

EXPLORING HIGH SCHOOL MAINSTREAM TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
ESOL STUDENTS

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, my parents, and my step-daughters. Thank you, Niels Goldstein, for your tireless support and unwavering faith in me. You lift me up and empower me to be my best self. Thank you, Charlie and Dottie Koenig, for instilling in me a love of learning. Thank you for planting the seeds of inquiry in my heart. Thank you, Emily and Nikki Love, for sharing in successes as well as setbacks. You've made my life richer, indeed.

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING MAINSTREAM TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ESOL STUDENTS

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George Mason University, 2011

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The purpose of this study was to explore high school mainstream teachers' perceptions of English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) students. Although research regarding English language learners has been present in the literature for some time, there is a paucity of research regarding high school teachers' perceptions of ESOL students. The participant set for this study includes teachers from one suburban high school in the state of Maryland. In this mixed-method study, survey data were collected from 50 teachers and two rounds of interview data were collected from 7 teachers. This study explored high school mainstream teachers' perceptions of ESOL students, high school mainstream teachers' perceptions of themselves as teachers of ESOL students, and high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students. Five key findings are identified: Teachers of ESOL students want and need instructional strategies training, must be provided access to a variety of resources, would benefit from gaining the tools needed to navigate cultural

concerns, must be made aware of challenges faced by ESOL students, and would benefit from cultural immersion experiences as a means to inform their perceptions of ESOL students. Limitations and suggestions for future research are also presented.

1. INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

“Why are they sending these kids to us?” Projected onto the larger educational scene, the answer to this question is simple: They live here. The growing presence of diversity in our public school population is the face of our future. While experiencing the largest influx of immigrant children since the turn of the last century (Banks, 2006), public schools are also dealing with more language and religious diversity than most teachers are trained to embrace effectively in their classrooms (Eck, 2001; Garcia, 2005). (Howard, 2006)

Hite and Evans (2006) stated that mandated testing is increasing as student demographics are changing. Language-minority students arrive with varying degrees of English proficiency and while teachers often find it challenging to bring native-English-speaking children to success, the task is much more formidable when English language learners are expected to meet the same standards in both literacy and content-area subjects. The researchers state that according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, only 29.5% of teachers of English language learners have training in the instruction of language learners. The reality is that this percentage is even lower when one considers that English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) training does not necessarily indicate a degree in the field.

“Training” can mean that the teacher has a single afternoon in-service on cultural differences.

While student demographics are changing, demographics regarding instructional staff have remained fairly consistent. Many public school teachers have been teaching in diverse settings for years, but many other teachers are experiencing diversity for the first time. The majority of classroom teachers is White middle class and has little experience with minority students (Nieto, 2002). Further, language minority students have tremendous impact on classroom policies and procedure, curriculum, teaching methodology, and student interaction. Meeting the learning needs of language minority students is not only a moral responsibility, it is a legal responsibility as set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act.

Background of the Problem

I am currently an ESOL teacher in a public school district in Maryland. Our school district is in a suburb of Baltimore and is comprised of residential neighborhoods and rural farms. In this school district, the ESOL program has been in existence for only 11 years, so compared to neighboring districts, having English language learners in the mainstream classroom is new experience for many mainstream teachers. As such, ESOL students are often in classes led by teachers who have no experience with their specific needs and challenges. At the same time, teachers are often ill-equipped to recognize that students with diverse backgrounds are in unique positions to bring their own cultural capital to the classroom. Lipman (1997) explored teacher participation and the dynamics of ideology, race, and power in relation to school restructuring. She stated that school

culture can set a context which reinforces the cultural capital of privileged, primarily White students. Indeed, the cultural capital of the privileged majority is often valued over that of language minority students as well. There exists a relationship between culture and education, and students' learning is typically adversely affected by cultural disconnects.

Assessments in our district are administered only in English and because assessment must match instruction, instruction is delivered in English. In our school district, the ESOL teacher delivers two types of instruction: direct English language instruction and instruction that makes classroom content accessible, often by scaffolding assignments, front-loading content, and providing background information if educational gaps exist. Instructional delivery takes several forms. Some students receive English instruction via the "pull-out" approach, which means that for a specified amount of time and a set number of days per week the student is removed from class for individual instruction or instruction as a member of a small group. Some students receive services via a "plug-in" (sometimes called a "push-in" or "inclusion") model. This means that the ESOL teacher, following a set schedule, sits with the student in the mainstream class and acts as a bridge between the student and the course content. All ESOL students in my school district are mainstreamed into the general education classroom, including newcomers. As a result, both students and teachers experience language and cultural challenges that more often than not frustrate rather than invigorate, as students are learning language and accessing course content simultaneously in mainstream

classrooms. Simultaneous acquisition of English language and course content is an approach not limited to my school district, rather, it is used nationwide.

As the numbers of language learners increase in my school district, the process of determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the English language learners subset becomes increasingly critical. Schools retain or lose accreditation based upon the academic performance of majority students as well as the performance of subsets of learners. In my school system, if there are at least five language learners taking a particular test, a subset exists. Often, language learners have a difficult time accessing content, making academic gains, and performing successfully on state exams. The performance of English language learners alone can be the decisive factor in whether or not schools attain AYP.

Students in grades 3 through 8 are assessed using a series of tests called the Maryland State Assessment (MSA). These tests assess the students' knowledge of math, reading, science, and social studies. Math and reading scores are used to determine AYP. Although newcomers are exempt from the reading exam for one year, they are not exempt at all from the math MSA, a policy that seems entrenched in the fallacy that math is a universal language. In fact, the math MSA is steeped more in word problems than in problems requiring computation only. On the high school level, students are required to take four High School Assessment (HSA) exams. These exams include algebra, biology, government, and global perspectives (literature and language arts). Without passing scores on these exams, students are unable to graduate. While the tests are multiple-

choice in format, each test has a sizable section that requires students to respond in an open-response format.

We define a “highly qualified teacher” as one who is highly qualified in a particular content area. “Highly qualified” seems to rest on academic content, not on students, assuming we teach subjects, not students. Competence in subject matter is, of course, important, but one can be brilliant in one’s field and be unable to teach, or unable to teach all students. Many classrooms and school districts now consider themselves “multiculturally aware,” but this awareness is often limited to such things as curriculum content (what will be covered in class) and textbook selection and revision. Oftentimes schools address the needs of language learners by adopting a “cafeteria style” approach to multiculturalism. Bulletin boards feature “native” children in stereotypical attire and international dinners are seen as the way to make foreign-born students feel “at home.” While these efforts are well-intentioned, rarely do they transition easily to changes in pedagogy, assessment, and evaluation. Fundamental changes are needed with regard to instructional delivery, coursework and homework need to be modified to meet the needs of the individual learner, and expectations of success must be elevated (Olneck, 2000). The core issue for exploration in this research is mainstream teachers’ perceptions of ESOL students. What do teachers believe about ESOL students? What do teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students? What do teachers believe ESOL students need to be successful? This study sought to illuminate teachers’ perceptions of ESOL students and teachers’ understandings of the needs of ESOL students, including teachers’ perceptions of what instructional staff needs to facilitate the instruction of

ESOL students. When teachers' perceptions are explored and understood, the catalyst for change may be in place and steps can be taken to provide teachers what they need to ensure all students are successful.

Significance of This Research

Pohan and Aguilar (2001) summarized the importance of exploring teachers' beliefs. They stated that attitudes can predict behavior and educators' beliefs serve as filters and ultimately influence their actions. The researchers explained that it is important to explore educators' personal *and* professional beliefs because sometimes one's personal beliefs might be in direct conflict with one's professional beliefs. The example offered by the researchers is that a teacher might agree that bilingual education is important (personal context) but might believe that public funding should not be used to this end (professional context). For this reason, this research explored a range of mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding ESOL students. Indeed, one does not leave one's "personal self" behind when one interacts within a professional environment.

Although the literature has a fair amount of research exploring the interactions of elementary school teachers and ESOL students, the literature involving mainstream secondary teachers and their perceptions of ESOL students appears to be limited. Literature searches were conducted in JSTOR, ERIC, and Education Full-Text. Key words included "perceptions," "teachers," "ELL," "ESOL," "ESL," "training," "expectations," "high school," "educators," "non-English speaking," "culture," and "bilingual." Elementary teachers typically report that mainstream pedagogy generally reflects best practices for all students, including ESOL students. It has been said that

elementary instruction is driven by pedagogy while secondary instruction is driven by content. Hite and Evans (2006) conducted a compelling study regarding mainstream first grade teachers' understanding of strategies for accommodating the needs of English language learners. One important finding was that first grade teachers generally felt their classroom instruction was like ESOL instruction in many ways. Lessons were typically steeped in the use of manipulatives and graphic organizers. Teachers regularly used simplified speech and repetition, particularly with regard to directions. In this study, teachers of ESOL students were also likely to use idioms carefully and employ oral assessment if needed. Additionally, teachers were mindful of ESOL students' cultural backgrounds and endeavored to utilize this understanding when planning lessons. Ladson-Billings (1995a) states that there has been much discussion about improving education, teacher education, equity, and diversity, but there is a need to explore the role of pedagogy. Exploring mainstream teachers' perceptions on the secondary level may indeed provide insight into teachers' understanding of pedagogy and how that impacts the school experiences of high school ESOL students.

Understanding mainstream teachers' perceptions could impact approaches to teacher training and could likely begin to bridge understanding across cultures. Ference and Bell (2004) conducted a study designed to explore and shape preservice teachers' dispositions necessary for effective teaching in diverse cultural settings. They found that the preservice teachers at one university did not have the cultural background or experience necessary to interact effectively with language minority students. After a two-week immersion experience with language minority families, preservice teachers

increased their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward immigration. Preservice teachers were better able to incorporate ESOL students' prior knowledge and culture with ESOL methods and curriculum. Providing firsthand experience appeared to be a conduit to pedagogic change.

A teacher training program at a university in Florida addresses the changing needs of classrooms in Florida schools. Many school systems in Florida now require an ESOL endorsement for new teachers and retraining for experienced teachers. Consequently, many universities now offer an ESOL endorsement for undergraduate elementary education students. Bristor, Pelaez, and Crawley (2000) discussed the reality of learning English through content classes. When this university's teacher training program began incorporating instructional strategies for linguistically diverse learners, cooperating teachers reported positive changes regarding the performance of elementary preservice teachers, stating that preservice teachers demonstrated increased awareness of the needs of ESOL students and incorporated ESOL strategies and methodologies in their lessons. This study shows that attention to elementary teachers' approaches to pedagogy could yield positive results for ESOL students, but it also reinforces the fact that there exists a perception that methodology is something to be addressed on the elementary level. Indeed, there is much room to explore perceptions of ESOL pedagogy on the secondary level and the repositioning of high school mainstream teachers as ESOL students' primary provider of needed supports and services.

In addition to increasing the pedagogic repertoire of secondary teachers and improving the school experiences of ESOL students, this research will also add to the

body of research in multicultural education. Bennett (2001) states that one dimension of multicultural education is the focus on equity in education. Students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to drop out of school or be suspended or expelled. According to Bennett, there is a hidden curriculum that is expressed in teachers' attitudes and expectations. This hidden curriculum encompasses expectations for student learning, grouping of students and instructional strategies, and classroom climate. The total school environment must be transformed. Bennett states that greater equity would contribute toward reversing these problems and move ethnic minorities toward academic success. Understanding teachers' perceptions is the first step in such a transformation and facilitating the educational success of English language learners is a pathway to ensuring equity in education

Research regarding secondary mainstream teachers' perceptions of ESOL students and their needs and challenges is limited. McClure (2005) stated that while there is some coherence to education at the elementary and middle school levels, much work needs to be done to upgrade the professional workforce in high schools. Reeves (2006), in a study of 279 high school mainstream teachers, found that there exists a neutral to slightly positive attitude toward English Language Learner (ELL) inclusion, a somewhat positive attitude toward coursework modification, a neutral attitude toward professional development for working with ELLs, and misconceptions regarding second language acquisition. The literature suggests that although the number of language minority learners has been steadily increasing, the readiness of mainstream teachers has stagnated. Understanding secondary mainstream teachers' perceptions may provide

insight into needed teacher training, potentially paving the way to success for ESOL students.

Definitions of Terms

The field of education is not only replete with acronyms, it is peppered with terminology that is often unique unto itself. Therefore, it is important to clarify definitions of terms used in this research.

- *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* – a statewide accountability system mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. All states are required to measure achievement for all schools and districts and to establish annual achievement targets. The goal is for all students to meet or exceed standards in reading and mathematics by 2014.
- *English Language Learner (ELL)* – a student for whom English is not the first language.
- *English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)* – services delivered to students for whom English is not their first language.
- *Mainstream Classroom* – “regular” classroom in which English is the language of content instruction and English is the majority language of students receiving instruction.
- *Pull-Out Instruction* – the language learner is removed from the mainstream classroom for a period of time for English language lessons.

- *Push-In or Plug-In Instruction* – the language learner remains in the mainstream classroom and an ESOL teacher provides classroom support to the student in order to make course content accessible.
- *Inclusion* – the inclusion of the English language learner in the mainstream classroom.

Research Questions

This study explored mainstream classroom teachers' perceptions of ESOL students. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students?
2. What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students?
3. What are high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students?

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is comprised of a review of the literature and a discussion of conceptual frameworks which was necessary to situate the research questions. Three conceptual frameworks relevant to questions of inquiry are discussed. The review of the literature explores research regarding teachers' perceptions of ESOL students, teachers' perceptions of themselves as teachers of ESOL students, and mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students. For organizational ease, the literature review is presented in three subcategories, each addressing one of three research questions.

Conceptual Frameworks

Research on the relationship between beliefs and practice forms the foundation of this research. Additionally, three conceptual frameworks also guide this research: identity theory, social reproduction and cultural production theory, and culturally proficient instruction theory. These theories spring from educational anthropology, which examines the interconnectedness between education and culture.

Beliefs and Practice

The literature on teacher beliefs is relevant to this study. Several studies have linked beliefs with practice. For example, Wilkins (2008) investigated the relationship between elementary teachers' mathematics knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices.

This study involved 481 in-service elementary teachers in the southeastern United States and found that beliefs and attitudes were related to teachers' instructional practice and teachers' beliefs were found to have the strongest effect on teachers' practice. This study was based on a 1989 theoretical model attributed to Ernest, which stated that instructional practices were thought to be a function of teachers' content knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. The findings of Wilkins' (2008) study were consistent with Ernest's theoretical model. Knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes were all found to influence instructional practice. Background characteristics, such as years teaching, degrees earned, and mathematics courses taken were found to have indirect effects on instructional practice. These effects were mediated by content knowledge and attitudes. No direct effects were found. Wilkins stated that teachers' attitudes were found to positively affect teachers' beliefs, adding to the total effect of attitudes on instructional practice.

Mansour (2009) studied the relationship between science teachers' beliefs and practices. Mansour noted that 1996 research by Haney, Czerniak, and Lumpe determined that teacher beliefs are significant indicators of the behaviors that will be present in the classroom. Further, teachers' beliefs about subject matter also influence decisions about what to teach, what to omit from the curriculum, and how much class time to allot to a given topic (Cronin, 1991, as cited in Mansour, 2009). Mansour stated that beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are strong predictors of behavior. Mansour notes that in 1986, Shulman argued that change in belief can precede change in practice. Mansour stated that while the study of beliefs is important to the understanding of teachers' practices and

their decisions in the classroom, teachers' beliefs should be studied within a framework that is aware of the influence of culture.

Identity Theory

Identity theory states that identity is socially and culturally constructed in a particular context (Eisenhart, 2001). Individuals make meaning of experiences through the lens of their culture. External influences and cultural messages are situated within one's current context and each person makes meaning of experiences through a cultural lens. We are all products of past experiences and past and present experiences will certainly contribute to the construction of our future selves, consciously or unconsciously. Identity theory examines factors that contribute to the construction of the self, not the construction of a group. Identity is not limited to assumptions, generalizations, or stereotypes about a given group. Identity is unique, cumulative, and separate from the precise set of experiences of anyone else. Each individual receives, processes, and internalizes messages to construct an identity that is theirs and theirs alone; therefore, identity is never static. One's identity is always in transition, and new understandings and circumstances contribute to one's perpetual reinvention.

Social Reproduction and Cultural Production Theory

Social reproduction and cultural production theories, based on the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1970/1990), address societal and institutionally imposed limitations on possibilities. These theories examine factors that hinder individual achievement and limit the potential of minority groups. Social institutions such as schools often unwittingly play a role in social reproduction. Dominant societal groups

structure society in ways that perpetuate their best interests; therefore, cultural, economic, and linguistic inequalities are perpetuated. Ways in which individuals react to imposed power structures impact social and career aspirations and potential in all areas of life. Schools and educational practices consciously or unwittingly often create and solidify systems that fail to value or affirm the cultural capital of diverse students.

Culturally Proficient Instruction Theory

Culturally proficient instruction theory (or culturally relevant pedagogy) draws on the work of Gay (2000), Irvine (1992), and Ladson-Billings (1995b) and, as summarized by Ernst-Slavit and Wenger (2006), is defined as having three key features: students' cultural knowledge helps them create meaning, success extends beyond academic success to include social success in a variety of cultural settings in school as well as in communities, and students are empowered to consider their education and roles in contributing to a democratic society. In culturally relevant pedagogy, teaching is a highly social and contextualized process. Teaching is most effective when teachers include students' prior experiences, community settings, and cultural backgrounds. Further, a concerted effort should be made to include ethnic identities of both teachers and students in teaching and learning (Gay, 2000). There is typically a disconnect between these features and school practices, particularly in schools with Latino, Native American, African American, and Asian American students, especially if they are poor (Ernst-Slavit & Wenger (2006). Cultural contexts for schools and classrooms are in perpetual state of flux, changing as students and families come and go.

Literature Review

Process

As stated in Chapter 1, literature searches were conducted in JSTOR, ERIC, and Education Full-Text. Key words included “beliefs,” “practice,” “perceptions,” “teachers,” “ELL,” “ESOL,” “ESL,” “training,” “expectations,” “high school,” “educators,” “non-English speaking,” “culture,” and “bilingual.” The following review of the literature is presented in three sections, each addressing one research question. The review of the literature will serve two purposes: to provide an overview of existing research and to illuminate gaps in the literature that this study addressed. Chosen studies situate discourse within the components of identity theory, social reproduction and cultural productions theories, and culturally proficient instruction theory.

What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students?

Nieto (2002) stated that most teachers in the United States are White, monolingual, middle-class females who are teaching increasingly diverse students. As a result of limited experiences with diversity, many teachers view language diversity as problem rather than an asset. Nieto also examined interrelated policies and practices as they relate to student achievement and purported that it is important for teachers to understand that particular social groups in society are afforded privileges while other social groups lose due to membership in groups outside of privileged social groups. Nieto dissected expectations of student achievement, explaining that when teachers have low expectations of students, they are mirroring an unequal society (2002, p. 189). Teachers are not blameless in having low expectations, rather, their expectations of students are

multidimensional and complex. The following research studies explore mainstream teachers' perceptions of ESOL students.

Flores and Smith (2008) analyzed teachers' attitudinal beliefs about language-minority students in academic settings and compared them to teachers' ethnicity, linguistic proficiencies, number of ESOL students in class, and amount of diversity preparation. The researchers stated that it is important to examine attitudinal beliefs because they are thought to be predictors of behavior. This study was implemented in a predominantly Hispanic urban community in South Texas. Data were gathered using a 34-item survey and 564 teachers were surveyed by teams of undergraduate students. The study focused on Hispanic teachers (41.3%) and White, Non-Hispanic teachers (52.5%) because these two categories comprised the largest numbers of participants. Schools represented were urban, suburban, rural, poor, and affluent schools in both the public and private domains. Many teachers reported some degree of bilingualism but the majority (54.8%) reported that they did not possess the language skills to report student progress to Spanish-speaking parents.

The results of this study yielded findings that are particularly useful to my research. Teachers in this study generally believed that lack of English and lack of exclusive attention to mainstream culture in the curriculum may result in decreased learning potentialities. Teachers generally held positive attitudes regarding instructional modification, bilingualism, increased funding for education, and teacher preparation. Teachers in this study believed that language proficiency is necessary for membership in a group, or citizenship. Hispanic teachers held more positive attitudes toward all survey

constructs. Interestingly, Hispanic teachers and White teachers with limited diversity preparation were equally likely to indicate less positive beliefs about language and cultural diversity. Bilingual Hispanic teachers had more positive beliefs than Hispanic teachers without comparable bilingual proficiency. According to the researchers, teachers' communicative competence impacts effective instruction of language-minority students. The results of this study highlight the value of diversity training, purposeful experiences with ELLs, and some degree of bilingualism.

Tettegah (1996) assessed the influence of White prospective teachers' racial consciousness attitudes and identity on their perceptions of the teachability of students from various racial/ethnic backgrounds. Prospective teachers were administered the Oklahoma Racial Attitude Scale and the Teachable Pupil Survey. The participant set was comprised of 96 student teachers enrolled in a cross-cultural teacher education course at a southern California university. Teachers ranged in age from 22 to 50 years. The researchers asserted that racial identity is socially developed. The researchers conducted this study to determine how White prospective teachers self-identify and to identify racial/ethnic attitudes and attributes held by White prospective teachers about students from different racial/ethnic groups. Further, the researchers sought to determine whether these identities and attitudes influenced teachers' attitudes toward students from different racial/ethnic groups. Finally, the researchers explored whether or not these identities and attitudes impacted perceptions of cognitive and social behaviors of diverse racial/ethnic groups.

Findings from this study indicate that the White student teachers in this study held certain attitudes regarding expected characteristics of students with regard to race/ethnicity. Teachers gave the highest ratings for institutionally appropriate behaviors to Asian American students compared to African American, White, and Latino groups. Asian American students were also ranked higher in cognitive-autonomous-motivational behaviors and African American students were ranked the lowest. African American students were rated highest in the personal-social dimension. The researchers held that teacher training programs should develop better ways to evaluate and process the racial attitudes of prospective teachers.

Edl, Jones, and Estell (2008) examined teachers' perceptions of academic and interpersonal competence in European American and Latino students. This study sought to better understand the influence of language and ethnicity on students' academic and social capabilities. The researchers studied students from fourth to fifth grade in regular and bilingual classrooms. All students in this study were in seven schools in two school districts. Placement in bilingual classrooms was based on formal English assessments and teacher reports of students' academic and social functioning in English. Students moved to regular classrooms when their English improved and when they felt ready.

Teachers rated students four times, during the fall and spring of fourth and fifth grades, on a variety of characteristics related to aggressiveness, popularity, and academic competences. In the fall ratings, teachers consistently rated Latinos in bilingual classrooms as lower than their European American counterparts on every variable while Latinos in regular classrooms were more often rated similarly to European American

students. It is interesting to note that with regard to the popularity rating, teachers no longer saw these differences in the spring of either year, indicating that perhaps the Latinos became more socially integrated over the course of the year or perhaps teachers gained a deeper understanding of Latinos' social constructs and changed their assumptions. While teachers' perceptions of students' academic and interpersonal capabilities were steeped in language and ethnicity, perceptions can change over time. Over time, teachers began to view students as more alike.

The literature suggests that teachers do not often consider the potential giftedness of English language learners. Hughes, Shaunessy, and Brice (2006) examined code switching among bilingual and limited English proficient students as possible indicators of giftedness. Code switching involves changing from one language to another within a brief period of time, moving back forth between words, phrases, or complete sentences. The process of code switching, often viewed as a disadvantage or an indicator of a semi-literate background, is actually an indicator of high levels of understanding of two cultures as well as deep understanding of the structures and purposes of two languages. Schools and teachers, however, do not tend to view code switching as an advantageous skill. Further, giftedness assessments are traditionally single-language oriented or rely on concepts that are steeped in mainstream culture.

Reed (2000) explored one school's approach to meeting the needs of gifted and talented ESOL students. When the researcher was offered the position of Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) resource teacher at a public middle school where more than 62% of the students were ESOL students, she was dismayed to discover that every GATE

class was overwhelmingly Caucasian. Hispanics were completely absent from GATE classes, and no GATE students were ESOL students. Reed stated that ESOL students were not offered comparable challenges and instead were relegated to language development classes with teachers who had no understanding of gifted education strategies. Parents of ESOL students rarely complained due to language barriers and lack of understanding of programs offered. Many ESOL students lacked the academic English necessary to do well on standardized tests, which determine eligibility for the GATE program (money was not available to purchase non-verbal ability tests). In light of these facts, Reed took steps to change things. Details about the GATE program and testing procedures were translated into 37 needed languages and sent to parents. Personal contact was made to families of students whom faculty believed showed indicators of giftedness and interpreters known and trusted in the ESOL community helped facilitate information sessions. Although many more students were viewed as potential candidates, only 16 students agreed to take the test as many expressed reluctance to move outside their comfort zone. Students took the standardized test after practice sessions and when other factors were included, such as curiosity, perseverance, and a need for fast-paced instruction, nine students were placed in one or more GATE classes and their achievements exceeded expectations. The GATE program was not diluted nor did it lessen its rigor; rather, ESOL students in the GATE program took part in after-school academic support programs. The following year, more families of ESOL students expressed interest in learning more about the GATE program and more teachers expressed interest in giftedness in English language learners.

Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) conducted a meta-analysis to explore potential differences in teachers' expectations for racial minority students and European American students. As in the study conducted by Tettegah (1996), Tenenbaum and Ruck also discovered that teachers held highest expectations for Asian American students. Teachers held higher expectations for European American students than for Latino or African American students. Teachers made more positive referrals and fewer negative referrals for European American students than for Latino or African American students. Positive and neutral speech, such as questions and encouragement, were more often directed at European American students but negative speech, such as criticism, was directed equally toward all students. Teachers' favoring of European American students was associated with small but statistically significant effects. One such effect was that students perceived that teachers held different expectations for students of different ethnic backgrounds. African American and Latino students reported race-based differences in treatment by teachers. The next study in this section further explores teacher perceptions through the lens of student perceptions.

Wayman (2002) determined that student alienation from school is a major cause of dropping out of high school. Further, poor student-teacher relationships are often cited in describing student alienation as some students perceived that teachers treated students differently with regard to ethnicity. The researchers utilized a large-scale dropout database to explore student perceptions of teachers' ethnic bias in Mexican American and non-Latino White dropouts, at-risk students, and students in the general school population (the control group). Participants were Mexican American and non-

Latino White adolescents from three communities in the southwestern United States (varying in size) and were chosen using random sampling. Participants were asked to complete a survey utilizing a 4-point Likert scale that included such questions as whether or not teachers liked Mexican American and non-Latino White students and participants were asked to respond with regard to their elementary, middle, and high school experiences. The survey also included questions addressing socioeconomic factors.

The researchers found that while perceptions of teacher bias were not rampant, they were most prevalent in dropouts, Mexican American adolescents, and males. The study suggests that ethnic background is the strongest factor influencing perception of bias, indicating that Mexican American students were more likely to perceive bias than non-Latino White students. Although the researchers do make causal assumptions between perceptions of teacher bias and dropping out of school, these perceptions may indicate that school climate is not as inclusive of Mexican American culture. It is also purported that teachers might have given messages of bias that Mexican American students more readily perceived. Bias can be delivered in ways in which the teacher is unaware, such as in affirmations and expectations. Because teachers often fill knowledge gaps with stereotypes, the researchers suggest teacher training to address these concerns. Teachers across grade levels were perceived as equally biased. Dropouts perceived higher bias than did at-risk students and at-risk students perceived higher bias than the control group. Males were more likely than females to distinguish high bias. Interestingly, socioeconomic status and grade level were not found to be significant covariates, but location was found to be significant. Students in the urban location were

less likely to perceive bias than students in the mid-sized and small location, and ethnic differences increased when controlling for location. Findings in this study are significant to my research in that my research site can be described as suburban, bordering on rural, suggesting potential similarities of teacher demographics.

Hansen-Thomas and Cavagnetto (2010) examined mainstream middle school teachers' perceptions about their English language learners. The three schools in this study had been impacted by the presence of English language learners, either due to large numbers or to smaller numbers in schools that did not have a history of educating language learners. This study found that teachers believed that because mathematics involves numbers, it is understood and taught the same across languages and cultures. As mathematics pedagogy becomes more steeped in language, the need for better training and a better understanding of English language learners becomes more urgent. Two components of this study resonated with my research. This is the only study in my review of the literature that specifically included schools with small numbers of English language learners coupled with staff members who had little experience teaching language learners. Also, as I train teachers across our district, I find that mathematics teachers seem to exhibit the greatest resistance to ESOL-related concerns, perhaps because their subject matter only recently involves a great deal of language.

Leonard, Napp, and Adeleke (2009) examined culturally relevant pedagogy via a case study of two secondary mathematics teachers and their ESOL students. There exists a disconnect between the instruction of mathematics and the perceived need for culturally relevant pedagogy. The researchers examined cultural pedagogy as it relates to

mathematics education in K-8 classrooms by developing and implementing a professional development course for eight high school mathematics/science teachers to help teachers gain the tools needed to teach in majority minority classrooms. The course was designed to help teachers become more sensitive to students' cultures, to show teachers how to make student culture a part of the mathematics and science curriculum, and to consider the needs of new teachers as they begin to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy. Teachers were tasked with designing and implementing their own pilot project with students. Data was gathered from two mathematics teachers from this group. The researchers found that teachers' beliefs about what counted as mathematics, perceptions of high stakes testing, and perceptions of school policies influenced their identities as mathematics teachers and their enactment of culturally relevant pedagogy. After the implementation of their pilot projects, their understandings of their own identities and their understanding of their students' identities shifted. Teachers concluded that it was more advantageous to teach fewer concepts in more depth. While some pilot projects failed to resonate with students' culture, students did improve their math skills as well as their critical reasoning skills. Further, because the school was experiencing low standardized test scores in math, teachers focused too heavily on basics, thus sacrificing rigor.

Mantero and McVicker (2006) explored potential differences between middle school mainstream teachers and ESOL teachers' perceptions about second language learning. The researchers assert that perceptions and judgments spring from belief systems, and teachers' perceptions of students' language influence teachers' expectations

for students' academic performance. General educational experiences, ELL training, experience with foreign cultures, and contact with ELL students impacted mainstream teachers' attitudes toward ELL students. The teachers participating in this study, conducted in Georgia, taught ELLs who had either completed a year of intensive English study or who qualified for ESOL services and were learning in mainstream classrooms. Some ELLs had not had formal education in their native countries. Newcomers participated in a newcomer academy in order to receive intensive English language instruction and content support. After 12 to 18 months, ELLs were mainstreamed into general education classrooms, often taught by teachers who had no experience with ELLs and no formal preparation for ELL issues. This study surveyed several factors that influenced mainstream teachers' expectations of language proficiency and academic performance: extent of training in working with linguistically diverse students, general beliefs about second language acquisition, perceptions of working with ESOL students in the mainstream classrooms, and beliefs about proficiency in the first language and how that relates to acquiring a second language. Participants included 87 middle school mainstream teachers, 8 middle school ELL teachers, 61 sixth grade mainstream teachers, and 4 sixth grade ELL teachers. Findings showed ELL teachers were significantly more positive toward ELL students than mainstream teachers. Mainstream teachers had a neutral perception overall toward ELL students. The researchers assert that teachers' perceptions of ELL students indicated teachers' willingness to facilitate language learning and therefore affected classroom instruction. Both groups had more positive perceptions of ELLs with more graduate level ELL coursework. ELL teachers with more

staff development had a more positive perception of language learners and mainstream teachers had only a neutral to slightly positive perception of ELLs after the same amount of staff development. These results lead to questions regarding staff development. It would appear that staff development was resonating more with ELL teachers and if that was the case, what would mainstream teachers need from staff development sessions to better meet their needs? These issues are explored in the third research question of this current study regarding perceived needs for supports and services. As the researchers state, these issues are indeed important to explore because beliefs transform teachers' pedagogical practices and approaches to teaching.

