ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

Ashley Kimball

Under the Supervision of Dr. Edina Haslauer

Statement of the Problem

The rising ELL population throughout the United States raises the following question: Are mainstream teachers prepared to meet the unique needs of the ELL population in our schools? This study will examine mainstream teachers' competencies regarding second language acquisition theories and ELL teaching methods in a small, rural, midwestern district.

Methods and Procedures

This project involved literature reviews of the history of ELLs in the United States, second language acquisition theories, and teaching methods for ELLs. Mainstream teachers then completed a survey based on second language acquisition theory and ELL teaching methods. Finally, the project included ten classroom observations of mainstream teachers of ELLs by the researcher.

Summary of Results

The results of the research revealed that teachers in this district are lacking knowledge of best practices in educating ELLs in mainstream classrooms. A conclusion drawn from the results revealed that teachers from this small, rural, midwestern school could benefit from professional development in second language acquisition theory and teaching methods of ELLs. Recommendations for further study include administering the survey to all mainstream teachers in this district as well as longer observations in mainstream classrooms in order to gain a deeper understanding of daily interactions between teachers and ELL students in the mainstream classroom.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The rising ELL population throughout the United States raises the question of how can we best prepare our mainstream teachers to better meet the needs of the ELL population in our schools. This study will examine mainstream teachers' competencies regarding second language acquisition theories and methods in a small, rural, midwestern town. This school's ELL population consists of 51 students or 7% of the total student population.

Since each ELL student comes with various needs, it is important that teachers are equipped with diverse, research based, methods and strategies to best serve each individual student. In a world of increasing demands on mainstream teachers, this study will be conducted with the intention of identifying areas where the mainstream teachers from this particular small, rural, midwestern town, can enhance their skill set to properly prepare them to meet the needs of the growing ELL population.

Purpose of the Study

Over the last decade, the number of ELL (English Language Learners) has grown from 4.1 million to over 4.9 million (NCES, 2012). By 2013, ELLs accounted for 8.5% of the US population over the age of five, and between 1990 and 2013, the number of ELLs in the US grew by 80% (Migration Policy Institute, 2017; as cited in NCES, 2012). The majority of these ELL students are placed in mainstream classrooms for at least part of their school day and are expected to learn the same academic material as their native English-speaking peers.

Mainstream classroom teachers are not only expected to teach classroom content, but also language instruction, in which they do not have sufficient training/professional development. In a 2002 report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 42% of teachers surveyed answered that they taught ELLs in their classroom, but only 12.5% of these teaching

professionals had logged more than 8 hours of training specifically related to ELLs. The Education Commission of the States (ECS; 2017) federal law requires that schools provide research-based professional development to any teachers, administrators, and staff who work with ELLs. The training must focus on methods for working with ELLs and occur frequently enough to have a positive impact on the ELL students. According to a Research Brief by Murphey, PhD, the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students, is about 40 percentage points in both fourth-grade reading, and eighth-grade math has been basically remained unchanged from 2000 to 2013. These numbers support data that mainstream teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of ELLs in regular education classrooms.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to use the data collected in order to determine if mainstream teachers in this rural, midwestern school are meeting the needs of English Language Learners in regular education classrooms. This study will help reveal if best practices, based on methods and theories that I have researched, are currently used by mainstream teachers for ELLs. The results of this data will enable this researcher to provide training of effective ELL teaching strategies for mainstream teachers by providing professional development in this rural school district located in a midwestern community in the areas of culture, research-based language acquisition theory, and instruction in effective teaching methods for ELLs.

Currently, ELL students are mainstreamed in the classroom. An article by Jong and Harper (2005) stated that teaching ELLs is much more than the pedagogical adaptations found in Just Good Teaching (JGT). Unfortunately, when teachers rely on JGT for ELL students, they fail to notice language learning differences that impact academic achievement of ELLs. It is important for teachers to have a basic understanding first-language (L1) and second-language

(L2) development in order to best meet the diverse language needs of ELLs. In addition, JGT falls short in meeting the cultural needs of ELLs. Without considering the ELLs language development and culture in teaching, the ELL student is not granted the same learning opportunity as students who are native speakers and share a common culture. In order to improve teacher effectiveness with ELLs, the Center for American progress aims to identify essential skills that can be purposefully integrated into teacher development programs and initiatives (Samsung & Collins, 2012).

