant parts of the graphic are, what the conventions of the graphic (arrows, highlighting, etc.) are expressing, and how

students should interpret the graphic and connect it to the science content" (Cook, 2012, pg. 67). Additionally, textbooks can be problematic because they tend to focus on technical terms and may include illustrations that are too abstract and left without sufficient instruction (Rybarczyk, 2011). From my experience, as well as the information learned from past studies, it seems a few guidelines could be presented. A good visual should be placed immediately in relation to the word or process it illustrates with text integrated into the image when possible. It should be clear and concise, as realistic as possible and accurately representing the term or concept, as well as include people that look like your student demographic. A visual should *not* be overly complex, leaving the student more confused or with further questions, nor should it depict only the ideas of Western culture (Cook 2012; Halwani, 2017; Vinisha & Ramadas, 2013; Rybarczyk, 2011). Further research into the efficacy of visuals is needed to determine how to best promote visual literacy.

<div align="center">Making the Connection</div>

Making language more accessible to ELs through the use of visual learning strategies is proven to be beneficial. By offering comprehensible input through the use of visual supports such as adding images to text, providing realia, using graphic organizers for making information and text more visually organized, and acting out language through body movement and gestures, the new information is becoming more accessible to the learner at their i+1. The question that remains is how to incorporate and model these strategies during a professional development workshop for all types of teachers with different background experiences in working with ELs. Without the proper training and exposure to tools and resources for supporting ELs, most educators haven't had the

opportunity to learn about the specific challenges that students face when learning a new language. In my experience with the staff that I work with, most have had little to no training whatsoever in second language acquisition, or how to use specific accommodations to support the ELs in their classes. The central purpose of this capstone is to provide the staff I work with the materials and resources to help guide them through this process and offer them strategies for implementing comprehensible input through the use of visual learning supports.

As the EL population is quickly rising every year, a basic understanding and awareness of language acquisition becomes necessary in order to provide all students with equal access to the content and expected levels of assessment. It is of the utmost importance that at both the state level and district level there is a new awareness and encouragement for implementation of these strategies in all classrooms and continued professional development for all teachers. Research thus far has highlighted the urgency for further investigation into what mainstream teachers receive as training in the area of working with ELs. The aim of my research is to find a way to create materials for implementing effective strategies, such as making information more comprehensible through visual supports, for a future professional development workshop. The questions that will guide this aim are:

1) How can a professional development session be created to help make teachers more aware of visual learning strategies intended to offer comprehensible input for English Learners?

2) How can I make the materials adaptable and relevant to non-EL teachers with low levels of experience in working with ELs?

Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter has so far discussed the professional development backgrounds of mainstream teachers, the current strategies and practices being used in mainstream classrooms, the effects of professional development, as well as an overview of the key strategies in making input more comprehensible through the use of visual supports. A brief review of these visual supports was discussed as to how they serve to provide support to the EL and their language learning process. This kind of differentiated instruction serves to benefit not only ELs, but all students in the classroom, because it pays special attention to language features that are necessary for all learners. Also, it highlights the fact that language, and the ability to communicate, is a universal skill embedded within all content areas and necessary for all students to be able to acquire and master. Throughout this capstone project, I am working to create materials for a future professional development workshop session that will introduce these key visual learning strategies to non-EL teachers in order to help guide their practice of how to accommodate the language acquisition process. In this next chapter, I will lay out the development of these materials as well as the background of the setting in which these materials and workshop session are intended.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

When I first started teaching, I mistakenly assumed that all teachers had received some form of training or coursework in providing beneficial strategies for teaching ELs. I quickly discovered that wasn't true as many of my co-workers were quite hesitant to discuss collaboration for planning lessons because they didn't even understand what an EL was. So naturally, the questions of whether or not the staff that I work with had any previous training or professional development in working with ELs, as well as whether or not they were familiar with the idea of comprehensible input as a possible accommodation for their ELs, was constantly on my mind and kept coming up as a necessary starting point for our partnership in the teaching the students that we shared. I soon realized that creating materials for a professional development workshop could uncover some of these answers and help me to advocate for the needs of my students. This has led me to explore the answer to the questions: *How can I create materials for a professional development workshop session that would help make teachers more aware of visual learning strategies intended to offer comprehensible input for English Learners? How can I make the materials adaptable and relevant to teachers with low levels of experience in working with ELs?*

The research in chapter two suggests that ELs can benefit from accommodated learning through the addition of visual supports and making the input more comprehensible, or accessible, to the learner. In order to build a solid foundation of skills, I decided to introduce non-EL teachers to a beginning understanding of the different

levels of language acquisition and proficiency, as well as the types of visual strategies that could support their instruction. For this capstone project, I have created an interactive presentation that models and applies these visual strategies, with the intention of presenting this information at a future district workshop or staff training session. In these next sections, I will describe the rationale for the study, the background of the setting and participants, and a description of the process of developing the materials for the workshop will be provided. Lastly, a reflection of the process in developing these materials will be discussed.

<div align="center">Rationale</div>

My purpose in this study was to create materials for a future professional development workshop for non-EL teachers in which I introduce them to the idea of comprehensible input and visual learning strategies in order to accommodate the needs of their ELs. The professional development training session was created for two reasons. First, the school district in which this study was intended has a need for providing professional development to their mainstream staff because of a new Minnesota law requirement for teacher relicensure. In April of 2015, the 2014 Minnesota Legislature enacted a change to teacher licensure renewal requirements to include evidence of growth in best teaching practices for meeting the needs of English Language Learners (Board to Issue Licenses, 2017). This new enactment provides an avenue to deliver professional development for the staff that I work with in the areas of best practices for ELs, thus making this study pertinent. Secondly, as mentioned in chapter one, the state of Minnesota had passed the MN LEAPS Act in 2014, which called for every district state-wide to require its educators to be skilled in developing the English language proficiency

of their ELs (Leaps Act, 2017). This act helps to ensure that there will be more emphasis and awareness on the support teachers need in order to provide quality education to all students. Moreover, as a teacher and collaborator myself in the state of Minnesota, I felt the need to help provide and support this professional development because it would improve my understanding and teaching practice as well.

<div align="center">Background of the Setting</div>

<u>The School District</u>

The materials I designed during this study are intended to be used during a professional development workshop for a staff that works in a large, suburban, public school district outside the Twin Cities. Currently, the EL population for this district is 4% of the total student body and is growing each year (District Details, 2014). I am one of seven EL teachers in the district, and because our EL population is lower in comparison to the larger urban districts, I work with all of the identified EL students between two elementary schools. Every day I work with six grade levels, K-5, and collaborate with about 30 teachers between the two buildings. I currently service about 35 students on average throughout the year; however, it fluctuates depending upon work migration and the building of new developments for housing. I work directly with my student groups for about 25-30 minutes at a time in my pull-out ESL classroom. My beginner EL students I see every day; however, the upper-level EL students I may only see about 2-3 times a week due to time restrictions and scheduling. Thus, apart from an average of a few hours a week, my ELs spend the majority of their day with their mainstream classroom teachers.

Description of the Participants

The participants intended for this workshop include a variety of classroom teachers within the public school district that work in grades K-5. These are the intended grade levels since the content and examples shared within the workshop align to the standards and curriculum of grades K-5, and those are the grades I work with. These teachers could include: K-5 classroom teachers, specialist teachers in the areas of art, music, physical education, and media, special education teachers, intervention and resource teachers, gifted and talented teachers, and para-professionals. This session is intended to be offered to no more than 40 participants so as not to overwhelm the space and provide ample opportunity for interaction. The participants sign up voluntarily for the workshop session through the sign up system used within the district for in-service workshop days.

Workshop Setting

The workshop is intended to be presented at the district's office center in the main conference room where a smartboard and tables are provided. The session is intended to last three and a half hours and will be offered two times throughout the school year as the same workshop, once in the fall and again in the spring in case teachers were not able to participate in the first session.

Description of the Process for Developing Materials for the Workshop

Developing materials for a workshop that includes a variety of teacher backgrounds was an interesting challenge. It felt almost as if I were creating an entire curriculum for staff to use among each grade level, and it was always difficult to decide what made the cut and what kind of information to save for a later date. When I first

started thinking about this capstone project it quickly became overwhelming because I didn't know where to start. So many teachers are new to working with ELs but have twenty or more years of teaching experience, so I wondered what could I teach them? It was also quite complicated to try to come up with information that was succinct enough to cover everything I wanted them to learn and use, without offering too much information that the teachers would just feel inundated and weighed down by yet another 'to do' on their list. This project has evolved from presenting the staff with as much general information on ELs as I could in three and a half hours, into a more direct approach on necessary steps for accommodating beginning language learners. Once I dug into the research of how visual learning strategies could accommodate ELs, I decided to focus on comprehensible input in order to guide the teachers through the first steps of understanding language acquisition. Communication and meaning is often times embedded within the language itself and is not always apparent or accessible to the learner if the vocabulary and content are still unfamiliar. This led me to helping teachers find ways to look at content, and their own verbal and physical communication, by showing them how to look at language through an acquisition lens. Additionally, I wanted to help them discover which concepts might be more difficult for an EL, and which concepts need to be taught more explicitly. Teachers need to be able to identify the language and cultural demands inherent in their curriculum and in their use of language so that they know when specific cultural knowledge is assumed in the text (Meyer, 2000). In order to address these language barriers, teachers must be able to recognize what vocabulary may be unfamiliar for ELs but not necessarily for their fluent English speakers. Asking teachers to recognize both language and cultural differences among

their subject knowledge is a support that can be beneficial for not only their EL students, but all students because it pays special attention to how words relate to each other and a culture.