Byrnes, Kiger, and Manning (1997) explored mainstream teachers' attitudes toward linguistically diverse students. The participant set, 191 mainstream classroom teachers enrolled in teacher education courses in Arizona, Utah, and Virginia, were selected to reflect diverse language experiences. Teacher participants were given a 13-item attitude survey with statements related to language diversity. The researchers determined that region of the country, experience working with linguistically diverse students, a completed graduate degree, and formal training all positively impacted teachers' attitudes toward language diversity. Attitudes were most positive among those holding a graduate degree. The most positive attitudes were expressed by teachers in Arizona. The researchers theorized that teachers in Arizona might have more frequent and diverse interactions, thus leading to more positive attitudes. If this is the case, then the less frequent and fewer diverse interactions of teachers in my district are worthy of

exploration, particularly in light of these findings which suggest fewer diverse interactions might foster more negative attitudes toward language learners.

Summary. What do most high school teachers believe about ESOL students? The literature indicates that teachers often have little diversity training. Limited English skills are viewed as a problem and consequently, multilingualism is rarely viewed as an asset. Teachers feel they lack the skills to connect with parents who do not speak English. Teachers generally believe that lack of English and lack of exclusive attention to mainstream culture in the curriculum may result in decreased learning potentialities, and that language proficiency is necessary for membership in a group, or citizenship. Diversity preparation affects teachers' beliefs about ESOL students. Hispanic teachers and White teachers with limited diversity preparation were equally likely to indicate less positive beliefs about language and cultural diversity. Bilingualism impacts teachers' perceptions of ESOL students. Bilingual Hispanic teachers had more positive beliefs than Hispanic teachers without comparable bilingual proficiency. The literature explores whether identities and attitudes influence teachers' perceptions of students from different racial/ethnic groups. Student teachers gave the highest ratings for institutionally appropriate behaviors to Asian American students compared to African American, White and Latino groups. Asian American students were also ranked higher in cognitive-autonomous-motivational behaviors. African American students were rated highest in the personal-social dimension. Over time, teachers began to see students as more alike than different. While teachers' perceptions of students' academic and interpersonal capabilities are steeped in language and ethnicity, perceptions can change over time.

African American and Latino students report race-based differences in treatment by teachers. The literature shows that ethnic background is the strongest factor influencing perception of bias, indicating that Mexican American students are more likely to perceive bias than non-Latino White students. Because teachers often fill knowledge gaps with stereotypes, the researchers suggest teacher training to address these concerns. The literature suggests that teachers do not often consider the potential giftedness of English language learners. Teachers often view English proficiency as a measure of giftedness, thus excluding ESOL students from gifted programs. The literature showed that ELL teachers were significantly more positive toward ELL students than mainstream teachers. Mainstream teachers had a neutral perception overall toward ELL students. The literature showed that region of the country, experience working with linguistically diverse students, a completed graduate degree, and formal training all positively impacted teachers' attitudes toward language diversity.

What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students? Nieto (2002) explained that teachers, consciously or otherwise, view mainstream culture as the measuring stick by which to assess all other cultures, contributing to a perspective of “otherness” regarding diversity. Teachers belonging to the mainstream culture often fail to realize that they, too, have a cultural lens through which they perceive the world. Because most teachers do not have opportunities to view themselves as “other” and because this lens is shared by colleagues, media, and society at large, it is often a challenge for teachers to understand that they are situated within a culture. Nieto asked two questions that are particularly relevant to this

study. Although she refers to preservice teachers, the same questions might be applied to teachers currently practicing. First, Nieto asks, “How can future teachers learn to accept the talents and skills students possess and incorporate them into the curriculum (rather than seeing students as a set of walking deficiencies?” (p. 192). Many teachers water down the curriculum in an effort to accommodate student differences. Although these intentions are often well-meaning, the result is often low expectations for some students and a curriculum that is lifeless and lacking in rigor. Further, teachers must reexamine the belief that “students from culturally and linguistically diverse families somehow lack the stamina to be productive learners” (p. 192). Rather than viewing differences from a deficit perspective, teachers must base their teaching on students’ existing skills and talents. Although students come to school with challenges that are beyond the teacher’s control, classroom teachers must strive to make changes that are within their control, such as instructional policies and practices. Nieto believes that the focus of professional development should be on negative expectations of student achievement rather than on teacher expectations. Nieto stated that teachers cannot teach what they do not know. Teachers must be encouraged to explore academic content beyond the traditional canon, such as anthropology courses or courses in African American, Latino, Asian, and women’s studies. Nieto also stated that teachers must be provided experience with varied educational settings so that they can better understand the influence of culture on learning. One way to do this is to place future teachers with teachers of different backgrounds who use a variety of strategies and approaches with their students.

Teachers across the curriculum must believe that they are teachers of ESOL students. Zamel and Spack (2006) discuss teaching multilingual learners across the curriculum by exploring students' and faculty's expectations and experiences in undergraduate courses. The researchers state that language and literacy are situated in specific classroom contexts. Language and literacy are acquired through immersion in subject matter, therefore, all faculty shoulder the responsibility of developing English language learners' literacy skills. The researchers confirmed their theory that writing assigned to foster learning, combined with feedback, is a strong catalyst for language acquisition. The researchers also determined that when pedagogy is transformed to meet the needs of ESOL students, mainstream students benefit as well. The researchers asked hundreds of students, through surveys, interviews, and reflective journals, what they felt their teachers should know about their academic needs. Students acknowledged struggles with the language, cultural confusion, appreciation for teachers who understand the magnitude of their efforts, concerns about being able to express themselves in spoken English, frustration at not being full contributors to class, and fears about being labeled less intelligent. Interestingly, the students stressed that they did not want less work or easier work, but wanted strategies to manage their workload. Two undergraduate students, studied over a six-year period, reflected upon the value of instructors' encouragement and meaningful writing and discussion opportunities. Other longitudinal data, this set from a three-year study of an undergraduate student, points to responsive teaching strategies that support learning. These include building upon students' background knowledge and experience, situating course content in real life, relating new

material to social and cultural situations, supporting lectures with handouts, and tapping into students' multicultural knowledge.

In discussing faculty perspectives, Zamel and Spack (2006) found that while many instructors had very positive interactions with English language learners, they were concerned about students' silence, written or spoken language they perceived to be inadequate to meet course requirements, and misreadings of texts. When teachers focused on students' language challenges, they saw little potential in the students. Few faculty believed they could or should facilitate the acquisition of language and literacy. Instructors who were sympathetic to the struggles of language learners felt too constrained by pressures to cover a certain amount of material to make curricular changes. The researchers conclude that instructors are often as unprepared to work with multilingual learners as multilingual learners are to work with them.

Ernst-Slavit and Wenger (2006) conducted a three-year ethnographic study of 20 bilingual paraeducators preparing to become certified teachers. Paraeducators' perceptions were gathered through interviews. Bilingual paraeducators often have extensive classroom experience working with all students and firsthand experience learning a second language and culture. Thorough understanding of students' experiences and conviction that students' cultural backgrounds provide existing knowledge upon which to build new knowledge make bilingual paraeducators culturally relevant teachers. Their experiences and positions in the schools are very often underutilized and overlooked. Paraeducators struggled to see themselves as teachers, often grappling for words to describe what they do and how their role impacts students

who are outside the mainstream. The researchers state that paraeducators are cultural brokers even within school systems with majority ideology, even though they struggle to understand their own roles within this framework.

Hite and Evans (2006) examined mainstream first grade teachers' understanding of strategies for accommodating the needs of English language learners. In this qualitative study, the researchers explored how 22 first grade teachers in Florida perceived the use of instructional strategies for ELLs. The teachers in this study were not expected to directly teach English as a second language, rather, they were to facilitate second language acquisition while also teaching content. This requires teachers to emphasize "comprehensible input," that is, impart content knowledge through language that the learner is able to comprehend. Although this study focused on elementary teachers, the insight garnered here informs my study of high school teachers because they, too, must convey content knowledge through comprehensible input. The researchers state that oftentimes a language learner's affective filter impedes language acquisition, but mainstream teachers have in their ability to lower their students' affective filters. While mainstream teachers may not feel they are experts at facilitating English acquisition, they must realize that they have the ability to create a non-threatening environment. This assertion informs this research question regarding teachers' perceptions of themselves as teachers of language learners.

Teachers in Hite and Evans (2006) were given a survey that yielded data that was organized into six categories: adjustment of teaching approach, modification issues, parent interactions, affect and classroom philosophy, peers as teachers, and use of the

primary language. The researchers reached three conclusions: strategies for teaching literacy and content to first grade students are compatible with strategies for teaching language literacy and content to ELL students; teachers held very positive feelings about, and high expectations of, their ELL students; and teachers found benefits from student–student interaction, even though much time is spent on whole-class instruction.

The researchers stated that their study leaves them with several questions. Of these questions, one in particular resonates with my study. Hite and Evans (2006) asked if an examination of strategy use by teachers in the upper grades would reveal differences in the kind and extent of accommodation strategies compared to their investigation’s findings. Indeed, examination of perceptions and practice of upper grade teachers is limited. This question posed by Hite and Evans was addressed in this current research on several levels through the use of the survey and through the interview process.

Chubbuck (2004) studied the enactment and disruption of Whiteness by examining teachers’ life histories and their practice and policy in relation to students of color. The participants were two White secondary literacy teachers teaching in a Midwestern community of approximately 100,000. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Each teacher was observed approximately 25 times. This study is relevant to my research because it concentrates on educators’ personal histories and how that impacts classroom practice and policy.

Rhine (1995) addressed the challenge of effectively preparing teachers of English language learners to meet the needs of ELL students. In this study, teachers were asked to predict their students’ success on math problems and to participate in a tutoring

session. Findings indicated teachers did not trust their abilities to assess students' understanding and assessed ELL students differently from non-ELL students. Further, when looking at instructional practices and student involvement during tutoring, ELL students, when compared to non-ELL students, spoke fewer complex sentences and used manipulative language less often. Most significantly, teachers' questioning methods showed a bias against ELL students.

Lewis, Maerten-Rivera, Adamson, and Lee (2011) explored urban third grade teachers' practices and perceptions in science instruction with English language learners. This study collected data, in the form of a questionnaire and observations, from the first year of a five-year research and development project that examined 38 teachers' perceptions of their classroom practices compared to actual classroom practices, as observed by outside observers. The study involved 38 teachers and chosen schools had a percentage of ELLs above the district mean, a percentage of students on free or reduced lunch above the district mean, and school "grades" of C or D according to the state's accountability plan. Seven schools were in the treatment group and eight schools were in the control group.

In Lewis et al. (2011), four domains of science instruction with English language learners were included: teachers' knowledge of science and content, teaching practices to support scientific understanding, teaching practices to support scientific inquiry, and teaching practices to support English language development during science instruction. Teachers in this study were participants in a professional development intervention that endeavored to improve the science and literacy achievement of ELL students. The

researchers explored two parallel concerns: many teachers do not have the necessary training to work with students from varied backgrounds and many teachers do not have the knowledge of science content or science-specific teaching strategies to develop students' understanding of science and inquiry. The elementary science teacher must develop deep understanding of the content to be taught, employ content-specific instructional strategies, guide students to make connections among science concepts and apply science concepts to the real world, recognize the role of prior knowledge, and guide students toward making well-supported arguments based on evidence. In addition to delivering content to all students, science teachers must support the general and academic language development of English language learners. Although many teachers believed ELLs must acquire English before tackling course content, reality dictated that ELLs develop language skills and science skills simultaneously. Moreover, the language of science extends beyond grammatical structures. In addition to vocabulary specific to the sciences, commonly used words take on different meanings (matter, space). The inquiry process itself is structured around a communication approach that is often new to all students, and ELL students benefit from a hands-on approach to science because it is less dependent upon language.

Teachers in Lewis et al. (2011) used a science curriculum that included guidelines regarding scientific inquiry, ways to incorporate English language and literacy development, suggestions for scaffolding instruction, strategies to foster reading and writing for all students, and specific strategies to promote English language proficiency for English language learners. Teachers also attended workshops that covered unit

content and potential student misconceptions, linguistic scaffolding for ELL students. Findings based on data from questionnaires indicate practices for understanding were related to practices for inquiry and practices for English language development. Findings based on observations indicate practices for understanding were related to practices for inquiry, practices for English language development, and teacher knowledge of science content. Interestingly, the researchers found a weak to non-existent relationship between teachers' self-reports and observations of their practices.

Lynch, Klee, and Tedick (2001) found that learner attitudes toward content courses were generally not positive. The researchers discovered that content instructors were often unsure how to structure a content-based class. One teacher expressed doubts about the ability to convey substantial content in the second language. As a result, learners and instructors both expressed frustrations. Duff and Uchida (1997) explored the negotiation of teachers' sociocultural identities and practices in postsecondary English as a Foreign Language classrooms to explore the relationship between language and social identity. Results revealed teachers' perceptions of their sociocultural identities grew from past educational, professional, and cultural experiences. These identities were subject to changes over time due to varying factors, such as classroom culture and reactions from students and colleagues.

Rueda and Garcia (1996) explored teachers' perspectives on literacy assessment and instruction with language-minority students. The researchers collected data from 54 teachers who taught in six urban districts in Southern California, serving primarily language-minority Hispanic students. The teachers were placed into three groups of 18

teachers. One group was comprised of teachers with bilingual credentials. Another group consisted of “waivered” bilingual teachers. This means that these teachers taught in bilingual classrooms but were not fully credentialed. The third group consisted of credentialed special education teachers of “learning handicapped” language-minority students. The purpose of this study was to explore the differences in teachers’ training and the resulting impact on teachers’ beliefs and knowledge. The researchers employed semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires. Interview topics included teacher background, the pedagogy of reading, reading instruction, assessment, student learning and language characteristics, and the context of class, school, and community. Classroom observations focused on curriculum, teaching methods, assessment practices, classroom organization, and data related to bilingualism and biliteracy.

The results of Rueda and Garcia (1996) illuminated key teacher perspectives and assisted in guiding my research. Results from the interviews indicated a great deal of variance within each group of teachers, but bilingual and waived teachers held a slightly more positive view of bilingualism and biliteracy. Regarding reading and literacy, special education teachers were more closely aligned with the transmission model of reading and the other two groups were mixed. No group was strongly constructivist. Special education teachers were more closely aligned with discrete methods of assessment, followed by bilingual waived teachers and then bilingual credentialed teachers. Classroom observations yielded more data. Teachers had overwhelming demands placed upon them during the day, little chance to reflect, and

limited support for the implementation of new strategies. Across classrooms and interviews, the urgency for learning English was great. Although teachers had been exposed to theories that support native language instruction to facilitate English literacy, they were reluctant to employ such strategies due to school and community emphasis on English acquisition. Further, teachers reported that students were reluctant to use Spanish in school and would often answer in English even if questioned in Spanish.

The most significant aspect of Rueda and Garcia (1996) in terms of the direction of questioning in my work is revealed in the discussion of this research. The researchers stated that variation in teachers' beliefs was wide. This variation was found among groups, within each group, and within individuals. Further, the researchers found that daily challenges faced by the typical practitioner, such as pressure to facilitate English acquisition and demands on time and resources, presented more crucial hindrances to the instruction of language learners than absence or presence of particular theoretical models. The researchers state that more attention to the realities of practice is needed for both theory development and research on how teachers integrate theoretical ideas with everyday demands and constraints of teaching. My research picked up this thread. The researchers further explain that while prior training impacted teachers' beliefs and practices, there were significant within-group variations. One can conclude that these are not the only factors that influence beliefs and practices. Rueda and Garcia (1996) again conclude that further research is necessary to address these indications.

An important aspect of the interview process in my research was to uncover not only how teachers perceived themselves now, but how they understood changes and

potential changes in their perceptions. Rueda and Garcia (1996) reported that many of the teachers in their study had somewhat negative views of bilingualism/biliteracy, even with coursework to incorporate language and culture in teaching. These findings propelled me to delve more deeply into the intricate confluence of perceptions and training and the subsequent impact on teacher awareness. The authors pondered whether or not these beliefs existed before professional coursework and remained unchanged, or were their beliefs modified as a result of factors in the contexts where they taught? My study endeavored to illuminate those ideas.

Summary. What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students? Teachers across the curriculum must believe that they are teachers of ESOL students. Language and literacy are situated in specific classroom contexts and are acquired through immersion in subject matter, therefore, all faculty shoulder the responsibility of developing English language learners' literacy skills. The literature shows that many teachers water down the curriculum in an effort to accommodate student differences. Although these intentions are often well-meaning, the result is often low expectations for some students and a curriculum that is lifeless and lacking in rigor. Rather than viewing differences from a deficit perspective, teachers must base their teaching on students' existing skills and talents.

The literature shows that while many instructors had very positive interactions with English language learners, they were concerned about students' silence, written or spoken language they perceived to be inadequate to meet course requirements, and misreadings of texts. When teachers focused on students' language challenges, they saw

little potential in the students. Teachers did not often believe they could or should facilitate the acquisition of language and literacy. Teachers who are sympathetic to the struggles of language learners oftentimes feel too constrained by pressures to cover a certain amount of material to make curricular changes. The literature shows that teachers are often as unprepared to work with multilingual learners as multilingual learners are to work with them.

Teachers have the ability to lower their students' affective filters. While mainstream teachers may not feel they are experts at facilitating English acquisition, they must realize that they have the ability to create a non-threatening environment. The literature shows that strategies for teaching literacy and content to mainstream students are often compatible with strategies for teaching language literacy and content to ELL students. Teachers often do not trust their abilities to assess ESOL students' understanding and often assess ELL students differently from non-ELL students. The literature shows that many teachers do not have the necessary training to work with students from varied backgrounds. In content area classrooms, teachers must see themselves as deliverers of academic content as well as facilitators of academic language development of English language learners.

The literature shows that teachers feel overwhelmed and feel unsupported when implementing new strategies. Although teachers had been exposed to theories that support native language instruction to facilitate English literacy, they were reluctant to employ such strategies due to school and community emphasis on English acquisition. The literature shows that teachers often have a somewhat negative view of

bilingualism/biliteracy, even with coursework to incorporate language and culture in teaching.

What are high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students?

Nieto (2002) stated that school policies and practices must be understood within a societal context and not simply within individual schools' or teachers' attitudes and practices. Because my research explored the attitudes and practices of individual teachers, it was important to explore the sociopolitical context of our society in general. Policies and practices have deep roots. Nieto suggested that "although many teachers are hardworking, supportive of their students, and talented educators, many of these same teachers are also burned out, frustrated, and negatively influenced by societal views about the students they teach" (p. 126). Teachers are products of the sociopolitical cultures in which they live. Nieto stated "messages about culture and language and how they are valued or devalued in society are communicated not only or even primarily by schools, but by the media and community as a whole" (p. 128).

An often-heard lament of mainstream teachers is "Why don't they just learn English?" Tse (2001), in her book by the same title, explains that understanding public perception of heritage languages and the role of heritage languages in education allows us to begin to understand some teachers' perceptions of language learners. Tse stated that despite overwhelming research to the contrary, the general public is firmly under the impression that heritage languages are a problem, not a resource. Tse referred to this as a "linguistic blind spot" and demonstrated that this explains why conventional wisdom

leans toward allowing heritage languages to dissipate within a few generations (p. 54).

Tse continues by examining the impact of heritage languages on education, stating “when non-English languages and bilingualism are developed, heritage-language-speaking children are more likely to become proficient in English, to succeed academically, and to contribute positively to the job force as adults, precisely the same goals held by language assimilationists” (p. 54).

Tse (2001) gives two reasons why developing the heritage language is advantageous for children and adolescents. First, continual development of the native language can increase the rate of English development while still enabling the child to learn school subjects. A solid command of one language helps a learner master subsequent languages not only more thoroughly, but more rapidly, given that the learner already has a linguistic foundation in place. Additionally, if a student has an adequate command of the heritage language, the student is better able to access content knowledge in that language, thereby making the transition to content in English much easier. When students discuss a topic in a new language, they are better able to make meaning if they have been exposed to the topic via the heritage language. Second, students who are fluent in English have the potential to become bilingual and biliterate if they work to develop and maintain their heritage language. This is not only advantageous to the individual, it is advantageous to society as a whole. Tse explains that the student who is bilingual is often more creative, a better problem-solver, and a better divergent thinker, given that the student has more than one way of thinking about a concept. This leads to

economic advantages in the workplace and increased access to varied resources and “funds of knowledge.”

Personal conversations with mainstream teachers of ESOL students have always seemed to indicate that teachers are unprepared to teach ESOL students. Teachers in my training sessions consistently lament that they feel they do not have the training necessary to address the instructional challenges presented by English language learners. The literature supports these persistent impressions. Watson, Miller, and Driver (2005) examined English language learner representation in teacher education textbooks. The researchers examined the content of the 25 top-selling preservice teacher training textbooks for information regarding the instruction of English language learners, specifically, the processes of first and second language acquisition, cross-cultural issues in schooling, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, methods for communication effectively with school personnel and parents, practical teaching strategies of ELLs, needs of students with little formal schooling, incorporating the students’ first language in instruction, how differences in language and culture affect students’ classroom participation, making oral and written language comprehensible to the ELL, and information pertaining to the assessment of the achievement of the ELL. Five raters used a consistent scale to locate and identify information that would be beneficial for the instruction of English language learners. Texts were introductory as well as content oriented. The researchers determined that in most cases content relating to English language learners comprised less than 1% of texts and in many texts English language learners were not mentioned at all. Texts that did mention English language learners

presented potential instructional challenges but never provided instructional strategies that could be implemented by classroom teachers. Strategies for teaching ELLs, assessment of ELLs, and making oral language comprehensible were virtually nonexistent. This study indicated that beginning teachers must rely on additional training beyond preservice training to meet the educational needs of English language learners.

Gatt (2008) also explores the challenges faced by in-service teachers who have not gained the skills needed to meet the needs of English language learners during the teacher certification process. This mixed method study asked two questions: What are the greatest challenges impeding effective education for the state's ELLs? What areas of professional development are needed to overcome these challenges? Gatt states that in Idaho, as in much of the country, ESL positions have been very hard to fill, citing data from the 2005 to 2006 school year which indicated 72% of school districts in the state with vacancies in ESL reported the positions were difficult to fill. These positions had been filled by education assistants without ESOL certification, and most of the ESL certified content teachers had received training through workshops and in-services rather than through coursework or preservice programs. Survey questions were generated by the board of directors of the state association of ESL and bilingual educators. At the annual Idaho Association for Bilingual Education conference, 165 educators were given the survey (106 were returned) and the researcher conducted focus groups and interviews. In addition to surveys collected at the conference, 157 surveys were mailed to teachers in the state (55 were returned). Participants responded to survey items and also took part in an interview. The study consisted of 161 participants (57% White, 40% Hispanic, 3%

other), although data for 102 certified teachers were included in this survey (program directors and para-professionals were not included). Of the 102 certified teachers, 80 indicated English as their first language, 21 indicated Spanish as their first language, and 1 indicated a language other than English or Spanish. Seventy teachers held ESL endorsements and 39 held bilingual education endorsements (some held both). The study did not indicate whether participants taught in elementary, middle, or high school. Participants were selected based upon high numbers of ESOL students on their caseloads and willingness to provide insightful data. In-service teachers stated that they needed professional development to address the needs of growing numbers of English language learners. Teachers said a significant challenge faced when working with ELLs is that colleagues lack the knowledge and skills to educate ELLs and that they lack an understanding of diversity or multicultural education. Teachers also expressed the need for more multicultural education specialists to provide training in second language acquisition. Another problem is the attrition rate of qualified ESL and bilingual endorsed educators due to increasing workload and little support. Teachers in this study named hiring more ESL or bilingual education certified teachers as a priority, as well as professional development methods including ESL methods, sheltered instruction, and first and second language literacy methods. Interestingly, teachers also pointed out that a Spanish class as a required part of the undergraduate experience would be helpful because even if fluency was not attained, teachers would gain an understanding of the minority culture and empathy for language learners.

O'Brien (2011) examined high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the training they received to teach ELLs. All 344 social studies teachers in a large Florida district were given surveys and 123 surveys were returned. Eight teachers were interviewed to provide insight into perceptions of college coursework and district-provided training for ELL issues and concerns. Interestingly, 82.9% of survey respondents said they received training in teaching ELLs (59% indicated in-services while 20% indicated college courses). Participants stated that college coursework and district-provided training left them ill-prepared to teach language learners. Participants also stated that site-based support provided by additional ELL educators was the most effective way to improve and support learning for ELLs. The researchers concluded that an important way to address ELL concerns was to provide high quality, relevant professional development.

Watnick and Sacks (2006) explored teachers' perceptions of full inclusion in elementary, middle, and high schools in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The researchers examined the implementation of full-inclusion policy and coinciding challenges to meet the needs of increasing numbers of ELLs. They also conducted a pilot study to explore teachers' perceptions of the effects of inclusion on special education students and English language learners. Schools were randomly selected. Open-ended surveys were mailed to 35 staff members and administrators and 15 were completed and returned (7 by general education teachers, 6 by special education teachers, and 2 by administrators). Results showed that inclusion was in practice at 13 schools and that each school determined program implementation. English language learners have been integrated into all

surveyed inclusion programs. While ELLs were fully included, students needing intensive language support received additional services. Schools reported benefits of ELLs and special education/ELLs in an inclusive classroom environment. Five schools said special education/ELL students benefit because they are able to interact and socialize with the general education population and general education students learn to work collaboratively with special education/ELL classmates. General education classrooms benefit because many special education or ELL strategies are considered good practice for all students. Finally, children placed in inclusive settings become more tolerant of each other.

Meskill (2005) explored outcomes and implications for training arising from faculty development activities for the Training All Teachers project (TAT). This federally funded curriculum enhancement project was designed for preservice and in-service educators across disciplines, focusing on English language learners and addressing needs that have not been addressed. The researcher stated that training for educators often fails to impart the skills necessary to instruct English language learners. While university coursework often includes diversity training, practical issues concerning ELLs are often overlooked, and short-term professional development interventions have been shown to be ineffectual. The TAT training took place with faculty at the School of Education at SUNY Albany in ways that modeled responsive professional development. Faculty determined the format of the training sessions and how to best present ELL-related information and develop course syllabi. Four broad topics were emphasized: language and its relation to society and culture; language acquisition and the

interconnectedness of first and second languages; cross-cultural issues, roles, and responsibilities of teachers and schools regarding English language learners; and methods for communicating with parents and other stakeholders regarding English language learners. In this study, five faculty members reported their perceptions of the training. Faculty reported that they experienced considerable growth in their understanding of ELL students. Previously, faculty reported that they had been unfamiliar with laws governing the education of ELLs and that schools were not required to support ELLs' learning. Some faculty members asserted that ELLs enriched the classroom environment but that they were concerned about the literacy difficulties that ELLs encounter. Faculty members also reported new understandings regarding supports and services schools must provide, the importance of designing instruction based on individual learner's needs, and a deeper understanding of mandated accommodations. Faculty reported the extreme effectiveness of the training session segment conducted in Chinese. This immersion tactic gave faculty an immediate, genuine sense of what language learners face.

Cho and DeCastro-Ambrosetti (2005) examined the effects one multicultural education course had on secondary education preservice teachers' attitudes about the needs and experiences of linguistically diverse students as well as regard for multicultural education. Teachers' attitudes were assessed before and after the course using a survey. Of 25 initial participants, 18 participants completed both surveys and their data was used in this study. Gender groups were almost equal as were distributions among majority and minority ethnic groups. Survey questions covered experiences and exposure to cultural and linguistic diversity, multicultural curricular issues, and social structural equality. The

survey used a 5-point Likert-type scale as well as open-ended questions to gain in-depth perceptions and self-reflections. While findings show teachers attitudes either improved as they developed awareness and appreciation for other cultures or stayed positive, teachers still reported feeling ill-equipped to teach students from diverse backgrounds due to limited cultural knowledge and teaching experience. Some participants feared being rejected by parents of minority students and others were concerned about not being able to teach them in the “right” way. Participants also expressed that while their knowledge of other cultures increased due to the course, they still felt they lacked relevant experience with diverse communities. Findings also showed some resistance to certain concepts. Only 27% of participants agreed that minority parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds placed great value on education and only 17% agreed that a major reason for the pattern of low academic achievement among poor minorities is the structure and values of schools, not the home. The researchers were concerned that on the survey administered prior to the course, 56% of participants agreed that multicultural education benefits all students and consequently society, but on the survey administered after the course, only 44% of participants agreed. This contradiction between positive attitudes toward diversity and resistance to the benefits of multicultural education must be further investigated.

Summary. What are high school mainstream teachers’ beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students? The literature indicates that teachers are unprepared to teach ESOL students. Teachers feel that they do not have the training necessary to address the instructional challenges

presented by English language learners. College coursework and district-provided training often leave teachers feeling ill-prepared to teach language learners. The literature shows that teachers believe that site-based support provided by additional ELL educators is an effective way to improve and support learning for ELLs. Additionally, an important way to address ELL concerns is to provide high quality, relevant professional development. Textbooks typically either fail to address issues related to teaching language learners or present potential instructional challenges but do not provide instructional strategies that could be implemented by classroom teachers. Strategies for teaching ELLs, assessment of ELLs, and making oral language comprehensible are virtually nonexistent. Teachers indicate that because of this dearth of support, they must rely on additional training beyond preservice training to meet the educational needs of English language learners. The literature shows that support personnel may be in short supply. ESL positions can be hard to fill and the attrition rate of qualified ESL and bilingual endorsed educators due to increasing workload and little support is significant. As a result, support personnel for ESOL students often do not have necessary training. ESL certified content teachers often receive training through workshops and in-services rather than through coursework or preservice programs. In-service teachers believe they need professional development to address the needs of growing numbers of English language learners.

Teachers state that a significant challenge faced when working with ELLs is that colleagues lack the knowledge and skills to educate ELLs and they lack an understanding of diversity or multicultural education. Teachers want more multicultural education

specialists to provide training in second language acquisition. Additionally, professional development methods including ESL methods, sheltered instruction, and first and second language literacy methods are needed. Spanish language instruction for educators is also identified as helpful because even if fluency was not attained, teachers would gain an understanding of the minority culture and empathy for language learners. The literature shows that teachers desire a greater understanding of language and its relation to society and culture, language acquisition and the interconnectedness of first and second languages, cross-cultural issues, roles and responsibilities of teachers and schools regarding English language learners, and methods for communicating with parents and other stakeholders regarding English language learners. Teachers often feel ill-equipped to teach students from diverse backgrounds due to limited cultural knowledge, limited experience teaching children of diversity, and limited experience with diverse communities.

Gap Analysis

What do we know? In this section, I will share an analysis of the literature which indicates four areas where we need to know more about teachers of English language learners.

First, the literature indicates that attitudinal beliefs are important. They are thought to be predictors of behavior. Perceptions and judgments often spring from belief systems, and teachers' perceptions of students' language influence teachers' expectations for students' academic performance. General educational experiences, ELL training, experience with foreign cultures, and contact with ELL students impacts mainstream

teachers' attitudes toward ELL students. The literature shows that these issues are indeed important to explore because beliefs can transform teachers' pedagogical practices and approaches to teaching. The literature suggests that teachers' perceptions of ELL students can impact teachers' willingness to facilitate language learning, thereby affecting classroom instruction.

Second, the literature shows that mainstream teachers could benefit from additional diversity training. Teachers often have little diversity training and are ill-equipped to meet the needs of ESOL students. Teachers struggle to understand the needs of language learners. While teachers believe English skills are necessary to fully participate in learning and mainstream culture, teachers rarely view multilingualism as an asset. Diversity training and staff development can positively impact teachers' perceptions of ESOL students or, it may have little impact on teachers' perceptions of ESOL students. Studies show that teachers' perceptions can change over time. The literature shows that in one region of the country, experience working with linguistically diverse students, a completed graduate degree, and formal training all can positively impact teachers' attitudes toward diversity.