The 80% increase in the United States' ELL population over the last 30 years has initiated some changes in education standards, but not necessarily in teacher competency. For example, according to the Education Commission of the States (2014), the state of Wisconsin has teacher standards to earn an ELL instruction license. However, it does not require all mainstream teachers, who will likely teach ELLs in their classroom, to demonstrate competency in ELL instruction, nor does the state of Wisconsin offer incentives to earn a license in English as a Second Language and/or endorsement. In 2016, 32 states reported not having enough teachers for ELL students, with Wisconsin reporting a shortage every year for the last 20 years (US department of Education, 2016). As the ELL population grows in schools, educators are not adequately preparing mainstream teachers to meet the needs of the ELL population, nor giving them sufficient ELL teacher support in the classroom.

Assumptions

In this study, the following assumptions were made: The mainstream classroom teachers chosen would be truthful in their survey responses; Teachers would perform in an honest, professional manner with their ELLs as they do in their daily routine; In addition, the data may

not be completely comprehensive due to the time restrictions and the small pool of mainstream teachers of ELLs observed. Nonetheless, the assumption can still support that there is sufficient data to offer professional development in areas that may improve education of ELLs.

Delimitation of the Study

This researcher is providing some delimitations from this study in order to provide a more comprehensive view of this study. One delimitation was that only teachers of students who have not tested out of the ELL program were observed. The pool was small. Due to time restrictions to complete the project, 10 classroom observations were completed. Additional observation time would be necessary in order to gain a more comprehensive conclusion of day-to-day methods being utilized in the classrooms of mainstream teachers in this small, rural, midwestern school district. Due to time restraints, individual interviews with participants were not conducted. Interviews with the teachers observed may have assisted in clarifying areas in which ELL teaching methods had previously occurred, but were not observed on the days this researcher was in the classroom. Some of the ELL teaching methods are difficult to observe in only one or two class periods. These methods may have been utilized earlier, or will be utilized later in the classroom. However, this researcher was unable to observe these additional variables in such a short time. On the survey, the choice *neutral* was not clear to the teacher completing the survey, nor this researcher, when reviewing the survey as to what the term *neutral* signified. Considering these delimitations, methods still allowed this researcher to gather sufficient data in order to provide future professional development that may prove beneficial for mainstream teachers in this small, rural, midwestern school district.

Methodology

In order to complete this seminar paper, a short review of the history of the education of ELLs in the United States will be conducted. Additionally, a literature review about second language acquisition theory will be examined. A survey on best practices and teaching methods of ELLs in the mainstream classroom will be completed by mainstream teachers. Classroom observations will also be conducted. The current knowledge of mainstream educators in this rural, midwestern school will be measured based on the survey and observations. The results will be used to conclude if mainstream teachers in this district are knowledgeable in second language acquisition, as well as best practices and teaching methods for ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Second Language Acquisition Theory

Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell (1983) identified five stages of second language acquisition, for both academic and social language. The amount of time an ELL student spends at each level can vary from a few days to a year, and because of the complex nature of language, both academic and social, these stages can also overlap. Understanding of these stages will help enable mainstream teachers to better meet the individual needs of the ELLs in their classroom.

The first stage identified is the “Pre-Production” or “Silent Period.” There is no set time for this stage to occur, as each individual, and the circumstances surrounding that individual's learning environment, are unique cases. As stated in the name, this is when students are silent and are absorbing the language around them. Communication in this stage is mostly non-verbal or one-word “yes” or “no” responses. Some examples of prompts that teachers may use during this time are: “is this…,” “show me…,” “who has…,” and “where is the…” A comparison could

be made to a parent talking to a young toddler who has receptive language skills, but lacks the linguistic skills to be able to respond. However, it is important to remember that this ELL is not a toddler and comes with a whole world of abilities and experiences in her/his native language.