Once I was able to narrow down a focus strategy for the workshop, I began looking at the research to help guide me through modeling examples and activities that could showcase how to apply visual learning strategies like those discussed previously. Chapter two highlighted specific ways in which visual learning strategies can create an avenue for comprehensible input and these are the types of strategies that I will focus on modeling during the workshop. The workshop will model a few different types of resources teachers can use to create visual learning strategies in order to make both oral and written communication more comprehensible to the learner. For example, the workshop will introduce and model activities for creating differentiated texts, adding images to text and assessments, using realia and body movement to encourage visual connection, and using graphic organizers to help students visually connect the information. The research in chapter two suggests that many teachers are already providing accommodated supports for their ELs. However, it was also found that most non-EL teachers are not offering support of any kind, nor do they have a lot of past training or experience in how to do so. Since English as a Second Language (ESL), and language acquisition in general, is an unfamiliar field for most the staff in my district, I first plan to introduce them to what it means to be a language learner by putting them in the shoes and experience of a language learner. I intend to accomplish this by starting the workshop in French, assuming the majority of the participants do not speak French, and asking them to complete a task by reading a portion of a French text. Next, they will be

required to fill out a writer's response to the reading, again in French. The participants

will be divided into four groups, each with a different level of accommodation, in order

to illustrate what it might look like when visual support is provided. This task will most

likely be very confusing for the participants and will help facilitate a discussion of what

kinds of strategies or accommodations would have helped to make the information more

comprehensible. Next, I plan to introduce the idea of comprehensible input and give

examples of what this looks like. I will first model this by using concrete examples from

the curriculum we use in our reading, science, math, and social studies content areas

among the different grades K-5. The purpose of offering examples over multiple content

areas is to highlight the fact that language can be supported and recognized for its level of

complexity in all subjects. Lastly, the participants will collaborate in their team groups to

use the strategies discussed and modeled during the presentation and, using their

language lens, try adding visual support to some of the content that is pertinent to their

grade level, and then discuss their strategy with the group.

With this intention, the research (Borko, 2004; Peercy et al., 2015) suggests that

the workshop material should provide information applicable to the environment and

teaching life of the participants in order for the teachers to find value in it. Classroom

teachers described their experience as useful but only when the information and activities

presented were relevant to their classroom instruction. In order to accomplish this,

teachers will be given some time to use their own content material and practice using the

modeled strategies for visual support. By using the strategy in practice the participants

become engaged in the learning and can leave the workshop having material they can use

and implement as they see fit. This helps make the information provided more relevant

and applicable to their practice. Moreover, by giving them the time to collaborate with others in the group, or with a partner, they will have an opportunity to look at language through others' perspectives and build upon their shared knowledge.

<div align="center">Description of Reflection Process</div>

This capstone project will not only be a milestone achievement in my education, but a strong indication of my commitment and passion to the field of second language acquisition and creating successful partnerships among teachers and students. Considering this capstone as a part of my own personal professional development, I plan on reflecting on the process of researching, writing, creating, and presenting the information to the staff that I work with. I intend on keeping a journal as I work through the steps to create the materials for the workshop, reflecting on how they changed from beginning to end as I had more experience working with the research. I also plan on having many discussions with teachers and my EL team to get their perspective as well. If it becomes possible to offer this workshop to staff in my district, then I plan to have discussions with some of the participants after the workshop to see how useful they found the material and information, whether or not they think they will be able to apply the learning to their teaching, and if they would like to attend other workshops concerning visual learning strategies for ELs. Then, using this feedback and my personal reflection, I could modify and add to the materials for the presentation to be given at a future date.

Using my EL team as support for suggestions and clarifications, using my students as inspiration, and using my own reflection purposes and personal goal of becoming a more knowledgeable teacher, I hope to be able to share what I have learned through this experience with other staff and friends.

Summary

This study will impact not only my personal teaching strategies, but those of the district teaching staff as well. The results may spark further interest in research of providing all teachers with the tools they need to deliver appropriate content to ELs, as well as providing more support for all students in the room. This chapter has provided information on the rationale for the research, a background of the setting and intended participants, the intended structure of the presentation, and a description of my reflection process in creating the materials for this capstone. In the next chapter, I will provide the materials created for the workshop.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS

This chapter will outline the materials and information that was created for the intended workshop on introducing teachers to visual learning strategies for ELs. I have been an ESL teacher for the past five years and I seemed to keep coming back to the same reflection at the end of the school year. I always wished there would be more support and training offered to the non-EL teachers on how to provide and implement accommodated pedagogy to benefit their EL students. This idea was always lurking over my head and resurfaced at professional development workshops, staff meetings, coworker conversations, and even with my students and their families. So, with this in mind, I began to ask myself these guiding questions: *How can a professional development session be created to help make non-EL teachers more aware of visual learning strategies intended to offer comprehensible input for English Learners? How can I make the materials adaptable and relevant to non-EL teachers with low levels of experience in working with ELs?* Using the support from the literature research, I have developed a workshop to introduce non-EL teachers to visual learning strategies using comprehensible input. Below are the content slides from the presentation as well as the presenter's script.

Professional Development Presentation Slideshow

The Google slide presentation, *Visual Learning Strategies for English Learners-How can you provide comprehensible input?* can be found, in full, published on the web at Visual Learning Strategies for English Learners Presentation

Professional Development Presentation Script

Slide #	Presenter says:	Presenter Notes:
1.	Welcome everyone, and thank you for being here. Just a quick hand raise, how many of you currently have an English learner in your class? Great, you can think of them as you go through these first slides ☺ For those of you that may not have EL students in your classes right now, I'm going to give you just a small glimpse into their daily life. My name is Jillian Magnusson and I am an EL teacher in our district. Our goal for today is to learn about comprehensible input and how we can all make our content and communication more easily accessible to our language learners by providing visual learning strategies! If you could please sit by your grade-level or specialty area that would be great. We will be doing content-specific collaborative work. Once you're all seated and settled, I will be putting you in to 4 groups.	Set up grade level table assignments, or table tents, so participants know where to sit. Once they are settled, divide in to 4 groups labeled Group A, B, C, and D.
2.	We are going to start this off by becoming language learners. Welcome to Reader's Workshop in French! Here we go ☺ FRENCH out loud= *Bonjour étudiants, comment*	Put on the beret hat before you start the French lesson to signify you are now French teacher only.

	ca va? On va pratiquer une compétence de lecture aujourd'hui qui s'appelle le séquençage. Avant que je commence a lire le texte, prenez votre place et sortez vos cahier rouge, et un crayon. (wait for them to move, just keep repeating the directions) TRANSLATION: (Hello students, how are you? We're going to practice a reading skill today that is called sequencing. Before we start reading the text, please take out your red notebooks and a pencil.)	TO THE WHOLE GROUP: 1st read – read at normal speed, no stress, no visuals or gestures 2nd read – read at a little slower pace, but still no visuals or grestures 3rd read – read more slowly, putting stress and volume on the emphasis words, and point to a red notebook and pencil (only I have these items, just for visual pretend)
3.	*(INTRO) : Étudiants, aujourd'hui on va lire sur la vie de Philippe Dupont, un grand joueur de tennis. On parlera de ce que le texte nous enseigne, et comment les mots et les phrases spécifiques nous aident à comprendre le texte. On va se demander :* *Qu'est-ce qu'il fait d'abord, ensuite, et puis, finalement?* *Ecoutez-bien* (read the text out loud) (Today learners, we are going to read about the life of Philippe Dupont, a famous tennis player. We will talk about what the text is teaching us, and how the words and phrases help us to understand the text. We will ask ourselves: What does he do first, next, then, and finally?	As I read the title of the paragraph on the board, point to the bold words d'abord, ensuite, et puis, finalement, as you read them in the intro. 1st read – normal pace, no stress, and no visual support Wait for students to respond to prompt questions, most likely they won't, so just provide the answers and move on.

4.	*(TEACHER MODEL): Etudiants, quelque chose qui va m'aider beaucoup a comprendre ce texte c'est quelque chose qui s'appelle le SEQUENÇAGE. Ca veut dire mettre les événements de l'histoire en ordre pour savoir qu'est-qui ce passe d'abord, ensuite, et finalement. Ca va m'aider beaucoup comme un lecteur d'organiser l'information en lisant. Je vais utiliser cette organiseur ici. Vous voyez comme il dit 'D'abord, il..' 'Ensuite, il...' 'Puis, il...' et 'Finalement, il...' dans chaque quadrant? C'est comme je mets l'information en ordre numérique 1,2,3,4. Donc, je vais relire le texte et me demander qu'est-ce qu'il fait d'abord? Comment sais-je? Parce que le texte dit qu'il commence sa jour typique en disant 'Philippe commence à sept heures du matin' Et puis je prends l'information et l'écrire dans la première boite ici (write in the first box in French –il commence à sept heures'). Maintenant, je sais comment trouver les phrases clés qui signifie quand les événements se passent. Essayons-nous les trouver les autres dans le texte ensemble.* (Students, something that is going to help me to understand this text is something called SEQUENCING. That means to put the events of the story in order so we know what happens first, next, and last. This will help me as a reader to organize the information as I read it. I'm going to	Actually write the response in French in the first quadrant, as modeling the lesson.

	use this organizer here. You see how it says 'First he…' 'Next, he…' 'Then, he…' and 'Finally, he…' in each box? It's like I'm putting the information in number order 1,2,3,4. I'm going to reread the text and ask myself 'what does he do first? How do I know? Because the text says 'Philippe starts his day at 7 o'clock in the morning. So I take that information and I write it in the first box here (actually write my response in the first quadrant) Now, I know how to find the key phrases that tell me when the events happened. Let's try and find the rest in the text together.)	
5.	*(GUIDED PRACTICE) « Maintenant on va relire le texte en soulignant les phrases dont il me dit QUAND Philippe fait quelque chose. »* (Now, let's re-read the text and underline where the phrases tell me WHEN Philippe does something.)	Actually underline the time phrases in the text; showing them how to do this.
6.	*(INDEP. PRACTICE) « Et donc, maintenant, vous allez travailler avec une partenaire, ou toute seule, comme vous voulez, et terminer par écrire vos réponses dans chaque boite et on va discuter après. »* (OK, so now you are going to work with a partner, or by yourself, however you wish, to finish putting the responses in each box. We will share at the end.)	After the French directions, hand out envelopes to groups A-D. **(ALL groups get a copy of the text and graphic organizer)** **Group A** – Given no extra visual support **Group B** – This group is

	(Allow for a few minutes of pretend work time. If students try to ask a question in English I will say, "Pardon, je comprends pas l'anglais." Which means "I'm sorry, I don't understand English" and move on to someone else.)	given images to support some of the vocabulary. These supporting materials are found on slide 10. **Group C** – This group is given what B has, plus time phrases have already been underlined, as well as a graphic organizer to help them group their responses. These supporting materials are found on slide 11. **Group D** – This group is given what C has, plus the addition of sentence starters and a word bank to complete the sentences. These supporting materials are found on slide 12.
7.	*(CLOSE and SHARE): "Ok, terminez votre travail, gardez votre papier, et mettez vos yeux sur moi. » (attends quelques minutes)…. » Et bon, qui peut me dire qu'est-ce qu'il fait pendant sa jour typique, Philippe Dupont? Levez les mains s'il vous plait." …(attends quelques minutes)… "quelqu'un a une idée?" …(attends quelques minutes)… "vas-y étudiants, aidez-moi. Qu'est-ce que vous avez trouve dans le texte?*	If the group tries to talk to me in English, I will ignore their questions and comments, gesturing to them I don't understand. After showing frustration, take off the beret and switch back to speaking English.