Third, the literature shows that due to limited supply of ESOL teachers and high numbers of ESOL students, mainstream teachers are often the primary teachers of ESOL students. In large numbers of classrooms, language and literacy are acquired through immersion in subject matter. Teachers often believe that the way to address the needs of language learners is to water down the curriculum and sacrifice rigor. Linguistic and cultural diversity is viewed as a deficit rather than a springboard for instruction and

pathway to enrichment for all students. Teachers do not often believe they can or should facilitate the acquisition of language and literacy. Teachers must endeavor to lower ESOL students' affective filter by creating a non-threatening environment and strategies that benefit ESOL students in the mainstream classroom often benefit all students. Mainstream teachers often feel overwhelmed and unsupported. The literature shows that teachers often have a somewhat negative view of bilingualism/biliteracy, even with coursework to incorporate language and culture in teaching.

Fourth, the literature shows that college coursework and district-provided training often leave teachers feeling ill-prepared to teach language learners. Textbooks often omit challenges and solutions regarding the instruction of language learners. Teachers believe they do not have the information needed to meet the instructional and assessment needs of language learners. ESOL teachers provide high quality, relevant professional development. The literature shows that teachers believe they would benefit from a higher degree of cultural understanding, greater exposure to diversity, and a more comprehensive understanding of roles and responsibilities regarding English language learners.

What do we need to know? While the literature provides insight into mainstream teachers' perceptions of ESOL students, supports and services needed by ESOL students, and teachers' perceived roles regarding the instruction of ESOL students, there is much more to understand. For example, the literature shows that interaction with diversity impacts teachers' perceptions of ESOL students and might even foster more negative attitudes toward language learners, bilingualism, and multicultural education (Cho &

DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). If this is the case, then the limited interactions with diverse learners of teachers in my district are worthy of exploration.

The intent of this study was to understand the perceptions of mainstream teachers in my district so that these findings could not only inform the literature, but could also pave the way for the conceptualization and implementation of local staff development. The blueprint for local staff development could, in turn, provide a compass for districts with similar needs and demographics. There are contradictory findings in the literature regarding staff development. According to some studies, short-term professional development interventions for in-service teachers have been shown to be ineffectual; according to other studies, similar interventions have been shown to be quite effective. This research endeavored to understand what makes staff development timely and useful by gaining a much deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions and beliefs.

This study sought to both address gaps in the literature and determine if concepts present in the literature were applicable to teachers in my district. Do teachers in my district believe they have adequate training, experience, and resources to address the needs of ESOL students? Do teachers in my district have a good understanding of the background and culture of ESOL students in their charge? Do teachers believe they have the skills needed to modify content for ESOL students, support literacy, and fairly assess ESOL students? Do teachers believe heritage language maintenance and mainstreaming within the regular classroom have merit? Does the legal status of students impact teachers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities toward ESOL students?

The next chapter will explain the research methodology for this study. Included within the next chapter are contributions of pilot studies to research processes and procedures, an explanation of how the research site and participants were selected, a presentation of the research design, and approaches to data collection and data analysis.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study explored mainstream classroom teachers' perceptions of ESOL students. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students?
2. What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students?
3. What are high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students?

Overall Approach

The foundation of this study is the concept of "original voices." Much has been written detailing what teachers should and should not do in the classroom. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding what motivates teachers to act in specific ways. A common complaint of teachers is that they are rarely asked for their ideas, input, or perspectives. This study sought to learn from teachers, firsthand, how they perceive ESOL students, how these perceptions manifest in the classroom with regard to ESOL students, and what role teacher training programs must play when preparing teachers for meeting the needs of diverse learners in the classroom.

To attain depth of personal insight, this study is mixed-method but primarily qualitative in nature. Understanding perception and motivation is not easily expressed

with numbers and statistics. The faculty of a suburban high school completed a survey comprised of 20 questions regarding perceptions of ESOL students and their needs. The faculty was then invited to participate in the interview process and 7 interview participants were selected from a pool of potential participants. Through an interview process that was centered upon meaningful discussion, teachers had a platform to share how they perceived ESOL students, what factors shaped their lens, and how they transferred perceptions to classroom procedure and policy. This small number of participants yielded depth of data inaccessible by instruments meant for a larger sampling. Maxwell (2005) states the strength of qualitative research is its focus on specific situations or people. Further, he states that qualitative studies seek to understand how participants understand the meaning of their actions and how these understandings influence behavior.

The following documents are attached as appendices: Human Subjects Review Board Approval (Appendix A), Informed Consent Form - Survey (Appendix B), Informed Consent Form - Interviews (Appendix C), Survey (Appendix D), Invitation to Participate Letter (Appendix E), List of Interview Questions for the first round of interviews (Appendix F), List of Interview Questions for the second round of interviews (Appendix G), and Summary of Findings for the first round of interviews (Appendix H). Approval was granted by the George Mason University Human Subjects Review Board and the Assistant Supervisor of Research and Accountability for my school district.

Contributions of Pilot Studies to Process and Procedure

Glesne (1999) discusses myriad reasons for conducting a pilot study. Ideally, a pilot study involves interviewing participants who are representative of the anticipated participants in the actual research. A pilot study also gives the new researcher a chance to practice interviewing and a chance to hone observation skills. As a doctoral student, I have had the chance to conduct three such studies. Although my pilot study participants are not representative of my dissertation participants, my pilot studies have afforded several very important opportunities and have provided valuable insight into the qualitative data collection process. Maxwell states that if pilot studies were not direct attempts to pilot the current study, they should be discussed in terms of what the researcher learned from them.

In 2004, I conducted a study at Covenant House in Washington, DC. Covenant House, supported by the Catholic Church, is a refuge for runaway and impoverished youth typically in their teens and early 20s. Staff members strive to reunite them with their families or move them toward competent independent living. Covenant House utilizes the efforts of paid staff as well as volunteers who fulfill various roles. While at Covenant House, I worked as a volunteer in the GED program. I tutored runaways and recently released prisoners in skills needed to pass the writing portion of the GED exam. My study investigated factors that encourage a person to undertake volunteer work. I interviewed three participants with a structured set of interview questions: the director of volunteer services, a nun who worked full-time at Covenant House, and a high school teacher who tutored in the evenings. I also included an impromptu interview session with

a focus group of several college students spending their spring break volunteering at Covenant House.

This first qualitative study allowed me to experience the role of participant researcher and consequently begin to learn to navigate the potential pitfalls inherent to that position. I learned that access is valuable. I had no trouble assembling participants and I found that because I was connected to Covenant House, I was considered “one of the team,” and consequently my participants were quite candid. I benefitted from well-developed rapport and I feel my tenure in the facility allowed me to structure more insightful questions. I also began to understand the importance of balance between structured interview questions and flexible digressions. To that end, I learned that there are different types of digressions. Sometimes a digression means focus needs to be reestablished and sometimes a digression yields valuable data, unexpected insight, or future research questions that would remain undiscovered if interview questions were seen as rigid and static. Transcribing interviews allowed me to see what types of cues I consistently missed as a result of putting my thoughts ahead to the next question rather than focusing on the immediate response. I learned that intense note-taking during the interview is detrimental to the interview itself. I noticed that my participants would stop talking if I kept writing and at times the very process of writing caused me to miss conversational cues. Finally, I learned that qualitative data analysis can fall victim to one’s own lens. Sometimes we find what we want to find. To this end, it is imperative to read all transcripts carefully, choose category codes wisely, and most importantly, strive

to uncover connections between coded categories. This will produce a more tightly woven, holistic story.

Later in 2004, I conducted a second pilot study at Covenant House. This study sought to explore students' perceptions through the lens of a literacy program. Before I immersed myself in life at Covenant House, I planned to spend the semester analyzing approaches to literacy employed by the GED program. I eventually realized there were no site-generated approaches to analyze because volunteers were encouraged to get to know the students and help them improve their writing skills by any means possible. I changed the focus of my study from program-centered to student-centered and devised new interview questions that would allow me to better understand my students. I interviewed four students and collected writing samples from five students. I endeavored to understand what events shaped their lives, what characterized their present learning with regard to literacy, and what vision defined their future.

As in the first study, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the role of a participant observer. I found that rapport had to be developed differently in this situation because I was seen as an authority figure and not as a peer. Conducting these interviews taught me the importance of being genuine. My participants were products of challenging circumstances and could detect ulterior motives quite quickly. The writing samples indicated some students were far more candid using the written word (compared to the interview process) demonstrating that it is perhaps valuable to offer participants more than one vehicle by which to express themselves. This pilot study is similar to my dissertation topic in that I explored the concept of "perception" for the first time and

therefore had to shift my lens away from myself. I also learned an important process lesson through this study. It's important to fully understand context and avoid assumption before structuring a study. I assumed there was a cogent literacy program in place and I assumed that program would yield ample data. When I learned otherwise, I understood that it was important to be flexible enough to relinquish my initial goals and devise a way to uncover similar data via a different track. Sometimes the best data in a qualitative study is the data the researcher never expects to find.

In 2005, I conducted a pilot study designed to explore parents' perceptions of the heritage culture of their adopted children. This study utilized a convenience sample of two sets of parents, all connected to the elementary school at which I taught at that time. Parents were interviewed in their respective homes and interviews were audiotaped. Each set of parents was interviewed once and I transcribed the first interview before conducting the second interview. Although a secondary purpose of this study was to field test potential questions for my dissertation, a change in dissertation topic propelled me to revisit this pilot study and examine ways the process itself informs my current study.

This study reinforced previous lessons learned and yielded new insight regarding process. Encouraging participants to identify the interview venue serves to lower their affect filter. Conducting two interviews, separated by significant time, allowed me to utilize the literature in a cyclic way. The literature informed my first interview, data analysis and revisiting the literature informed my second interview, and further data analysis together with a final return to the literature provided a cohesive, well-connected

“story.” It became clear that interviews and reviews of the literature guide the direction of research and research structures dialogue.

Selection of Participants

Maxwell (2005) and Glesne (1999) state “purposeful selection” is the typical way to select participants and settings in qualitative research. Participants are selected deliberately to provide specific information. Goals of purposeful selection include achieving representativeness and ensuring all participants are cohesive in some way. Glesne conveys the importance of selecting information-rich cases. The type of purposeful sampling that closely met my needs was homogeneous sampling. In this type of sampling, similar cases are selected in order to describe a specific subgroup in depth. The purpose for my study was not one of breadth, but rather depth. I wanted to develop a deep understanding of the perceptions of a small number of high school content teachers, with the expectation that their perceptions will likely reflect the perceptions of teachers of similar background and instructional settings.

Participants were former colleagues at a high school in suburban Baltimore, MD. Although I taught at this particular high school several years ago, I did not work directly with the selected interview participants and most did not remember me as my tenure at this school was brief. Participants were recruited during a mandatory faculty meeting for all staff members in September 2010. At the beginning of the faculty meeting, I explained my coursework and the nature of my impending research. I then distributed a 20-question survey (Appendix D) and asked teachers to complete the survey along with the consent form (Appendix B) which would allow me to use data gleaned from the

surveys. Additionally, I distributed to the entire faculty a letter inviting teachers to further participate in the study by agreeing to two rounds of interviews (Appendix E). Interested participants returned the paper to me with their name and contact information.

Assertions by Pohan and Aguilar (2001) supported my decision to collect data from high school teachers. The researchers assert that preservice and beginning teachers' beliefs have been studied for three decades. I, too, have found that research overwhelmingly focuses on attitudes and beliefs of preservice, beginning, and elementary teachers. The researchers state that attitudes, beliefs, and expectations have been found to guide and direct teachers' responses toward various students. In addition to addressing gaps in the literature, my decision to study the perceptions of high school teachers was rooted in personal experience. As I have conducted teacher training sessions across the county, I found that teachers seemed to become progressively more negative as instructional level increased. While I hypothesized that this might be due to less experience with ESOL students and increasing teacher accountability concerns, I deemed scholarly research necessary to begin to uncover reasons, thereby gaining the information necessary to develop needed training sessions and provide timely resources.

Survey Participants

According to the principal at the research site, there were 70 classroom teachers. At the meeting where the data were collected, 53 staff members were in attendance. After 53 surveys were collected, I determined that 50 surveys would be used to gather data. I excluded 3 surveys because the information supplied at the end of the survey

indicated that they were not classroom teachers (1 assistant principal, 1 intervention specialist, and 1 media specialist).

Interview Participants

Of classroom teachers present at the meeting, 13 teachers submitted forms indicating interest in participating in the interview process. I created a chart with information provided on the interest forms and supplied notes to provide an organized approach to participant selection (Table 1). I phoned each potential participant to gain more information and to gauge willingness to commit to two rounds of interviews. I decided to choose 7 teachers so that I would have a large enough participant pool to represent several instructional disciplines, a range of teaching experience, and fair gender balance. Interviews were conducted in Fall 2010. Candidates marked in bold in Table 1 were chosen to be participants in this study.

Table 1

Interview Candidates

Name (pseudonym)	Subject(s) taught	Years teaching	Data provided on the form
Greg	Chemistry and Physics	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 years at research site
Lori <i>(did not check a box but provided information)</i>	Art	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 years elementary school in AZ with many ESOL students • 13 years high school
Irene	Library Media	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaches information literacy skills to small groups • taught Spanish • <i>not teaching full classes</i>
Deb	Spanish	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years middle school • 22 years high school • 25 years in this district • <i>time constraints</i>
Muriel	Spanish, History, Geography	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taught in Republic of Panama • taught in the United States
Kelly	World History	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaches Social Studies
Rob	English	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all years at the high school level
Adam	Social Studies	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years teaching • 5 years at the research site
Dan	Math	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic schools - 8 years • local city schools - 2 years • neighboring counties - 14 years • research site - 6 years
Darcy	Special Ed	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high school • <i>time constraints</i>
Kim	History, Government	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>phone calls not returned</i>
Maria <i>would like more info</i>	English/Reading	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elementary, middle, high • public and private • <i>phone calls not returned</i>
Kris <i>would like more info</i>	Food and Nutrition	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll County • <i>not willing to participate in both interviews</i>

Note. Candidates marked in bold were chosen to be participants in this study.

Site Selection and Setting

As of this writing I am an ESOL teacher in a suburban district outside Baltimore, MD. My district has 32 schools, 7 of which are high schools. The majority of the student body and teaching staff are Caucasian. Many teachers have never taught an ESOL student and oftentimes, by their own admission, they find themselves frustrated when an ESOL student is enrolled in their class. My district has 230 ESOL students, spanning pre-kindergarten through grade 12, and 40 of those students are high school students. There are 35 languages spoken by ESOL students in my district representing 33 countries of origin. Approximately 60% of our ESOL students were born in the United States. Although our overall ESOL population is growing, a typical school has fewer than 10 ESOL students. Each ESOL teacher typically teaches students at multiple schools. I have taught all grade levels during my tenure in this district, including students at my research site.

Glesne (1999) states studying one's own institution is attractive for four main reasons: Access is generally smooth and easily facilitated, rapport is already established, collected data has the potential to be directly useful in the researcher's professional life, and the time required to carry out the various research steps is often reduced. Access has indeed been smooth. Three years ago, I taught four ESOL students at this school. All four students attended a "mod" with me, which is a 90-minute block of time. During that time, I taught English skills and modified course content to make content accessible for my learners. I also worked with their teachers, demonstrating modification techniques and supporting individual accommodations. The following year, two of those students

were graduated and two students were exited from the program. Although there were no active ESOL students at this school the year after their exit, I was present at this school several times a week to follow up on concerns raised by teachers regarding our two exited ESOL students. Currently, there are three ESOL students at the research site, all of whom are newcomers to the United States. Because I have access to the school and rapport has long since been established with the principal, I was able to easily procure site-based permission to conduct my research. Because I had been teaching in this district for five years, my research gained quick approval from the Assistant Supervisor of Research and Accountability. The importance of rapport extends to instructional staff as well. This school had been on my caseload for three years so I was familiar with most faculty members. I was in the fortunate position of being recognized and trusted within the school, but not such a permanent fixture that professional distance was threatened. Research at this site benefitted me professionally because in addition to direct instruction, I am responsible for teacher training and facilitating the smooth transition of ESOL students to the mainstream classroom. My research helped me to not only understand teachers' perceptions, but to understand the catalysts for teachers' perceptions. In turn, this research has the potential to impact the content and delivery of future professional development sessions. On a day-to-day basis, this research will help me interact in a constructive way with teachers who exhibit hostility toward ESOL students. Understanding how someone feels and why they feel the way they do is the first step toward restructuring interpersonal communication to benefit the professional

development of the teacher and, perhaps most importantly, to positively impact the academic experiences of ESOL students.

Participants were interviewed in venues of their choosing. My pilot studies taught me that participants provide the most candid information when they are comfortable with their surroundings. Giving participants the option to choose the venue affords participants a modicum of control that invariably yields a higher degree of candor. Participants were encouraged to choose whether they preferred to be interviewed at school, at home, or in an alternative venue. All participants chose to be interviewed at school, in their respective classrooms, and after their students were dismissed for the day.

Research Design

Maxwell (2005) indicates that research questions are central to every study and research questions guide research design. Careful consideration of my research questions indicated that a qualitative approach would yield necessary data. Although quantitative instruments are well-suited to provide a broad range of data, qualitative approaches are best utilized to understand the perspectives of a small participant set. Perception, motivation, and attitudes are multilayered and human interaction and interpersonal rapport are the best ways of uncovering information that is often far below the surface. This information is inaccessible by numbers on a scale. The qualitative approach allowed me to delve deeply and to better understand shades of personal experience. Although my interviews were semi-structured, repeated interviews allowed me to follow threads offered by participants and uncover insights I had not anticipated.

Survey Development

Pohan and Aguilar (2001) described the development of an assessment tool designed to assess educators' personal and professional beliefs about diversity and to both broaden the approach to diversity and address educators' personal and professional beliefs regarding diversity. Their Personal Beliefs About Diversity Scale includes items relating to race/ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, disabilities, language, and immigration and the items are situated within the contexts of relationships, raising children, treatment by others, living conditions, and collective stereotypes. This professional scale includes the educational contexts of instruction, staffing, segregation/integration, ability tracking, curricular materials, and multicultural versus monocultural education. Understanding the development of this tool has guided the development of my survey and interview questions.

Exploring these instruments allowed me to structure my survey. The survey consists of 20 statements that address teachers' perceptions of ESOL students. Each question is followed by a 5-point Likert scale, labeled so that the participant knows that a "1" is "no" and a "5" is "yes" and the three numbers between 1 and 5 represent degrees of agreement or disagreement. Additionally, each question is followed by several lines put in place to encourage open-ended responses, elaboration, and/or explanation. I developed questions that addressed personal beliefs as well as professional beliefs, understanding that the two are not easily separated. This survey was piloted by a class of 15 graduate students, all teachers. Their data was not included in the body of my research; rather, their feedback was solicited for the purposes of refining my survey

instrument. These teachers were invited to read the survey carefully and jot constructive criticism on the survey itself. After the teachers read the survey and recorded written remarks, I facilitated a 15-minute session to discuss clarity of survey items, average time needed to complete the survey, and clarity of given directions and expectations, so that procedures would be standardized.

Data Collection

The tasks of collecting and analyzing data were embraced holistically because each process informs the other, resulting in a process that is cyclical in nature. According to Weiss (1994), data collection and analysis are processes that are conducted simultaneously. One does not precede the other. Data were collected three different times and in two forms: two rounds of interviews (approximately one month apart) and one administration of a survey.

Collecting Survey Data

In September 2010, I attended a faculty meeting at my research site. The meeting was held after school and was one hour in duration. The principal agreed to allow me to speak first on the agenda. At that time, I introduced myself and explained my connection to the school. Some teachers were familiar with my role because they had had an ESOL student in their content classes at some point in the past. Most teachers, however, were unfamiliar with my role and had limited experience with ESOL students while teaching at this school. After introducing myself and my connection to the school, I explained my research goals, data collection procedures, and benefits they could expect if they elected to participate further by agreeing to be interviewed. Faculty learned that this study would

yield general knowledge regarding insight into teachers' perceptions of ESOL students and that this knowledge, in turn, would perhaps inform the literature and structure future ESOL training in the district. Faculty learned that in the next few minutes they would be asked to complete a survey and complete the accompanying Informed Consent Form giving permission to use survey data in the dissertation. They also received a form inviting them to participate in the interview process. This recruitment letter reiterated the purpose and procedures of the study and invited faculty to provide their contact information and brief self-descriptive data if interested in participating. The paper explained that participants, if they agreed to be interviewed, agreed to two 30-minute interviews between late September and early November. Most importantly, faculty was explicitly informed that any and all participation, including the survey process, was completely voluntary and was to be undertaken only as a help to me. There was no pressure to participate and no implied obligation either by the researcher or the principal. Faculty was informed that should they choose to participate in both rounds of interviews, they would receive a \$25.00 gift certificate to Borders as an expression of appreciation for their helpfulness, time, and candor.

After introducing myself, my research goals, and data collection procedures, I distributed surveys, informed consent forms (for the surveys), and an invitation to participate in the interview process. Each of those documents was printed on varied colored paper to facilitate ease of collection. Teachers were advised to leave their names off the surveys as they were meant to be anonymous. Merriam (2002) indicates that documents, in addition to interviews, provide valuable data. Although this survey could

not be considered an existing document, it was important for several reasons. It was created by the researcher based on a review of the literature and recollections of informal conversations with colleagues, resulting in a data collection instrument that was site-specific. Examining the literature, conversing with colleagues, and facilitating professional training sessions at numerous sites in the district had given me a reasonable understanding of the issues and concerns of mainstream teachers with regard to ESOL students.

Teachers had the duration of the meeting to respond to the survey. The principal agreed that faculty would be permitted to complete the survey while remaining engaged with subsequent agenda items. Although it may appear that this would create the potential to disregard the survey, I have found that when participants are required to remain on-site for a length of time, responses are more copious in nature and the tendency to move beyond the Likert scale to the open-ended sections increases. At the end of the meeting, I stood at the door beside three boxes. Teachers deposited surveys in one box, informed consent forms in another box, and recruitment letters in a third box. The researcher was mindful to ensure each participant deposited an informed consent form with every survey deposited. Papers were periodically shuffled within each box to ensure that the researcher was unable to make connections between surveys and informed consent forms as these connections would yield identifying data and would jeopardize anonymity. After faculty left the room, the researcher quickly counted surveys and consent forms to ensure that the numbers were the same. Each consent form was also quickly checked to ensure a name and signature had been provided.

Collecting Interview Data

Shortly after determining my participant set, I contacted each participant to determine an interview date, time, and venue. At that time they were told that they would be expected to sign an informed consent form (Appendix C) and that the forms as well as tapes and transcripts would be kept in a secure location. Each participant was asked to identify the venue of their choosing and together we agreed to a mutually convenient date and time. I interviewed each participant with a carefully devised list of questions (Appendix G). Although some digression was natural, each participant was asked all questions on the list. Interviews were audio recorded and the researcher took minimal notes, primarily as a means to briefly note ideas for future questions or as a way to record subsequent concepts to explore. In this way, conversational threads were utilized, not lost. After the first round of interviews were transcribed, reviewed, coded, and categorized, the second round of interviews was conducted. As in the first round of interviews, all participants were asked the same set of questions. These interviews, too, were audio recorded and brief notes were recorded.

Data Analysis

Maxwell (2005) states the first step in data analysis is to carefully read through all data. Surveys were analyzed to uncover two types of data: the mean was found for each of the 20 questions and comments were collated from all surveys with written comments. Determining means for each question provided insight into faculty-wide perceptions. Collecting written data provided on the lines below each question provided additional qualitative data, beyond data provided by the seven interview participants. I looked for

common themes to emerge from each line item, and I looked for outliers that did not reflect typical responses, carefully considering whether or not atypical responses were the result of candor or a perceived need to respond in a way that is “expected” by the researcher. These data are presented at the end of Chapter 4. Although I prepared interview questions, the cyclic nature of data collection and data analysis compelled me to examine my survey data to determine if my interview questions should be altered or enhanced.

Interviews were transcribed using pseudonyms and all pseudonyms were kept confidential. After interviews were transcribed, I carefully read and reviewed all transcripts. Themes and trends surfaced that allowed me to begin making connections and consider coding options. Weiss (1994) discusses two methods of coding: issue-focused and case-focused. This study was issue-focused. To maintain organization, each participant’s transcribed interview was printed out on uniquely colored paper and a key was kept linking paper color to individual participant. Transcribed interviews were coded for similar themes. After reading through transcribed interviews many times, six overall themes emerged. Transcripts were cut apart and put into six separate categories by theme. Transcripts were reviewed again, this time for themes within each theme. Identifying sub-groupings within each theme facilitated ease of data reporting in Chapter 4, in that similar responses made by several participants could be discussed concurrently.

The first round of data analysis combined with evolving research yielded themes worthy of exploration during the second round of interviews. The purpose of the second round of interviews was to delve more deeply into connections made during the first

round of data analysis, to clarify comments or responses that appeared unclear, and to address new insights uncovered as a result of revisiting the literature. The second round of interviews were transcribed and coded in similar fashion as the first. As each interview was conducted, it was integrated into the larger body of data. Weiss (1994) describes a process of summarizing the data according to its coding. The researcher states what was said and what he or she believes it to mean. Order can follow prevalence of a particular code, in that discussion begins with themes which have the greatest amount of data. In this way, items that fit a particular code are discussed holistically and items that deviate from that particular code are discussed as variants. While some themes easily lent themselves to data presentation according to most prevalent coded category, other themes presented data according to cohesiveness of storytelling and prevalence of smooth segues, particularly if no dominant coding surfaced. This process was repeated for all coded themes. Weiss (1994) states the final phase is inclusive integration. In this stage, individual themes are drawn together to look at “the big picture” and a coherent story is woven from these threads. After themes were identified and discussed for the second round of interviews, these themes were further examined to determine which themes supported themes identified in the first round of interviews and which themes were new or more detailed versions of initial themes. Finally, data from the surveys and both rounds of interviews were addressed in relation to the original guiding questions set forth at the onset of this research.

Validity

Maxwell (2005) explains that validity threats and how they are addressed are not only important issues in a qualitative research study, they are to be examined throughout a study. Maxwell indicates that the two broad types of threats to a qualitative study are researcher bias and reactivity. Researcher bias is something that cannot be completely eliminated, much like one's ideas, thoughts, and lens through which the world is viewed cannot be eliminated. Rather, potential researcher bias can be explained and addressed. I recognize that my beliefs about the role of teachers and my career as a teacher could potentially impact my study. I have been a teacher for 23 years and in my tenure I have worked with English language learners and/or children of poverty for all but 6 of those years. The realities of my position expand my duties beyond teaching to the arena of student advocacy. On a daily basis, I advocate for the needs of the underserved and I guide mainstream teachers in professional development and instructional strategies regarding ESOL students. While many teachers openly embrace ESOL students and willingly do everything in their power to help diverse learners, it often comes to my attention that this is indeed not the case for many other teachers. I recognize that I have a tendency to "side" with the ESOL student when the teacher–student relationship is struggling. I do feel, however, that my tenure as a mainstream classroom teacher tempers this potential bias to some degree. I understand, firsthand, the challenges of classroom management, the pressures of high-stakes testing, and the ever increasing demands of teacher accountability. In fact, it is this background that has enabled me to build rapport as a specialist. I recognize that I am steeped in my work. Teaching is not merely what I

do, rather, it defines who I am, so it follows that it is sometimes difficult to look at teachers and teaching through an objective lens. Ultimately, I am confident that recognition of these tendencies will keep researcher bias in check.

Reactivity is the effect of the researcher on the individuals studied. Maxwell (2005) states eliminating such influence is impossible; rather, the researcher should strive to understand that it exists and use it productively. While I am in no way an authority figure with regard to my participants, the fact that I am an ESOL teacher and a teacher-trainer might have potentially tempered participants' comments regarding ESOL students. Perhaps participants might have attempted to soften remarks or withhold strong feelings which may have been negative. I attempted to address this by reassuring participants that the purpose of my study was to empower teachers and schools to enable teachers to have access to the assistance and training they identify as important.

There are several other ways in which I attempted to address validity concerns. Involvement with the participants was intensive and long-term. Data was collected from repeated interviews, not just one quick session, thereby reducing the chances of jumping to conclusions or making connections that did not actually exist. Interviews were intensive in that the lists of questions addressed many aspects of the literature and attempted to address the research questions themselves in a variety of ways. This facilitated richness of data. I sought respondent validation by getting feedback from participants regarding data and conclusions. Not only did this add clarity, it helped identify researcher bias and misunderstandings.

4. RESULTS

This study explored high school mainstream teachers' perceptions of ESOL students. This investigation includes survey data collected from 50 participants attending a faculty meeting at the research site and interview data collected from 7 participants at the same research site. Participants were interviewed twice. Survey data and data from each interview are discussed separately and then holistically. This study examined the following research questions:

- What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students?
- What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students?
- What are high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students?

This chapter will present survey data followed by a presentation of findings from two rounds of interviews.

Surveys

Participant Profiles

Survey participants provided descriptive data on the last sheet of the survey. Of the 50 participants, 30 were female and 20 were male. Instructional content areas were represented fairly evenly: Mathematics: 6, Science: 8, English: 9, Social Studies: 8,

Foreign Language: 3, P.E./Health: 4, Art: 3, Special Education: 4, Technology/Business/
Agriculture/Family Sciences: 5. The average number of years teaching was 16.74.

Findings

Table 2 provides the mean for each survey question. The table supplies the research question (Appendix D), the number of responses provided out of 50 potential responses, and the mean for each question. The survey utilized a 1 to 5 Likert scale (5 is high). Table 2 also provides participants' comments, if any, for each question.

Comments listed provide insightful data and exclude comments such as "I don't know" or "I don't have any information."