It is an important reminder for mainstream teachers that comprehension precedes production in both social and academic language (Berg, Petron, & Greybeck, 2012). While ELL students may not be able to respond, they may be cognitively aware of what is being said and are simply unable to answer at that point in their language journey. Time and patience are key in this stage. Often, because there is a range of time that learners may spend in this stage, teachers and parents can become frustrated during this time, feeling as though their student/child is not making any progress in their new language when, in reality, s/he is simply going through the silent period.

The second stage is known as "Early Production" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Students in this phase continue to build upon the inferences they constructed during the Silent Period, but they will begin to communicate verbally with short phrases. Some useful questioning techniques for this stage are: yes or no, either/or, who, what, and how many (Hill & Flynn, 2008). According to an article by Concordia University (2012), a learner in this stage typically acquires about 1,000 words. It is common for ELLs to make many grammatical errors during this stage, which may last up to six months, but communication should be celebrated rather than corrected.

After the Early Production, "Speech Emergence" develops, in which the learner acquires about 3,000 words and begins to read and write in her/his new language (Concordia, 2012; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Students are still thinking in their native language during this stage. According to Hill and Bijork (2008), students in this stage have good comprehension, can produce simple sentences, but still make grammatical mistakes. They believe that during the

stage of Speech Emergence, students should be asked to answer questions that require a short-sentence response. Since ELL students in this stage can handle the "why" and "how" questions along with short explanations or short phrases, it is acceptable to occasionally ask these students questions requiring a multiple-sentence response. However, it is not acceptable to ask them questions requiring pointing or a one-word response. These responses will not assist ELLs in gaining proficiency towards stage four: "Intermediate Fluency."

During the "Intermediate Fluency" stage, which may last a year or more, ELLs acquire about 6,000 words (Concordia, 2012; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). During this stage, students transition into thinking in their new language and create more complex sentences in their writing and speech. Students in this stage now begin to think in English and are able to ask for more clarification on academic tasks. Conversational English may be strong at this point, but mainstream teachers need to know that ELLs are only beginning to understand the academic language used in their classroom.

The fifth and final stage is "Advanced Fluency." At this stage, students have achieved near native fluency, although idioms can still prove to be challenging (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). In the mainstream classroom, there should be a shift towards building academic language. Mainstream teachers should remember that students have gained more independence in reading and writing and should be challenged to foster growth in those areas. For example, mainstream teachers could incorporate this by having students retell main plots of stories or explain a concept and leave out insignificant details.

When reviewing literature related to ELLs and second language acquisition, there are key components based in theory that ELLs continue to share across the board. A common connection between different pieces of literature often refers to the Stephen Krashen Monitor

Model. Krashen, an expert in the field of linguistics who specializes in second language acquisition theory and development, combined his five hypotheses of second language acquisition into what is generally referred to as the Monitor Model (Krashen, 1983).

The first component of this model is the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis. In this hypothesis, Krashen describes two ways in which linguistic skills are developed: acquisition and learning. The acquisition process is very similar to how we acquire our first language in which the learner is unaware language acquisition is taking place. Acquisition is a subconscious process and requires the learner to have meaningful interaction, in which learning is a conscious process that uses rules and grammar. It is Krashen's belief that "learning" is less effective than acquisition because it is acquisition that enables the learners to store the information and to be able to use it in actual performance (Krashen, 1983). Although learning is believed to be less effective, its function is important as ELLs begins to monitor their language output.

The Monitor Hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning. Krashen (1982) stated that "acquisition is the sole initiator of all second-language utterances and is responsible for fluency, while learning (a conscious knowledge of the rules) can only function as an 'editor' or 'monitor' for the language output. The monitor can only operate when there is sufficient time, the focus in on form, and the language user knows the rule is being applied" (p. 10). There are different levels of monitoring, based on each ELL student's disposition and "learned" knowledge. Monitoring occurs just before output as an internal scanner, helping to guide the learner through their next utterance.