	Qu'est-ce que vous avez écrit dans les boîtes? »…(en frustrante, termine l'activité) (Ok, finish your work, keep your paper, and put your eyes on me…*wait a few minutes*….Ok, who can tell me what Philippe Dupont does in his day? Raise your hands please…(waits a couple minutes)… "does anyone have any ideas?"…waits a couple minutes… " c'mon students, what did you find in the text? What did you write down in the boxes?" … (frustrated, finish the activity by writing in all the answers for them).	
8.	Ok, so how did that go for everyone? (wait for responses, then read slide aloud and they can think of their answers in their head) Raise your hand if you were able to complete the writing activity, or even parts of it. Raise your hand if you felt frustrated or confused. Raise your hand if you looked around the room to see what other students were doing. Raise your hand if you really wanted to speak English or ask me a question but didn't know how? Raise your hand if you learned anything from that text. Ok, some groups were offered different levels of visual support. Let's look at what each group got in their envelopes.	Have copies of the support materials given to each group (A-D) on table next to me, so I can use them as reference as I go through each slide.
9.	This was given to Group A. You see there are no supports other than the graphic organizer, which every group got to start with.	Hold up text and graphic organizer from envelope A

10.	Here is what Group B got. They were provided with some visual images to support some of the vocabulary from the text.	Hold up images document from envelope B.
11.	Here is what Group C got. They were provided with the same support as group B, but I also added some support with organizing the information visually by underlining the time phrases, and pictures of the clocks above each box.	Hold up document from envelope C.
12.	Here is what Group D got. They were provided the same supports as C, as well as some sentence starters and a word bank.	Hold up documents from envelope D
13.	(read slide aloud) Break time 5 min.	
14.	(read slide aloud)	
15.	(give them a moment to read slide) ALL teachers are language teachers. What does this mean? Well, we all communicate to our students, whether through words or actions. It is up to us, as their teachers, to try and make that transfer of meaning the most accessible to the student. Let's first recognize that language is a part of everyone's content area. Take the word TONE for example. In music class, you are teaching students about the different tones of sound. In Art class, you are explaining that some colors have warm tones and some have cool tones. In Reading, you ask the student to find the author's tone of voice, which is a very difficult and inferring task I might add! And in Phy. Ed. class you help students to tone their muscles. In	

	Science, you ask students to tone a black and white picture by adding colors to it, and in Language class, you help students pay attention to the part of speech, categorizing tone as both a noun and a verb. Huh, that's a lot! If we don't help highlight all these different registers, or situations in which a certain use, or definition, is more appropriate, how is the student supposed to communicate properly? It is here where we start to make aware, that even in the most simple communication of one word, we may actually convey one of 6 different meanings, and the meaning depends on the context or subject matter area. It is our job as teachers to provide students with the support to access language across all domains.	
16.	(read quote aloud) It's important that, as teachers, you are not only modeling for the students how to understand the content, but the language within that content as well. For example, you see here that in Science we use many command forms of the verb. (read text table) However, in social studies or history lessons, we're talking about events that have already happened (read text table) and it becomes quite relevant to talk about past tense verbs and be sure students know how to use them.	
17.	(read slide aloud) If the student hasn't ever had experience with the content you are speaking of,	

how can they read or talk about it? Maybe the student DOES have prior experience with a topic, but just doesn't know the words in English yet. For example, grocery stores or super markets may look and service customers differently around the world. We can help students produce language by providing visuals to spark their prior knowledge as well as the new vocabulary to practice and apply the new content.	
18. We must always be aware of what kind of prior knowledge our students may have, and never to assume it is the same as ours. Many of our language learners come from cultures dissimilar to us as Americans, and must also learn how to navigate SCHOOL culture. For example, many of our schools assume families know all about parents signing planners, spirit days, show and tell, picture day, hallway and lunchroom expectations. Other countries/cultures may not have these same kinds of expectations. Providing visual support to teach these new expectations, to both the student AND family members, is important.	
19. (read slide aloud) These levels of Bloom's Taxonomy describe the complexity of required English at each level. You can see how the language becomes more abstract at the higher order thinking levels requiring students to be able to create, evaluate, and analyze language. Therefore it becomes even more crucial to support with visuals, especially throughout the	

	secondary school years where the content and instruction is so much more text heavy.	
20.	Stop and Think – Let's pause here and reflect on the information we've just read/discussed. If you can, think of a time when you were traveling in a place where English was not the dominant language. Was there a communication barrier? For those of you who are thinking of Spanish, consider this example. Would you be able to negotiate with the hotel had they lost your luggage?	If nobody shares, I can share my experience in Brasil.
21.	Making Input Comprehensible – just a fancy way of saying making information or communication coming IN to the brain more easily understood. If I am speaking to you, what sounds/words/phrases are you currently able to understand? What does it mean to understand something? Researcher and linguist Stephen Krashen came up with this idea of input being comprehensible when the information is just above the level of your current proficiency in language. For example, looking at this visual, if my level of reading in Chinese is here (pointing to the orange circle), then the next level of input for me to comprehend would be here, and only with support of visuals and accommodated, or leveled, text would make that comprehensible to me. Otherwise, the information would be here, and it's too challenging at that level (pointing to the yellow). Remember, this is talking about information coming IN, or INPUT. So imagine	

	you just turned on the T.V. and you see....	
22.	Is any of this comprehensible? Using my background knowledge, and what I already know, I can assume this is a newscast because it has a lady talking, there are words on the screen, and an image in the background. Where I come from, that means she must be a reporter. However, I have no idea if I'm correct, I'm really just making guesses since I don't have any context support to help me. Also, I really hope this isn't talking about anything inappropriate, cause I really have no idea!	
23.	(read slide aloud) This means that without providing visual and culturally relevant support, the information is above their level of input and can not be learned independently. To give you an example of cultural relevancy, think of all the reading and writing activities we do that are specific to Minnesota and our American culture. Here you see a little boy playing in snow, a s'more, ice fishing, and camping. What if a student comes from a place that doesn't have snow, has never left his home, and doesn't understand what a graham cracker sandwich is? This was just a basic example, but think of all the content from history or social studies that is specific to the United States, or the Midwest specifically? Oregon Trail, Pioneers and settlers, the Declaration of Independence, our branches of	

	government, native American Indians, The Gold Rush, etc. All of this comes with the assumption that you and your family grew up in this country and have been exposed to these events before by either school or a family member talking about it. ELs are most likely not going to have this prior knowledge, especially if they are new to country, and so most often the text is above their level of i+1 and requires some additional support.	
24.	Here is a brief visual that describes the levels, or proficiencies, of a learner of English. These levels were created by the WIDA Consortium, a group of states that designed standard language learning levels, that our district uses. If you are brand new to English, you start here at level 1- ENTERING. Through the years, as you become exposed and have more experience with English, you increase your abilities to listen, read, speak, and write in academic English. A level 1 student may only be able to identify vocabulary by pointing to pictures, whereas a level 5 student can distinguish similarities and differences between two or more objects and use comparative conjunctions to describe them. Proficiency at a level 6 is called REACHING to signify that the student has demonstrated a level of English that is equivalent to their English-only peers. These levels help us understand where a student is on their journey of learning and becoming proficient in English, but we need to remember	Have copies printed and available in case they want to take one on the way out.

	there is no exact science, nor expected 'due date' as to when a learner may reach a level, nor is there a standard level of growth consistent to all learners. Some studies have shown, however, that general guidelines for reaching level 6 Proficiency have been marked at 5-7 years of continuous exposure to academic English and instruction. Again, recall the type of English Learner I described before who comes from a limited or interrupted formal education, or SLIFE students, and how this continuum of proficiency levels would affect these types of learners. Acquiring language is a cognitive process and therefore cannot be expected to be the same for everyone. Students will grow in their proficiencies at different rates and in different ways. Just as all babies learn to sit up, crawl, walk, and talk at different times. Just as all students learning to read, even in their first language, do so at their own rate. Language is a unique path of exposure and experience within an environment. Furthermore, exposure to academic language may only happen at school, since we cannot assume that our students' families have had the experience or exposure to English themselves.	
25.	Brain break – I've been talking at you a lot, take a brain break and just enjoy this visual ☺ Anyone not familiar with Star Wars? Need some	

	activating of prior knowledge? ☺ Go ahead and chat for 2 minutes. (read slide aloud)	
26.	Please keep in mind that by attaching an image to a word, or a sentence frame, or a graphic organizer, you are offering some accommodated support. However, that is only just the beginning, and further workshops offering ways to partner the visual support with language acquisition strategies would be greatly beneficial!	
27.	Read slide aloud	
28.	(read slide aloud) Even though it may seem elementary, I think it would be worth our while to go through each of these types of visual support, looking at them through the eyes of a language learner.	
29.	(give them a moment to read slide) Body language and gestures – These made me laugh. But in all seriousness, is there 'language' being communicated through these poses? Yes. This is almost always the first coping mechanism people go to in order to communicate when there is a barrier of some kind. Think of how often you use your hands to help you talk throughout the day. Anyone ever counted how often? This body language, and using your body AS language, can be a visual support for an EL student. I'll talk more about this later on when we go through some examples.	
30.	(give them a moment to read slide) Images – Adding an image to a vocabulary word,	