Table 2

Survey Questions

Survey questions	Number of responses*	Mean
<p>1. I have adequate training to address the needs of ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I only speak English and my classes are way too large to pay attention to ESOL students.” • “I have met with the ESOL teacher once.” • “I was very dependent on my ESOL resource teacher for strategies and without her help, I would not have been successful with my Thai student.” • “I have had no training except in a grad class where ESOL was taught as a unit.” • “What is the grading policy? What are the resources?” • “I have not received any training for ESOL students. However, I have not had ESOL students in my class.” • “I learned a lot in Brooklyn and the South Bronx.” 	50	2.06
<p>2. Teachers in my school district have adequate training to address the needs of ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I was trained here a couple of years ago in anticipation of having ESOL students.” • “Many do not have the urban experience I do.” 	41	2.24
<p>3. I have adequate experience teaching ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I had ESOL students when I worked at another high school and a few since I’ve been here.” • “I have two ESOL students and have little idea what to do with them.” 	49	2.00
<p>4. Teachers in my school district have adequate experience teaching ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There are so few, I imagine some may never have had them.” • “Probably just the ESOL teachers.” • “Not too many ESOL students. Two in six years.” 	39	2.18

(continued)

Table 2. Survey Questions (continued)

Survey questions	Number of responses*	Mean
<p>5. I have the resources needed to address the needs of ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have a folder with some information.” • “All I was given was a Russian dictionary.” • “Not in my room, but I know I can get them.” • “I’ve seen resources available.” • “I purchased three textbooks in the Spanish version.” • “Some need one on one or other assistance.” • “Mostly by conferencing with the ESOL teacher.” 	47	2.34
<p>6. Teachers in my school district have the resources needed to address the needs of ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Not sure because lots of things have been cut recently.” 	38	2.53
<p>7. I have a good understanding of the background of most ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The liaison does a good job of filling me in on my ESOL students’ background.” • “I have been given basic information.” • “Only through my content knowledge and through current events.” • “I am a special ed teacher so the regular classroom teacher may have more info.” • “I lived in the city.” 	49	2.29
<p>8. Teachers in my school district have a good understanding of the background of most ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I can’t really know that but it doesn’t seem so.” 	39	2.23
<p>9. I feel I am able to adequately assess the strengths and challenges of ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “With the help of the ESOL teacher.” • “I would need to depend on the ESOL teacher...greatly.” • “I can’t communicate with the students in my class.” 	49	2.20

(continued)

Table 2. Survey Questions (continued)

Survey questions	Number of responses*	Mean
<p>10. ESOL students should have classroom content modified to meet their needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It depends on the subject. English or other classes with lots of reading could put ESOL students at a disadvantage.” • “But don’t dump additional duties on classroom teachers.” • “Not always possible in order to meet curriculum requirements.” • “Learn the language first, then learn content.” • “We do enough with students who can communicate effectively.” • “Too many time constraints.” • “Time and length of modification needs to be assessed.” • “As little as possible as needs change or improve.” • “I don’t know if they can read.” 	49	3.47
<p>11. Alternative assessments (e.g. portfolios, limited multiple choice options, or open book/notes) should be available for ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Only if someone else volunteers to write them. I’m already maxed out!” • “Not sure how open book/notes helps an ESOL student to improve acquisition of the English language.” • “If so, then it also needs to be allowed on state testing.” • “For a limited time and for formative grades.” 	49	3.57
<p>12. Teachers should understand an ESOL student’s culture and how that culture impacts the ways in which the student navigates course content and classroom procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Take ten students away per class and I might have time.” 	50	4.30
<p>13. I have a considerable amount of experience with non-native English speakers outside the school setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Me speakie English!” 	50	1.82

(continued)

Table 2. Survey Questions (continued)

Survey questions	Number of responses*	Mean
<p>14. ESOL students benefit from maintaining their home language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In addition to learning English.” • “These students should maintain their culture as much as possible.” • “I think it is an advantage for all students to communicate in English, but a student should be able to learn as much about it as possible.” • “Being bilingual in our ever-communicating world.” • “They should maintain it, but must become fluent in English.” • “I believe it is an advantage for any student to be or become bilingual or multilingual.” • “To an extent. We want them to retain their heritage while at the same time learning a new culture.” 	47	3.91
<p>15. Mainstream students benefit from having ESOL students in their mainstream classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I believe it is more of a distraction.” • “They can learn to appreciate those who are different culturally.” • “Only if they can communicate with them.” 	49	3.59
<p>16. ESOL students should be taught in a setting separate from mainstream students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Only until they are functional in English.” • “Until they become comfortable with the language.” • “Until they learn English.” • “I think the ‘least restrictive environment’ standard is a good one. Whatever needs to be done so that the student learns.” • “For a bit, absolutely, then inclusion for less challenging courses, except skills oriented classes like math and science.” • “At first...provides them with people to connect with.” • “Depending upon the level of the student.” 	49	2.27

(continued)

Table 2. Survey Questions (continued)

Survey questions	Number of responses*	Mean
<p>17. ESOL students should be taught using the same methodologies as mainstream students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In some instances, like math.” • “It depends on the specific case.” • “But in a separate setting until they learn English.” • “They must learn to adapt to their surroundings.” • “In a separate classroom until they are proficient in English.” • “Whatever works. This probably differs with each student.” • “Use differentiated instruction.” 	45	2.98
<p>18. Schools should be allowed to examine the legal status of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Leave that to the feds!” • “Yes. It is a gross waste of valuable resources to educate illegals. It drains money from those who are here legally, as well as native students.” • “Not the teacher. Maybe the school district?” 	48	3.25
<p>19. Most ESOL students are not in the United States legally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Maybe not most, but many.” • “Most are, but there is a growing number of illegal students.” • “I have no information that has been given to me that I would know a student’s legality.” 	35	1.77
<p>20. I am able to comply with state policies and practices regarding the teaching of ESOL students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Perhaps, if I knew what they were.” • “Sometimes mandated state-assessed curriculum is not suited for emerging English learners.” • “I am not familiar with state policies.” • “I am sure there are many ‘best practices’ I know nothing about.” • “If I know the policies, I am SURE I can comply!” • “I have not had to do so, but I believe I could if the opportunity arose.” 	38	3.13

Note. N = 50.

Summary

Data from survey items 1 to 4 and 13 address teachers' assessments of their own training history and experience with ESOL students, their perceptions of colleagues' training history and experience with ESOL students, and their own experience with non-native English speakers outside the school setting. Mean scores for items 1 to 4 averaged 2.12, suggesting training and experience are limited. Comments provided after these line items indicate that teachers generally feel they have little experience with ESOL students and limited training to address the needs of ESOL students. Comments also indicate that while teachers might depend upon the ESOL teacher for support, interaction with the ESOL teacher is limited. One teacher felt she had significant practical experience given her tenure in a large urban setting, and this experience was perceived as valuable. The mean score for item 13 is 1.82, suggesting that collectively, teachers have little experience with non-native speakers of English. One teacher provided a somewhat derogatory comment, suggesting that for this teacher, experience is indeed limited.

Data from items 5 to 9 address teachers' perceptions of access to resources needed to address the needs of ESOL students, teachers' understanding of the backgrounds of ESOL students, and teachers' perceived ability to adequately assess the strengths and challenges of ESOL students. Mean scores for this set of items averaged 2.32, suggesting access to needed resources, understandings of students' backgrounds, and ability to assess ESOL students are limited. Comments indicate scant resources are in use (references are made to a folder and to a dictionary). Two teachers' comments reflect initiative to be proactive regarding resource procurement (knowing where to

locate resources and purchasing Spanish language textbooks). Like the first set of items, this set of items indicates teachers rely on the help of the ESOL teacher.

Data from items 10 to 12 and 17 address perceptions of content and assessment modification, the impact of an ESOL student's home culture, perceptions of instructional methods. Mean scores for items 10 to 12 averaged 3.78, suggesting teachers understand the importance modifying classroom content and assessments and the importance of cultural considerations. Comments indicate that while teachers deem these considerations important, time constraints contribute to frustration. The mean score for item 17 is 2.98, suggesting teachers feel, to a moderate degree, that ESOL students should be taught using the same methodologies as mainstream students. Interestingly, this appears to contradict items 10 and 11, which seem to indicate more support for modifications and alternative assessment.

Data from items 14 to 16 address perceived benefits of home language maintenance, perceived benefits of having ESOL students in the classroom, and perceptions of segregated instructional settings. Mean scores for items 14 to 15 averaged 3.75, suggesting teachers feel strongly regarding the benefit of home language maintenance and the benefit of having students in the mainstream classroom. Comments suggest teachers view bilingualism as an asset and mainstreaming of ESOL students a benefit to mainstream students if communication is achieved (although one teacher feels it is a distraction). The mean score for item 16 is 2.27, suggesting that support for a separate setting for ESOL students is not as strong as perceived benefits of

mainstreaming. Further, comments suggest that support for a separate setting is limited to brief duration and only if it benefits the students.

Data from items 18 to 20 address legal status of students and compliance with state policies and practices regarding the teaching of ESOL students. The mean score for item 18 is 3.25, suggesting that teachers feel, to a moderate degree, that schools should be allowed to examine the legal status of students. Comments, however, raise concerns about funding and questions regarding whose job this should be. The mean for item 19 is 1.77, which is the lowest mean of all items. This mean would seem to indicate most teachers believe most ESOL students are in the United States legally, but it is important to note that only 35 of 50 participants rated this item, perhaps acknowledging a degree of uncertainty (one comment supports this consideration). The mean for item 20 is 3.13, suggesting teachers feel somewhat able to comply with state policies and practices regarding the teaching of ESOL students. Through the comments, however, teachers admit that perhaps understanding of policies and practices is limited.

Connections to Research Questions

What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students? Survey participants perceive that while ESOL students should be taught using the same methodologies as mainstream students, there exists support for modifications and alternative assessments. Participants feel strongly regarding the benefit of home language maintenance and the benefit of having students in the mainstream classroom. Participants hold positive views of bilingualism and mainstreaming of ESOL students. Participants believe that schools should be allowed to examine the legal status of

students; however, concerns exist regarding funding and who should be involved in this process. Most participants appear to believe that most ESOL students are in the United States legally, but the low number of respondents for this particular question might indicate a degree of uncertainty.

What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students? Survey participants feel that as teachers of ESOL students, they have little experience with ESOL students and limited training to address the needs of ESOL students. Participants have little experience with non-native speakers of English. Participants understand the importance modifying classroom content and assessments and the importance of cultural considerations, but feel that time constraints contribute to frustration. Participants feel somewhat able to comply with state policies and practices regarding the teaching of ESOL students; however, participants admit that perhaps their understanding of policies and practices is limited.

What are high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students? Survey participants feel that supports and services are needed. Participants depend upon the ESOL teacher for support but interaction with the ESOL teacher is limited. Scant resources are in use, although some teacher indicated initiative to be proactive regarding resource procurement.

Interviews: Round One

Participant Profiles

It is important to situate interview data within each participant's unique experience and educational training. Participants' self-reported life synopses, coupled with relevant commentary, provide context through which the interview questions, and thus the research questions, are examined. Seven teachers were interviewed in both rounds of interviews. The same set of teachers were interviewed twice. All participant names are pseudonyms.

Adam, a social studies teacher with 12 years teaching experience, graduated with an undergraduate degree in political science. He has been teaching at the research site for five years. Before teaching at the research site, he taught at a Catholic middle school and as a long-term substitute in another district. Adam expresses his contentment with his current teaching setting: "Roundabout route, but I ended up at the right place, though. This is where I should be."

Dan, a math teacher with 30 years teaching experience, has taught at the research site for the past seven years. He began his teaching career as a substitute teacher and has worked in three private schools and four public school systems, including the research site. He has also coached several sports teams in a public school system.

Greg, a science teacher with 29 years teaching experience, teaches primarily chemistry and physics. His first teaching experience after college was as a Peace Corps volunteer in Africa, where he taught science for four years. Upon his return, he taught

for five years in a large urban system while pursuing a graduate degree in education. He has been teaching science at the current research site for 20 years.

Kelly is newest to teaching. She has been teaching social studies for four years and all four years have been at the research site. Before her first teaching position, she completed her student teaching in a district with much diversity. Unlike the other participants, Kelly graduated from high school five years ago—from the research site. She credits her teachers for influencing her decision to teach, stating that many inspired her to carry on their work.

Lori is an art teacher who began her teaching career teaching art to elementary students in a state with a very high ESOL population. After six years in that setting, she relocated to the current state and began teaching art to high school students in a neighboring public district and remained in that setting for six years. She has been teaching art at the research site for seven years.

Muriel has been teaching Spanish, geography, and world history for 29 years. She began her teaching career in Panama, her native country, and taught there for 18 years. Her field of formal study was history and geography. Muriel's native language is Spanish and after learning English as an adult, she won a Fulbright Scholarship to study English in the United States. After marrying an American, she began teaching in the United States. Her husband's military career afforded her the opportunity to teach in three states before making her current state her home. She has taught Spanish at the research site for three years. With the exception of a few years at the elementary and

middle school levels, Muriel has taught high school students for the majority of her career.

Rob has been teaching English for 33 years at the research site. In addition to a long career at the research site, Rob taught wilderness survival to children and adults for two and a half years in a multitude of states. In that capacity, he planned and guided trips that included such adventures as canoeing waterways and climbing Mt. Washington. His trips often included blind students and deaf students. Like Kelly, Rob states that strong, positive teachers influenced his decision to teach.

Table 3 summarizes the interview participants.

Table 3

Participant Profiles

Name	Subject(s) taught	Total years teaching	Teaching history
Adam	Social Studies	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years teaching • 5 years at research site • public and private settings • degree in political science
Dan	Math	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 years teaching • public and private settings • sports coach • undergraduate degree in math
Greg	Chemistry and Physics	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 years teaching • 4 years teaching in Africa • 5 years teaching in large urban district • 20 years at research site
Kelly	World History	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 years teaching • 4 years at research site • 1 year extended student teaching in an urban district
Lori	Art	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 years teaching • 6 years elementary school • 6 years in a neighboring public district • 7 years at research site
Muriel	Spanish, History, Geography	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 years teaching • 18 years teaching in Panama • 11 years teaching in 4 states • (3 years at research site)
Rob	English	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 years teaching • 33 years at research site • 2 ½ years wilderness survival school

Themes

Throughout both sets of interviews, participants responded to a consistent set of interview questions that asked them to reflect upon their respective personal and

professional backgrounds, past and current teaching experiences, and overarching beliefs and attitudes regarding teaching style, classroom dynamics, student expectations, educational policy, and the ESOL students themselves. While numerous themes can be extrapolated from voluminous interview data, and depth and breadth regarding each theme varies from participant to participant, I identified six major themes. Appendix H provides a summary of participants' individual responses to each theme.

Theme One: Experiences influence classroom practice and perceptions of ESOL students. When asked to reflect on past teaching and life experience, all participants agreed that their past experiences influenced current teaching practices and perspectives toward learners and learning. For example, Muriel has had profound personal experience with language acquisition, and shares her personal struggle to become academically successful in another language.

I failed English in my first exam for the Fulbright selections. There were probably 2,000 students in general, and I was already 28 and there were students from 18 years old so I went there and in the morning the exam was more psychological, like how you handle pressure. And then in the afternoon it was English and I failed badly. They offered me English classes in Panama City for three months and I declined. And the lady said, "I can't believe you are saying no! We are going to pay for your classes!" Well, I was working and I couldn't quit my job because I had to support my family. Then they provided classes in my hometown. When I passed all the exams and all the interviews, and every time we were less and less, we were 35 before they selected 20. I passed the

exam, the TOEFL. Then they said to me, “Muriel, you won the scholarship!” So you see, I know how hard it can be. I understand it takes a lot and it’s easy to almost give up.

Like Muriel, Rob recounts an early experience that taught him to have patience for the language learning process.

My mother was teaching and there was a foreign exchange student from Germany. She told me to take her out on a date because no one was taking her out. I took her out and I really liked her! I liked all the ways she was different and all the ways she wasn’t any different from anybody else. Her English was really good but there were still a lot of things she needed help with understanding. My mother did the best thing for me. That early experience was my first look into different places and different people.

When asked if that affects his classroom practice, Rob wholeheartedly agreed.

“Definitely! I think I’m more aware of how kids are reacting to kids who aren’t from here, and I know that I try to smooth those transitions a little bit, if I can.”

Muriel explains that firsthand cultural experience allows her to bridge cultural understanding between her ESOL students and mainstream students.

I told them how they are going to learn about Hispanic families through me. And that I am going to share my culture with [them] and [they] are going to share [their] culture with me and that way we will have a better understanding of some of the things that make each other tick. We will see the ways we are different, but it is more important, I think, to see the ways that we are the same. Like we have

the Quinceneros, the 15th birthday in Latin America, and here it is the Sweet 16.

When we listen to each other, we see the world with different eyes.

Muriel explains that perhaps her experience with her ESOL students' home environments affords her a deeper understanding of students' obstacles.

I think maybe I understand a little bit more about what's what, because I have seen it and lived it. For example, a student of mine was involved in gangs in his country, but not here. He tried to start a new life. But guess what? He has many tattoos and couldn't hide these symbols, so he feels labeled by other Hispanics. Right away. He knows I know what they mean so he doesn't have eye contact with me. I tell him, listen, you can start a new life here. Sadly, you cannot erase what happened to you but you can erase this pain through hard work. So with the psychologist, with our help, with every teacher that was working with him, he got some help.

Muriel uses her cultural understanding to help other teachers navigate cultural quandaries.

I had a teacher come to me. She could not figure out why her student was not able to translate an English paper into Spanish even though he could read the English paper. I told her that for many, Spanish is a home language, spoken only. There is no reading or writing. This was new for her, a new understanding. Another time, another teacher, she asked about the eye contact. She said her ESOL girls would look at her, but not so much the boys. I explained that for the boys, if they are coming from a rural area, having a female teacher is not easy.

They were growing up in houses where dad was the authority. Sometimes people call it macho, but it's more like the boys are just more used to doing what the dad says, the male presence.

Rob and Lori bring experiences from unique instructional settings. Rob reflects on his role as a wilderness survival teacher: "Every student can learn and students learn at different rates." Rob explains that this understanding is evident in his classroom practice: "I learned to find the best way to motivate, to push the right buttons, to get them to want to learn." Lori discussed at length her experience with diverse learners in other states. "Geographically and culturally, things are just different. I had a lot of Native American children and a lot of Mexican children. I had to change the way I said things because English wasn't strong for all of my students." When asked if she could recall an example, Lori gave an example involving modifying vocabulary. "I remember I said 'technique' and they were just looking at me so I said 'method' and they were still looking at me, so I said, 'the way we're going to do this.'" Lori further explained that in addition to modifying vocabulary, content was modified as well.

I started doing a lesson about the four seasons because that's what I had always done, and I realized then that they didn't have four seasons. They didn't know about leaves changing and it's a wake-up call to realize that you do have to modify subject matter and the way that you teach in order to reach all those kids who come from different cultural backgrounds or at least make them understand why you're doing it.

For some participants, gradual exposure to language needs served to prepare them for language learners with much greater obstacles. Kelly experienced an extended student teaching experience in a district with considerable diversity. She describes her ESOL population as primarily Salvadoran, and as having “no severe learning comprehension issues.” She further explains that her students had a good understanding of English so “there were only basic accommodations for them. I gave them extended time.” This, Kelly feels, helped prepare her for her first language learner at the research site, a newcomer from Thailand with no English skills. “None at my student teaching site were as severe. None had no English whatsoever and I’m glad I could at least begin to work with language learners when their needs weren’t so overwhelming.”

When reflecting on making content accessible to all students, Greg credits his experience teaching science content in Africa.

It’s just very satisfying to be able to explain something to someone and then see that they really understand this, that they really know how to do this. Once you start doing that for a while, it kind of keeps you going. A lot of hassles and annoyances, but in the end, there are days when someone really does appreciate what you do, and again, it’s great when students say, “Wow, I really understand this!”

Greg took his motivation from his cultural experience and carried it over to his stateside teaching experiences, striving to transfer enthusiasm and motivation to his students.

One of the things in my early experience is just to try to get more students, first of all, to believe science is something they can do. A lot of students in high school

are just thinking that this is going to be difficult so to try to get them to recognize that first of all, it relates to stuff they do every day and then also that it is something they can be successful at. That doesn't mean they'll necessarily go on to a career in science, but they realize that there's stuff here that they can apply to how they live every day. How do certain things work? How do the laws of motion, for example, govern practices when trying to drive a car? That's the thing about science. I realized that science applies to all cultures, all languages. Sure, you need language to do the lab or the experiment, but when you set up in a certain way, it can be mostly visual and then you can reach all students.

Greg further explains that science, when presented properly, dispels the myth that science is only for the "smart" students or students with specific language skills.

So I would say the biggest thing is just to overcome their misconception that science classes are for really smart people and they're really not. I try to get more students engaged in the science class by making it understandable for everyone, and also get them to take several science classes and not just stop whenever they get whatever the requirements are.

Dan remarked that his past teaching experiences have made it clear to him that student diversity takes many forms.

You have the smaller class sizes, the uniforms, and the little bit more strict discipline in private schools to the larger classes and more unstructured and more unruly behavior of kids in the city to here, which is kind of in the middle. I would say teenagers aren't different at any school, per say, but what is allowed, what

they're used to and what is tolerated at home varies. So that is usually responsible for what you get in the classroom.

When questioned further, Dan explained how these differences impact teaching and classroom management.

You sometimes have to spend more time managing things if the class is unruly.

You have to make sure they're in their seats and they're doing what they're supposed to be doing. Some classes here are like that, but some aren't. Teaching in different places made me see that all students need very different things.

That's also the way it is if someone doesn't speak the language. They need things to be different.

Adam explains that maintaining classroom management grew from his need to appear experienced as a new teacher.

There are a lot of things I use to this day in terms of holding the attention of the class. When I was brand new, I had to get their attention, hold it, and make them think I had been doing that for a while. So my learning curve increased and I became more comfortable.

Both Adam and Kelly credit their experiences as students as major influences on their classroom teaching. Adam states that his teachers were powerful role models.

I take a lot of what I do for kids from those who taught me. I had really good teachers. I was really fortunate to have good role models. And when I thought about what I wanted to do after college, I thought well, I'd kind of like to be like

those people. They knew when I needed to be cut slack, and they cut me slack.

They knew when I needed a kick in the butt, and I got that kick in the butt.

Adam explains that his teachers' interest in him as an individual set the stage for his foundation of teaching, which is to understand each student as an individual.

Out of my class of 25, I have 25 different learning styles, different personalities, different everything in that class. Different backgrounds and experiences and I have to figure that out and be a different person to each one of them. And those are the lessons I've learned both as a student and as a teacher and that's how I try to be for my students.

Adam also explains that understanding teenagers helps him reach students of diverse backgrounds.

Teenagers walk around with a guard up and the places I've felt the most comfortable were places I felt I could let my guard down and be myself, be unique, and that's what I want from my classroom. I want them to be comfortable enough to learn. I mean they're going to be accountable, but I'm not going to be looking for them to be doing things wrong. And that's what teenagers want, no matter where they're from. They want you to respect them and be comfortable with them.

Like Adam, Muriel addresses the uniqueness of each student and of each instructional setting.

It's never the same year, or the same activity that you do because of the dynamic of the class. The students are so different each year, and also inside of each class,

you end up doing something different from one classroom to another and sometimes for students who are in the same class. I strongly believe in individual education and to have that, you have to have individual practice for each of your students.

Muriel reflects on her own learning style and recognizes that each student is a unique learner.

I know that everyone learns in different ways and needs different time for reaching the same objective. Some students may need just 10 minutes, other students need longer. Me, I need different things. Many people just need something visual but I need something kinesthetic. I need to be doing something, like moving something around. I know how I work and learn and that tells me my students all have their own ways, too.

Muriel talks about her experiences in Panama and her experiences as a newcomer to the United States in shaping her approach to teaching and fostering her understanding of diversity. She recounts how difficult it was to leave Panama.

The invasion against Noriega was in 1989. Many people thought I would not be able to travel to the United States, wouldn't be able to get the passport or any clothes because everything was closed because of the invasion and there was a lot destroyed.

As a newcomer to the United States, Muriel recounts early obstacles. She found her initial immigration experience challenging: "I was crying all the time! I didn't know enough English!" At that point, she transferred to a new graduate school in the United

States, stayed with an English-speaking host family, and finished her master's program. She felt her outlook improved at this point, stating, "No traveling back home. And no being homesick!" As she reflects on her work experience, Muriel concludes that her experiences trickle down to her interactions with students. She notes,

the amazing thing is that I've been lucky to work with wonderful people.

Americans have been patient with me and to embrace me. So I have no regrets at all and I always have positive people around me. So the experience is you learn as much as you can, and everything teaches you something. And that is something you pass on to your students, students from everywhere.

In summary, participants indicated in the interviews that they believed their professional and personal experiences influence their classroom practice and perceptions of ESOL students. Prior teaching experiences with diverse populations impacted all participants' perceptions of ESOL students. Prior teaching experiences with English language learners allowed participants to consider each student's individual needs, modify course content to adjust for cultural differences, relate new content to what students already know, modify vocabulary for ESOL students, and acknowledge that students learn at different rates and pathways to motivation vary. Personal experiences, particularly for Muriel, influenced perceptions of ESOL students. Personal experiences increased empathy for ESOL students, allowed teachers to bridge cultural understanding between students of different backgrounds, and assist other teachers with new understandings of ESOL students. Just as teachers believed professional and personal experiences influence classroom practice and interactions with students, they also noted

that lack of experience and training impacts both the classroom and the students. Within the next theme, participants point out ways in which lack of experience with language learners fuels the desire and need for ESOL training.

Theme Two: Teachers felt a strong desire and need for ESOL training.

Consistently, participants voiced a need and a desire for timely, relevant ESOL-related courses and in-services. With the exception of Muriel, who has a broad and deep understanding of ESOL best practices and of language learners, participants expressed frustration at feeling unprepared to tackle the language and cultural needs of diverse learners.

While participants often overtly recognized the need for training, some also revealed that misconceptions are commonplace. For example, Lori expressed frustration when the family of an ESOL student failed to respond to translated communication. “We did have a family years ago who never responded to anything even though we sent stuff home translated.” It is commonly assumed that the families of ESOL students must have literacy in the native language and translating information will thereby facilitate communication. While it is true that this is often helpful, it is also quite common to work with ESOL families with little or no formal education, thus increasing the likelihood of illiteracy in the native language. Kelly also assumes that material in the native language will automatically be helpful: “I gave several students bilingual dictionaries but unfortunately some were just too lazy to use them.” I questioned Kelly further, asking about native language literacy levels. “Yeah, that’s a good question. I never thought of that. I just thought it would be better than nothing. But if they can’t read it, I guess it

can't help." Kelly was surprised to learn that while many ESOL students are bilingual, they are not often biliterate. Oftentimes a home language is only spoken, while the developing language of literacy is English. Kelly was intrigued by this information. "I wish I had more of this background. Things like this would have made things easier and it would have helped me better meet the needs of my students. I felt like I was running blind."

The need for ESOL training, from informal site-based in-services to formal coursework, is clear. Adam recounts that he has not had specific ESOL education classes, although ESOL topics have been addressed as part of other courses. Rob states that ESOL-related coursework was not a part of his teacher training. Kelly, who completed her coursework relatively recently, also states that while she has been trained to work with students with various learning differences, she did not receive enough information regarding students with language differences.

You know, I kind of feel like, my master's degree is in education and in order to get that degree I had to take a variety of coursework and I had to take a lot of special ed classes and I was thinking that you know the time I spent learning about students who have dyslexia and what I can do for them, students who have different forms of autism and what I can do for them, no one took the time to set aside for what do I do if the child can't speak the language. I'm not that far out of college. Why didn't I have at least a class on it which could show me what resources are available?

Kelly summarizes what she sees as a potential negative impact of teachers ill-trained to work with linguistic diversity:

Sometimes I get so frustrated by what I don't know or feel I can't do. I don't think I've ever taken out my frustration on the student, but I can understand how that might happen. It doesn't make it right, but what happens when the pressure is there for everyone to succeed, and some students can't understand anything that's going on?

Greg notes that although he has not had formal coursework, he learned as he went along.

I haven't had any coursework in particular but I've picked up strategies along the way. I have some strategies, but I have to be honest, I really don't know the best way to help a student who's having trouble with English, with the language itself.

Greg acknowledges the need to help all students build a strong vocabulary, and is relieved to learn that research shows it is critical for ESOL students in particular to rapidly build vocabulary and understand the connection between vocabulary and comprehension. "I don't want to turn it into a vocabulary class, but if he's not understanding your words, then the concepts aren't going to make a whole lot of difference." In addition to discovering the power of vocabulary, Greg has also discovered the impact of kinesthetic learning for ESOL students.

I mean, science is nice in that you can have an experience as opposed to just listening to words. There is the experiment part that they can just understand what is going on even if they can't quite put words to it, so that does help, but do I

have great strategies for a kid with limited English? I really don't, and certainly that's something I find lacking in myself. I would say, though, that most of my colleagues feel the same way. How am I supposed to help him understand this when we're not really able to communicate the way we need to? I use a word and that's not something that's understood, how do we get around that?

Similarly, Dan voices his frustration:

It would have been a real benefit to be told some things ahead of time instead of doing things on the fly, like trying to figure out what might work. Like how to limit vocabulary or how to make it more understandable.

While participants lament the dearth of ESOL coursework in their professional studies, several participants note that site-based in-services would meet their immediate needs. Lori remarked, "I wouldn't need a whole degree in it at this point, just a course or a training session." Adam shared that he has participated in site-based in-services regarding ESOL and although they were beneficial, he wishes he had more training.

They helped me work with ESOL teachers and they gave me a better understanding of the students. They were tremendously helpful, and now that I have a bit of knowledge, I see that I need a whole lot more. More in-services would be great.

Lori registered her surprise at the limited nature of required ESOL training.

It always consistently surprises me that they haven't been more on top of it. Even when I taught in areas with large numbers of language learners, I don't recall any

kind of training or anything. I've had no formal training from any county I've ever worked for.

Lori remembers one in-service at the research site.

We've talked about tolerance and cultures. Just knowing little things like we encourage eye contact and in other cultures, students don't make eye contact with authority figures, well, that's important. And about proximity like how not everyone has the same ideas about personal space. So, we've had things like that, but information about ESOL directly for teaching, no, we haven't had that. We need all of it. About the culture and also specific ways to teach the students.

Like other participants, Dan states that although he has not had formal coursework, county in-services have been helpful.

We did have some people who came in here a few years ago that specifically trained us knowing we were going to have ESOL students in our classes the following semester. They told us what it was going to be like, what to expect, how to handle grades and things because they wouldn't really be on grade level. They also told us specifically about each kid that we were going to get. I like that the training was very targeted, very focused on our exact situation, and very needed right at that time.

While Rob echoes the need for ESOL-related training and in-services, he notes that sometimes it seems interest is generated but the in-services, while much needed and very welcome, do not necessarily materialize.

Some things have been offered in the county, but it's one of those things where they ask us what we would like to have and we write down what we could use and they say, "It's a good suggestion but we're not doing that."

Participants were asked to describe the types of in-services that would be most beneficial. Lori expressed the desire to be more independent regarding planning for her ESOL students.

I would have liked a better understanding of how to pre-plan. When I worked with the ESOL teacher, I had to plan everything way ahead of time so that she would have time to rework it for my student. There were times I forgot or couldn't get it to her early enough and I felt horrible. The kid was sitting there not knowing what was going on and then it's so hard to catch up after the fact. So I think if I had a better idea of how to prepare for his needs by myself, I wouldn't feel so pressured.

Like Lori, Greg would like some training to more easily deliver accessible content and improve a student's English at the same time.

I would want to work better with somebody who needed and wanted to understand the science I was teaching but needed more English to be able to do that. I know this isn't supposed to be an English class, it's a science class, but if I could give him the content in some way that would help him and he could actually learn some vocabulary at the same time, he'd be successful in the class and he'd be better prepared for the next class. I have no idea how to do that. It's not something I've ever had to think about.

Interestingly, Greg's comments indicate that, on some level, he feels English language acquisition is separate from content acquisition. Training addressing the concept of language acquisition through content would clearly be beneficial.

Kelly, Greg, and Dan expressed the need for deeper cultural understanding, as it pertains to instruction as well as to the ESOL student's social life. Kelly stated that she would have liked to know more about her language learner's culture so that she could improve her instructional delivery.

I could have benefitted from understanding more about his educational culture.

There's the stereotype that because he's Asian, math and science will be okay, but that's a stereotype and I don't know how much, if anything, that has to do with him. If I understood more about his educational culture, like how he and his family viewed education, I could have understood him better.

Kelly also felt that understanding how subject matter is approached in another country would be helpful. She states,

It would be great if someone could tell me how history is taught in Thailand. I mean, is it taught in school or is it shared through family? Or if it is taught in school, is it taught chronologically or is it region-specific? There are so many different ways to approach history and not only do I have no idea if he's familiar with history as a subject but how is he used to learning it? How can I help him make sense of this?

Greg echoes Kelly's concerns about understanding a student's culture, stating that an in-service addressing non-verbal communication would be helpful: "I would like to be able

to read them better. Just recognizing that, wait a minute, they're nodding their heads, but there's something here that they're really not understanding." Dan also points to the need to learn more about culture, expressing that the language barrier isn't so much a hindrance in his classroom as is the cultural barrier.

In my math class, there aren't a lot of written directions. If you understand what you're supposed to do and you've practiced it, you don't have to worry as much. But what I don't understand is what to do if there's a difference in, how should I say it, hygiene standards. How do I talk to the kid who doesn't seem to bathe? He's not making friends because no one wants to sit by him. What do I do? Maybe where he grew up, water was hard to get, so it's normal for everyone to not take baths that often. But what do I do?

While discussing the potential of in-services, participants revealed misconceptions about best practices for ESOL students. For example, there exists a perception that the best way for in-services to meet the needs of classroom teachers would be to teach other languages. Rob feels that his main challenge is being unable to speak the languages of his language learners, although he does acknowledge that this is a tall order.

So, to a degree, I'm handicapped because I'm not able to speak fully in any foreign language, to any student that would come in and really I don't have the ability to communicate with any of them. I think an in-service in, say, speaking Spanish would help. Then I could just translate everything. But even if I did, say, have Spanish, that might help me with an ESOL student this year, but like when I

had my Chinese student? I don't think I can learn the language of every student I get.