Another component of this theory is the Natural Order Hypothesis. This states that language is not learned, but acquired in a natural, predictable order and is tied to the Input Hypothesis. While there is a predictable order, some students acquire their structures before

others. Krashen (2013) explained that while a rule may appear simple, such as the third person "-s" in English, it is actually acquired later than the progressive "-ing". In fact, some adults who speak English as a Second language still haven't acquired this rule (Krashen, 2013). Simple rules are not necessarily acquired before a more complicated rule. In other words, there is not a logical order based on the simplicity of the rules. Some rules that appear simple, such as the third person example previously mentioned, will actually be acquired later, or never, depending on the person. This presents some issues teaching students based on a curriculum design that follows a simple to more complex grammar design. It is also important to remember that the natural order of a learner cannot be changed. No amount of drills, explanations, or exercises will change the learner's ability to acquire these skills sooner than when s/he is naturally ready.

The Input Hypothesis states that language is only acquired from input that is comprehensible (Krashen, 2013). For the learner, this is completed effortlessly. For learners to grow they must have comprehensible input that is just above their current level of understanding. If input is too far above their level, they will lose the chance to make connections. If it is too far below, the learner will remain at her/his current acquisition level. Language acquisition occurs when the learner understands the message conveyed, through either speech or written language, and can take the last rule s/he acquired and then subconsciously apply it when exposed to input just beyond her/his previous level. Acquisition at this stage is effortless and natural, and can be fostered in many ways. The key at this level is input. Students will acquire the structures they are ready for as long as the input is comprehensible and interesting. Language should not be presented by rules. Instead mainstream teachers should create instruction that is rich in spoken and written language at the appropriate level of the student (Krashen, 2013).

Finally, the Affective Filter Hypothesis explains how certain factors, such as environment or motivation, affect the learner (Krashen, 2013). It is closely tied to the Input Hypothesis, because if certain factors occur, the input is filtered out, making it is impossible for comprehensible input to occur. The goal for ELLs is to have a low affective filter, which will enable the learner to navigate her/his way through the language in a comfortable, low anxiety, setting. The part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), has to have input in the brain in order for acquisition to occur. While the learner may understand the input, factors such as low self-esteem, anxiety, or other circumstances can prevent the comprehensible input from reaching the LAD, inhibiting the learner from making progress (Krashen, 2013).

It is vital that teachers of ELLs recognize that there is a significant difference between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), or "social" language, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), or "academic" language (Valdes, 2001). According to Valdes (2001), over 30 years ago, Jim Cummins saw a need to create a distinction between a student's success in social language and their success in academic language. All too frequently, mainstream teachers assume that a student who functions well socially should be able to transfer those skills to their academic work. Different kinds of interaction, such as cooperative learning, is important to ELLs but will not necessarily result in language learning (Valdes, 2001). Academic language often requires explicit modeling and instructional focus. It is important that mainstream teachers provide structured opportunities in their curriculum for ELLs to negotiate meaning through academic language (Gibbons, 2002).

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential

development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). It refers to what refers to what a learner can do without help and what s/he can do with help. Scaffolding is a temporary framework that can be taken away when the learner secures the task. By breaking tasks into smaller, manageable pieces, it allows the student to focus on the content that s/he needs to learn. Mainstream teachers can scaffold for ELLs in a variety of ways: linking new information to what the ELL already knows through providing comprehensible input, pre-teaching vocabulary, using of graphic organizers, and using pre-constructed sentences.

Effective ELL Teaching Methods and Practices

ELLs come from many different backgrounds and abilities making background knowledge an important factor in ELL education. According to Velez (2008), there are a variety of actions that will help ELLs feel comfortable in the mainstream classroom. One suggestion is to learn the history of the ELL, her/his interests, special achievements, her/his academic abilities in her/his native language, and well as information about her/his culture and home life.

Velez (2008) stated that in order to create a steady education experience of the ELL, it is important to gain knowledge of the ELL's previous school experiences, both in the native country and in the United States. Creating a sense of belonging in the classroom is also important in teaching non-ELL students how to value other cultures and embrace diversity. Helping students discover similarities they have with ELL students and their families is another way to create connections in and out of the classroom.