	or concept, can be an easy task now that we have access to such technology using our ipads, chromebooks, phones, etc. HOWEVER, you must be very careful the image is appropriate, that the image accurately represents the word or concept, and that it does NOT make the learning more cumbersome. Later on, we will discuss how to find language that may need support, as well as how to choose or design appropriate images. Also, I want to make note that it's important to realize that each student comes to class with a different background, especially if their culture is very different from ours, and so they may not understand an image just because you have attached it to a word. For example, a student may still not know what the 'dab' or 'stanky leg' are because those are American cultural dance moves (I think?!) and so extra explicit teaching would need to accommodate the learning as well.	
31.	(read slide aloud) Research has shown that students learn to manipulate new content when they can interact with the information and apply it to the task. Being able to see/touch/feel/and USE an object can aid in the learner's understanding. Here are some quick ideas I found on the internet that uses an egg carton as a manipulative to support their understanding of math concepts, language concepts, and even science concepts. It's important to provide examples of the *language* necessary to complete tasks like these, giving	

	them multiple exposures *to using* the academic language of the content area. For example, when teaching the skeletal system, using the egg carton sections as bone, you can ask the student to describe the spinal column with the key vocabulary.	
32.	Graphic Org – Many of you are already using scaffolds like graphic organizers to support your students. For ELs, we should be mindful that just giving it to them isn't necessarily going to help. The student needs to be taught HOW to use it, and then HOW to apply the information. Model the kind of language that is expected to be able to decipher, understand, and speak about the organizer. Graphic organizers are great opportunities to USE language. For example, if you have a compare/contrast focus, you can teach words like *however, instead, on the other hand* ….instead of always using the word BUT. Keeping in mind the level of your EL students and you decide if they are ready for a task this proficient.	
33.	We just saw some examples of the 4 types of visual supports I described earlier. Do visuals always help?	
34.	Stop and Think – (read slide out loud)	Take suggestions from the audience if they are willing or just shout them out
35.	I'll give you a moment to read this slide. (pause) We've now discussed a few different types of	

	visual aids as one way to support language learning in order to make the new information more comprehensible. So, what then, makes a good visual? There are a few guidelines and principles to follow in order to make a good visual. First, visuals should be clear, concise, and an accurate representation of the information it illustrates. It's also important that the visual is directly next to the word or concept it illustrates so the student can attach the word/concept directly to the image in association. When possible, use a real image instead of clipart. Also, make sure to include images of people that represent the students in your class and may even share their home culture. Make sure you have a multicultural representation of characters in your libraries in classroom and the school. Now, on the other hand, here's what a visual should NOT be. Visuals should not be overly complex, thus leaving the student more confused. A good test would be to see if the student is able to talk about the new word or concept once you've taught the visual. Visuals should NOT be placed on the next page, or down at the bottom, or in the corner, away from the text it illustrates. And, as mentioned before, a good visual will not only and always depict Western culture, nor assume only Western cultural activities.	
36.	Here are some guidelines for visual aids that I found among my research. Take a moment to	

	read them and let me know if you have any questions, or want any clarification. (wait 2 minutes) Ask, "I especially think the last bullet point is interesting. I never thought before about how demanding it can be to listen and watch/read at the same time until I watched my first movie with subtitles. Keep in mind your students are not only watching what you are doing, showing, modeling, or pointing to, but your body language as well, and then trying to listen and take in your oral communication simultaneously.	
37.	You may be asking yourself WHY is this so important? (get participant to read white box text aloud) Also, here I made sure to note that you don't always have to create your own visuals, but just assess the quality of the ones already provided for you in your content resources. (get participant to read yellow text box aloud)	
38.	(read slide aloud)	
39.	(read slide aloud)	
40.	(read slide aloud)	
41.	Part 3: Examples of Visual Support	
42.	This was taken from a 1st grade text. Here you see great, real-life pictures. However, none of the words are bolded, nor underlined, nor are the pictures labeled in any way. So, unless the student is proficient in reading English, they may have limited ability to express what they know about these animals. Also, the academic language in this text, such as hibernate and omnivore, may	

	be above their level of proficiency because these are terms students come in to contact with only when in academic settings, and so they may know and understand the concept of hibernation or omnivores but just don't know that vocabulary term yet. They need to be explicitly taught how to use this new language.	
43.	Here is an example of some visual support where images were added to some important vocabulary from the text. This can be pre-taught and discussed before you introduce the text, and then as you go through the reading, ask students to highlight the words from their vocabulary list. These could also be added to their science notebooks for later reference, or for informal assessments. A writing extension could be visually supported by offering a sentence starter with a word bank. After learning the vocabulary from the reading, they now use it a 3rd or 4th time in writing, and again in sharing their writing.	
44.	Here is a 1st grade text given to students to learn about Polar Bears. The teacher asked the students to go back to their desks and write down 2 facts they learned about Polar Bears. What if you have a student who struggles with reading, writing, or doesn't yet have a vocabulary about animals? I took the opportunity to look for academic language, like the two terms bolded here, and then offer visual support for some of the other concepts that a student may not have background	

	experience with.	
45.	Here, I have added an image to help explain the vocabulary, as well as created a graphic organizer with word bank, and sentence starters. After modeling how to complete the organizer, you could ask the student to complete the last two sentences, or create his/her own. It's important to remember that we need to give the student a way to express what they understand, and take out any hurdles that may impede that expression due to lack of reading and/or writing proficiency. If you are assessing their understanding of the vocabulary, but they aren't ready for a writing task with sentences yet, ask them to match the vocabulary term to a picture from your prompts. Then create a modeled sentence for them to copy.	
46.	Here is an example of a social studies writing task on what 1st graders learned about being a Good Citizen. Here, the teacher could provide a visual vocabulary that includes the words you used when discussing this topic during the unit. Offer a sentence starter for their response and let them use the visual word bank to choose an idea they want to express.	
47.	Here is an example of a 2nd grade science assessment. If I'm not at a middle to high level of reading proficiency yet, how could you accommodate this for me? What kinds of visuals might you provide to support comprehensible input?	
48.	Here is my example. I have offered visuals on	If a participant wants to bring

		up the issue of altering assessments, just ask them to give you an example from this slide and break apart the language of the question, asking them what is the student being assessed on in this question, specifically. Then, together, decide which parts could be accommodated so as not to take away from the true intent of independent assessment.
	what up/down, push/pull, girl/boy, stroller/sidewalk, and gravel mean. Does this take away from the validity of the test assessing their understanding of these concepts and how they affect each other? By providing these visuals cues, the student has a starting place for activating that prior knowledge and may be able to recall using these concepts during the science lessons. Again, this is just a starting block and does not mean that we only need to provide picture support for our ELs.	
49.	This is a 2nd grade Social Studies Assignment. As I look at this, I wonder what kinds of visual support could be provided as a starter?	
50.	Here are some examples of what I came up with. By adding visuals to the answer choices you are only supporting the meaning of the phrase, not giving them the answer to choose. They need to decide for themselves what good citizens do.	
51.	(read slide aloud. Then elicit a few responses)	
52.	This is a 3rd grade social studies reading task. This does have a visual, but is it accurate to what the text conveys? Did you think this was about native people and how they had to find food? Fishing? Might you think it's a story about people being attacked by a hippo? Actually, this is about how people used to travel long ago before there were trains, planes, or automobiles. Clearly, this is not the greatest visual to support that idea! We need to be mindful of what KINDS	

	of visuals we are providing, and what we are expecting of our students' understanding.	
53.	Here is an example of what you could do to visually support some of the academic language in the text. Notice how the term is defined, supported by an image, and then used in a sentence to give it context. Again, this could be pre-taught before you offer the reading, and then, through either individual or partner work, the student now has a visual to cue the search for the term in the text, highlight it, and re-read with more close understanding. Of course, this all should be modeled and practiced first!	
54.	Here is a 3rd grade Life Science review from a classroom teacher– She has bolded the language students need to be able to produce for this unit that is talking about classifying animals, and learning about how they live and grow in the environment. What vocabulary, or ideas, from this text do you think might need some visual support?	
55.	Here are some of the terms I thought would support their understanding of the essential take away – classifying animals. I also included some sentence frames and a word bank to give the new terms some context. Give these vocabulary terms with pictures to your EL students before you introduce the text so they have some background experience with the topic. Then, once you've read the text aloud, ask the students to use this	

	visual to help them find the word IN the text, highlight it, and then practice saying it and reading it in text with a partner. They can glue this into their science notebooks and use on their assessments. (up to you of course!)	
56.	This is a 3rd grade reading task for comprehension. This is what the student receives and is asked to read, individually, to themselves before they fill out a response sheet. Are these questions asking them if they know what 'waddle' means? How about 'route' or the expression 'quiet their nerves'? Do you think if we offered some visuals to some of the vocabulary from this text that it would take away from the assessment of their comprehension of a fable?	
57.	I decided by giving my students the visual support of some of the vocabulary they may be unfamiliar with this wasn't taking away from their comprehension of a fable. Here, the images provide some visual context of the word, and now the student can go back into the text to find the term in the context of the fable. You could meet with the student and pre-teach these vocabulary terms, then give the comprehension assessment letting them use the visual vocab as support for their thinking and responding. You could even extend the learning by asking them to say sentences using the word, drawing a picture of what it means to them, acting it out in role-play, or teaching another student. It's up to you to decide which language you think is most important to understand the meaning, or the take-away lesson, from the text. Some general guidelines could be: * Is it an academic word they will see frequently in other contexts, such as	

	accustomed, then YES! * Is it a less frequent word, but needed to understand this text, them YES. * If it can be easily figured out in context and /or is similar to what they already know, then maybe not. * If it can be quickly explained or demonstrated, like waddle, then maybe not.	
58.	Here is a 3rd grade Social Studies landforms activity. This reading and responding task asks the learner to have knowledge of how to read a map, what vocabulary is specific to this area, and how to classify information. That is 3 assumed directions for 1 task. If you had a beginning language learner who didn't know the words for most of this vocabulary yet, how can they participate in this task? What visuals could be provided for support?	
59.	Here is an example of a vocabulary visual you could offer the student while reading and working on this task, either individually or with a partner, depending on their level. Also, to offer extra practice in USING the new vocabulary, offer the student a partner to practice speaking these new terms with and give them sentence prompts as examples. Like, "I see mountains in orange. I see plains in green" etc. Again, this would be helpful to ALL students, not just your ELs.	
60.	Here is a 4th grade Earth Science chapter test. The original is on the left, with text only. I wondered how I could provide visual support without impeding the assessment? I talked with the	