Greg, too, believes that translation would help his students access content: "I would even have liked to know how to say some of these things in geometry in Spanish or in something else." When I explained that oftentimes translating academic terms is unhelpful because the student hasn't necessarily been exposed to the terms in the native language, Greg replied, "Ah. That makes sense. I guess if you've never been taught 'scalene', it doesn't matter what language it's in."

Several participants indicated the need for in-services to more thoroughly develop the relationship between the classroom teacher and the ESOL teacher. Lori points to the effectiveness of a site-based ESOL resource person.

About two years ago I had a student who was placed in my class and he didn't know any English at all and I met with the ESOL teacher at that point and she gave me whole packet and what I would do is before every lesson, I would get her my lesson plans and my hand-outs so she would go through it with him before hand and write down the key words so that he could follow along. That was a good ESOL teacher. Other ESOL teachers, maybe, could be in the in-service with us so that we all know what to expect from each other.

Like Lori, Kelly also remarked that the ESOL teacher was helpful, but would like to learn other ways to use resource personnel.

This blue folder is what I have. The ESOL teacher from a few years ago gave it to me and look it has some ideas for modifying lessons and also information about

the interpretation office. But this is all I have. It's all I've ever had. I'm glad I have it, but I just know there are other ways I can avail myself of the resource teacher and I just don't know how I can do that in the best way.

When the ESOL resource teacher is effective, the impact can be quite positive. Lori states that the ESOL teacher made things easier.

I had an ESOL student that spoke absolutely no English but that was a positive experience because the ESOL teacher was great and gave me a folder that explained a lot of things and I was able to give her handouts ahead of time and she worked one-on-one with that student. I've had positive experiences but had I not had the support of an ESOL teacher, I think I would have been very frustrated. And the student would have been frustrated as well. I feel limited in how well I can teach because I don't have the training and experience that's needed for that.

When Rob encountered a student from China on his class list, he went to great lengths to find resources. He expanded his search beyond his district's resources and explored options in other districts with many more ESOL students: "We finally found materials in another county. We found simplified versions of what we were using. They had ESOL materials and they also had better special ed materials, which were also helpful." Rob also looked to the local community for support. He visited a local Chinese restaurant and asked questions about China, including questions about language and culture. "I wanted to understand my student a little better. I thought she was depressed, but I learned that her quiet ways were considered respectful. I guess I'm just not used to that!" Rob further explains that he was glad he took the time to find some answers,

because “sometimes kids can be so different from what we expect and it’s the teacher’s job to find answers, creatively, if necessary.” Lori expresses similarly, “Teachers who don’t understand that these kids need different things, they should reevaluate what they’re doing. We don’t get cookie-cutter kids!”

In summary, teachers felt a strong desire and need for ESOL training. Participants overwhelmingly reported a lack of coursework in ESOL-related issues. Participants stated that district in-services centered upon ESOL issues and concerns have been very helpful, particularly when the training is student-specific rather than theoretical. With the exception of Muriel, participants conveyed an overwhelming sense of frustration regarding cultural barriers between themselves and their ESOL students, perceived inability to help students with English skills, and uncertainty regarding instructions of language skills through content. Increased teacher accountability also contributes to a sense of frustration. Some participants revealed misconceptions regarding native language literacy, the effectiveness of translated material, and the use of consistent interpretation in the classroom. While an effective working relationship with the ESOL teacher is valued, participants would like to develop needed skills to become more autonomous when planning for and working with ESOL students. Due to limited experience with language learners and limited exposure to coursework and training centered upon ESOL-related issues, it is not surprising that challenges exist with regard to identifying the needs of language learners, determining appropriate modifications, and implementing interventions.

Theme Three: Challenges exist with regard to identifying the needs of language learners, determining appropriate modifications, and implementing interventions. Participants' challenges can be categorized in four ways: inability to communicate with the student and/or family, lack of information regarding an ESOL student's prior knowledge and schooling, uncertainty regarding assessment of specific language needs, and lack of confidence determining and implementing instructional modifications and interventions.

Kelly explains that the biggest challenge in identifying the needs of her language learner was the inability to communicate:

I wish I know how to speak Thai! The one thing that frustrated me, because I feel you need to know the kid to teach the kid, regardless of whether they speak English or not, every single 1 of my 90 kids, I make every effort to know the kid so I can teach them. I felt I had no real way to communicate. I couldn't speak his language and he couldn't speak mine and there was no translator in sight. I really, really wished I could just sit down with him and get to know him and what he needed. So that's the number one thing that I needed. I didn't feel like I had that connection with him.

Further, Kelly shares her failed attempts to communicate with family members.

What's difficult about determining language and learning needs is the language barrier. When I worked with my ESOL student, so little was known about the child, because we didn't have an interpreter and because his family couldn't speak English, that was an especially big challenge. I think he was living with extended

family, and it seemed that his situation was very secretive. We would try phone numbers and they would never work. So, I couldn't communicate with him to figure out what he needed, nor could I communicate with his family to find out what they needed. My hands were tied.

Kelly stresses that failing to modify instruction for an ESOL student might be the result of miscommunication rather than willful noncompliance.

With a special needs students, especially at the high school level, they're often able to verbalize how they learn and what they need. With ESOL, it's more challenging to determine language and learning needs because you can't necessarily communicate with the child easily enough to determine how the material needs to be modified. So it may not be that the teacher is refusing to provide modifications, it could be that the teacher may not understand what modifications the child needs to be successful.

Like Kelly, Rob recounts frustration with the language barrier.

It's hard figuring out what they need. I only speak English. I couldn't figure out what my Chinese kid needed at first. I knew there was no hope for me learning the language, so I didn't have a way to understand what he already knew, what he got in China.

Greg addressed the issue of disjointed background information and laments that it is difficult to identify needs if the teacher knows nothing of students' backgrounds:

They're all so different. The suburbs of Detroit are filling up with refugees from the Middle East. Around here, I think we have a lot of migrant workers, mostly

Mexican and Central American, I think. Five years ago, we didn't have that, so it's changing fast. Things are constantly changing. So I wonder where people are from and what their home life is like. I can't really identify needs if I don't know the first thing about them.

Compounding the problem of lack of background information, Greg explains, is his perceived inability to identify language needs.

I think the kids are identified for ESOL services well enough, but I don't have any way of really figuring out exactly what they need in terms of language. I can't listen to their English and say what they're weak in and be able to fix it. I can try and change the assignment so they can get it, but I don't know how to really figure out what they need.

While Greg shows a willingness to modify assignments, he struggles with implementing modified work that would meet a specific need. Further, while Greg is willing to differentiate with regard to instructional delivery, he considers it a challenge to simultaneously meet the needs of ESOL students and mainstream students.

Sometimes it's hard to change things around, like the class work, so that the ESOL kids will get it. We do what we can, but I don't know how to make sure they get what they need and all the other kids in the class aren't shortchanged. How do I keep them from losing time while I'm doing different things for the ESOL kids? I don't know.

Rob also shared his perspective regarding time and attention.

I'm not worried about equity issues. I know some teachers might get all worked up about giving one student more than another, but that's the job. The job's to teach. You might have to work a lot harder to teach this student than that student, but that's the job. It's the same way with raising my own kids. I have one who's a lot more work than the other, but the job's to raise them, not give them each 50%. One needs 20% and the other needs 80%, and that's just the way it is.

Adam and Kelly discussed ways they have attempted to address the challenges of implementing interventions. Adam's approach involves broadening his perspective. He surmises that modifying for ESOL students is not much different from modifying for students in general:

I used to simplify a lot of things for my exchange student from Italy. As a teacher, you do what you need to do to get your students to learn. You differentiate instruction all the time. ESOL is just a different layer so there's no real difference. Some teachers complain about the extra work, but if you're a good teacher, you're doing it for many of your students anyway.

As Adam shares, he reveals that he has been scaffolding instruction to meet language learner needs.

At the beginning, I simplified everything but as the semester went on and his English got better, I simplified less. By the end, he got what everybody else got.

As time went on, he needed my help less and less.

Not only does Adam examine instructional delivery, he examines assessment.

I want to know what the kids know. I can find a million different ways to find out what somebody knows. If it means modifying an assessment and getting the same information, then who cares? I'm finding out what they know and I'm finding out in a different way. As long as I get what the student knows, have they mastered it, what can I do to measure it, well, that's all I need. I guess the challenge comes in when I have to think, "Am I doing this right?" I don't know. I'm guessing.

Adam summarizes his perspective by addressing individual difference.

You have to figure out what they need. That's my job. I mean, I don't just walk in and paint with a broad brush and say everybody learns this way or everybody learns that way. It takes a while, but you start to figure out who learns best by doing what. It's a challenge with ESOL students, but then again, it's a challenge with all students.

Like Adam, Kelly discusses ways in which she attempts to address the challenges of differentiated instructional delivery.

I pride myself on the fact that if a kid thinks one way, I can kind of twist so it's a fit for another kid who thinks another way. So usually I'm presenting concepts in my class in a variety of different ways so all the kids understand.

Further, Kelly addresses the use of site-based resources and assessment modifications.

I sent my ESOL student to the support room where the test was read to him and he had fewer questions and anything with an essay had been turned into short answer. And I excused him if his sentence structure wasn't proper or if his English was off, I just excused him from that. The new grading policy says that

summative assessments outweigh class work, so it's even more important that an ESOL student is given any modification they need for an assessment. If the tests are going to outweigh the class work, those tests better be modified to a point where the child can be successful, or you're going to have ESOL students failing all over the county. That's a challenge on a county or state level.

Muriel and Kelly surmise that some colleagues are unable or unwilling to meet the needs of language learners. Kelly concludes by considering the ramifications of failing to modify for differences.

For me, modification isn't a problem. But for other teachers who might not necessarily want to provide help or may not know how to provide modifications, the students aren't going to be successful. A lot of teachers don't know how to change things up to reach different learners, but there are also a lot of teachers who just don't want to. The students won't be successful. And that's a scary thought.

Like Kelly, Muriel and Lori feel it is the teacher's responsibility to address the challenges of implementing modifications. Lori states,

Every student learns differently. You should be able to modify for different learning abilities, for different intelligence levels, and for different types of intelligence. We know kids learn in different ways, such auditory or visual, so any teacher should be open to modifying for any student, including ESOL.

Adam echoes concerns about how learning style differences impact the ability to access content.

A big challenge to having ESOL kids in the classroom is to make sure they're getting all the content. A huge part of the way I do things is discussion-based. We have focus groups, breakout sessions and stuff. That's probably not the best way for ESOL because it doesn't rely on anything, really, other than talking. Not a lot of visuals or anything. It's hard to me to take the time to change it up, because I've facilitated these discussions the same way for a long time.

Dan and Lori consider the advantages and pitfalls of considering culture when making educational decisions. Dan considers it challenging to discern the difference between understanding cultural background and how it impacts instruction and the dangers of stereotyping.

Sometimes I think the danger of looking at culture to understand language or learning needs is that it's dangerously close to stereotyping. I wouldn't want to have somebody come in and make generalizations to say, well, Hispanic kids are this and this is what you have to do with them and they're good at this and not good at this. Information about a particular student is better, along with maybe how culture affects that particular student. But as a group, that can be tricky. I wouldn't want to implement something just because some broad culture idea says it should be a certain way.

On the other hand, Lori feels a broad understanding might be useful.

It's a real challenge to understand what it's like in other places. It might be nice to get a sheet that just said you're getting this student and he comes from this country and in this country direct eye contact is disrespectful, for example. Might

be nice to have as the student enters the classroom so we have a little background. Obviously, not everything on the sheet would fit every person from that place, but culture is important. It can't hurt to understand more about where someone is coming from. It would help the way I teach him and it would help me help him socially.

Dan, too, talks about social challenges and working with a student's affective filter: "If they're not comfortable, they won't speak and they won't participate. It won't really matter how much of English they understand or not."

Dan and Lori addressed the challenges inherent in specific subject areas. Dan is concerned that some areas of mathematics are language laden, and addresses the challenge by front-loading vocabulary.

Implementing modifications in math hasn't really been an issue, except in algebra because there are a lot of word problems and a lot of vocabulary in those problems. Lots of kids have a hard time even getting to the problem, not just ESOL kids. I try to give them those words first so they'll recognize them when they see them. But that's really the same for any kid. That kind of thing helps all the students.

Lori modifies writing expectations: "Sometimes I might have ESOL students write a sentence instead of a paragraph. How could a teacher not modify expectations and expect the student to succeed?" Interestingly, when Lori emphasizes the importance of modifying, she reveals a common misconception regarding ESOL students' prior knowledge: "Any student who learns differently or who has a different set of challenges

needs modifications implemented. That kid is coming in behind, and at a disservice. They just don't know as much as the other students." Rob concludes his thoughts by stating that the biggest challenges are often not generated by students, rather, they are generated by teachers.

The biggest challenge is when a student comes to the United States from another country, another culture, it takes approximately seven years for them to assimilate and really get a hold of our culture, the way we speak, idioms, everything. That's just the way it is. It's long process, and if you lose sight of that, it will get very frustrating, very quickly. Most teachers don't realize that, and if the kid isn't fluent and keeping up with class work in a month, they're all bent out of shape. A lot of teachers can make it harder than it has to be. They want them fluent tomorrow. You have to remind yourself that this is not a sprint, this is a long-term project in which you're building a huge house. Lay a good foundation so the next step can be taken for this student. Then hopefully, by seven years, they'll be comfortable in this house.

In summary, challenges exist with regard to identifying the needs of language learners, determining appropriate modifications, and implementing instruction. Most participants are unsure how to modify content for language learners, and when some degree of comfort is expressed, participants voice uncertainty regarding whether or not what they are doing is "right." Participants have some existing modifications in place, such as scaffolding instruction and modifying vocabulary. Participants were unsure how to identify and address cultural needs of language learners, understand ESOL students'

content background, and communicate with ESOL students' families. Some participants felt their colleagues were unable or unwilling to provide modifications for ESOL students. While overwhelmingly eager to provide differentiated instruction for language learners, some participants were unsure how to proceed without compromising instructional rigor for mainstream students.

Participants shared their challenges identifying the needs of language learners, determining appropriate modification, and implementing interventions. While language learners clearly present challenges in mainstream classrooms, they also afford particular benefits to mainstream students, classroom teachers, and to the classroom environment.

Theme Four: ESOL students afford particular benefits to mainstream students, classroom teachers, and to the classroom environment. Participants overwhelmingly agreed that ESOL students afford particular benefits to the classroom environment, consistently remarking that mainstream students benefit from exposure to diversity. Greg explains that students at the research site are rarely exposed to diversity.

The benefits are that you have someone who has a different experience. We have kids, you know, where everyone was brought up the same way, and by the time they're juniors or seniors, many of them have had the same faces in their classes since kindergarten. It really is helpful to have someone who's had a different experience and just thinks a little bit differently. And once they get a little more comfortable and they have something to share the other kids can actually embrace it and be enthusiastic.

Dan echoes Greg's sentiments.

Some of the kids are naturally curious and some are scared to even say anything because they don't want to offend them. A lot of these kids are sheltered, and then they end up going to [the local] community college, and then they see the same kids all over again. They have no idea what it would be like to be in a work place and have people that would be a lot different and who don't all think the same things and do the same things the same way. Our kids get only a little bit of that. I don't think we have enough diversity here to make the kind of impact I would like to see. When we have unity day in the spring, it's nice, but being that it's only one day a year, I don't think it has the kind of impact for the rest of the year. You can't compare a one-day program to living and learning with students from other countries. It won't stack up.

Like Greg and Dan, Lori, Adam, Kelly, and Rob agree that students benefit from diversity.

The kids that are here, they get to see other kids and how they live. They're going to have to get used to that and see what they're like, especially at this school. We don't have a lot of diversity. So when we do have some, it's a big thing. Some of the kids around here, they don't know how to react. They don't know what some of these kids have been through or what it's like in their country.

Lori remarks that both students and teachers benefit from cultural exchange.

One of the benefits is that not only do other children learn from kids from other places, but teachers do, too. In this county, we don't see a lot of differences, so

the kids from other places can really teach the teachers. I had a student from Mexico and she would share Mexican art with me that maybe I hadn't seen so I learned more about the culture through my student. I know it's the same for my students. It's a rich experience.

Adam suggests that mainstream students are able to understand new contexts through interactions with students from other countries.

ESOL kids bring a bit of abnormality, and I don't mean that in a negative way. They bring a little bit of something different and it's good to expose kids because when you're in an environment like this and everybody looks the same, they hear about how something is done somewhere else and they're like, "What?" It gets them to start seeing that the world doesn't just revolve around me or my group of friends or my school, there's a lot of other stuff out there.

Kelly and Rob feel that exposure to diversity fosters mainstream students' curiosity.

Kelly refers to conclusions of sameness.

The benefit was that because kids had not had any interactions with a kid from Asia before, they were so interested in his clothes, music...sometimes those things would mirror kids here but sometimes they didn't. So having him share his culture was a benefit because even when things were different, kids found a way to find commonality.

Rob shows that conversations about terminology lead to cultural exchange.

I think the benefits are that the other students are curious. You know, what's the culture like and do they like the things that I like. For example, you say football

in America, and obviously everybody knows. You say football to the ESOL student or foreign exchange student, and they're thinking soccer.

While the presence of ESOL students often benefits the entire class, Rob explains that sometimes individual students can be affected in very profound ways.

It can be motivating for individual students. I had a Spanish-speaking student last year and a girl in the class really liked him. Every day, she came to class with a book about learning Spanish. She was trying to learn Spanish, not just to communicate with him, but to communicate with his parents. Even if nothing comes of the relationship, her perspective on the world is changed in a very real way.

Dan extolled the many virtues of having ESOL students in the classroom, particularly with regard to providing an academic model and a behavioral model. He states that students in his class benefitted from seeing how quickly his Asian students could perform complex computations in their heads.

I know I'm probably adding to a stereotype, but the kids I had from Asia didn't do much on paper. It was amazing what they could do in their heads and they were right more often than the kids using paper. It was good for the other kids to see that so they could see that it was possible. My student from Thailand told me that in his school, working out math on paper was just for when you were learning it. To show you really knew it, you had to do it in your head. Very different here.

Participants commented on ESOL students' behavior and work ethic. Dan feels his ESOL students set the bar for overall classroom behavior.

All my experiences with ESOL students have been great, especially in terms of behavior. You would think they'd be bad a lot because they don't understand and that would make them cause trouble, but it's not true. They've always been the hardest workers and I've always been kind of secretly glad that they've raised the bar for the other kids. Imagine, they have such a loose grasp of the language and they still can do better than many of the other kids. What does that say about kids here?

Similarly, Lori views ESOL students' behavior and work ethic quite favorably: "I don't know if it's because they don't know how to communicate or be bad, but I've never had an ESOL student that's been a disciplinary problem." Lori talks about the benefit of having ESOL students set positive examples with regard to homework.

Sometimes when I explain the homework I look at an ESOL student and think, this is just going in one ear and out the other. But darn if they don't come in the next day with what they needed to do! I can't say that about many of my kids who do speak English! How is it they're confused but the kid without the language isn't confused?

Muriel echoes her colleagues' perspectives, recalling her time working with elementary students.

These kids meant business and were ready to learn, as soon as they entered the classroom! They were ready to work! I remember finishing the content early, and they always were the ones to ask for more. I could see in their eyes that they were thirsty for more knowledge. Now, these were much younger kids, and now

they are big so more problems get in the way, but I can still see it in many of them, yes.

Dan explains that it's good for kids to understand the challenges kids have in other countries:

I've told kids here and elsewhere that sometimes you don't realize how good you have it. In another county, I had a girl from Ivory Coast. She said her school there had been blown up by rebels so she didn't have a school for years. She was grateful now to just have a school so that she could have somewhere to learn. She sat in the front with the other ESOL kids who were ready to learn and wanted nothing to do with the kids who were disrespectful. When the other kids learned about what she'd been through, I really think they developed a little empathy.

Dan also concludes that modifications implemented to benefit ESOL students turned out to benefit the entire class, particularly with regard to vocabulary development. As a result, Dan excitedly reports that his instructional strategies improved as a result of working to meet the needs of his ESOL student.

In geometry, there's a lot of vocabulary and I try to limit it. I don't mean I don't give them all the vocabulary, but I try to be very conscious of which words I introduce and when. You know how I got to this point? I was trying to really focus on vocabulary because of my ESOL students. That's always a tough one for them, the vocabulary. So I found myself being very precise with definitions and examples, you know, not just mentioning it in passing and assuming they have it. I also spent more time on vocabulary we already learned, you know,

bringing it back up for them so it stays and the surface and doesn't get pushed down and out and gone. And then, like, a light bulb went off over my head! Not only were the ESOL kids doing better, but I looked at the whole class and everyone was doing better! They all benefitted from my new way of doing things! It really made me realize that even though I thought I was focusing on an ESOL method, it was really just a better way to teach. So not only did the other kids benefit, but I did, too. I wouldn't have really seen that if it wasn't for having kids learning English in my class.

In summary, participants felt ESOL students afforded particular benefits to mainstream students, classroom teachers, and to the classroom environment. Participants felt ESOL students exposed mainstream students to different ways of thinking and interacting, often set the academic and behavioral bar for mainstream students, and helped mainstream students develop empathy for challenges faced by some ESOL students. Participants felt modifications and differentiated instructional practices put in place for ESOL students often benefitted the entire class. Teachers as well as students benefitted from cross-cultural exchange, for example, one participant increased her knowledge of Mexican art and another participant stressed that close peer relationships fostered cross-cultural understanding.

Theme Five: Interaction with culturally diverse populations impacts perceptions of “otherness.” This section of questioning asked participants to reflect on experience and consider how interaction with culturally diverse populations impacted their perceptions of “otherness.” Greg, a former Peace Corps volunteer, spoke

enthusiastically about lessons learned from his tenure in Africa, marveling at how he gained a much deeper cultural understanding than he ever anticipated. He remarks that he came home with an enduring paradigm shift.

When I started in the Peace Corps, it was really an opportunity to go overseas and to experience another culture, but once I got there, you know, just being able to explain things and finding out that there is something you can do to help other people, to not only teach content but to really get to know other people on a really, really, personal level, well, it's no longer just a cultural experience. You start thinking from someone else's perspective. Four years in another country will do that.

When asked if he thought his experience impacted his perceptions of ESOL students, Greg gave an example of empathy grown from the challenges of language acquisition.

When I was in the Peace Corps, I found myself nodding and agreeing even when I didn't understand what was going on. You don't want to offend people you don't know. And sometimes it's just easier to nod than to put in all the work to really figure out what is going on. It's exhausting. So, I understand being some place and not really understanding what's going on and having to learn a new language because I lived that.

While Greg finds commonality, he is quick to point out that his experiences are different from those of his ESOL students in many ways.

But the kids coming here have extra layers to that. They're staying here, while I knew that my stay was temporary. They're also helping their parents, you know,

translating for them and just helping them cope. What was different about Peace Corps was that I was an outsider, but a welcome outsider. It was like, “There’s a lot of stuff we really don’t share and understand, but hey, really glad you’re here.” So it was a level of respect, as opposed to the kids who come here. They don’t get that level of respect. I mean, not only do they feel like they’re outsiders, they’re burdened by being the go-between for their parents, they’re coming to terms with probably not going home again, and in some cases, I’m sure they feel they’re unwanted outsiders and it’s kind of closed and in some cases a little closed-minded.

Finally, Greg shares his insights regarding the impact of travel on his perspective of language instruction.

It’s neat to travel and to see that there are so many people, in other parts of the world, who really do speak several languages. We’re one of the only places where that’s not an expectation. Just realizing that as a country, we have a lot to learn about language instruction. We really don’t even have an expectation of a second language as opposed to some places where people pick up several languages and we should have more of an emphasis on that, but we don’t. So that a student who is coming in here and doesn’t speak English doesn’t feel so isolated right away. I think that’s changing. We’re getting more and more of a broader spectrum of languages being spoken but we still have a long way to go. If we were better at teaching second languages to our own kids, we’d probably be better at doing it for kids who come from other places.

Rob and Dan shared vacation experiences that allowed them to begin to gain insight into different cultures. Rob shares a humorous story that moved the concept of “otherness” from abstract to tangible.

I’m a homebody and I’ve only ever been here, along the East coast. I went to Punta Cana with my wife about 10 years ago. I was shocked to see all the European tourists on the beach without clothes! We were walking down the beach and came across a group of people sunbathing and swimming with no clothes on at all! They started talking to us and said they were from Italy. They were completely at ease, naked on the beach, talking to us, not a care in the world! I had heard that about other folks, but it hit me then and there! Pow! There really are different ways to move about in the world! I went back and forth between feeling really uncomfortable to really overjoyed because I felt like I had really stepped out of everything I had known, just like they had stepped out of their clothes! Ha!

Dan recounts lessons learned when he and his wife cruised to the Mediterranean when they were married.

That was a real eye-opener. Things are much, much different, as far as the architecture, the language, everything’s just older. It was hard trying to explain to people what we wanted to eat! Using the phrase book or the translator was too hard. Mostly we used sign language. It seemed like a big job just to get normal things done, like eating.

Dan continues to share his secondhand experience with non-verbal cues. He reflects upon this when he considers ESOL students' perceptions.

My wife has traveled more than me and she said that in Greece head shaking for yes and no are opposite. Also, in Japan, showing the bottoms of your shoes is impolite. It makes me wonder sometimes what ESOL students might conclude about what we do, without us ever intending something. And also what their body language might be telling us, but we don't really get it because the cues are different.

Kelly explains that she has traveled extensively. She feels that not only has global travel helped shape her lens, her ability to bring firsthand world experiences to her classroom has helped guide her students to a broader world view.

I've traveled extensively throughout the United States and outside the United States, I've been to England, France, Austria, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, Canada, throughout the Caribbean, and I did spend a semester in college in Egypt. That's one of the reasons I was hired to teach world history. When I'm teaching the course, I can oftentimes reference experiences I've had or things I've seen, or put up my own pictures. For kids, it makes it more real, I think.

Kelly continues to explain that in addition to teachers, peers can have a profound effect on students' perceptions of culture, time, and place.

I had an exchange student from Germany last year. She was phenomenal and her English was phenomenal. She didn't need any support. She was an amazing asset to my class. When we did European history, she was able to provide us with

different perspectives, and the kids here, hearing it from a peer, they were interested in new and exciting ways. In Germany, she had to do a project about the women behind Hitler and the Nazi party, and how some of them supported their husbands and some of them didn't and what happened after the war. So she presented her project to the class and all 30 pairs of eyes were glued to her for about 40 minutes. I learned something so valuable at that point that's influenced me to this day. Never underestimate the power of perspective and never underestimate the power of peer voices.

Like Kelly, Adam gained new cultural insights in the classroom setting.

When I taught middle school, we had a Korean family, and we had a meet the teacher day and this family came with the grandparents and they kept bowing furiously at me! I had no idea why and I tried to bow back, and the student said that in Korean culture, teachers have the highest level of respect. And I thought, I got all that just for being the teacher? I thought, man, I've got to go over there!

Rob, Greg, and Adam explain that their interactions with the community provided another layer of understanding regarding language and culture. Rob explains that when he sought help at a local Chinese restaurant when struggling with Chinese words in a book he was reading with his class, he was surprised to learn something new about language.

When I walked into the restaurant and showed the words in the book to the owner, she said she didn't know. I was so confused! Then she told me that the words were in Mandarin and she spoke Cantonese. I had no idea that China had more

than one language! I thought Chinese was Chinese! I know it's a simple example, but it hit me in a huge way. After that, I thought, "What else am I sure of that's wrong?"

Although Greg had lived abroad for years, he stresses the importance of remaining mindful of language struggles.

Seeing people out with their friends and family doing their shopping and speaking their native language, it always hits me that language is so key to everything we do. I was shopping yesterday and there was an Indian family and they were speaking back and forth in their native language and you just get a feeling of what it's like to be someplace where they're speaking a language you don't understand. In that one moment, I was out of the loop and I was very, very aware of it. In Africa, it was like that for me for a long time, and for kids who land in our classes, it's like that for them as well.

Adam recalls that his first immersion with language diversity was in the work place.

I've only been to Canada and the Bahamas, so I can't say I have a lot of experience with people speaking other languages, not in their own countries. But my first couple of years out of college I was a restaurant manager and most of the employees I interacted with, especially in the kitchen, were from Latin American countries.

When asked if that informed his perspective, Adam responded positively.

Oh, absolutely! A better understanding of their culture. My love of soccer was a sort of bridge. My dad helped some of them who were in trouble with the IRS.

My dad wouldn't accept payment, so their wives made up homemade tamales.

Amazing! So the cultural traditions, they felt like they had to pay us back. They really were incredibly warm. It's different when you can put faces on a big, nameless group of people.

Lori shares positive examples of diversity in her personal life. "When I was in Phoenix, here I am Jewish and my best friend was Iranian and her son and my son were best friends. I love that it didn't matter." Lori looks further into her past and recalls that many years ago, her sister set the stage for cultural exchange.

My sister was a big influence. She hosted foreign exchange students. One was from Brazil and they're still very good friends and he and his family even came back for my wedding! So we've maintained that friendship. Also, I dated a deaf guy for a long time and that motivated me to learn sign. And that, really, is whole culture right there! People don't realize that about deaf culture. And what blew my mind was that he was the best dancer I ever danced with! He could feel the vibrations on the floor and he would move! I can't dance like that and I can hear the music!

Muriel reflects upon her experience as being the cultural outsider, and explains that experiences impact a person's behavior.

I don't take it personally, if the experience of the person prevents him or her to be more open to other people. Maybe they have a negative experience before so I try to walk in their shoes and I try to understand their feelings. If I expected that they be patient with me, I need to reciprocate the same feeling to them. So I just know

that something else perhaps happened in their life and I sit down with them. If it's a parent of one of my students, I try to dialogue with them to try to talk with them and see that our main concern is their child's progress.

In summary, participants shared myriad perspectives regarding interactions with culturally diverse populations and their impact on perceptions of "otherness." Interaction with the families of ESOL students impacted perceptions of otherness; for example, Adam's interaction with a Korean family impacted his perceptions of teacher status. Interaction with diverse populations via past employment impacted cultural perceptions, empathy for language learners and those outside the cultural paradigm, and, as Greg stated, the ability to "think from someone else's perspective." Forays into language acquisition reminded participants how hard ESOL students work to navigate our language. Participants' cross-cultural friendships and relationships provide cross-cultural understanding on a very personal level. Participants report that travel enables teachers to bring a broader world view to students. Travel also allowed participants firsthand experience with culture shock.

Theme Six: Teachers' perceptions of ESOL students' legal status, understandings of legal compliance, and perspectives on ways immigration impact classroom decisions. Participants had strong feeling regarding ESOL students' legal status and compliance with educational policies and procedures. Adam, Kelly, Greg, and Dan remarked that compliance with ESOL accommodations mirrors compliance with special education accommodations. Adam feels that teachers will accommodate

according to learning needs or they will not, regardless whether the student is an ESOL student or a special education student.

The teachers who grumble about modifying to be in compliance with the IEP [Individualized Education Program] are the same ones who grumble about everything, so of course they'll grumble about doing things differently for ESOL students. I don't know if they don't like teaching, or don't like the extra work, or just want to teach in one set way, but they're going to complain no matter what.

It does seem to me that a lot of teachers deliver content and then I guess just think their job is done at that point. Most of us do what we have to do for our students.

Kelly also likens ESOL compliance to special education compliance.

I teach a lot of special needs kids so I am constantly modifying my class work not just because the IEP might say I have to, but I need to find a way to make them not only learn but maybe decide they like history. So for me, to modify something for an ESOL student is the same thing. There are teachers who absolutely refuse to provide accommodations or modifications for any student and I think those people should probably be fired. Why are you teaching if you're not willing?

Upon further reflection, Kelly adds that lack of compliance might result from lack of cultural empathy.