The culture of each ELL is unique, and it is important for teachers to study the culture of an ELL in order to better understand behaviors displayed by ELLs in the classroom. Some cultures consider it rude to look adults in the eye. ELLs may hesitate to ask questions because in

their culture it is considered rude to question an adult. Even acknowledging an ELL's accomplishments publicly can cause embarrassment for her/him if that is not a practice in her/his culture. Parental involvement can also greatly impact the success an ELL experiences in the classroom. Awareness of these differences will enable mainstream teachers to involve parents whenever possible in order to help create a positive impact for the ELL. Mainstream teachers lacking awareness of these cultural differences may result in resistance from ELLs to use their new language (Velez, 2008).

It is important for teachers to remember that for language acquisition to occur, the learner must be exposed to language input that is just above the learner's current level. In the mainstream classroom, this can be fostered in many ways. The key is providing opportunities in which the learner can interact with peers in a meaningful way. Not only does fostering peer interaction present the opportunity for the ELL to receive input with a low-affective filter, it provides her/him with the opportunity to practice using the target language. Peer interaction allows time for the teacher to informally assess areas in which the ELL student may be struggling, and to fill in those gaps by incorporating additional support into future lessons (Velez, 2008).

Think-pair-share activities are an additional way to foster peer interaction (Velez, 2008). These activities allow ELLs the time needed to sort out their thoughts, which are often occurring in two languages, and to process answers. By the time the ELL is ready to answer, many times the teacher has moved on. It also gives the ELL an opportunity to speak in a low-anxiety situation. Often, teachers do not want the student to feel embarrassed so they avoid calling on ELL students. While teachers may think they are helping the student, this is actually a disservice to the English Language Learner, which may encourage her/him to create the habit of letting

others answer. Think-pair-share also gives the ELLs the opportunity to process their thoughts, hear what others think, and then offer an answer that is combined with another student in a less intimidating setting (Velez, 2008).

Mainstream teachers who have ELLs in their classroom should not shy away from creating a language rich environment by "watering down" their language. There are various methods a teacher can use in order to increase exposure to printed language such as regular access to books and reference materials, labels, posters, and bulletin boards. Word walls are a fantastic resource for ELLs and can be created around certain concepts such as the alphabet and phonetic sounds of English, new sight words, grammar rules, conversational practice, and writing structures. Other methods to assist teachers in creating a language rich environment may involve pre-teaching vocabulary and using graphic organizers. Graphic organizers are schematic visuals that assist students in grasping the concept both as a whole and as parts, and are a great way to supplement written or spoken words. Another tool that helps ELL students learn in an organized manner is outlines prepared by the teacher. For example, a T-Chart helps students examine two sides of a topic by creating two lists. These tools can assist mainstream teachers in advancing a language rich environment (Echevarria, 2007).

There are various ways to assess ELLs in the mainstream classroom who do not yet have the ability to produce the language necessary to pass regular assessments. Performance-based assessments, portfolio assessments, regular informal checks, and scaffolding assessments are just a few ways that an ELL can demonstrate knowledge without having to rely on her/his language skills. Projects, drawing, and graphic organizers are all useful tools to allow ELLs to show their abilities, rather than talk about them. It is also important to note that students should be assessed

in the language they are taught in, not their native language. When scoring the presentations, it is important to focus on content rather than the form.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Procedures

This study used both surveys and classroom observations to collect data from mainstream teachers to determine their knowledge of teaching methods and strategies for ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This researcher administered the ELL Knowledge Survey to the twenty-one participants.

Participants

The participants in this study were twenty-one mainstream teachers of ELLs in a small, rural, midwestern school district.

Instrumentation

Of the twenty-one participants, fourteen completed the survey. The survey consisted of eighteen research-based questions and was designed to elicit information about the participant's current knowledge of English Language Acquisition, knowledge of current ELL teaching methods, as well as a way to assess participants' experience with ELLs. Another purpose was to identify areas of instruction in which research-based strategies could be implemented in order to benefit the ELL population in this particular school district.