	classroom teacher and together we came up with the essential questions and take aways from the unit. We then created and modified the questions to offer more simple language and visuals for vocabulary support. This would be helpful for your beginning ELs to be able to show you their understanding, since some of the complexity of language has been taken out of the equation.	
61.	Part 4 – Let's Use Our Language Lens!	
62.	(Read text on slide) Every instruction you give includes some type of communication. By being aware of the TYPE of language you are using (ie: idiomatic expression, slang, academic vocabulary, language without context, sarcasm, etc) you are using your language lens. It is up to you to learn the levels of your EL students and their background experiences that may support or interfere with their learning of new English concepts. Take this one step at a time, and try it out with just one lesson at first. Let's give it a try together.	
63.	Let's use our language lens and look for language that may need some visual support, or at least some explicit teaching. First, ask yourself, is any of this first grade science text assuming prior knowledge? Are there words without context? What words or phrases might be difficult for a student to comprehend in this text based on words alone?	If participants offer some examples, write them on the poster board next to the presentation.
64.	Take a moment to read this slide to yourself pr check with a partner to see if they had the same	

ideas. (give them 2 min.)

Ok, here's what I came up with that could be tricky for language learners, or even just struggling readers. And I even left out the most basic vocabulary, for example: bats, feathers, fur, wings, night, fly, and sunset. Assuming a student has already learned these, or that you've already provided visuals to these words, we are still left with 6 instances where a learner may still need support. This is because there is SO MUCH more than just 4 sentences of words here. The words in red are an example of a very complex grammar structure, called fronting, where the phrase is implying that bats are similar to birds because they can fly, but they don't have feathers so that makes them dissimilar. The reader would need to inherently understand, or infer this. Very tricky for language learners! I've also highlighted some of the vocabulary that could be tricky because they don't have a concrete example or visual, therefore no context. For example, how do you define the term 'although'? As a teacher reading this aloud to your class you would probably take just a couple minutes to read this, maybe even just one minute. An English learner is going to need a lot more time to be able to first process what they are reading, and then needs more time to recall in their memory and prior experience whether or not they have that language and vocabulary yet, or whether they have any

	experience with Bats at all. And by the time they've finished that thinking process, you are already on to the next activity. Whew! That's a lot for one little paragraph in first grade. Here's a tip! (read the peach rectangle aloud to reiterate)	
65.	Let's do another example. Here is something students see over and over again in science through the grade levels, so it's extremely important we're helping them to acquire this vocabulary and language to express the parts of a plant and their functions. Even though these labels are grammatically awkward and could be better labeled with complete short sentences, what words or phrases do you consider academic language? (wait for some responses, write them down, if any.) Great. These words are specific to the content area and may only be learned or used while covering this specific unit in science. I haven't heard many students use 'chlorophyll' out on the playground, or in passing through the lunch room! It's important to note that social language is learned more quickly than academic language because of this reason, students aren't exposed to or practicing academic language like 'chlorophyll' or 'oxygen' as often as they hear and use social language. So students may appear to be more fluent in English than they really are because when you first meet them, you are using social language.	Write down responses given, if any.

66.	Help make the vocabulary more comprehensible by relating it to more commonly used words they may already know. Produces = makes, converts = changes, supports = holds up, etc. Now, I'm not saying don't teach them the higher academic terms, they need to learn and understand these as well, since they'll come across them in reading and other assessment tasks. I am saying, provide them with the scaffolding and visual support to help get them to that level. Remember, i+1. Extend the opportunity by having the student write both the basic level and the high academic level term in the sentence. For example, "The flower makes, or produces, seeds" or "The stem holds up, or supports, the leaves" This can be made into a super fun game or speaking activity with the whole class!	
67.	One more practice. Take a couple minutes to read this text. Then I'll have some questions for you. (wait 3 minutes) What words or phrases would you want to teach explicitly from this text? WHY? Are there any visuals or images you could offer to accompany the text? How did you choose them?	Use chart paper to write down responses
68.	Here is a list of words I found that could use some support. I would now create pictures or images for the vocab words that have image association (like lets out, year-round, mini-breaks, Thanksgiving, states, and tripled). Next, you could offer students the opportunity to learn	

	these new vocabulary terms BEFORE you read or assign the text so they have some beginning background knowledge. Remember, always give the new word in context, so either in a spoken example or written in a sentence, so they can see and hear how the term is used in context of meaning.	
69.	Again, here is an idea for making the text, and concept of year-round school, more visually comprehensible. First, TEACH the students what these connected circles mean, give them an example, and post it around the room for visual reference. TEACH the students how to talk about the information from the diagram, by giving them speaking starters to copy from. TEACH them the academic language of a diagram (ie: however, instead, throughout, etc). Also, you could pair your EL student with an English-speaker and together they can talk about how their school is the same and different from what the text says in Year-round school. They highlight or underline IN THE TEXT where they got their answers. Be sure to model using the comparison language BOTH and HOWEVER before you expect them to do this in their partner speaking. Post a visual speaking stem/example around the room they can use for reference and go back to with their partner.	
70.	Ok, now it's your turn to be language teachers! I would like you to get in to a group based on your grade level or similar positions. You can be just	- Have resources from each grade level available in labeled piles on table.

	partners, or small groups of any size you like. I asked you to bring some content examples with you today, however if you weren't able to, I have resources from each grade level on the table here (showing an example) and you are welcome to take one of these if you need. You will be using your grade level resources in your small groups to help each other come up with some visual supports or modifications to something you use in your lessons. Up on the board are the key strategies we've discussed today, and you can either use just one of them, or use a few, it's up to you. I want you to use this time as workspace and collaboration with your colleagues to offer ideas for how to make the information more comprehensible by offering visual supports. Here is a list of steps to help you use your language lens (point to board). If you don't know where to start, just raise your hand and I'll come to your group. You can feel free to use your own laptops, ipads, or use the computers along the wall to access materials and visuals. You have 45 minutes for this activity, and then we'll have 15 minutes to share with the group. Have fun!	- Walk around and monitor groups, offer input.
71.	(once everyone is gathered together and back in their seats, read slide aloud. Once a few groups have shared, say) "These are all ways to incorporate comprehensible input in the classroom! Please remember that this doesn't need to happen for every lesson at first. I know this can be overwhelming! Start small by offering	

	visual support for ELs in one content area, or even one unit within that content area. Then, meet with your EL specialist and discuss ways to reflect or modify the practice for next time, adding on more lessons as you go."	
72.	THANK YOU! (read slide) Also, if you wanted extra copies of anything you have seen in my presentation today, please email me with a note of what you are looking for and I'll email it to you, or we can meet to talk about it.	Offer link to presentation and stay after for questions/comments

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Nelson Mandela said, "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (Strauss, 2013). I agree with this statement, and I also believe that every student deserves the opportunity to receive equal access to an education that is appropriate for them. This is why I feel it is crucial that we bring more awareness to the serious lack of professional development and support of teachers who work with English Learners, so that they too can use their education to change the world. I decided to take it upon myself to do my small part and bring more awareness to the school district I work in. I wanted to find out what kind of support our teachers need when it comes to educating our ELs. This capstone project provided me with a tool to use as advocacy for the staff and students I work with, and although I wanted to be able to share all of my experience learning about EL pedagogy, I realized that was not going to be possible in a three and a half hour session. Subsequently, the research behind effective practices in supporting language acquisition highlighted the use of visual learning strategies, and I agreed that was a good place to start. The goal of this research was to explore the questions *How can a professional development session be created to help make non-EL teachers more aware of visual learning strategies intended to offer comprehensible input for English Learners? How can I make the materials adaptable and relevant to non-EL teachers with low levels of experience in working with English Learners?* The following sections will provide reflections on major learning connected to the literature review, possible implications, limitations, recommendations for further research, as well as a personal reflection of this capstone process.

Reflections on Major Learning

One of the most surprising findings among the research and throughout my experience in working on this project was that, even in these more modern times, there is still an alarming reality of inequitable access to appropriately trained teachers who have a past education and experience in working with ELs (Drucker, 2003; López, Scanlan, & Gundrum, 2013). This compelled me to learn more about the staff I work with, specifically in their experience working with ELs and what kinds of professional development or training they had received. I began by looking into school district requirements on a national level. Federal law states that school districts must provide research-based professional development to any teachers, administrators, and staff who work with ELs (Education Commission of the States, 2017). It was interesting to learn that this federal requirement included administrators and other staff because I would be curious to know if this were true for the district I work in. Furthermore, on a state level, over 30 states do not require EL training for general classroom teachers beyond the federal requirements, and it was not clear if even the federal requirements were being upheld in these 30 states to begin with (Education Commission of the States, 2017). This means that, for general education teachers, most of whom spend more time instructing ELs than the ESL teachers themselves, there is little to no representation of qualified teachers equipped with appropriate pedagogy, even though the federal law requires it. As my curiosity grew stronger, the research guided me to exploring specific licensure requirements for obtaining an elementary teaching license. From my beginning research, I learned there were very few programs available that required teachers to have any coursework in the area of language acquisition. Youngs and Youngs (2001) claim that

teachers have not been prepared to address the linguistic challenges and cultural differences that they may find among their diverse classrooms present in today's schools. I was surprised, then, to learn that in Minnesota the law states that any teacher of a child in kindergarten through grade six must have and demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the reading and writing processes and development, particularly with English learners, including ways in which the writing systems of other languages may differ from English and processes involved in transferring competencies from one language to another (Teachers of Elementary Education, 2017). State law is requiring that teachers be equipped with the knowledge to support a student's language acquisition process in order to teach in the general education classroom. It is possible that because the district I work in has a smaller population of ELs than larger city districts, such as Minneapolis and St. Paul, the scope of these state requirements has yet to reach and take affect in my district. This is why I decided to create these materials and hopefully get the opportunity to offer this professional development. Moreover, as I noted in chapter two, it wasn't until 2014 that the state enforced the teacher relicensure requirement that added a special section for teachers reflecting on their practice, specifically in the areas of supporting their English Learners (Board to Issue Licenses, 2017). Again, from my own personal experience, it wasn't until this requirement was enforced that most of the classroom teachers I worked with ever asked for support in providing appropriate instruction for their ELs. As the base for justification was met, the next step was to explore and evaluate the idea that all classrooms and school interactions are language rich environments, hence all teachers are language teachers and should be prepared to accommodate the needs of the EL population. Just because a student may not yet be

proficient in English doesn't mean they aren't interested or curious about it, they still have the ability to want to express themselves and interpret new information; the only caveat is that the lesson provides them with enough language support so that they aren't disadvantaged (Echevarria,Vogt, & Short, 2008). Therefore, no matter what kind of classroom a learner is in, some proficiency in English will always be a prerequisite, and that makes every teacher a language teacher.