There are teachers who are just outright stubborn who refuse to do it and then there are teachers who maybe can't necessarily empathize with the student in that

they can't really understand where the student is coming from and therefore can't provide the proper modifications.

Greg stresses the legal implications of compliance.

Compliance is compliance. Letter of the law. Like special ed. If someone comes in and they have some sort of IEP or paper that says they're supposed to get this and that, then they get this and that. I'm obligated to do that. He still has to take standardized tests and no one's going to say, well, he's limited English proficiency, so that's okay, he doesn't have to learn. We're still accountable. You want the kids in your class to be as successful as they can. What is it you need to help them [with] so they can be successful? Obviously, there's a policy with helping limited English proficiency, so okay, I can modify this assignment so that he can learn better. I would say, though, I'd want someone who is qualified to help me so that I'm not trying to make it up as I go along because I'm really not qualified to do that.

Finally, Dan echoes his colleagues' thoughts regarding compliance: "People should be used to compliance issues by now. We've had that with special ed since the '90s so now it's just one more thing."

Rob and Kelly point out that the issue is not always willingness versus unwillingness to comply; rather, it's whether or not the teacher understands how to be in compliance. Rob laments the dearth of information and guidance.

I wish I really knew what the ESOL policies and regulations are. We get it about special ed., Title 9, No Child Left Behind, but we never had an in-service where

we can say, “Okay, let’s talk about ESOL students. Here are the state regulations and policies, here are the federal regulations and policies, this is what you need to do, this is how you handle this,” as opposed to walking into your classroom and you have a couple of ESOL students and you’re like, “Do I treat them like everybody else or are there special laws, special rules?”

Kelly echoes Rob’s sentiments: “I have no idea what policies and practices are in place. I have no idea how they would impact my daily life in the classroom.”

Kelly, Dan, and Greg had definite opinions regarding the school’s role in questions of legal status. Kelly shares an experience involving a particular student: “I had a student last year who was here illegally from Ecuador and he told us that. He volunteered the information. We were talking about the United States immigration laws and how much they’ve tightened since 9/11.” When asked how his classmates reacted, Kelly continued.

There was a definite division in the class. Some kids took offense and were like, “You’re here illegally?” And then there were the kids who I think were willing to overlook it because he was such a nice, kind, popular kid. I told him I had to notify the office, not that I wanted him to be sent away! The child’s still here. So I don’t know if it would necessarily be beneficial for schools to know whether or not the child is illegal. It seems to me it would just create bad blood, because it’s not information that anyone needs to have. So personally, I don’t want anybody here who is illegal, but I would never deny a child who is sitting in my classroom, and I wouldn’t deny anyone an education because they’re illegal.

Dan explains a broader view.

I agree that schools shouldn't request proof of legal residence before enrolling kids. Ideally, you would like people to be on track to become citizens, because I think that if you take up residence somewhere that should be your goal. We do have plenty of kids and adults here who would say, "We have all these illegal aliens, and it's bad, blah, blah, blah," but if you think about it, if you just happen to be born someplace where the most you can make is five bucks a week or if there aren't any jobs, well, I don't care if somebody says it's illegal or not, you're going to go where you can make more money, because if you have a family to support, that's what you do. We do it the other way around. We take our jobs and our factories and send them somewhere else so we can have people work for a fraction of what they would here. So, it's a much bigger picture and don't let's take it out on the kids.

Greg concludes by remarking that schools would be ill-equipped to address questions of legal status, even if given the power to do so.

On the first day, we don't even always get a class list! Whoever shows up, that's who's in your class! Even if someone decided it was our job figure out legal status, how would we do that? Funny! It takes us months just to figure out who has all their shots!

Like Dan, other participants agree that the concept of legal status is bigger than individual students at individual schools. Greg explains that determining legal status is within the purview of an outside agency.

You're enrolling a student, he's here, his parents' situation isn't his fault.

However that happened, if he's here, and they've got proof of residence, I mean, I don't know what it is to demonstrate that you're qualified to attend a particular school. It would seem to me that if they've got that, then they should be enrolled. Now if there is some sort of immigration status that is illegal, I'm not sure that should be the school system's job; that should be a job for the authorities, for some outside agency.

Lori has soft remarks regarding friends who are illegal, but takes a tough stance on the more global issue of legal status.

I say if you want to come to this country, that's great. Pay taxes, be legal, and that was hard for me because I had friends who were illegal and did I want to see them deported? No! In Arizona, they have areas for I guess you'd call it day laborers so a lot of people who were unemployed would go and these spots were kind of known, and if you were a contractor, or if you just wanted to move some stones in your yard, you can drive and offer them whatever money you're going to offer them and then they can go. So, they spent millions of dollars to build covers, like roofs, so that when the illegals are standing out there they didn't get hot and sunburned. And I'm like, "Sorry, I feel for them, but they're not paying taxes." My money just paid for that. And then there are special scholarships to send their children to college, and they weren't paying taxes! Who's paying for my kids to go to college? So that's my issue. Beyond that, if you're paying taxes,

we should give you whatever services you need. But I'm not kicking you out, but that's where I stand on that. And I'm a liberal!

Rob illustrates his frustration with a local example.

My patience ends with people who are really out to beat the system. I happen to know of a gas station around the corner that's owned by people from a different country. They come here to work for about eight months and don't pay taxes or anything else and at the end of eight months, they leave and another relative comes in and so on.

Kelly and Rob address issues of limited services. Kelly explains that providing support for undocumented people would provide access to assistance.

We do have a huge illegal population from Mexico. I feel like I want them here legally. If the school was able to get that information, I would hope they would find a way to work with moving people toward legal status, to be counted for tax purposes and also it's easier to bring services to people who need services if they're on the books and we can know who needs what. How do we know what people need if we don't know where they are? If we think of our ESOL students, they are much more likely not to be legal. The ESOL teacher's services are valuable and I wouldn't want anyone who is here illegally to detract from anyone who is here legally who needs services.

Rob, too, feels that a path to citizenship should be provided.

I think if a family is here, they're here for a good reason, and more than likely, a better life. I think they want to become citizens. We can say "Okay, we're going

to welcome you with open arms, and while you're working, we'd like you to take a course to become an American citizen." I mean, that's why you're here, that's what you want to be, so why not help make it work? Instead of scaring everybody, say "Register with us and we'll help you. Here are the courses." Why are we frightening the daylights out of everybody?

Dan echoes Rob's concern for families.

I think the biggest challenge with political status is that I don't want to pry. I mean, there's a fine line between something that's beneficial for you to know, and prying into things that they might not want you to know. As far as things like their family situation, their economic situation, and their immigration status, sure it would be helpful to know those things but I can see how the process of finding out might cause more stress for the family than that information would be worth.

Muriel, too, focuses on students and families.

If they are in my class, I teach them. My vocation since an early age is to be a teacher. The other issues, all the big fight and political problems, that's not my job. The important part is who is in that desk. The student in that desk, that's who I teach. It is not for me to control the other parts.

In summary, participants' perceptions of ESOL students' legal status, understandings of compliance, and perspectives on immigration impacted some decisions; while other participants felt that teachers are legally bound to provide modifications, they identified specific obstacles to compliance. Participants stated some colleagues are unable or unwilling to meet compliance expectations, some colleagues

lack empathy for ESOL students or are unaware of expectations regarding ESOL students, and many colleagues are unsure of a teacher's role regarding issues of legal status. Participants said they would benefit from someone qualified to help make modifications. Participants believe schools should not request proof of legal status for enrollment but that citizenship should be the goal for all immigrants. Some participants felt that ESOL students are more likely to be undocumented and undocumented students detract from ESOL services for students who are documented. Participants stressed that their responsibility was to teach students in their class and adhere to compliance expectations, and leave questions of legal status to others.

Connections to Research Questions

Data from the first round of interview questions can be presented within the framework of this study's research questions. What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students? Interview participants' perceptions of ESOL students are influenced by their professional and personal experiences. Experiences with ESOL students and their families and with diverse populations outside the school setting impacted cultural perceptions, empathy for language learners, and for those outside the cultural paradigm. Forays into language acquisition reminded participants how hard ESOL students work to navigate our language. Travel enabled participants to bring a broader world view to students and allowed participants firsthand experience with culture shock. Interview participants' perceptions of ESOL students' legal status, understandings of compliance, and perspectives on immigration impacted some classroom decisions. While most participants felt that teachers are legally bound to provide modifications, they

stated that some colleagues were unable or unwilling to meet compliance expectations or perhaps lacked empathy for ESOL students or are unaware of expectations regarding ESOL students, and many colleagues are unsure of a teacher's role regarding issues of legal status. Most participants said they would benefit from someone qualified to help make modifications. Most participants believed schools should not request proof of legal status for enrollment but that citizenship should be the goal for all immigrants. Some participants felt that ESOL students are more likely to be undocumented and undocumented students detract from ESOL services for students who are documented. Most participants stressed that their responsibility was to teach students in their class and adhere to compliance expectations, and leave questions of legal status to others. All participants believed ESOL students exposed mainstream students to different ways of thinking and interacting, often set the academic and behavioral bar for mainstream students, and helped mainstream students develop empathy for challenges faced by some ESOL students. All participants felt modifications and differentiated instructional practices put in place for ESOL students often benefitted the entire class and teachers as well as students benefitted from cross-cultural exchange.

What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students? Interview participants believed prior teaching experiences with English language learners allows them to consider each student's individual needs, modify course content to adjust for cultural differences, relate new content to what students already know, modify vocabulary for ESOL students, and acknowledge that students learn at different rates and pathways to motivation vary. Further, some participants have some

existing modifications in place, such as scaffolding instruction and modifying vocabulary. All participants believed experience with ESOL students allows them to bridge cultural understanding between students of different backgrounds and assist other teachers with new understandings of ESOL students. Some participants were unsure how to identify and address cultural needs of language learners, understand ESOL students' content background, and communicate with ESOL students' families. All participants believe lack of experience and training impacts both the classroom and the students with regard to identifying the needs of language learners, determining appropriate modifications, and implementing instruction. All participants are willing to provide differentiated instruction for language learners, but some participants were unsure how to proceed without compromising instructional rigor for mainstream students.

What are high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students? Interview participants felt a strong desire and need for ESOL training due to a lack of coursework in ESOL-related issues. Some participants stated that district in-services centered upon ESOL issues and concerns have been very helpful, particularly when the training is student-specific rather than theoretical. Some participants were frustrated by cultural barriers between themselves and their ESOL students, perceived inability to help students with English skills, and uncertainty regarding the instruction of language skills through content. Some participants revealed misconceptions regarding native language literacy, the effectiveness of translated material, and the use of consistent interpretation in the classroom. While an effective working relationship with the ESOL teacher is valued,

participants would like to develop needed skills to become more autonomous when planning for and working with ESOL students.

Generating Subsequent Questions

Questions for the second round of interviews emerged from data gathered during the first round of interviews. Second-round interview questions were developed in two ways. Oftentimes, conversation generated topics that seemed to warrant further study and consideration. As I transcribed data from initial interviews, questions arose that propelled me to the literature for further exploration. Ultimately, this process of transcribing and researching yielded concepts for further consideration. Second-round interview questions were also generated by carefully looking at the quality of participants' responses to first-round questions. Responses were sometimes vague or too general. It became clear that rephrasing questions or asking for specific examples would encourage participants to probe their thoughts on a deeper level, thereby uncovering richer data. All questions in the second round of interviews were posed to all participants, regardless whose remarks spurred the follow-up question.

Interviews: Round Two

Professional Identity

Participants' responses raised questions of professional identity. In the first round of interviews, participants described their professional identity in terms of past teaching experiences and various certifications. How might participants view their professional identity with regard to their past experiences? How might they understand professional identity as a filter through which they perceive ESOL students? The literature describes

the predominant “face” of teaching as White, monolingual, middle-class, and female. Thus, participants were asked the following question: “A large percentage of teachers are White, monolingual, middle-class, and female. Would ESOL students do better with a more diverse instructional staff?”

Adam, Lori, and Rob discuss the importance of being able to identify with one’s teacher. Adam states, “I think you probably tend to learn better from somebody who looks or sounds like you.” Lori relates the importance of cultural connection to her Jewish heritage.

I think that goes beyond just language. I think any with any student, the more similarities you have with them the more there is a comfort level. And I feel that with being Jewish in this area. There aren’t a lot of Jews in this area and when I meet someone I feel we connect differently. We have that similarity. So I think if you can have that one common connection with someone, that does make you more comfortable. Because obviously, the way the faculty is now, it doesn’t reflect the students coming in.

Rob responds to identity and gender.

Different cultures treat children differently. I know that in African cultures, people are embarrassed if they don’t have at least one son. In Hispanic cultures, women are treated differently than they are in Western cultures. So you can have a male ESOL student who comes from one culture and wants a male teacher to have his manliness be validated, where you could have a different student from a

different culture who prefers to have a female teacher. There are girls who would prefer to have women teachers and girls who would prefer to have male teachers.

Rob and Greg consider a connection between linguistic diversity and cultural connections. Rob states, “It would be better if we were all multilingual. Maybe if the school board bought everybody Rosetta Stone, we could connect better with students and meet students’ cultural needs.” Greg sees value in language skills as resources: “So having more diverse populations, more diverse staff, having more languages that are represented, I mean, the more of that you have, the more resources you have to draw from.”

Adam, Greg, and Dan believe that diversity in teaching impacts ESOL students beyond the classroom. Greg states,

Well, I think if you have more people from the backgrounds of the students themselves, I mean maybe as time goes on you’ll get those students who come back and teach and help their own, so to speak. I mean, if you’re looking at somebody who just really totally doesn’t relate to your situation, I think you’re going to have a very difficult time. It can be done, but I think it makes things harder.

Adam shares his understanding of diversity in the “real world,” expressing that it’s the student’s responsibility to conform the norms of the “majority.”

The world that they’re going to go out into, if they continue to live in the United States, they’re going to have to deal with a world that is majority White, where almost nobody speaks more than one language, where the vast majority of people

are middle class. That's most of the population. The kids who can adapt, and go between their world and the real world are probably going to be the ones who will be the most successful. So it's not that their instructors shouldn't be diverse, it's just that the world they're going to go into doesn't reflect that diversity.

Dan relates that a diverse instructional staff benefits all students.

Well, see, I think all students would do better with a more diverse instructional staff. I think more kids benefit by having variety. We don't have a whole lot of diversity here, but as much as possible I think that would be good. I don't think it benefits them necessarily because of their status as ESOL kids, I just think it benefits them in general, the same way it benefits the general population.

Kelly and Muriel question the necessity of a diverse instructional staff. Kelly states,

I think it's only natural that someone would gravitate toward someone that looks like them especially in a new environment where they don't understand very much. So perhaps it would be beneficial for them to see minorities where they feel like they're not the only one but at the same time I don't think it's necessary as I'm sure there are monolingual White females who would be more than willing to comfort them, help them, and figure out any way they can to educate them better.

Muriel emphasizes the importance of life experiences.

I believe it depends on the richness of the person's experience. You could be a White teacher, monolingual, middle-class and female who has traveled and has

been involved with other ethnic groups or in the community and has experience that can be brought back to the classroom and shared with the kids. Or if you're in touch with the new technologies with the computer and you're aware of what's going on in other places. So I think a diverse ethnic background isn't always the answer. It depends. So I am coming from Panama, but that doesn't necessarily make me better than other people who have been to more places and have been in contact with more cultures than I have.

In summary, participants generally believe it is important to identify with one's teacher with regard to both culture and gender. Participants also believe that a wider range of languages would foster cultural connections and serve as a resource. It is also believed that teacher diversity would have a "trickle-down" effect, encouraging more diverse students to enter the field of education. One participant believes that while it is beneficial to have a diverse instructional staff, it is ultimately the responsibility of students to conform to the majority. Some participants suggested that a diverse instructional staff might not be the only way to meet the needs of ESOL students, rather, monolingual White females might possess the skills and life experiences necessary to meet those needs.

Changes in Perception Over Time

In the first round of interviews, participants considered how their experiences impacted their perceptions of ESOL students. Participants shared anecdotes involving specific students, lessons learned from travel, and insights gained through interactions with diverse populations. These revelations, while insightful, provide perceptions that

are snapshots in time. A return to the literature raised questions regarding changes in perceptions over time, and led the researcher to explore the impact of direct experience with ESOL students. Participants were asked to consider changes in their perceptions with the following questions: “Think about your perceptions of ESOL students before you had ESOL students in your class and after you had ESOL students in your class. What would you say is the greatest change in your perception of ESOL students?”

Rob emphasizes that because his understanding of ESOL students’ culture and lives has changed, he has a better understanding of the limits of his own cross-cultural understanding.

The greatest change in perception for me is I really realized that I don’t know much about the culture that student’s coming from and the background that student’s stepping out of. I’ve not been to China, I’ve not been to Asia, I’ve not been to Africa, I’ve not lived as that student has lived and I’ve not confronted things that they’ve confronted. I never really thought of those things before I had students whose lives were very different from mine. I learned from one ESOL student about slave trading. Slave trading! I mean, that’s a hard concept for me to grasp. So the change in perception for me is really a change in perception about myself. I really don’t have a handle. I don’t have a clue! I didn’t know before that I didn’t have a clue. I don’t have a grasp of what that student’s life might have been like, you know, whether they lived in a one-room apartment and maybe there were 12 people in there.

Adam and Kelly report changes in their perceptions of ESOL students' work ethic. Adam discusses motivation for learning and relates it to his understanding of teenagers.

I would say that the greatest change is the amount of work that I've learned those kids are willing to put in. These kids are willing to go to great lengths to (a) learn to speak the language and (b) adapt and become culturally proficient. Teenagers are teenagers, across the world, so I think maybe a strong motivation is to fit in and become accepted. You could take a teenager here and a teenager in probably China, and they're going to be going through the same sort of things. So a kid from another country who comes here, they want to learn the language, and they want to learn the cultural customs so they can be like all the other teenagers and not be the odd guy or the odd gal out. And so I think a lot of the work they do is to get to the point where they are no longer the odd one.

Kelly admits her lack of experience with ESOL students led her to believe that her ESOL student would not learn very much. Further, she explains how her new experience with an ESOL student changed her perceptions of her mainstream students.

What changed was my expectations of capability. Before I had *Austin*, I was very nervous about him coming into the room and what exactly I could accomplish with him. I was almost preparing myself for that child to go through my entire class and not learn anything. But once he was in the room, and I could see his passion and his determination to try to learn, how hard he was working at it, it inspired me to not give up on him. When he was in the classroom, I was so

very, very impressed by everything he was able to do. It almost angered me, in a sense, that no other student seemed to try as hard. You know, he was able to learn the same amount of material as everyone else, and he had a tremendous language barrier. I definitely believe that our ESOL students are capable of accomplishing a lot more than I originally thought, and it also motivated me to encourage my other students to reach beyond the current goals that they set for themselves.

While Adam and Kelly report positive experiences with ESOL students' work ethic, Muriel feels age has a significant impact on motivation and peer pressure might be a deterrent to learning.

Everything depends upon the age of the student. Kids in elementary school that come to the United States, the level of their expectation is so high. They are hardworking kids with an enormous amount of energy and desire to learn. I found that they were always eager to learn more. That feeling, that energy, I don't feel it the same way when I teach kids on the secondary level. The same for middle school. Some of them are less motivated because they want to fit with the group of students who are not as willing to learn.

Lori reports that she underestimated the rate at which students would learn English.

The biggest change for me was realizing I had underestimated them. I underestimated how quickly they would learn English and how quickly they would learn subject matter. I still don't know how they learned subject matter because I don't speak their language! It's absolutely amazing how adaptable they

are once they get here. I wonder how that would be in reverse, American English-speaking kids going to other countries. Other countries have some exposure to English or some willingness to learn languages. We're arrogant in this country. We don't meet anyone halfway. We seem to say, "If you want to come here then speak our language." Most Europeans are at least bilingual. So I'm amazed at how quickly they learn. I'm blown away! Within months, they've made huge gains.

Like Lori, Greg and Dan are impressed by ESOL students' abilities to access course content without mastery of the language. Greg states,

You kind of get this idea that hey, nothing can be done until they learn English first, but really, that's not going to be practical, first of all. There are things you can do to address the needs of students with diverse home languages, there are things you can do to help them as a group. I'm still not understanding that as well as I could, but at least better than 10 years ago, before having any ESOL students.

Dan echoes Greg's sentiments.

Well, I thought it would be way more difficult to work with them than it has been. The ESOL kids I've had were the most motivated kids I've had. The kids seem to be more self-motivated, more interested in succeeding. I thought it would be more like I would have to literally be up there doing charades or hand signals or something like that. What they could do in class without being fluent was just amazing.

In summary, participants felt that their experience with ESOL students had changed their perceptions of ESOL students. One participant expressed that interaction with culturally diverse students not only informed his cross-cultural understanding, it highlighted the need for greater self-awareness regarding diversity. Participants reported that their perceptions of ESOL students changed when they realized they had underestimated them. Participants reported that over time, they have learned that ESOL students work hard to become linguistically and culturally proficient and work hard to access course content. One participant indicated that experience with ESOL students of varying age groups has impacted his perceptions of ESOL students' degrees of motivation.

Differentiation and Implementation of Modifications

In the first round of interviews, participants embraced the importance of making content accessible for ESOL students. Participants expressed the importance of scaffolding academic content, modifying assessments, using visual aids, and considering culture when making instructional decisions. Transcribing this section of interviews led the researcher to question whether differentiation for ESOL students was, for this set of participants, still in the theoretical stage or whether participants were actually implementing modifications. A follow-up question to pinpoint specific examples seemed necessary: "We've talked at length about differentiation and modification. Can you think of specific things you've done to make content accessible for ESOL students?"

Rob, Kelly, and Muriel meet the needs of ESOL students by procuring resources. Rob states, "Well, when we had the Chinese student, we diligently searched to find

materials and I know we worked hard to try to make it so that he could understand, at least to some degree, our culture.” Kelly utilizes technology: “I used any electronic device, like the translating tools, or using an Internet resource where he could do some Internet translation.” Muriel accessed human resources.

Sometimes we have active involvement with the counselors and the instructional assistants. Sometimes parents can be in your classroom as another human resource. You can have guest speakers for your classes and demonstrations, such as how they prepare a particular meal and in that way they can share part of the culture.

Adam, Kelly, and Greg stress the need to simplify material. Adam simplifies language.

Especially in the beginning, when they’re still sort of in the language acquisition phase, trying to simplify things as much as possible, I’d say you simplify but you still want them to understand. You definitely need to simplify it more at the beginning, and as they acquire the language, then you don’t.

Kelly procures simplified printed material.

I found myself using materials written in a simpler version of English. The content was still there, it was still content-rich, but perhaps the way the content was presented was more of an outline and the language wasn’t nearly so challenging. I feel that was the most helpful thing.

Greg simplifies assessments. “Um, rewriting or restructuring tests, quizzes, assignments, ah, helping them interpret what it exactly means and what is being asked of them.”

Lori shares an example of using content to access culture.

I had a foreign exchange student who was from Mexico, although her English was really pretty good. I made sure I researched Mexican art so that we could talk about Mexican art. And she was so excited about that! She would show me things. She would bring in pictures and we would talk about that. So I guess within my content, art, I was able to delve into their culture. And I think that makes more of connection and they're able to trust you more.

Dan discusses differentiation in more general terms.

Well, making sure the kid is following along. Make sure he doesn't have a blank stare. I think that's most of what you would end up doing. Most of it has to do with meeting them halfway and making sure they understand what you're talking about.

In summary, participants named specific ways they have made content accessible for ESOL students. Participants procured resources in several ways, including accessing technology and seeking out human resources such as counselors and parents of ESOL students. Participants also simplified language, printed material, and assessments.

Needed Training

In the first round of interviews, participants clearly expressed a need for training and coursework. While participants gave some thought to essential elements of an in-service, the researcher believed that delving a bit deeper would yield additional insights. The following question was structured so that participants might consider a more direct relationship between perceptions of ESOL students, specific gaps in their understanding

of instruction of ESOL students, and potential trainings: “If you could design the most valuable ESOL in-service or ESOL workshop to meet your needs, what kinds of things would you want to learn?”

Rob, Lori, and Adam would like to enhance their cultural awareness. Rob views cultural understanding as a way to empower students.

I would want to learn about their cultures. I think if I know about their cultures, then that allows me to start to make inroads into how the thinking process works and how we’re viewed from their perspective and at the same time how they are viewed in their culture. Like, for girls, suddenly there’s a teacher saying, “Go for it, you can do this, you can do anything you set your mind to,” and it might not be anything they’ve ever heard before. So I think for me, if I have certain students, whether they’re Asian, or African, or Hispanic, if I have insights into the culture, then that gives me a way to deal with specifics of the culture and to reach that person.

Lori views cultural understanding as path to smooth relationships.

The first thing I would like to learn is cultural differences between us because I don’t want to offend. You know, there’s certain cultures that stand closer, and further away, and some that make eye contact and some that don’t. And there are probably many other idiosyncrasies and I don’t want to offend anyone. I mean that’s the last thing, as the student’s new teacher, they walk in and I do something offensive. So that’s even more immediately important, the cultural things.

Adam would like a deeper understanding of students' countries of origin and reasons for immigration.

I would like to learn more about where the kids are coming from. We have this sort of single-minded view. I'm assuming most of our ESOL students come from one of two places, either Central America, such as Mexico or a Spanish-speaking country, or the Far East, such as an Asian country. I would say the overall majority is from Spanish-speaking countries. If you say "Hispanic" to most Americans, they think it's one place. I personally know there's a difference. If you say to a Honduran, "You're Mexican," they get mad at you. I personally would like to know where they're coming from and why. Like what are the push and pull factors? Why are there kids coming from these countries? We need more about cultural understanding. We talked about *Jun* last time. There was a teacher here who insisted he was Chinese. He was furious! And I know he was furious because he came to me upset about it and he said, "Well, these stupid people can't even tell the difference between a Chinese and a Korean." I told him, "You know what? There are a lot of Americans who can't." I talked to him and we tried to work it through, but I know he's very proud of being Korean. If I went to China and someone said "You're English," I would be like "No, I'm not."

Lori and Kelly would like to build their resources and thereby feel more

empowered. Lori states,

The language issues. You can't teach all the teachers all the languages, but maybe places to go. Good websites. People to talk to. You know, resources. So

if we do have questions, we can access that and get what we need. That would go a long way in helping me feel more in control.

Kelly echoes Lori's suggestions.

I think it would be helpful to go into a list of resources. What resources do we have in the county to help with these children including things like translators or like the folder that you gave me that has that information in it. Going through the folder and saying "These are all the things we have available for you" and then perhaps on the tail of that some sort of Q and A or small group breakout where teachers can work directly with an ESOL teacher such as yourself or someone else who has worked with ESOL students to just kind of talk back and forth about what kinds of challenges you've faced or did this work well or what would you recommend I do in this sort of situation. I think that would be kind of neat.

Kelly and Greg feel they would benefit from immediately relevant information.

Kelly requests county-specific information.

Well, first I think I would start off with what the ESOL population in [our county] looks like. What kind of kids do we have coming in so that could kind of prepare everyone for whether or not they would interact with an ESOL student. Theory about these kids is important, like how they best learn and best practices, but even that is most helpful if we can relate it to our specific students. Right here and now.

Greg stresses the need to know what to do with timely instruction and assessment: “More strategies for modifying assignments, more strategies for teaching differently. How do I help the student I have right here, right now?”

Greg, Dan, and Muriel stress the importance of understanding students on a personal level. Greg also stresses the need to keep current information about students.

More strategies for helping students, more things you can do to help them assimilate as quickly as possible, make them feel as if they are part of the classroom, make them not feel so isolated. Actually implementing them in the classroom, you’re still faced with the student who has the perception that he really doesn’t fit in, and really it’s very difficult for them. You know, our school is very homogeneous and someone who comes in and is different can have a very difficult time. And definitely, new information all the time. What you think you know changes all the time because the population changes. So we’d need to be updated all the time.

Dan feels he would benefit from the real-world experiences of others.

I guess for someone to come and talk about the kids we’re going to have, and then also teachers that have had ESOL students and then hopefully ones from various places. And also talking to someone who has had a student who just got off the boat and didn’t have any English at all. How they would handle something like that? And I think basically just so people wouldn’t be intimidated, it would be good for teachers to get up there and share their experiences and help out.

Muriel connects personal understanding of each student to improved instruction.

I think teachers need to learn that they shouldn't make the students feel overwhelmed. Some of them have different backgrounds, and for some just having a chair, a desk, that's different. In many places, there is no classroom. So sometimes we take for granted that we have facilities. So first they have to get familiar with their surroundings. Teachers need to get to know them. It can take some time. And then, teachers might be surprised when the students go beyond their expectations. If I get to know the kids, then I know if they need some specific modification. For example, I might have a student who speaks Spanish beautifully, but then I find out they cannot read or write in Spanish. It's just oral communication. So I need to get to know him, and then I can know how to fill the gap between him and the rest of the class. If we don't know the student, it doesn't matter how many resources we have, we won't be successful.

In summary, participants focused heavily on the need for training to enhance cultural awareness, believing that cultural understanding is a pathway to empower students and foster smooth relationships. One participant voiced the need for a deeper understanding of students' countries of origin and reasons for immigration. Participants would like to enhance their repertoire of resources, including websites, experts in the field, written guidelines, interpreters and translators, and discussions with teachers who have experience with ESOL students. Participants also cited the value of student-specific information relevant to our district and information regarding instructional differentiation and assessment and assignment modification.

Heritage Language

Participants in the first round of interviews discussed perceptions of ESOL students' legal status, understandings of legal compliance, and perspectives on immigration as they impact classroom decisions. While these discussion points reflect the participants' understanding of legal matters concerning ESOL students, the conversations failed to precisely explore issues of heritage language. The following line of questioning sought to explore the current controversy of heritage language and how that impacts perceptions of ESOL students: "Many people say that English language learners should relinquish their heritage so as to more rapidly/efficiently learn English. Do you think that maintenance of the heritage language is a hindrance to learning English? Would there be ways in which maintenance of the heritage language would be considered an asset?"

All participants agreed that maintenance of the heritage language would be an asset, to varying degrees. Rob feels that maintenance of the heritage language maintains ties to one's country of origin.

No, I don't think they should just give it up. That's part of their heritage and I think they should maintain that. I don't see it as a hindrance to learning English at all. Some people come here and give up everything and do everything to be American, and others become American as well, but keep a closer connection to the motherland, like with the language. I don't think it has to be one thing or the other.

Greg feels that maintenance of the heritage language will connect future generations to current generations: “You have languages that are disappearing. I don’t think that’s a good thing. There are languages that no one speaks anymore. To think you might not be able to pass your language down to your kids, it’s tragic.”

Adam views maintenance of the heritage language as a natural asset, but seems unsure of acquiring languages simultaneously.

I don’t think it’s a hindrance. I mean, you are who you are. You can learn another language, and that doesn’t take away from what you are. I come from a large Italian-American family. One of the biggest regrets that my father and my aunts and uncles have is that my grandfather refused to speak Italian to them. He wanted them to be American. He didn’t want them to be Italian. Now, think how cool it would be, had my father learned Italian. We only know the bad words in Italian, but when you’re young, and you’re speaking more than one language, for kids it’s so good for them, you’re opening up so much in their mind. So it may be a hindrance at first, the whole immersion thing might be better, but once they have the language acquired, if they want to go back to speaking primarily at home whatever language, that’s fine, and if they don’t lose that language and if they get into college and people who speak more than one language are really marketable.

Unlike Adam, Muriel and Kelly have stronger opinions of simultaneous language acquisition, each using specific examples. Muriel states,

The young mind is so eager, and so wanting information that it’s easy for them to learn a second language and not lose their original one. Right now, the world

demands that you speak more than one language. I have a friend who is married to a German. The child speaks Spanish to the mother, German to the father, and English with the neighborhood children. And she's only three! I was so amazed! Kelly discovered the possibility of simultaneous language development while traveling.