In addition to the survey, this researcher also completed ten classroom observations of mainstream teachers to learn if researched-based methods were being used in mainstream classes with ELLs. An observation guide was created based on two key concepts identified during the

literature review: language acquisition methods and classroom ELL teaching strategies. During the observations, this researcher recorded findings utilizing the methods on this key as a guide.

This researcher analyzed data from the survey multiple times in order to gain a clear vision of the data and provide feedback. Notes from the observations were reviewed numerous times and themes were identified by color coding common methods and strategies. The data collected from surveys and observations was analyzed to identify areas in which research-based methods and strategies could be implemented into mainstream classrooms by teachers in this rural, midwestern school district.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

Of the twenty-one mainstream teachers surveyed, fourteen participants responded. The analysis of the survey data revealed that 85.8% of teachers surveyed have at least one ELL in their mainstream classroom, and 42.9% of those teachers currently have five or more ELL students. The survey revealed positive data regarding classroom teaching methods already being utilized by mainstream teachers in this small, rural school district. In allowing ample time for students to formulate oral and written responses, 92.8% believe they provide enough time, and 64.3% found music, storytelling, and games to be effective strategies in teaching ELLs. The survey also revealed: 71.4% of participants found partner work to be an effective strategy when teaching ELLs, 64.3% are aware of their ELLs proficiency level, and 100% of staff agreed, or strongly agreed, having ELL support in the classroom is an effective method for teaching ELLs.

The survey data ultimately allowed this researcher to identify three specific areas of professional development from which this rural, midwestern school district could benefit. These areas include: cultural training, a briefing in research-based language acquisition, and instruction

in effective teaching methods for ELLs. Of the teachers surveyed, 71.4% did not have any professional development regarding ELLs in the past year. In addition, 57.1% had never completed a class relating to ELLs, and 64.2% felt they do not have a strong understanding of their ELL's background. 50% of participants answered that they did not know the difference between language acquisition and language learning. Half of the participants revealed a lack of knowledge in academic language versus social language. Fifty percent of teachers also believed that if ELLs have strong oral communication skills, their academic skills will also be strong. Of the staff surveyed, 57.1% were not familiar with stages of language development, and 50% did not know how to modify an assignment based on proficiency levels. While 92.8% of staff surveyed believed they gave ample time for students to formulate oral and written responses, observations determined that this self-assessment may have been skewed by self-perception compared to this researcher's observations.

Analysis of observation results

Of the eight mainstream teachers that this researcher observed during ten observations, the data showed the following results. Modeling was observed in seven of the eight mainstream classrooms, and one classroom was not observed due to testing. While the seven teachers did model effectively to meet the needs of native speakers, it was not adequate enough to meet the needs of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. When checking for understanding, four of the observed mainstream teachers used this method successfully, and four were in need of improvement. BICS and CALPS were part of this researcher's observations but these skills were difficult to observe in such a short period of time. When using visual and non-visual cues, this researcher observed three of the eight teachers using them effectively for ELLs. Four teachers were in need of improvement, although they were using visual and non-visual cues to some

degree. Non-verbal cues were not observed in one classroom due to testing. Scaffolding showed the most diverse data. Three teachers were successful, three needed improvement, and two were not observed using this method. Differentiation was observed successfully in three classrooms and five were found in need of improvement. Pre-teaching with native language and error correction were not observed in any of the classrooms. Partner work was observed successfully in three classrooms, one needs improvement, and four were not observed. ELL talk/participation was only observed successfully in one classroom and not observed in the other seven classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In the analysis of this researcher's classroom observation data, there was evidence of many pedagogical adaptations occurring in the classroom that would align with Just Good Teaching. This researcher observed mainstream teachers modeling, completing checks for understanding, and using the partner work method, all of which are positive teaching methods. However, in reviewing observation data, it was the opinion of this researcher that these methods lacked certain components necessary to fulfill specific oral language and literacy development needs of the ELL. The ELL requires specific preparation relating to her/his knowledge and skills in the areas of language and culture. When these two areas are specifically integrated into classroom instructions, it benefits both the ELLs and native English speakers.