In addition, creating the materials for this workshop required me to first gain some background knowledge on what would make an effective training for teachers. The literature review explored the idea that there are certain kinds of professional development that are more effective than others. It is within a collaborative community that educators can find the most rewarding and useful practice, and furthermore, it was noted that having professional development that was ongoing, long-term, and sustained over multiple exposures, created outcomes in teachers who were more likely to walk away affected by the content (Edstam & Walker, 2013). Moreover, the research specifically highlighted the effective outcome of trainings that allowed for the classroom teachers to be given time to observe, collaborate with, and then reflect on their practice with other teachers, most essentially, the EL teachers (Peercy et al., 2015). The professional development materials created for this capstone project were designed with this important information in mind. As I was thinking about how to clearly and effectively communicate my content to a group of diverse backgrounds and over multiple content areas, I knew from the research that it needed to be succinct, applicable to their practice, and allow for time to collaborate and create resources together. This is why the last part of the workshop offers participants the time to look at a resource specific to their

content area and apply the methods and techniques modeled during the workshop, together with their team. Also, further on in this chapter I discuss my intent for this workshop to be ongoing and offered over multiple opportunities so as to provide a continuous stream of support for these non-EL teachers.

An important next step was to concentrate on a target strategy that this workshop would focus on to introduce non-EL teachers to accommodating language learning students. The plethora of research and information among the field of second language acquisition made it very difficult to isolate just one specific strategy since they all work in tandem to support the very diverse needs of these kinds of learners, especially since languages themselves are so diverse. One technique was consistent, however, and that was the idea of creating comprehensible input through strategies offering multiple opportunities for interaction with speakers of the target language (Brown, 2007; Carrier, 2006; Wang, Many & Krumenaker, 2008). This means that the new information being presented to the learner is provided just beyond their current level of proficiency. This level of understanding happens when the new language is used in context, provided the learner is at a level where they are ready to infer meaning independently. There are many research-based strategies essential to supporting the needs of ELs in order to make the information more comprehensible (Brown, 2007; Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2006; He, Prater & Steed, 2011; Marzano, 2004). One of these strategies is the use of visual supports, as it was found to be a consistent tool among all areas of acquisition. Since language is a part of every classroom it becomes apparent that making language visual is necessary across all content areas. Likewise, the addition of visual supports is a key advantage to making a cognitively demanding, and often decontextualized task, a little

less demanding (Fairbairn, 2006). Visual support can be offered by adding an image to a word or concept, using realia to demonstrate a word or concept through interactive use and movement using target language, using graphic organizers to visually display language in relation to a concept or new understanding, as well as making language more visual through body gestures which offers the student a physical connection to the new term. Visual prompts can aid the student in accessing their background knowledge to enhance oral and reading comprehension, because illustrations have been known to open a range of learning possibilities not available when language is used alone (Rakes, Rakes, & Smith, 1995). Likewise, being able to comprehend relationships among concepts is better understood when visuals accommodate the process. This makes graphic organizers a useful tool in accompanying an EL's beginning writing process. It allows them to deepen their understanding and keep new information organized to use as a later reference for applying to their learning.

It must also be mentioned that not every visual is a good visual. The research also showed that, although visual support is an effective tool in providing comprehensible input, it may only be so when provided appropriately through explicit teaching and modeling. Teachers need to show students how texts and visuals work together by enhancing specific concepts and relationships the student may not be able to infer on their own (Dreher & Gray, 2009). Some visual supports are only useful to the EL if used efficiently and purposefully. For example, simply displaying a poster of images on the wall may not assist the learner in understanding *how* to use them. If there are arrows, process visuals, venn diagrams, or labels, for instance, the student may not automatically understand what these symbols mean. The teacher first models and provides guidance

through structured practice where students can gain more opportunities for authentic engagement in which to practice a newly learned skill (Cook, 2012). Therefore, a visual support must be carefully chosen and implemented following certain guidelines. First, the visual support should be introduced and read alongside the term or concept it illustrates. In some textbooks and resources, visuals were found on opposite sides of the page from the words they referred to, or in some cases, even on the following pages (Cook, 2012). This would have required the student to refer back to information read previously, which is a cognitively demanding task and something a beginning language learner may not be ready for. It was also found more effective to integrate small pieces of text within the visual rather than placing it around the image. This helped the learner process the new information as a group rather than two separate pieces. Lastly, by including visuals that represented the students themselves, there were higher and more frequent levels of engagement and comprehension because the students found the information more easily relatable. This learning helped to direct the creation and use of some of the visuals I included in the workshop materials. For example, when I started this project I had included a visual vocabulary example that I use with one of my third grade groups to accommodate one of their reading comprehension tasks in the classroom. It wasn't until I took a second look at the accuracy of some of the images, and symbols placed around them, that I realized they could have left the student more confused than when they started because the image was illustrating more than just the word intended. I also modified the visual to include a small piece of text within the image instead of the next column over. Also, I have begun to have more constructive conversations around the accuracy of some of the visuals I see in the classrooms of my students. Some teachers

have left posters on their walls for years, assuming they were effective and useful to the students because they were colorful and included text with pictures. Now, some teachers are reanalyzing their visual supports and taking a more careful look into how they choose them and how they teach them.

<p style="text-align:center">Reflections on the Process for Creating Workshop Materials</p>

As I mentioned in chapter three, I kept track of my thoughts and what I learned through this project in a journal. This was a great way for me to not only create a resource, but to learn more about myself as a teacher and student through this process. As I reviewed the journal a few common themes emerged. First, I underlined ideas that were really important to me and wanted to highlight in the paper. For example, back in June of 2016, I wrote, "I need to remember that <u>classroom teachers have not been prepared for teaching ELs</u>. They have had their own expertise for years and it is my job to help them see how they can use what they are doing already but just add a little language flair." What I found so interesting about this comment is that this was clearly a common theme throughout my paper and something I was very adamant about highlighting. It's even true to this day, something that I still bring up in team meetings or staff meetings, that we need to step back and get perspective on where teachers are coming from and where we need to help them go. Also, I thought that comment was quite telling because I said it was *my* job to help them. It wasn't until a few weeks into teaching that I realized I had experience in something these veteran teachers never had, and that it was my job to help them recognize who and what a language learner is. This theme was also a helpful reminder to me as I developed the first sections of the presentation because it caused me to consider the backgrounds of my participants and be sure I was offering them a clear

understanding of what it means to be a language learner. This is why I decided to begin the presentation in French to hopefully set the stage for experiencing a short bit of language acquisition. Secondly, I noticed that questions I still had after a reading or working through the writing of a chapter would be circled by a big question mark. For example, one of the journal entries from the beginning of this project was just a big question in the middle of the page. In November of 2015, I wrote, "How am I supposed to teach all of the best strategies in one workshop?" and it was circled about five times with lots of exclamation points around it. It brought me back to those first weeks and months as I started this project and always struggled with grasping just one solid idea to write about. I wanted to be able to do it all and offer training on many of the strategies I had learned in my training so that non-EL teachers could view their practice in a new light. In regards to developing the presentation slides, this was a helpful theme to circle back to when I caught myself adding too much information to a slide. I would go back to reference my journal, reflect upon the questions still lingering, and then align them specifically to the material on the slide and eliminate what wasn't necessary to the focus of this presentation. Another theme that emerged was how I segued to other interests or topics I wished to persue. Throughout the journal, there would be entries where I would be writing a response to some article I had read about accommodating ELs in their content classes, and all of a sudden, I would draw an arrow over to the side and ask myself a question almost completely unrelated to the current topic. Noticeably, an idea had sparked another question I had a burning desire to explore. For example, while writing a response to how ELs used images to recount a story instead of words as a modified form of assessment, I wrote, "Do non-EL teachers need to know about

pronunciation strategies and how they affect a student's level of confidence? YES! Talk with Mrs. S. tomorrow." That meant I was reminding myself to bring this idea up to one of the classroom teachers I work with and discuss her strategies for calling on students or asking them to read aloud in front of the class. It wasn't exactly on the topic of the original journal entry, but consistent to the way that I think, which is I am always curious to know more and ask more of what I can do for others. I used this reflection to help build some pop-up notes in the presentation, assuming that as participants were listening and reading the slides with me, they too would most likely have lingering questions or connections to something else they wanted to talk about. I made notes in the presentation script to be careful in considering how much time I would allow to go off tangent, but still highlight their curiosity and offer them a chance to talk more about their questions later. Lastly, when I wanted to make connections to something at work I would draw a light bulb next to the section of writing. For example, one of the journal entries toward the middle of this project included a light bulb I had drawn next to a quote, indicating that I wanted to share this idea with my team. It wrote, "why couldn't we do this?" and was referring to a study about how to offer effective training and collaborative practice to teachers. Specifically, this study was about how classroom teachers were given time with their EL teacher to discuss student need in the beginning of the year, work together to backwards map an entire unit, and then through a series of observations and reflection meetings, they co-created strategies that fit exactly what the classroom teacher could implement into her practice, and then a final observation at the end of the year to review student achievement. The commitment from both types of teachers, as well as the administration, was admirable to me and I wanted to share this with my team to see if it

would be possible for us to try. Keeping this journal helped me to organize my information from the research, but also helped me to create a resource of support and theory I can fall back on when I speak up for my EL students.