I was in the Caribbean over the break, in Curacao, and the guide told me that the native island language is something called Papiamentu and in the home, everyone speaks Papiamentu. When the children start school, they will speak, read, and write Dutch. Then in fifth grade, the school day is split. Half the day is taught in Dutch and half the day is taught in English. And then in high school, everyone chooses another language to study, such as French, German, Spanish, or Italian. So, they speak four languages by the time they graduate from high school. So back to the question about the heritage language impacting the learning of English, Papiamentu and Dutch have nothing in common. And yet if you introduce it at an early enough age, that would be absolutely no hindrance, because the entire island can speak Papiamentu, Dutch, and English.

Like Adam, Greg and Lori believe multilingualism makes a person more marketable. Greg states,

Anyone who speaks more than one language has an advantage over someone who doesn't, so I think all of the students in this school who only speak English are at a tremendous disadvantage compared to a student coming in here who speaks another language and learns as they go along. I mean, they can learn another

language, but there are places in the world where people routinely speak five or six languages or even more.

Lori couches her remarks with regard to the global community.

I think it's silly to think they can relinquish their language. If they're leaving their homeland, they need to hold onto something! I think they should maintain their language, as well as learn English. I mean, I have kids who have to come in and translate for their parents. And we live in a global community. There's no way monolingualism can be an asset if someone has access to multilingualism. We're on a global stage.

Kelly and Muriel have differing views regarding the potential impact of first language retention. Kelly is cautious about the extent to which the native language should be used.

You know, I've heard the argument that some of our kids coming from El Salvador who at home speak entirely Spanish and then they come to school and it's much more difficult for them. But if the parents at home make the definitive decision that they're going to speak English to help their children learn English, I've heard it helps. I feel like when you're learning another language, you always get that moment of "phew" when you switch back into your own language. I don't want our ESOL students at any point to feel overwhelmed where they don't feel confident. I think everything should be done in bits and pieces. Now, would the heritage language ever be a hindrance to learning English? I think if they lean on it too much, yes. But I don't think that they should give it up completely,

because I do think the heritage language is an asset. The way that different languages express ideas is sometimes so much more eloquent, or so much more vivid than English. It depends on what it is you're saying, but in some languages some things can be expressed better or easier than in English. So I think that some sort of cooperation between the heritage language and English would be the best for the child. That's why an ideal situation would be we have a translator for every ESOL student, who can speak English as well as the child's heritage language. But financially that's not going to happen!

Muriel feels quite strongly that strengthening the heritage language strengthens second language acquisition.

I disagree that a student would need to relinquish the heritage language. First of all, you need to value, you need to love your own culture in order to understand a second one. You need to master your own language and master your own grammar as close to 100% as possible. Once this happens, then I believe that you appreciate the rest of the world. Again, you love yourself, you are able to love the rest of human beings. If you are not in first place, then the world will never share with you, because you won't appreciate it because you don't love yourself. And you need to get to know the language! If you know your first language 100%, you have a much better foundation for the second language.

Dan's response was unique in that he projected how he would approach second language acquisition should he find himself in another country.

Well, I know plenty of people who can do both, who have done both. I don't know how easy it would be when I picture myself going to another country and not being able to use English at all. In a way, I don't think people have a choice but to not relinquish it. A friend's daughter has already been to several other countries and I don't think she could make herself forget English. You might be thinking in one language and translating in another. I'm not sure how you do that and learn a whole bunch of other things at the same time. As far as maintaining it, I don't know how you can avoid it, especially if that's what's spoken at home. I think it's extremely important, whether it's a matter of citizenship, or stuff in school, to learn English. But I would say if I was going to another country, I would learn what I need to in order to succeed, but I don't think I would feel obligated to go beyond that. So I don't think it's necessary to give up one's language. I don't think it's fair to require that.

In summary, participants agreed that maintenance of the heritage language would be an asset. Reasons cited include maintaining ties to one's country of origin and fostering connectedness between generations. Participants' views of simultaneous language acquisition vary. One participant feels that one should return to one's native language after a second language is acquired, citing opportunities in higher education and in employment. Other participants feel several languages can be acquired simultaneously. One participant expressed that children would learn English more quickly if it was the language spoken at home. One participant felt the heritage language could be a hindrance to second language acquisition if it was used too much and another

participant asserted that strengthening the heritage language strengthens second language acquisition.

Challenges Beyond Language

In the first round of interviews, participants indicated myriad challenges when working with ESOL students, including the inability to communicate with the student and/or family, lack of information regarding an ESOL student's prior knowledge and schooling, uncertainty regarding assessment of specific language needs, and lack of confidence determining and implementing instructional modifications and interventions. Revisiting these early discussions signaled the need for broader examination. Might challenges exist that are not related to language? To explore further, participants were posed the following questions: "Other than the language barrier, what do you think are some reasons why English language learners might struggle in school?" and "Many teachers report that it is difficult to meet the needs of ESOL students. Other than not sharing a language with the ESOL student, what might be some obstacles that would prevent teachers from meeting the needs of ESOL students?"

Adam and Rob both commented on the difficulty of the English language. Adam states,

English is a pain in the neck to learn! And I learned that through learning Spanish. The Romance languages are derived from Latin, and the verb conjugation is so much simpler in those languages. So I would say that English is such a tough language and we have so many colloquialisms. Every language has

a sort of informal dialect, but we have a lot of regional nuances and regional vocabulary.

Rob concurs with Adam: “I really believe the English language is the hardest to learn. There’s very little that really follows rules and there’s always exceptions.”

Adam, Kelly, and Lori discuss differing educational philosophies and school culture. Adam states, “School is different in the United States than it is in other countries. So the differences in language and the differences in educational philosophy make it kind of a double-edged sword. It’s really tough.” Kelly talks about school culture and cultural competence.

The educational mindset is so different. Like in Curacao, children just readily accept learning all the languages, where here it’s like pulling teeth. But I think the dedication that some students have in other cultures to education that we lack here can be a problem. The respect toward authority, which is much more significant in other parts of the world which is unfortunately not as prevalent here. If you are an ESOL student and you’re coming to a country where you don’t speak the language and the people don’t act like you do toward teachers, they don’t act like you towards peers, I think you could feel very isolated and like a very small person, a very small fish in a very big pond. And I think that lack of confidence in understanding our cultural ways could possibly deter them from wanting to immerse themselves as much as possible, which obviously is the best thing you can do to learn our language....to immerse yourself as much as

possible. So they're not as willing to immerse themselves if they're having a hard time navigating the culture...making meaning of what's happening around them.

Lori connects school culture and tolerance of peers.

Well, being the new kid is never easy. It's hard enough making friends when you speak the same language and again back to the cultural thing. If you're going to go up to someone in the hallway and touch someone in the wrong way, a way that works in your country but here you'll get punched in the face, that's never good! And also, it depends on where you are. If you go to a school like this that's white bread, and they're not used to all those differences, and the tolerance level is not as high, that would probably make it more difficult. So I think where you are makes a difference.

Greg, Rob, and Muriel highlight the human need to fit in and be accepted. Greg states,

They feel different. They don't fit in. There's a background that's completely different. What they do have access to is quite different. What they're familiar with is not what the kids here are familiar with. So they have a huge barrier to fitting in. I mean, how would someone here feel about going to a foreign country and going to high school for a year. There would be all kinds of things they would find strange, difficult, unusual, or didn't understand. People would start speaking the language and they can't follow any of it, and then they wonder what it is they're saying and no one explains...all kinds of situations. I mean, that's going to be the norm. How would that make somebody feel? Not as if they're

part of the culture, and it's not setting them up to fit in. So they're going to have to struggle to overcome that and make their own way.

Rob discusses the push and pull between acceptance and maintaining heritage.

The new students look at other students and say, "I want to be like them and I want to act like them," so there might be a tendency to not work as hard. There was, in the state English exam, a story about a girl from China and as she was growing up, she was losing her cultural heritage. When she got older, she realized that was a part of her and that she had made a mistake in losing it and she didn't know how to get it back. So I think we need to let kids know that it's all right to be who you are. You're in America, and we're glad you're here, but it's alright to be who you are. You don't have to dress like us, speak like us, it's important for you to keep your heritage.

Muriel, too, discusses economic circumstances, conformity, and the tendency to choose poor role models.

The economic circumstances might keep them from success. Or sometimes they might be coming from a broken home. Or they might be parented by the television because parents are working long hours. We have to be conscious of that. There could be lack of supervision, lack of a mentor, someone the kids look up to. Sometimes a problem I see with mainstream kids here is that the parents want to be a friend. Kids don't want that. They look to the parent as an example! No one on the television should be considered a role model! The parents are the first teachers of the children. When they come to the classroom, they sometimes

don't bring any manners. They are rude. So when students come from other places, they look to kids here and sometimes what they want to imitate the negative behaviors and not the positive behavior.

Dan shares his insights regarding misconceptions about intelligence and culture. People might think that it's not the language that's the problem, it's that you're dumb. Other students and even some teachers think this. They equate language skills with level of intelligence. There's plenty of people who have heard at home that we need to send these people back where they belong, back where they were born and stuff like that, and not have to deal with it. But strangely, I don't think it's the same with the Asians. No one associates them with being dumb. They associate the Spanish with that. So it depends on the culture, too. Long ago when the Irish came, the Italians, no one wanted them here either. So there's a lot of lack of understanding about things that are different. I have a Jewish girl in my geometry class. They ask her things that show me that they have no idea what her religion is about. But you can't really know what another culture is like unless you've been there or unless you've studied it excessively. But even then, if you don't know anyone, it's all theoretical. I mean sometimes we have special days where we make food from someplace, or wear outfits from there or something like that and that's kind of cute, but at the same time, it's still not the same thing as what it's really like. In a lot of those places, people don't really dress like that, they dress the same way we do. So those special activities can be misleading. No

one today dresses in the so-called traditional outfits, unless there's a festival of some sort.

Adam and Kelly highlight the need for more extensive teacher training.

I think something should be added to what teachers learn in college. You know, I went through all that college to be a teacher, and the two things I didn't get at all were how to manage a classroom, and how to deal with kids who were special ed or who spoke other languages. And when you think about it, what are the two things that are crucial to teaching? Managing students in the classroom and understanding how to work with exceptionality, all kinds of exceptionality. In my opinion, college approaches it like you're going to teach the middle and only the middle. But it's the kids who are the exceptions, who need different things for learning or for behavior, that have the potential to cause the teacher the most stress. So I think it's education, it's knowledge, and in some cases ignorance that prevent teachers from knowing what to do, but if you're a good teacher, you will do anything to do right by the student. You'll figure out a way. I think that's the majority of teachers, but I think there are a lot who just don't have the tools.

Like Adam, Kelly sees the importance of increased teacher training, but also suggests that there should be more teacher accountability.

The most difficult thing is not being able to clearly communicate with them. But we have specialists in the county, we have access to these tools. I mean, unless a teacher hasn't properly accessed those things, or maybe the teacher might feel that they haven't been thoroughly educated on all the things that are available to them,

I don't see why they would see that there are any obstacles, unless you're a lazy teacher. And there are teachers like that, teachers who do things one way and have always done things one way and they're not changing. Like with special ed. At every faculty meeting, the special ed department shares new laws and procedures, and all of these laws and procedures are in place because some teacher dropped the ball somewhere, and we've actually had teachers at faculty meetings who have rolled their eyes and said under their breath "I'm not doing that." There are teachers that will get IEPs and sign off on it and send it back to the special department, and then put their copy in the recycling bin. So we have a few that absolutely, positively say, "Nope, if they don't do what the rest of the kids are doing, then too bad." And those are teachers who just shouldn't be teaching.

Muriel also highlights the importance of the teacher.

Teachers might not know what to do or be able to find what they need to help the child. I think that's the main reason. Teachers need to collaborate with each other about students who are new and really work together to find a way to teach that child. They also need to find it important to make sure they are communicating with the parents in their own languages, through the interpretation office. And teachers need to understand the power they have. One word can connect with a student or lose the student for good.

In summary, participants shared perceptions of ESOL students' challenges both with the English language and outside of language acquisition. Participants

acknowledged that English is a very difficult language to learn. Participants discussed the challenges of differing educational philosophies, citing differing levels of perceived commitment to education and perceived differences with regard to respect for authority. Participants also felt that some students might be reluctant to immerse themselves in American culture if they perceived the process to be too daunting, and they felt that remaining outside of peer groups would hinder language development. Other participants believed economic circumstances, lack of supervision at home, and a dearth of role models contribute to students' challenges. One participant pointed out that there is a perception that poor language skills indicate lower intelligence for Hispanic students, not Asian students. Finally, participants cited lack of teacher training and the inability to work with language learners or find resources to help them as a significant reason why ESOL students might struggle in school.

Connections to Research Questions

Data from the second round of interviews can be examined with regard to the research questions. What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students? Participants felt that their experiences with ESOL students had changed their perceptions of ESOL students. Interaction with culturally diverse students informed cross-cultural understanding and it highlighted the need for greater self-awareness regarding diversity. Participants reported that over time, they had learned that ESOL students work hard to become linguistically and culturally proficient and work hard to access course content and as a result, participants realized they had underestimated ESOL students. Participants acknowledged that ESOL students face challenges regarding the

complexity of the English language and challenges regarding disconnects in educational philosophies. Participants also felt that some students might be reluctant to immerse themselves in American culture and therefore find themselves outside of peer groups. Other participants believed economic circumstances, lack of supervision at home, and a dearth of role models contribute to students' challenges. One participant pointed out that there is a perception that poor language skills indicate lower intelligence for Hispanic students, but not for Asian students. Participants cited lack of teacher training and the inability to work with language learners or find resources to help them as a significant reason why ESOL students might struggle in school. Participants agreed that maintenance of the heritage language would be an asset, but participants' beliefs varied with regard to simultaneous language acquisition.

What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students? Participants feel they endeavor to make content accessible for ESOL students by simplifying language, printed material, and assessments. Participants have procured resources in several ways, including accessing technology and seeking out human resources such as counselors and parents of ESOL students. While participants generally believe it is important to identify with one's teacher with regard to both culture and gender, some participants suggested that monolingual White females might possess the skills and life experiences necessary to meet those needs. Participants also believe that teacher diversity would encourage more diverse students to enter the field of education.

What are high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students?

Participants focused heavily on the need for training to enhance cultural awareness, including the need for a deeper understanding of students' countries of origin and reasons for immigration. Participants would like to enhance their repertoire of resources, including websites, experts in the field, written guidelines, interpreters and translators, and discussions with teachers who have experience with ESOL students. Participants also value the student-specific information relevant to our district and information regarding instructional differentiation and assessment and assignment modification

Support for Original Themes

The second round of interviews yielded data that supported themes generated during the first round of interviews. Regarding differentiation and implementation of modifications, participants reiterated concepts of making content accessible to ESOL students, modifying class work and assessments, simplifying vocabulary and language in general, seeking external resources, and exploring technological support. The second round of interviews failed to yield specifics, thus providing implications for training. When questioned for specifics regarding needed training, participants reinforced the need for more awareness regarding culture and countries of origin, human resources and instructional resources, and student-specific information.

Additional Themes

While data from the second round of interviews largely reinforced themes generated during the first round of interviews, several key additional themes emerged.

Participants believe that all students, including ESOL students, would benefit from a diverse instructional staff, both while in school and after graduation. Participants also believe that training and support will give White, monolingual, middle-class, female teachers the tools necessary to teach a diverse student body effectively. While participants consistently stated that experience with ESOL students changed their perceptions of ESOL students in positive ways, the second round of interviews encouraged participants to reflect in deeper ways. Participants generally agreed that they had underestimated ESOL students and that ESOL students were more motivated and harder working than they had originally thought. Participants also shared that teaching ESOL students set the context for considering diversity in general terms. Participants considered the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining one's heritage language, concluding that maintaining one's heritage language would strengthen family ties and make students more marketable. Some participants, however, were concerned that maintaining one's heritage language might hinder the rate of English acquisition. Participants delved more deeply into challenges faced by ESOL students, considering the complexity of the English language, diverse educational philosophies, varying approaches to school culture, peer group challenges, economic and family circumstances, and unequal assumptions regarding ethnic groups.

Addressing the Research Questions

What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students?

1. *Work Ethic and Instructional Setting:* Participants believe that ESOL students work hard to become linguistically and culturally proficient and work hard to

access course content. Participants felt ESOL students benefitted mainstream students and classroom teachers by exposing students to different ways of thinking and interacting, setting the academic and behavioral bar, and helping mainstream students develop empathy for challenges faced by some ESOL students. Participants also felt modifications and differentiated instructional practices put in place for ESOL students often benefitted the entire class. Teachers as well as students benefitted from cross-cultural exchange. While most participants believe ESOL students are best served by mainstream classes, there exists support for a separate setting for ESOL students as long as separation is brief and only if it benefits the student.

2. *Heritage Language and Cultural Maintenance:* Participants believe ESOL students benefit by maintaining heritage language and culture as a means of maintaining ties to one's country of origin, fostering connectedness between generations, and improving employment options. Participants also believe that strengthening the heritage language strengthens second language acquisition. Bilingualism is believed to be an asset but concerns exist regarding whether or not this could be a hindrance to English language acquisition and whether or not children would learn English more rapidly if English became the home language. Participants' views of simultaneous language acquisition vary. Some participants believe several languages can be acquired simultaneously. One participant feels that one should develop one's native language only after the second language is acquired.

3. *Challenges in School:* Participants acknowledged that while English is a very difficult language to learn, ESOL students struggle in school for myriad reasons. Participants suspect that ESOL students might feel a cultural disconnect between school culture, which in turn impacts interaction with peers and authority figures. This disconnect, participants believe, might hinder language development. Some participants believe factors outside the school setting, such as family economic circumstances, lack of supervision at home, and a dearth of role models contribute to students' challenges. One participant pointed out that there is a perception that poor language skills indicate lower intelligence for Hispanic students, which might impact teachers' expectations. Finally, participants cited lack of teacher training and inability to work with language learners or find resources to help them as a significant reason why ESOL students might struggle in school.
4. *Legal Status and Compliance:* Although participants expressed uncertainty regarding expectations of compliance, participants indicated that they believe teachers are legally and ethically bound to provide modifications for ESOL students through instructional delivery and through assessment. Interview participants believe schools should not request proof of legal status for enrollment but survey participants felt, to a moderate degree, that schools should be allowed to examine the legal status of students. Some participants felt ESOL students are more likely to be undocumented and some felt ESOL students are more likely to be documented. Regardless, participants felt that

citizenship should be the goal for all immigrants, and that undocumented students detract from ESOL services for students who are documented.

What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students?

1. *Impact of Professional Experiences:* Participants felt that experience with ESOL students changed their perceptions of ESOL students and impacted their approach to instruction. Interaction with culturally diverse students informed cross-cultural understanding, highlighted the need for greater self-awareness regarding diversity, and reminded teachers not to underestimate ESOL students. Interaction with the families of ESOL students and interactions with diverse populations via past employment impacted cultural perceptions, empathy for language learners, and empathy for those outside the cultural mainstream. Prior teaching experiences with English language learners allowed participants to consider each student's individual needs, modify course content to adjust for cultural differences, relate new content to what students already know, modify vocabulary for ESOL students, and acknowledge that students learn at different rates and pathways to motivation vary.
2. *Impact of Personal Experiences:* Participants' cross-cultural friendships, relationships, and opportunities for travel impacted perceptions of culture, language, and diversity, thereby impacting perceptions of the teacher's role in the classroom. Personal experiences also increased teachers' empathy for

ESOL students, allowed teachers to bridge cultural understanding between students of different backgrounds, and assist other teachers with new understandings of ESOL students.

3. *Teachers of ESOL Students:* Participants experienced considerable challenges with regard to identifying the needs of language learners, determining appropriate modifications, and implementing instruction. Although some participants have some modifications in place, such as scaffolding instruction and modifying vocabulary, most participants were unsure how to modify content for language learners and stated they would benefit from someone qualified to help make modifications. Additionally, some participants felt their colleagues were unable or unwilling to provide modifications for ESOL students. While overwhelmingly eager to provide differentiated instruction for language learners, some participants were unsure how to proceed without compromising instructional rigor for mainstream students. While some teachers feel that ESOL students should be taught using the same methodologies as mainstream students, teachers generally understand the importance of modifying classroom content and assessments and the importance of cultural considerations. Data indicate that lack of training and time constraints contribute to teachers' frustration.
4. *Navigating Culture:* Participants viewed themselves as ill-equipped to identify and address cultural needs of language learners, understand ESOL students' content background, and communicate with ESOL students' families.

5. *Instructional Staff Diversity*: Participants grappled with the concept of their own identity in relation to a diverse student body. Participants generally believe it is important for students to identify with the teacher with regard to both culture and gender. Participants also believe that a wider range of languages spoken by staff members would foster cultural connections and serve as a resource. It is also believed that teacher diversity would have a “trickle-down” effect, encouraging more diverse students to enter the field of education. One participant believes that while it is beneficial to have a diverse instructional staff, it is ultimately the responsibility of students to conform to the majority. Some participants suggested that a diverse instructional staff might not be the only way to meet the needs of ESOL students; rather, monolingual White females might possess the skills and life experiences necessary to meet those needs.

What are high school teachers’ beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students?

1. *Instructional Strategies Training*: Teachers felt a strong desire and need for ESOL training. Survey and interview participants overwhelmingly reported a

lack of coursework in ESOL-related issues. Participants stated that district inservices centered upon ESOL issues and concerns have been very helpful, particularly when the training is student-specific rather than theoretical. There exists a perceived inability to help students with English skills and an uncertainty regarding instruction of language skills through content. Participants expressed the need for training regarding instructional differentiation, assessment modification, and strategies to adequately assess the strengths and challenges of ESOL students. Further, participants conveyed an overwhelming sense of frustration regarding cultural barriers between themselves and their ESOL students and expressed that this is a hindrance to effective instruction.

2. *Human Resources:* While an effective working relationship with the ESOL teacher is needed and valued, participants would like to develop needed skills to more autonomously plan for and work with ESOL students. Participants view the ESOL teacher as a valuable resource and generally feel assistance from the ESOL teacher is limited by time and caseload constraints. Some participants take steps to seek out human resources such as counselors, parents of ESOL students, experts in the field, interpreters and translators, and teachers who have experience with ESOL students. Participants also cited the value of student-specific information relevant to currently enrolled ESOL students.

3. *Instructional Resources:* Participants state that they do not know what types of instructional resources are available nor do they understand how to access resources needed to address the needs of their ESOL students. Data indicate scant resources are in use, typically limited to bilingual dictionaries and district-assembled information folders. Some teachers demonstrated a proactive approach to resource procurement, such as investigating resources in other districts and purchasing Spanish language textbooks. While some participants have already accessed technology as a resource, participants generally expressed interest in enhancing their repertoire of technological resources, such as websites and electronic translators.
4. *Compliance:* Participants feel somewhat able to comply with state policies and practices regarding the teaching of ESOL students, however, participants admit that their understanding of policies and practices is limited. Participants stated some colleagues are unable or unwilling to meet compliance expectations and some colleagues lack empathy for ESOL students or are unaware of expectations regarding ESOL students.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore high school mainstream teachers' perceptions of ESOL students. The research questions were: (a) What do high school mainstream teachers believe about ESOL students? (b) What do high school mainstream teachers believe about themselves as teachers of ESOL students? (c) What are high school mainstream teachers' beliefs regarding supports and services that should be provided to facilitate the instruction of ESOL students? Detailed results were presented in the last chapter. This chapter will summarize the five key findings from this study and discuss them in light of earlier research and theoretical frameworks. I will also discuss implications for professional development programs, and propose future research. Finally, this chapter will address limitations of this study.

Summary of Key Findings

Findings of this study, outlined in the previous chapter as research questions were addressed, are numerous. It is necessary to synthesize key findings from the larger list of findings that address each research question. In this way, one can begin to ascertain "next steps" and utilize new insights to devise substantive training that will begin to address the needs of educators with ESOL students in their care. From the comprehensive list of findings, five key findings are identified: Teachers of ESOL students want and need instructional strategies training, must be provided access to a

variety of resources, would benefit from gaining the tools needed to navigate cultural concerns, must be made aware of challenges faced by ESOL students, and would benefit from cultural immersion experiences as a means to inform their perceptions of ESOL students. Following discussion of the five key findings, connections to theoretical frameworks will be presented. Finally, implications for professional development programs will be proposed.

High school teachers of ESOL students want and need instructional strategies training. For the teachers in this study, formal coursework was limited and while experiences with district-provided in-services had been helpful, training sessions such as these did not seem to meet teachers' needs to a great degree. Teachers need strategies to learn how to teach English language skills through content instruction. Teachers need strategies to learn how to differentiate instruction and modify assessment for language learners, as well as strategies to utilize assessment data to inform instructional practices. Teachers must adequately assess the strengths and challenges of language learners with regard to English language acquisition and differences in background knowledge. The best example of the need to adequately assess ESOL strengths is in the work of Reed (2000). Reed challenged her school to consider the strengths of ESOL students and develop and implement a system for gifted and talented identification. Reed's efforts opened the door for ESOL students' assimilation into gifted and talented programs. A critical instructional strategy addressed in the literature is found in the work of Hite and Evans (2006). In this study, primary grade teachers facilitated second language acquisition through content instruction. Findings from my study indicate that high school

mainstream teachers must also facilitate second language acquisition through content instruction, but clearly lack the training to do this effectively.

A second conclusion of this study was teachers of ESOL students must be provided access to a variety of instructional resources including human resources and technological resources. Teachers need training to apprise them of available resources, inform them of the processes for resource procurement, and teach them how to best utilize a variety of resources to support instructional delivery and impact student achievement. While mainstream classroom teachers in this school did have access to an ESOL teacher, much work needs to be done to foster productive relationships between the mainstream and ESOL teachers. Also, students' parents, district interpreters and translators, and other professionals such as counselors are underutilized. Technological resources such as websites, software, and textbook support systems must be accessed. In the earlier literature review, Mantero and McVicker (2006) address differences between mainstream teachers and ESOL teachers' perceptions about second language learning. The researchers found that ESOL teachers were significantly more positive toward ELL students than mainstream teachers. In light of this, and in light of the call for fostering a more productive relationship between mainstream and ESOL teachers, ESOL teachers must ensure that they are maximizing their potential to be a powerful resource for mainstream teachers. Interestingly, paraeducators were not mentioned as potential human resources. The research of Ernst-Slavit and Wenger (2006) found that bilingual paraeducators often have extensive classroom experience working with all students and

firsthand experience learning a second language and culture. Bilingual paraeducators not only provide academic support, they act as cultural brokers.

Third, teachers of ESOL students would benefit from gaining the tools needed to navigate cultural concerns. Teachers need to identify and address cultural needs of language learners, understand ESOL students' content backgrounds, and communicate with ESOL students' families. Teachers would benefit from information addressing the impact of heritage language and home culture on students' perceptions of education. Teachers must understand the impact of first language literacy on second language acquisition. This supports the work of Tse (2001). Tse explained that continual development of the native language can increase the rate of English development while the child acquires academic content. Further, an adequate command of the heritage language allows the child to access content knowledge in the heritage language, thereby making the transition to content in English much easier.

Fourth, teachers of ESOL students must be made aware of the challenges faced by ESOL students. Participants agreed that nonexistent or limited coursework or training adversely affects teachers of ESOL students. Participants generally indicated that they understood ESOL students' challenges extend beyond language acquisition, including such things as difficulty navigating school and peer culture and economic hardships within families. These conclusions support and add to conclusions drawn by Zamel and Spack (2006). When the researchers asked hundreds of students, through surveys, interviews, and reflective journals, what they felt their teachers should know about their academic needs, students acknowledged struggles with the language, cultural confusion,

appreciation for teachers who understand the magnitude of their efforts, concerns about being able to express themselves in spoken English, frustration at not being full-contributors in class, and fears about being labeled less intelligent.

Finally, teachers of ESOL students would benefit from cultural immersion experiences as a means to inform their perceptions of ESOL students. Teachers indicated that experience with ESOL students changed their perceptions of ESOL students and impacted their approach to instruction. Teachers also indicated that interaction with diverse populations informed their cross-cultural understanding, heightened their level of empathy for language learners and cultural outsiders, allowed them to modify course content to adjust for cultural differences, and relate new content to what students already know. These findings support the finding of Edl et al. (2008), who determined that while teachers' perceptions of students' academic and interpersonal capabilities are steeped in language and ethnicity, perceptions can change over time.

Addressing Gaps in the Literature

The gap analysis in Chapter Two highlighted the need for more careful assessment of mainstream teachers' perceptions of ESOL students so that the needs of mainstream teachers could be addressed through staff development. There are contradictory findings in the literature regarding staff development. According to some studies, short-term professional development interventions for in-service teachers have been shown to be ineffectual; according to other studies, similar interventions have been shown to be quite effective. The research indicates that staff development is most effective when teachers' specific needs are addressed and teachers have an active voice in

expressing their concerns. Additionally, there is limited research regarding districts with low but growing numbers of ESOL students and mainstream teachers who have little or no experience teaching ESOL students. This study sought to address those gaps.

This study sought to both address gaps in the literature and determine if concepts present in the literature were applicable to teachers in my district. Do teachers in my district believe they have adequate training, experience, and resources to address the needs of ESOL students? Do teachers in my district have a good understanding of the background and culture of ESOL students in their charge? Do teachers believe they have the skills needed to modify content for ESOL students, support literacy, and fairly assess ESOL students? Do teachers believe heritage language maintenance and mainstreaming within the regular classroom have merit? Does the legal status of students impact teachers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities toward ESOL students?

Participants in this study do not believe they have adequate training, experience, or resources to address the needs of ESOL students. Teacher training courses routinely omit instructional strategies for ESOL students and frameworks for navigating cultural concerns. While this district has ample resources to support mainstream teachers, there appears to be a disconnect between understanding the resource needs of mainstream teachers and ultimate resource procurement. Participants readily lament that they do not have the experience needed to feel confident addressing the needs of ESOL students. Most participants in this study do not have a good understanding of the background and culture of ESOL students in their charge. While experience serves to bridge cultural awareness and classroom practice, participants feel that their experiences have made

them aware of diversity issues and that awareness drives them to learn more. Participants in this study endeavor to modify content for ESOL students and support literacy to the best of their abilities. For most participants, however, assessment of ESOL students remains a challenge. Participants believe heritage language maintenance and mainstreaming within the regular classroom have merit, and the legal status of students impacts teachers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities toward ESOL students.

Connections to Theoretical Frameworks

Two theoretical frameworks form the foundations of this research: identity theory and social reproduction/cultural production theory. Identity theory states that identity is socially and culturally constructed within a particular context (Eisenhart, 2001). External influences and cultural messages are situated within one's current context, and each person makes meaning of experiences through a cultural lens. We are all products of past experiences and past and present experiences contribute to the construction of our future selves, consciously or unconsciously. Each individual receives, processes, and internalizes messages to construct an identity that is theirs and theirs alone. Therefore, identity is never static. One's identity is always in flux, and new understandings and circumstances contribute to one's perpetual reinvention (Eisenhart, 2001). Social reproduction and cultural production theories address societal and institutionally imposed limitations and possibilities. These theories examine factors that hinder individual achievement and limit potential of minority groups. Social institutions such as schools often unwittingly play a role in social reproduction. Dominant societal groups structure society in ways that perpetuate their best interests; therefore, cultural, economic, and

linguistic inequalities are perpetuated. Ways in which individuals react to imposed power structures impact social and career aspirations and potential in all areas of life. Schools and educational practices, consciously or unwittingly, often create and solidify systems that fail to value or affirm the cultural capital of diverse students.

Identity theory provides a framework for understanding how teachers see themselves as teachers in the classroom. Like all people, teachers' identities are embedded at all times, therefore, teachers' identities impact the classroom. In this research, participants' contact with ESOL students and interactions with diverse populations provided experiences that informed their identities. As past experiences informed current identities, current cross-cultural experiences will inform future identities. As teachers teach ESOL students and immerse themselves in culturally rich environments, ways of knowing are altered and bridges to new understanding are built. As teachers learn more about students' backgrounds and become more deeply connected to students' families, teachers are more likely to develop the internal constructs necessary to understand the challenges of cultural disconnection experienced by ESOL students.

Social reproduction and cultural production theories provide a framework for understanding how teachers' perceptions and practices may impact ESOL students. In this research, teachers state that they want and need instructional strategies training. Without such additions to teachers' professional repertoires, instructional strategies remain static and ESOL students' cultural capital is not recognized, valued, or developed. Understanding language and cultural differences as deficits serves to perpetuate societal constructs of dominant groups (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/1990). When teachers are

provided pathways to cross-cultural resources, such as communication with parents, assistance from interpreters, and access to relevant technology, teachers will have the tools to find new ways to lead ESOL students to interpersonal and educational success.

Implications for Professional Development Programs

Needs of teachers of English language learners and suggestions for teacher professional development programs have long been a part of the literature. Sturtevant (1998) noted that non-English speaking learners are diverse, learning English takes a long time, literacy in the first language impacts literacy development in the second language, many instructional approaches appropriate for fluent English speakers are also appropriate for those still learning English, educators working with language learners should collaborate, students' families should be included, and there should be increased understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity throughout the school community. Gatt (2008), in a study of teachers' perceptions of English language learner education, proposed six solutions to professional development needs: parent involvement, ESL curriculum development, Spanish language class, first and second language literacy methods, sheltered English instruction, ESL methods, and how to establish a newcomer center. Gatt also reported ELL teachers' solutions for improving ELL education: hire more ESL or bilingual education certified teachers, create an ESL consulting teacher position, hire more bilingual education assistants, create a Sheltered English academy, provide effective professional development, group students by the same language proficiency levels, and make changes to the ESL curriculum. Indeed, needs of teachers vary considerably according to population served, district and state policies and

procedures, and availability of resources. Implications for professional development discussed here reflect the needs of teachers in this district, as voiced by participants in this research.

To their credit, participants have indeed learned much through direct experience with English language learners. Although coursework and training has been limited, participants have endeavored to instruct the ESOL students in their care to the best of their abilities; however, there exists a disconnect between in-services provided and skills learned. While participants generally speak favorably of district-provided workshops, data suggest that teachers are still not receiving the kinds of information necessary to optimize their time with ESOL students, thereby suggesting that these training sessions are underutilized and fail to meet teachers' needs. When structuring a paradigm for staff training and support in this district, three factors should be considered: needs expressed by teachers on the surveys and through the interview processes, misconceptions revealed as data were gathered, and a return to the literature to situate current needs within existing concepts. While it is important to address explicitly expressed needs voiced by participants, it is equally important to dispel erroneous information. Implications for training are discussed under five subheadings. Each subheading reflects a key finding in this research.

Instructional Strategies Training

Although the ESOL population in this district is relatively small compared to many districts, it is growing steadily. Participants stated that they underestimated the capabilities of ESOL students. Teachers must be trained to have high expectations for

ESOL students and to learn how to differentiate instruction while maintaining rigor. Olson and Land (2007) examined the impact of sustained, focused training on specific instructional strategies. This eight-year study in an urban, low-Supplemental Educational Services (SES) school where 93% of students speak English as a second language was conducted by members of the California Writing Project and involved 55 secondary teachers and approximately 2,000 students per year. The researchers examined the cognitive strategies approach to reading and writing instruction, an approach that explicitly teaches thinking and writing tools experienced readers and writers access when constructing meaning. As a result of this strategy, English language learners outperformed peers on academic writing, GPA, standardized tests, and high-stakes writing assignments. Results demonstrated the importance of high expectations for ELLs, a rigorous language arts curriculum, explicit teaching, guided practice, and students as partners in a community of learners.

Teachers also need strategies to learn how to teach English language skills through content instruction. While many districts use sheltered instruction or newcomer centers, the ESOL population in this district is not large enough for such large-scale approaches. In this district, ESOL students are mainstreamed immediately and are responsible for grade-level content immediately. Classroom teachers, with the help of the ESOL teacher, must simultaneously teach English language skills and content material. With training in differentiated instruction, scaffolding, and assignment and assessment modification, teachers will be better equipped to meet these needs. Because it is not always feasible to expect teachers to enroll in formal coursework when already in

practice, teachers might very well benefit from shadowing experienced mainstream teachers of ESOL students. In this way, teachers would have the opportunity to move beyond theory and witness differentiated instruction, scaffolding, and assignment modification in action.

Teachers must also be trained to use instructional approaches that maximize ESOL students' cultural capital. Even well-meaning teachers make the mistake of viewing English language learners as "deficient" or "needing to be fixed." This deficit model approach can be extremely detrimental to ESOL students. When this study's participant Lori emphasizes the importance of modifying content, she reveals a common misconception regarding ESOL students' prior knowledge. She states that "any student who learns differently or who has a different set of challenges needs modifications implemented. That kid is coming in behind, and at a disservice. They just don't know as much as the other students." While Lori's intentions are good, her underlying assumption is that what ESOL students bring to the table is irrelevant. Teachers must adequately assess the strengths and challenges of language learners with regard to English language acquisition and differences in background knowledge. In doing so, teachers keep social reproduction theory in mind and understand that all cultural capital should be valued and every choice we make in the classroom either encourages students to conform to the majority or to begin to value their own cultural capital.

Teachers are often unsure how to assess English language learners. Solano-Flores and Trumbull (2003) state that valid and equitable assessment of English language learners has been a concern for some time. The researchers propose test review, test

development, treatment of language as a source of measurement error, and dual language assessments. In the district in which the current research took place, assessments are given only in English. To ensure consistency of testing language and instructional language, English is the recommended language of instruction. While some participants believe translating material into the student's native language will always be helpful, the majority of the ESOL students in our district do not have first language literacy. Alternative assessment strategies, such as portfolios and projects, would allow ESOL students to demonstrate what they know without being constrained by rigid parameters of testing data.

Resources

In addition to instructional strategies, teacher training must provide classroom teachers access to resources. Teachers must be made aware of available resources, informed of procurement processes, and taught how to use the resources in the classroom. Technological resources such as websites, software, and textbook support systems must be accessed. Chen (1999) explored culturally diverse students' perceptions of computer-based collaboration tools for instruction and found that cultural minority students had an easier time expressing themselves online than in the classroom. Technological resources must extend beyond reference support and must be woven into daily instruction.

Human resources provide tremendous support for instruction and affirmation of cultural capital. While mainstream classroom teachers have access to an ESOL teacher, much work needs to be done to ensure the ESOL teacher's services are maximized. Every effort must be made to elicit the support of ESOL students' parents both as a

cultural resource and as an educational advocate in the home. Peterson and Ladky (2007) explored Canadian teachers' challenges and practices regarding immigrant parents' support for their children's literacy. Results showed that teachers encouraged parents to read to their children in their home language, but must be made to understand the expanded role of parents as co-teachers at home. Results also showed that teachers must increase their understanding of parents' perceptions of authority and the impact of first language acquisition on children's English literacy.

Teachers must be taught how to best utilize the services of interpreters and translators. In our district, the primary use of interpreters and translators is for communication with parents. Fradd and Lee (1995) state that parents possess a powerful influence for articulating expectations for academic achievement and this is often eliminated when families are unable to communicate expectations or to contribute substantially to the academic process. While teachers tend to rely on electronic translators or translation websites, teachers must be advised that these approaches are not always effective. Because English is replete with idioms, translators and translation websites often mistranslate documents. Further, many parents of ESOL students in this district have limited schooling and limited literacy in their native language. Fostering connections between mainstream teachers and interpreters allows teachers to give information to an interpreter and the interpreter can then contact the family by phone or in person. Interpreters can also help the teacher understand a student's needs. One participant remarked

It's hard figuring out what they need. I only speak English. I couldn't figure out what my Chinese kid needed at first. I knew there was no hope for me learning the language, so I didn't have a way to understand what he already knew, what he got in China.

Navigating Culture and Bilingualism

Participants in this study enthusiastically expressed the desire to better understand ESOL students' culture and how that impacts learning. Understanding culture allows teachers to foster smooth relationships with ESOL students' families and situate students' background knowledge within a cultural context. Understanding cultural heritage often allows teachers to view a student's first language as cultural capital and not as a hindrance to learning English. When bilingualism, biculturalism, and biliteracy are valued, teachers have higher expectations for students. Johnson (2000) determined that beliefs about the value of a student's native language influenced the type of expectations held for students. For example, a higher valorization of Spanish reduced the perceptions that maintaining Spanish would be a hindrance to learning English. Martin (1999) examined the perception of bilingualism as a problem and determined that teachers of linguistically diverse learners must work with parents and build on existing knowledge and experiences.

Teachers must also understand the impact of first language literacy on second language acquisition. The relationship between language and culture has been in the literature for some time. Tedick and Walker (1995) noted a shift in second-language teacher education and stressed the importance of considering the interdependence

between first and second languages and cultures and connecting language and culture in second language instruction. Barse and Jong (2008) conducted a study of secondary students' perceptions of a Spanish–English two-way immersion program and showed a link between language and identity. Spanish was valued for its connection to families and roots and Anglo students regarded bilingualism as important capital for job opportunities.

Finally, teachers would benefit from learning how to incorporate a student's heritage and culture in the classroom. For example, Vreeland (1998) presents a middle school family tree project where non-English speaking students compiled genealogical trees, oral narratives, letters, folktales and superstitions, recipes, photographs and then presented the projects to parents and classmates. As a result, students improved research and communication skills and impacted the cultural perceptions of their classmates.

Challenges in School

Teachers need training to understand and begin to address the challenges faced by ESOL students. While English language acquisition is a tremendous challenge, the complexities of navigating school and peer culture frame students' perceptions and impact learning English and affect the degree to which ESOL students are able to access course content. McLaughlin, Liljestrom, and Lim (2002) studied the educational experiences of immigrant Latin American ESOL students and the impact of communication between teachers, students, and parents. Results showed that because ESOL students are familiar with a different classroom culture, they are often confused about how to relate to and interact with teachers and other students in class. LeClair,

Doll, Osborn, and Jones (2009) studied English language learners' and non-English language learners' perceptions of the classroom environment and found English language learners rated themselves significantly lower in academic efficacy and rated their classmates as more likely to follow class rules compared to the ratings of non-ELL students.

Teachers must also be made aware of the challenges faced by undocumented students. In this district, 60% of ESOL students were born in the United States, thereby having United States citizenship. Because the district does not maintain records regarding citizenship status, it is unclear what percentage of the remaining 40% is undocumented. While it is not necessary for teachers to have student-specific information, it is necessary for teachers to be trained regarding the obstacles students face when undocumented, such as pursuing higher education and seeking employment.

Immersion in Diverse Communities

Participants in this study generally felt that interaction with diverse populations informed their cross-cultural understanding and this, in turn, impacted their classroom instruction. Three studies attest to the value of immersion experiences. Willard-Holt (2001) studied a training program for preservice teachers centered upon a one-week immersion experience in Mexico. This cross-cultural experience included an opportunity to teach in a bilingual school and tour cultural and historical sites. Through pre- and post-questionnaires as well as follow-up after one year, teachers reported continued impact on their teaching as well as personal lives. Langer, Escamilla, and Aragon (2010) studied a program for preservice teachers at the University of Colorado designed to

change attitudes and impact teaching strategies for Mexican American students. For two weeks, teachers lived and taught in Puebla, Mexico, teaching and observing in elementary schools and participating in daily life. Although pre- and post-surveys did not show a shift regarding attitudes toward Mexicans and Mexican Americans, changes in perceptions of teaching strategies were significant. Results indicate short-term programs may impact classroom instructional strategies and this may have a positive impact on English language learners. Almarza (2005) conducted a two-year long study that investigated the impact of an immersion course that examined preservice teachers' negative and preconceived notions about linguistically and culturally diverse students. White female preservice teachers shadowed students for a semester and then reflected on the experience. Participants reported positive effects on multicultural perceptions.

While it would be difficult to structure immersion experiences for in-service teachers, teachers in this study did indicate that experience with ESOL students changed their perceptions of ESOL students and impacted their approach to instruction. At the district level, in-service teachers would benefit from opportunities to shadow ESOL teachers and ESOL students in high population districts and then meet as a learning community to discuss their experiences and impressions.

Implications for Future Research

Four potential future studies spring from this research and from the review of the literature. This research necessitates longitudinal data involving the same set of interview participants. As the ESOL population in this district continues to increase, future research should include an exploration of teachers' perceptions of ESOL students

after long-term immersion with ESOL students. Part of this research should include an exploration of the differences between data gathered from survey participants and data gathered from interview participants in this study. Data gathered from interview participants was much more positive and optimistic than data gathered from survey participants. Data gathered from survey participants might be a more realistic reflection of mainstream teachers' perceptions due to the larger number of participants, or survey participants, due to anonymity, might have felt a greater degree of candor. Because interview participants were self-selected, they might very well have held more positive perceptions of ESOL students and teaching ESOL students than many of their colleagues.

Future research should explore how mainstream teachers' perceptions and expectations of ESOL students impact actual student achievement. A larger study would include teachers' perceptions and student academic data garnered from observations, assessment results, and portfolios.

Lee, Penfield, and Buxton (2011) state that there exist myriad instructional approaches to integrate academic content and English language instruction. Their research was part of a five-year project aimed at improving science and literacy achievement of ELL students in a large urban district. Third grade teachers in six schools were provided curriculum units and professional development. Writing prompts, administered at the beginning and end of each school year, required students to explain science concepts. Results showed students with greater English proficiency learned science content and developed English literacy simultaneously, but students with lower English proficiency did not show this simultaneous growth to the same degree. Future

research should investigate best practices to facilitate English language acquisition through content instruction, particularly for lower English proficiency students.

In this study, participants' perceptions of ESOL students' behavior and work ethic were quite favorable. One participant remarked that Asian students seem to do better in school than Hispanic students, thereby highlighting concepts of a model minority. Future research should further explore teachers' perceptions of different groups of immigrants and whether or not those perceptions impact student performance. Ogbu (1996), through cultural ecological theory, and Gibson (1996), in structural inequalities theory, state that cultural differences are not the decisive factors that impact school performance, rather, a class-based society, subordinate minority groups, and involuntary immigration versus voluntary immigration impact navigation of educational systems and tendencies toward conformity.

Limitations of the Study

The descriptive data and quantifiable data in this study represent the thoughts, impressions, and opinions of 7 high school teachers as a cohesive set as well as part of a 50-member group of colleagues. My role as an ESOL teacher/trainer may have had some impact on participants' candor, although steps were taken to reduce any impact. Full disclosure meant that my participants understood my professional role in the district and how I intended to use the data. These very conditions may have impacted data collection and analysis.

It is not the intent of this study to apply these data to other populations, nor is it the intent of this study to suggest sweeping policy reform. Information and insight

gathered in this study are best used to guide local training, suggest classroom support that would perhaps be beneficial to classroom teachers, and offer some insight into why classroom teachers act and react in certain ways. This study has inherent limitations. The small number of participants impacts external generalizability. The views of my small participant set are not necessarily representative of a larger or different group. Although my participants were purposefully selected and the researcher has every reason to believe that data are valid, there is no guarantee that the data extends to the greater whole.

While every effort was made to analyze data objectively and mitigate researcher bias, it is important to remember that the researcher is working through her own lens at each step of the investigation. The researcher selected the participants, the researcher devised the line of questioning, the researcher determined how data was to be coded, and the researcher synthesized meaning from the data. While results might very well inform local training needs and contribute to the body of research that will inform future studies, it is important to remember that this study reflects this particular time and place. It is hoped that this work provides new insights into the perceptions of high school mainstream teachers and these insights will support English language learners as they navigate language and culture in high school classrooms.

APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Dear Christine,

The HSRB has approved your protocol #6668 entitled “Exploring Mainstream Teachers' Perceptions of ESOL Students.” A copy of the consent forms approved for use in conducting this research will be included with the approval letter that is being sent to you today. You should not begin your data collection before receiving these documents. The consent forms have been stamped by the Human Subjects Review Board and are the ones that should be used to conduct your research. A copy will be sent to Dr. Sturtevant as well.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Karen
Office of Research Subject Protections

APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM: SURVEY

Informed Consent Form: Survey

Exploring High School Mainstream Teachers' Perceptions of ESOL Students

Purpose of Research: This research is being conducted to determine how mainstream classroom teachers perceive ESOL students and the needs of ESOL students.

Research Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey. It should take between 15 and 30 minutes to complete the survey. Your survey data can then be used in my dissertation. All surveys remain confidential. If you would like to participate further in this study, you will be asked to participate in two interviews which will take place at another time.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks.

Benefits: There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in understanding how mainstream teachers perceive ESOL students.

Confidentiality: The data in this study will be confidential. Neither your name nor any identifying characteristics will appear on any collected data. The survey is a separate document from the consent form. The two will not be linked. The completed survey will be collected separately from the signed consent form.

Participation: Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

Contact: This research is being conducted by Christine Goldstein, College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Christine Goldstein may be reached at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or at xxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx. You may also contact Dr. Elizabeth Sturtevant, College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Dr. Sturtevant may be reached at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or at xxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx.

You may also contact the George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at (703) 993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as

a participant in this research. This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

Consent: I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C. INFORMED CONSENT FORM: INTERVIEWS

Informed Consent Form: Interviews

Exploring High School Mainstream Teachers' Perceptions of ESOL Students

Purpose of Research: This research is being conducted to determine how mainstream classroom teachers perceive ESOL students and the needs of ESOL students.

Research Procedures: Participants will take part in two 30-minute interviews. Participants will choose the venue of the interviews. Interviews will be audio recorded. The purpose of the first interview is to gather the first round of data. All participants will be asked the same set of questions. The purpose of the second interview is to ask follow-up questions that will arise after data from the first round of interviews is analyzed and explored in the literature.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks.

Benefits: There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in understanding how mainstream teachers perceive ESOL students. This research might also be used to develop and implement ESOL professional development sessions.

Confidentiality: The data in this study will be kept confidential. Neither your name nor any identifying characteristics will appear on any collected data. You will be assigned a pseudonym and this pseudonym will be placed on collected data. Only the researcher will be able to link your pseudonym to your identity. All audiotapes and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet. Only the researcher will have access to this data.

Participation: Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party. At the end of the second interview, each participant will receive a \$25.00 gift card as a gesture of thanks and appreciation.

Contact: This research is being conducted by Christine Goldstein, College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Christine Goldstein may be reached at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or at xxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx. You may also contact Dr. Elizabeth Sturtevant, College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Dr. Sturtevant may be reached at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or at xxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx.

You may also contact the George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at (703) 993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in this research. This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

Consent: I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D. SURVEY

Informational Survey

Thank you for taking the time to answer the following questions. Please circle one number for each question. The data will be used to learn more about teachers' perceptions of the needs of ESOL students. Information gathered will help meet the instructional needs of classroom teachers and the learning needs of ESOL students. You are invited, if you like, to elaborate on the lines provided. Please sign the Informed Consent Form so that I can use any data you provide here. Consent forms will be kept separate from surveys to ensure anonymity. Thank you!

1. I have adequate training to address the needs of ESOL students.
(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

2. Teachers in general have adequate training to address the needs of ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

3. I have adequate experience teaching ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts (if yes, how much experience?) _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

4. Teachers in general have adequate experience teaching ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

5. Teachers in general have the resources needed to address the needs of ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

6. I have the resources needed to address the needs of ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

7. I have a good understanding of the background of most ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

8. Teachers in general have a good understanding of the background of most ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

9. I feel I am able to adequately assess the strengths and challenges of ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

10. ESOL students should have classroom content modified to meet their needs.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

11. Alternative assessments (such as portfolios, limited multiple choice options, or open book/notes) should be available for ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

12. Teachers should understand an ESOL student's culture and how that culture impacts the ways in which the student navigates course content and classroom procedures.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

13. I have a considerable amount of experience with non-English speakers outside of the school setting.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

14. ESOL students benefit from maintaining their home language.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

15. Mainstream students benefit from having ESOL students in their mainstream classrooms.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

16. ESOL students should be taught in a setting separate from mainstream students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

17. ESOL students should be taught using the same methodologies as mainstream students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

18. Schools should be allowed to examine the legal status of students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

19. Most ESOL students are not United States citizens.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

20. I am able to comply with state policies and practices regarding the teaching of ESOL students.

(no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

More thoughts... _____

_____ (you may continue on the back of this sheet)

Please supply the following demographic data (data is used for analysis only):

I am (circle one) male / female.

I have been teaching for _____ years.

My current content area is _____.

APPENDIX E. REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE FORM

Invitation to Participate

My name is Christine Goldstein and I am an ESOL teacher in Xxxxxx County. Although I do not teach at Xxxxxx HS this year, I have taught ESOL students here in the past.

I am working on my Ph.D. at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA and I am beginning to collect dissertation data. My dissertation is titled *Exploring High School Mainstream Teachers' Perceptions of ESOL Students*.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. If you would like to participate further in this study, please provide your contact information.

This study consists of two 30-minute interviews. Participants may choose where they would like to be interviewed. Interviews will be audiotaped.

Each participant will receive a \$25.00 gift certificate to Border's Bookstore.

Please check one:

- Yes, I would like to participate.
 I am interested in participating, but would like more information.
 No, I am not interested in participating.

Name: _____

Phone Number and/or Email: _____

Subject(s) Taught: _____

Number of Years Teaching: _____

Teaching Experience: _____

APPENDIX F. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – ROUND ONE

Guiding Questions for Participant Interviews

Exploring High School Mainstream Teachers' Perceptions of ESOL Students

Teaching History

- How long have you been teaching? How long have you been teaching at this school?
- Have you taught elsewhere? For how long? How have your experiences influenced classroom practice?
- What motivated you to become a teacher?

Educational Training History

- Tell me about your coursework. Have you had ESOL coursework?
- If you have had ESOL coursework, please tell me about your training. Were the classes valuable? What were the most important things learned? Could those courses be changed/modified to better meet your needs?
- If you haven't had ESOL coursework, how might ESOL coursework help you with regard to teaching ESOL students?
- Have you attended any in-services or professional development sessions designed to help classroom teachers teach ESOL students?

ESOL Students in the Classroom

- Do you feel you have a good understanding of the background of most ESOL students?

- How do you feel about modifying class work for an ESOL student who is struggling with English? Are there challenges to modifying class work? Equity issues? Do you feel most teachers would agree or disagree?
- How do you feel about modifying assessments for an ESOL student who is struggling with English? Are there challenges to modifying assessments? Equity issues? Do you feel most teachers would agree or disagree?
- Do you/would you find it challenging to determine the learning and/or language needs of ESOL students?

Personal Interactions with ESOL Students

- Have you had ESOL students in any of your classes? Please tell me about those experiences.
- What are some benefits to having ESOL students in your classroom? What are some challenges to having ESOL students in your classroom?
- Should ESOL students be in separate classes?

Cultural Interactions Outside the Classroom

- Tell me about your travels. Have you travelled within the United States (where)? Have you travelled outside the United States (where)?
- What type of travel do you prefer (vacations, mission work, relief/aid)?
- Have you interacted with non-English speakers? Please describe the setting.
- What were the challenges/rewards of these interactions?

Political Status of ESOL Students

- At present, it is illegal for schools to request proof of legal residence in the United States before enrolling students. What are your thoughts?
- How would compliance with state policies and practices regarding the teaching of ESOL students impact your classroom on a daily basis?

APPENDIX G. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – ROUND TWO

Guiding Questions for Participant Interviews – Round Two

- A large percentage of teachers are White, monolingual, middle-class, and female. Would ESOL students do better with a more diverse instructional staff? Why/Why not?
- Think about your perceptions of ESOL students before you had ESOL students in your class and after you had ESOL students in your class. What would you say is the greatest change in your perception of ESOL students?
- We've talked at length about differentiation and modification. Can you think of specific things you've done to make content accessible for ESOL students?
- If you could design the most valuable ESOL in-service or ESOL workshop to meet your needs, what kinds of things would you want to learn?
- Many people say that English language learners should relinquish their heritage language so as to more rapidly/efficiently learn English. Do you think that maintenance of the heritage language is a hindrance to learning English? Would there be ways in which maintenance of the heritage language would be considered an asset?
- Other than the language barrier, what do you think are some reasons why English language learners might struggle in school?

Appendix H. Summary of Findings: Interviews, Round One

Theme One: “Experiences influence classroom practice and perceptions of ESOL students.”

Adam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • credits his former teachers for showing him that each student is an individual • says his understanding of teenagers enables him to better work with diversity
Dan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first considered issues of diversity when teaching in private schools • believes teaching in different settings taught him to consider each student’s individual needs.
Greg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching in Africa taught him how to make content accessible • cultural immersion fueled his drive to motivate all students • relates new content to what students already know
Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposure to ESOL students with strong English skills prepared her for an ESOL student with limited English skills.
Lori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching at a school with a high ESOL population encouraged her to modify vocabulary for ESOL students • learned to modify content to adjust for cultural differences
Muriel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struggled to become academically successful in English • empathizes with the struggles of ESOL students • bridges cultural understanding between students of different backgrounds • assists other teachers with new understandings of ESOL students • believes each instructional setting is unique and each learner is unique • personal immigration experience informs classroom interactions
Rob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mother taught him to have patience with language learners • smoothes classroom transitions for newcomers • experience as a wilderness survival teacher taught him that every student can learn, students learn at different rates, and pathways to motivation vary

Theme Two: “Teachers felt a strong desire and need for ESOL training.”

Adam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has had no college coursework dedicated to ESOL • site-based trainings have been very helpful
Dan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would have preferred coursework over trial and error • site-based training helpful because it was student-specific • cultural barriers and can be more of a hindrance than language barriers
Greg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frustrated by inability to help students with English skills • recognizes the impact/need for strong vocabulary skills • recognizes usefulness of kinesthetic lessons for ESOL students • would like to learn how to improve a student’s English through content discussion. • would like training regarding non-verbal communication
Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assumes ESOL students have literacy skills in their first language • has had no college coursework dedicated to ESOL • feels she is “running blind” when trying to meet the needs of ESOL students • admits to being frustrated by what she does not know about ESOL instruction • feels the pressures of teacher accountability add to her frustration • wants more cultural training and insight into how content is taught in other countries • wants a stronger connection with the ESOL teacher
Lori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believes translated material meets literacy needs • has worked in areas with high ESOL populations, but has little formal training • has had brief cross-cultural training, but admits much more is needed for effective instruction • would like to develop the skills to be more autonomous in planning for ESOL students • values an effective working relationship with the ESOL teacher
Muriel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possesses a broad and deep understanding of ESOL best practices and of language learners
Rob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has had no college coursework dedicated to ESOL • believes speaking the student’s language is the best way to help • sought out and procured resource materials from a district with a high ESOL population.

Theme Three: “Challenges exist with regard to identifying the needs of language learners, determining appropriate modifications, and implementing interventions.”

Adam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modifies for ESOL students as well as for other students • scaffolds instruction to meet language learner needs • demonstrates comfort in modifying assessments for ESOL students • unsure if what he is doing “is right” • feels his discussion-based instructional approach poses language challenges for ESOL students
Dan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concerned his cross-cultural understanding borders on stereotyping • feels a student’s affective filter can pose instructional challenges • feels vocabulary-laden mathematics can be a challenge for ESOL students
Greg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frustrated by his lack of understanding of a student’s background • wants to learn more about students’ language needs and how to address them • struggles to understand how to make meaningful modifications • struggles to modify for ESOL students without “watering down” mainstream work
Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frustrated by inability to communicate with some ESOL students • distressed by not feeling “connected” to her ESOL students • frustrated by not being able to communicate with ESOL students’ families • feels her colleagues struggle to understand what needs to be modified • comfortable with differentiated instruction • believes assessment modification is critical because summative assessments outweigh coursework • feels some colleagues unable or unwilling to provide modifications
Lori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feels teachers should be open to modifying for all students • would have liked broad information regarding country and culture of ESOL students • states ESOL students do not know as much as their mainstream peers
Muriel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feels confident identifying the needs of language learners, determining appropriate modifications, and implementing interventions • frustrated with colleagues who appear to be unwilling or unable to meet the needs of ESOL students.
Rob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frustrated by the language barrier because it hinders his ability to access what his students know and do not know • believes a teacher’s job is to give each student what they need • feels his colleagues tend to have unreasonable expectations regarding ESOL students’ rates of language acquisition

Theme Four: “ESOL students afford particular benefits to mainstream students, classroom teachers, and to the classroom environment.”

Adam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESOL students expose mainstream students to different ways of thinking and interacting
Dan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream students at the research site are sheltered from peer diversity • a diverse student body provides consistent, continual diversity • local students are unsure how to react to and interact with diversity • ESOL students sometimes set the academic and behavioral bar for mainstream students • mainstream students develop empathy for ESOL students’ “plights” • ESOL modifications and differentiated instructional practices often benefit the whole class
Greg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream students benefit from diversity in the classroom
Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity fosters cross-cultural exchange
Lori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports that she learned a lot about Mexican art through her students • says her ESOL students have rarely been discipline problems • ESOL kids seem to move beyond the language barriers and complete homework
Muriel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESOL students, particularly in the early grades, are eager to learn
Rob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conversations about terminology lead to cultural exchange • students form close personal relationships leading to cross-cultural understanding

Theme Five: “Interaction with culturally diverse populations impacts perceptions of ‘otherness.’”

Adam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interaction with a Korean family impacted his perception of teacher status • interacted with employees from Latin American countries while a restaurant manager • father assisted some employees with IRS concerns • believes personal connections informed his view of “otherness”
Dan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travel abroad put him on the other side of the language barrier • considers that non-verbal miscommunication might impede understanding
Greg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Africa allowed him to “start thinking from someone else’s perspective” • Peace Corps service allowed him to develop empathy for the challenges of language acquisition • local experiences outside the language remind him how our ESOL students work to navigate our language
Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extensive travel enables her to bring a broader world view to her students • extensive travel enables her to bring a wider range of realia to her teaching

Lori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • says her personal friendships are diverse in nature • has maintained lasting friendships with foreign exchange students • was immersed in the deaf community while dating a deaf person
Muriel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vast experience as a cultural outsider • believes a person’s experiences impact how they perceive “otherness” • believes if one expects patience, one should be patient with others
Rob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recent travel outside the United States proved to be a source of culture shock • interacting with the local Chinese community provided new insights into language

Theme Six: “Perceptions of ESOL students’ legal status, understandings of legal compliance, and perspectives on immigration impact classroom decisions.”

Adam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feels some colleagues are reluctant to meet compliance expectations
Dan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feels teachers should be accustomed to compliance issues after years of special education compliance • schools should not request proof of legal status for enrollment • believes citizenship should be the goal for all immigrants • believes many immigrants come here for economic reasons • does not want to pry into a person’s family, economic status, or immigration status
Greg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believes when teachers are legally bound to provide modifications, they must do so • says teachers are accountable for student learning, and modifying instruction allows students to learn • feels he would benefit from someone qualified to help him make modifications • determining legal status is not the school’s job, but a job for an “outside agency”
Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers who do not modify for ESOL students or for students with IEPs should be fired • believes some colleagues are stubborn and some lack empathy • believes some colleagues are unaware of expectations regarding ESOL students • unsure of teachers’ role regarding issues of legal status • felt it was her responsibility to inform the school office of a student’s legal status • feels schools have no need for information regarding a student’s legal status • helping immigrants become legal would allow them to access many services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believes ESOL students are “much more likely not to be legal.” • believes ESOL students who are here illegally detract from ESOL services for students who are here legally
Lori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would not want to see friends deported • wants immigrants to be legal and pay taxes • resents tax dollars being spent on people who do not pay taxes • resents scholarships to send undocumented children to college
Muriel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feels it has always been her vocation to teach • feels political issues are “not her fight” • feels it is her responsibility to teach all students in her class
Rob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believes teachers sometimes do not have enough information to understand how to be in compliance • feels frustrated by people he believes are taking advantage of economic situations • believes those who are undocumented should be provided a path to citizenship

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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