Conclusions

Upon completing this research based on second language acquisition theory and best practices for teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom, in conjunction with the survey and classroom observations, this researcher concluded that teachers from this small, rural,

midwestern school would benefit from receiving professional development in the aforementioned areas of cultural background, language acquisition theories, and effective teaching methods for ELLs. It is would be beneficial for mainstream teachers receive training in these areas during in-service at the start of the school year and on a monthly basis thereafter.

The initial training could occur at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year during back to school in-service. Training should not be presented as another initiative that teachers are required to learn. Instead, it should be presented as a toolkit to assist teachers to better meet the needs of their ELL students. In order to achieve this goal, all aspects of the training for teachers should be completed during school hours, and not be another required documentation assignment. As an educator, this researcher knows firsthand the overwhelming feelings that accompany new required initiatives in which educators are not given enough time during school hours to learn and practice the new skills in order to implement them. This recurring phenomenon is known as "initiative overload" (Perkins, 2011). In order to avoid this training being viewed as "one more thing," it will be broken into one method per month. Breaking the training down, into smaller parts will provide three important keys for success for mainstream teachers: time, consistency, and the opportunity to implement it well.

Mainstream teachers in this district may benefit from receiving strategies that teachers can actively implement into their curriculum. Focusing on one method at a time will allow teachers multiple opportunities to learn each strategy well and to experiment with different ways to incorporate it into their curriculum. By the end of the 2018-2019 school year, the mainstream teachers from this small, rural, midwestern school district will have had the opportunity to learn how to effectively use several strategies well, rather than provide multiple strategies which may become overwhelming and impractical for teachers to apply in the time allotted during

professional development time and in their classrooms. This will allow mainstream teachers to have the flexibility and consistency to learn throughout the school year, as opposed to receiving an overwhelming list of strategies and being expected to implement them on their own by the end of the 2018-2019 school year.

Recommendations

There are some recommendations for researchers wanting to further investigate ELLs in the mainstream classroom in this rural midwestern school district. Administering a second survey district wide would prove beneficial to gain a more solid understanding of all mainstream teachers' knowledge in this school district. This would help to identify a wider population of staff that could use more ELL training and could result in better meeting the needs of ELLs in all classrooms. While the survey provided a starting point in discovering teachers knowledge of ELLs, the response choices in the survey could be edited to provide more clarity in the meaning of responses in the areas of second language acquisition as well as methods in teaching ELLs. For example, some of the survey responses were unclear as to whether the teachers were not knowledgeable in the area or if they simply did not implement that specific strategy.

A second recommendation would be to interview mainstream teachers to gain a better view of methods being implemented in their teaching but were not detected during classroom observations. Interviews would allow more detailed feedback and the opportunity to engage with teachers in conversations about specific day-to-day occurrences in the mainstream classroom.

The final recommendation would be to conduct more frequent observations with a focus on fewer classrooms at a time. Determining which teaching methods are utilized in a couple of classroom visits proved to be difficult. Increasing the number of visits while limiting the number of classrooms visited would allow the researcher to gain a truer perspective of daily instruction

of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Some of the next questions a researcher may want to ask are: What second language theory is applied in lesson planning? What scaffolding takes place while implementing a lesson? How are the ELL teachers included in the planning and execution of lessons and/assessing? With the number of ELLs only growing, future researchers have an exciting opportunity to assist mainstream teachers in their professional growth in this small, rural, school district in order to better meet the unique education needs of ELLs in the mainstream.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1 - Mainstream Classroom Observations

OS=Observed Successfully
ONI=Observed but Needs Improvement for ELLs
N/O=Not Observed

	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**
Modeling	NI	NI	N/O	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
Checks for Understanding	NI	OS	OS	OS	OS	NI	NI	NI
BICS vs CALPS	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O
Visual/Non-Visual Cues	NI	OS	OS	N/O	OS	NI	NI	NI
Scaffolding	NI	OS	OS	OS	NO	NO	NI	NI
Differentiation	NI	OS	OS	NI	NI	OS	NI	NI
Pre-teaching w/ Native language	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O
Error Correction	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O
Partner Work	OS	N/O	N/O	NI	N/O	N/O	OS	OS
ELL Talk/ Participation	N/O	N/O	OS	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O