<div align="center">Possible Implications</div>

The professional development workshop materials created for this capstone study are intended specifically for the staff that I work with. As described in chapter one, my passion for this project came out of a series of conversations, wonderings, and essentially an inherent desire to help accommodate non-EL teachers' understanding of best practices for working with ELs. Thus, it was clear to design this workshop study to fit the needs of this specific staff. Specific elements of the materials I designed for this presentation were purposefully included to maintain the general introduction of visual learning strategies because of the wide scope of experience from the participants in their beginning knowledge and practice in working with ELs. I tried to consistently keep in mind that some of these participants may have never worked with an EL before and so this information needed to be presented in a way they could relate it to their own setting. This workshop was also designed with the intention of being presented two times throughout the year, so that teachers who were not able to participate in the beginning could have a chance to attend in the spring. A secondary reason for offering this workshop again later in the year was intended to provide support for teachers who didn't have EL students in the fall but could have had some students move in mid-year, thus making this workshop more applicable to their practice at the time.

Since starting this project and research, I have had many different kinds of conversations with the staff that I work with and it was interesting to see how it has

changed the dynamic of how I collaborate with my coworkers. For example, before I approach a new teacher who shares my EL students, I always begin by asking them about their past experience in working with ELs and visual learning strategies. This helps give me an idea of how and where to start, as well as building a more trusting foundation for a working relationship because I am considering knowledge they may already have and strategies they may already use in their practice.

<div align="center">Possible Modifications</div>

The material created and presented in this intended workshop could be modified to align to more specific needs or audiences. Modifications would be needed, however, if this workshop were to be used over a different setting and longer or shorter periods of time. For example, it was asked of me to possibly share my research findings and materials at a staff meeting, which is typically presented in a teacher's classroom over a period of just 45 minutes. I would then need to take into consideration what parts of the existing workshop materials would be most pertinent and applicable, as well as effective to this new use of time and space. Also, this presentation could be offered to a different type of audience. As mentioned earlier, this workshop was designed to align to the grade levels K-5 since those are the grades that I support in elementary. The content of this workshop could be modified to align to the teachers and their content for secondary grade levels as well. Narrowing the audience even further, this workshop could be offered as a shorter more specific workshop to just classroom teachers in order to target specific content areas, such as science and social studies where language features are often embedded. This could be beneficial because the examples provided within the presentation and guided practice could specifically relate to a unit they are currently

working on, giving them a concrete takeaway from the workshop. Taking this idea even

further, this workshop could be modified to present to a specific grade level, perhaps just

3rd grade teachers, and target a specific content area they feel that ELs struggle with. The

workshop could then offer specific visual learning strategies and accommodations to their

resources within that content area. Another idea could be to offer a modified version of

this workshop to specialist teachers, such as physical education, art, media, and music

teachers. Specifically, the materials could be designed to take their special content areas

and provide a model for helping them to find language in their teaching environment as

well. For example, the workshop could include a session on guiding a physical education

teacher to look at the oral language directions he or she gives during a sports unit, adding

images to the vocabulary specific to that sport, and then providing authentic opportunities

for the students to use the new vocabulary in action. Since the national law (Education

Commission of the States, 2017) requires districts to offer professional development for

administration and other staff as well, the materials for this workshop could also be

modified to accommodate the specific environment for language proficiency necessary to

be successful in their domain. This workshop could be modified to fit the needs and

specific parameters of any grade level, content area, or even non-teaching staff member

(principal, office assistant, lunchroom personnel, etc), however, careful consideration

must be taken into account of its effect and purpose. Another modification that could be

of great interest is to design the materials of the workshop to specifically identify and

relate to a certain subgroup or type of language learner. For example, chapter one

described the different types of ELs as having multilingual families in one household, or

students that may have come from limited and/or interrupted exposures to education and

therefore have a different language acquisition process because of possible information gaps. A modified presentation could offer teachers who work with these kinds of students a more focused instruction on visual learning strategies that support this specific type of learner. Finally, this workshop session could be presented by someone other than myself. If a different presenter were to offer this workshop on my behalf, the script would be easy enough to follow, it would just depend on the presenter having a full background of the research that went into the presentation and script talking points. It would be beneficial to the presenter to read this capstone in full before sharing the materials with their intended audience.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

The intended audience for this workshop session is for any non-EL teacher who works in the district where I teach, in grades K-5, within any content area, including specialists and paraprofessionals, as they too, will encounter EL students in their communication. This means that most, if not all, of the participants for this intended workshop will not have an ESL teaching license. It is possible that some participants could be dual-licensed, or could have previously had an ESL license, and the workshop could be modified to reveal the participants' licensure backgrounds at the beginning of the presentation if that became necessary. Furthermore, this workshop was created to be presented at the district's office center in order to be offered as a central location, as well as having a space large enough to accommodate around 40 participants. Some participants could feel this workshop would be better received and more convenient for them if it were offered at their school building, or even in a smaller group setting. That way the participants could have access to all of their materials in the classroom or

building, rather than having to carry them with to the presentation at the district's office center.

The research and materials presented in this workshop focused solely on visual learning strategies for offering comprehensible input to ELs. Although this topic is a valid starting block in the language acquisition process, it by no means is intended to be received as the only strategy that is useful, and should never be understood nor assumed as the only way to offer comprehensible input. Another workshop focusing on academic vocabulary strategies, pronunciation strategies, the specific use of sentence frames, collaborative partner or group work, or one of many other culturally relevant pedagogical practices that support ELs would be beneficial. This would also support the notion that professional development is most effective when it is ongoing and revisited over multiple settings. If given the opportunity, I would use the feedback from this original workshop to gather specific information on what kinds of strategies the non-EL teachers are looking to receive as modeled and guided support. These limitations were considered throughout the process of this capstone and the development of the materials.

Recommendations for Further Research

As I read through the literature and created the materials for the workshop, I kept record of my interest for further research topics. First, in chapter one it was brought to my attention that there is a federal law stating public schools must provide professional development to not just classroom teachers, but administration and other staff as well. It would be of great benefit to the field of second language learning, as well as general pedagogy, to find out how this law is being received and implemented among administration staff, specifically, since decisions on student achievement, standardized

tests, funding, and equity are more than likely being made at the administration level. The learning from this research could spark a greater awareness of the special needs of our diverse population, and possibly assist in the allocation of improved programming and resources. Secondly, further research into the kinds of professional development that non-EL teachers are asking to receive would be of great concern to the administration, as well as EL teachers. This could be acquired through the use of a survey, workshop reflection or feedback, or simply through conversation among colleagues. Once feedback has been provided on what staff is looking for in terms of further professional development, this workshop could be referenced as a tool in designing the training materials. Lastly, it would be beneficial to all EL teachers and classroom teachers to learn from further research on the effects of visual learning strategies intended to offer comprehensible input. This next section will discuss my personal learning and reflections during this capstone project.

<div align="center">Personal Reflections</div>

This capstone study has been a meaningful and enlightening process. I learned a lot about myself as a scholar, a student, a teacher, a wife, and now a mother. I began this journey with the assumption that I would have a clear burning question with answers readily available and research to support the claims. This was almost completely untrue and inaccurate to how it all unfolded. As I mentioned earlier, my passion for this topic started as a young novice teacher assuming all educators had the same background experience as I did coming out of a licensure program. As I quickly learned that was not the case, and that, in fact, many of the teachers I'd come to work with had never taught an English learner, my direction for this project all of a sudden started to evolve into

more of a teach the teacher role. I found myself using some of the research I was

reviewing in conversations about summative and formative assessments at work, as well

as conversations with parents and other faculty about what is best for our EL students. I

realized that none of this was going to be clear cut, and would most likely change

throughout the process of writing this paper. Every resource I read would drive me to

another burning question, all of a sudden ideas started popping up in my head of another

workshop I could offer, or another presentation I wanted to give at a staff meeting. This

made it very difficult for an easily distracted learner as myself to stay focused on more

specific guiding questions. Luckily, I had an incredible advisor and team that helped me

get back on track. It took some paper cutting, post-it note arranging, and many cross outs

to get to where it needed to be. This alone was a reflection process. As I reflected earlier,

going through the journal entries was a very telling experience. It was interesting to see

the different tones of voice in my writing, depending on what invigorated me that day.

Sometimes I had pages and pages of notes, and then the next entry would have crossed it

all out and began with something new. Oddly enough, the skill that helped me the most

was to take all the information, write down the most important parts on to post-it notes,

and make it more visually connected by laying them out on to large poster board. That

way I could move the information around to different sections if they didn't feel right or

connect to a previous paragraph. In the end, I found it beneficial to make the information

more comprehensible by using a visual learning strategy.

     Another factor in the process of completion was the fact that in November of

2016, I had a little baby girl and became a mom for the first time. Trying to balance this

new life and new work schedule was a challenge, but it always surprised me how often

my capstone work would sneak into my thinking. For example, one afternoon I remember meeting a friend out for lunch so she could meet the baby, and about five minutes into the conversation we were no longer talking about baby sleep schedules, but I found myself asking her if she had ever had experience with a dual language learner, or someone who didn't speak English. This friend works as a nurse in a clinic and I had always been interested to know how that process works bringing a non-English speaking child to the doctor. Did her team of nurses have any prior training in working with these kinds of diverse patients? Did they receive any professional development on how to incorporate visuals? What do they do if they can't communicate in an emergency? Of course, when I stopped quizzing her on the logistics of the clinic, we got back to baby stuff. What was so interesting and surprising to me was that I was still always thinking about my students. I guess I was trying to find ways to bring more information and experience into this capstone project.

Throughout the work of this capstone, I do believe I have gained some insightful and useful knowledge. I now create and teach visuals more carefully, as well as consult with teachers and guide them to take a closer look at what the visual is actually implying. I feel more confident in my work and supporting teachers, and more often teachers are coming to me with questions on how to better support their EL students. In the beginning of the year, I offer time for teachers to talk to me about their past experience with ELs, what kinds of training they've had, and what kinds of trainings they would like. I have even shared a few articles from my research with the team of EL teachers in my district, and copied a few to leave in the teacher's lounge with some important takeaways highlighted. Working through this project has also helped me to find more creative ways

to make language visual. I was surprised to learn that I had been a bit rigid and traditional in some of my teaching, always starting out the same way for some of the topics that spiral through the grade levels. Now, I look to other teacher's resources and suggestions to help make language visual. For example, one teacher used hand motions and rhymes to help her students learn what a noun, verb, and adjective are. Another teacher shared some hand signals for remembering academic vocabulary and explained how to repeat the hand signal multiple times throughout the lesson. Visuals can be so much more than just a picture, especially when chosen and implemented wisely. Moving forward I hope to get the opportunity to share this research project with my administration and put this workshop into motion. Using the feedback from peers and participants, I also hope to create modified versions that will suit the different atmospheres and audiences. And lastly, as an EL teacher myself, I hope to make use of the skills and strategies I've learned throughout this project to improve upon my own practice with students.

REFERENCES

Asher, J. J. (1969). The Total Physical Response approach to second language learning.
The Modern Language Journal, *53*, 3-17.

Beatty, M. (2014). *Language Objectives in the Mainstream Classroom: What Teachers Really Know.* Capstone Thesis, Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Bergman, D. (2011). Synergistic strategies: Science for ELLs is science for all. *Science Scope*, *35*(3), 40-44.

Board To Issue Licenses. 122A.18 §Subd. 4b. (2017) Retrieved from:
https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=122a.18

Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher*, *33*(8), 3–15.

Brown, C. L. (2007). Strategies for making social studies texts more comprehensible for English language learners. *Social Studies*, *98*(5), 185-188.

Carrier, K. A. (2006). Improving comprehension assessment of English language learners using MMIO. *Clearing House*, *79*(3), 131-136.

Coady, M., de Jong, E., & Harper, C. (2011). From preservice to practice: Mainstream elementary teacher beliefs of preparation and efficacy with English language learners in the state of Florida. *Bilingual Research Journal,34*(2), 223-239. doi:10.1080/15235882.2011.597823

Cook, M. (2012). Teaching with visuals in the science classroom. *Science Scope*, *35*(5), 64-67.

De Jong, E. J., & Harper, C. A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English-language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough?. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *32*(2), 101-124.

De Jong, E. J., Harper, C. A., & Coady, M. R. (2013). Enhanced knowledge and skills for elementary mainstream teachers of English language learners. *Theory Into Practice*, *52*(2), 89-97. doi:10.1080/00405841.2013.770326

Definitions. 124D.59 §Subd. 2. (2017) Minnesota Statutes. Retrieved from https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=124D.59

Digest of Education Statistics: Table 204.20. (2015). *National Center for Education Statistics*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.20.asp

District Details. (2014). *National Center for Education Statistics.* Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/district_detail.asp?ID2=2730060&details=1

Dreher, M. J., & Gray, J. L. (2009). Compare, contrast, comprehend: Using compare-contrast text structures with ELLs in K-3 classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, *63*(2), 132-141.

Drucker, M. (2003). What reading teachers should know about ESL learners. *The Reading Teacher,57*(1), 22-29.

Education Commission of the States. (November, 2017). *50 State Comparison: What ELL training, if any, is required of general classroom teachers?* Retrieved from http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbquestNB2?rep=ELL1415

Echevarria, J., Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2015). What it takes for English learners to SUCCEED. *Educational Leadership*, *72*(6), 22-26.

Echevarria, J., Short, D., & Powers, K. (2006). School reform and standards-based education: A model for English language learners. *Journal Of Educational Research*, *99*(4), 195-210.

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M. & Short, D. J. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP model*, *Third Edition*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Edstam, T.S., & Walker, C. (2013) Staff development while you teach: Collaborating to serve English learners. *TESOL Journal*, *4*(2), pg. 345-359. DOI: 10.1002/tesj.81

English Language Learners. (2017) *National Center for Education Statistics.* Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=96

Fairbairn, M. B. (2006). *English language learners' performance on modified science test item formats: A pilot study* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (Accession No. 305337564)

Gándara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Driscoll, A. (2005). Listening to teachers of English language learners: A survey of California teachers' challenges, experiences, and professional development needs. Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6430628z

General Requirements For Programs. 124D.61. (2017) Minnesota Statutes. Retrieved from https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=12§4D.61

Gregoire, C. (2016, February 4). *The fascinating science behind 'talking' with your hands*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/talking-with-hands-gestures_us_56afcfaae4b0b8d7c230414e

Halwani, N. (2017). Visual aids and multimedia in second language acquisition. *English Language Teaching, 10*(6), 53-59.

Harrasi, Kothar Talib Sulaiman Al. (2014). Using "total physical response" with young learners in Oman. *Childhood Education, 90*(1), 36-42.

He, Y., Prater, K., & Steed, T. (2011). Moving beyond "Just Good Teaching": ESL professional development for all teachers. *Professional Development In Education*, *37*(1), 7-18.

Herrera, S.C., & Murry, K.G. (2011) *Mastering ESL and bilingual methods: differentiated instruction for culturally and linguistically (CLD) students*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Hite, C. E., & Evans, L. S. (2006). Mainstream first-grade teachers' understanding of strategies for accommodating the needs of English language learners. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *33*(2), 89-110.

Jackson, J., Tripp, S., & Cox, K. (2011). Interactive word walls: Transforming content vocabulary instruction. *Science Scope*, *35*(3), 45-49.

Kolano, L. Q., Dávila, L. T., Lachance, J., & Coffey, H. (2013). Multicultural teacher education: Why teachers say it matters in preparing them for English language learners. *CATESOL Journal*, *25*(1), 41-65.

Krashen, S., & Terrell, T. (1995) *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. Hertfordshire, UK: Prentice Hall Europe.

Leavitt, A. (2013). Teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom: The methods teachers use. *The Researcher, 25*(1), 79-93.

Leaps Act. (2017). *Minnesota Department of Education.* Retrieved from

    http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/el/leap/

López, F., Scanlan, M., & Gundrum, B. (2013). Preparing teachers of English language

    learners: Empirical evidence and policy implications. *Education Policy Analysis*

    Archives, *21*(20), 1-31.

Lucas, T., Villegas, A. M., & Freedson-Gonzalez, M. (2008). Linguistically responsive

    teacher education: Preparing classroom teachers to teach English language

    learners. *Journal Of Teacher Education*, *59*(4), 361-373.

Marzano, R. J. (2004). *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement:*

    Research on What Works in Schools. Alexandria, VA: Association for

    Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Meyer, L.M. (2000). Barriers to meaningful instruction for English learners. *Theory into*

    Practice, 39(4), 228-236.

Miller, D. L. (2011). *Visual approaches to vocabulary instruction: Teacher and*

    adolescent learner perceptions (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest

    Dissertations & Theses Global: Social Sciences (Accession No. 867418041)

Musanti, S. I., & Pence, L. (2010). Collaboration and teacher development: Unpacking

    resistance, constructing knowledge, and navigating identities. *Teacher Education*

    Quarterly, *37*(1), 73-89.

Musu-Gillette, L., De Brey, C., McFarland, J., Hussar, W., Sonnenberg, W., &

    Wilckinson-Flicker, S. (July 2017). *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial*

    and Ethnic Groups 2017. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from

    https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017051.pdf

Peercy, M., Martin-Beltrán, M., Silverman, R., & Nunn, S. (2015). "Can I ask a question?" ESOL and mainstream teachers engaging in distributed and distributive learning to support English language learners' text comprehension. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *42*(4), 33-58.

Rakes, G. C., Rakes, T.A., & Smith, L.J. (1995). Using visuals to enhance secondary students' reading comprehension of expository texts. *Journal Of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *39*(1), 46-54.

Roy-Campbell, Z. M. (2013). Who educates teacher educators about English language learners? *Reading Horizons, 52*(3), 255-280.

Rybarczyk, B. (2011). Visual literacy in biology: A comparison of visual representations in textbooks and journal articles. *Journal Of College Science Teaching*, *41*(1), 106-114.

Samson, J. F., Collins, B. A., & Center for American, P. (2012). Preparing all teachers to meet the needs of English language learners: Applying research to policy and practice for teacher effectiveness. *Center For American Progress*, April 1, 2012.

Schools, Districts, and Teachers at a Glance. (2017). *Minnesota Department of Education.* Retrieved from http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Summary.jsp

Standards For Professional Learning. (2017). *Learning Forward*. Retrieved from http://learningforward.org/standards/#.VuDE1JwrLIV

Strauss, V. (2013). Nelson Mandela on the power of education. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2013/12/05/nelson-mandelas-famous-quote-on-education/?utm_term=.8417ff5a3c54

Teachers of Elementary Education. 8710.3200 §Subp. 3c. (2017) Minnesota

    Administrative Rules. Retrieved from

    https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=8710.3200#rule.8710.3200.3.B.3

Vinisha, K., Ramadas, J. (2013). Visual representations of the water cycle in science

    textbooks. *Contemporary Education Dialogue, 10*(1), 7-36.

Wang, Y., Many, J., & Krumenaker, L. (2008). Understanding the experiences and needs

    of mainstream teachers of ESL students: Reflections from a secondary social

    studies teacher. *TESL Canada Journal*, *26*(2), 66-84.

Weisman, E. M., & Hansen, L. E. (2007). Strategies for teaching Social Studies to

    English-Language learners at the elementary level. *Social Studies*, *98*(5), 180-184.

Wright, K., Eslami, Z., McTigue, E., & Reynolds, D. (2015). Picture perfect. *Science

    Teacher*, *82*(4), 41-46.

Yoon, B. (2007). Offering or limiting opportunities: Teachers' roles and approaches to

    English language learners' participation in literacy activities. *The Reading

    Teacher*, *61*(3), 216-225. doi:10.1598/RT.61.3.2

Youngs, C.S., & Youngs, G.A. Jr. (2001). Predictors of mainstream teachers' attitudes

    toward ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*(1), 97-120.

Zwiers, J., & Crawford, M. (2009). How to start academic conversations. *Educational

    Leadership*, *66*(6), 70-73.