APPENDIX B

Table 2 - Survey of ELL Knowledge

I currently have __ ELLs in my classroom for the 2017-1018 school year.
14.3% No ELLs
28.6% 1-2 ELLs
14.3% 3-4 ELLs
42.9% 5 or more ELLs

I have received __ hours of professional development specifically related to ELLs in the past year
71.4% (0 hours)
21.4% (1-2 hours)
7.1% (7 or more hours)

I have completed __ classes specifically related to ELLs in the past
57.1 (0)
28.6 (1-2)
7.1 (3-4)
7.1 (other/part of course)

I am aware of the proficiency levels and abilities of my ELLs according to the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design) English Language Development (ELD) Standards.
*Should have broken into 2 questions written more specific or asked for examples to receive clearer data
50% Agree (Know proficiency levels)
21.4 Disagree
14.3 Strongly disagree
7.1 Other
7.1 Strongly Agree

I have a strong understanding of the cultural background of my ELLs
57.1 Disagree
7.1 Strongly disagree
21.4 Neutral
14.3 Agree

I understand the difference between language acquisition and language learning.
Strongly Agree
42.9 Agree
7.1 Neutral
42.9 Disagree
7.1 Strongly Disagree

I believe if my ELL students have solid communication skills, their academic skills will also be strong.

21.4 Strongly Agree
28.6Agree
21.4Neutral
21.4Disagree
7.1Strongly Disagree

I am familiar with the stages of language development
Strongly Agree
21.4Agree
21.4Neutral
50 Disagree
7.1 Strongly Disagree

I modify my language when teaching ELLs.

7.1 Strongly Agree
28.6 Agree
28.6 Neutral
28.6Disagree
7.1 Strongly Disagree

I speak slower and reduce my use of idioms when teaching ELL Students
7.1 Strongly Agree
14.3 Agree
57.1 Neutral
14.3 Disagree
7.1 Strongly Disagree

I provide ample time for ELLs to formulate oral and written answers **survey data doesn't align with observations*
7.1 Strongly Agree
85.7 Agree
7.1 Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I use visual and non-visual cues for my ELLs in class (Ex: sketches, gestures, intonation)
14.3 Strongly Agree
35.7 Agree
35.7 Neutral
7.1 Disagree
7.1 Strongly Disagree

I provide regular opportunities throughout my lesson for ELL students to "show what they know" in ways that match their language proficiency levels.
35.7 Agree
28.6 Neutral

35.7 Disagree
0- Strongly Agree/Strongly Disagree

In building background knowledge, I use the students' first language. (Cognates, for example)
Strongly Agree
14.3 Agree
14.3 Neutral
42.9 Disagree
28.9 Strongly Disagree

I am knowledgeable in creating instruction and an environment with a low affective filter.
Strongly Agree
14.3 Agree
14.3 Neutral
57.1 Disagree
14.3 Strongly Disagree

I am knowledgeable when it is appropriate to use error correction with ELLs
Strongly Agree
Agree
21.4 Neutral
71.4 Disagree
7.1 Strongly Disagree

I know how to properly modify various types of assessments for my ELLs based on their current language level.
Strongly Agree
35.7 Agree
7.1 Neutral
42.9 Disagree
7.1 Strongly Disagree

I have found Partner Work to be an effective strategy when teaching ELLs
14.3 Strongly Agree
57.1 Agree
7.1 Neutral
14.3 Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I have found Literacy-based curriculum to be effective when teaching ELLs
7.1 Strongly Agree
35.7 Agree
42.9 Neutral
14.3 Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I have found Total Physical Response (TPR) to be an effective strategy in teaching ELLs.
Strongly Agree
Agree

85.7 Neutral *did that mean they don't know what it is?
7.1 Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I have found music, storytelling, and games to be effective strategies in teaching ELLs.
14.3 Strongly Agree
50 Agree
35.7 Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I have found that having ELL support in the classroom is an effective method for teaching ELLs
35.7 Strongly Agree
64.3 Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree