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Perceptions of English Language Learners and Supporting Their Academic Achievement

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PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND SUPPORTING THEIR

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Abstract

This literature review discusses the increasing number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States and the shortage of qualified teachers to support them. The author reviews relevant literature to explore the relationship between teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward ELLs and their academic success. The research data shows that teachers' positive perceptions and attitudes toward ELLs positively impact their academic achievement. In contrast, negative perceptions and attitudes can seriously damage ELLs' academic, social, and emotional trajectories. The author emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive learning environment that values diversity and recognizes ELLs' linguistic and cultural strengths to promote positive perceptions and attitudes. The passage also discusses how a strong sense of belonging in a school or academic setting can positively impact an ELL's academic success and motivation. Studies have shown that students who feel a strong sense of belonging in their school community are more likely to attend school regularly, engage in class, and perform better on assessments.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In the United States, there are increasing numbers of English language (EL) learners in all schools, from primary to high school. According to the National Center for Education Statics (NCES) (2021), in the 2019-2020 school year, approximately 10.4% of public school students in the United States were English learners (ELs). It is higher in 2019 (10.4 percent, or 5.1 million students) than in 2010 (9.2 percent, or 4.5 million students). Reflecting the national increase, the percentage of public school students who were ELs was higher in 2019 than in 2010 in 42 states and the District of Columbia. However, U. S Department of Education (2021) stated that 32 states reported insufficient teachers for ELL students in the 2021 TSA Nationwide Listing Comprehensive Compendium. The shortage of qualified EL teachers is a serious issue for ELLs in the United States. The data shows that ELLs are a rapidly growing population in U.S. schools, and the demand for qualified EL teachers has not kept pace. Thus, many ELLs are being taught by teachers who are not trained in teaching English as a second language. This can lead to lower-quality instruction and negatively impact ELLs' academic progress and long-term outcomes.

The quality of EL teachers is crucial in determining the success of ELLs in the United States. EL teachers are critical in helping ELs develop English language proficiency and academic skills since they are the first and most important point of contact for these students in the education system. Unfortunately, data reveals many ELs are not taught by fully qualified EL teachers. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality report (2014), only 24 percent of programs train general elementary teacher candidates in strategies to support ELs or students not progressing in early reading. More than half of the teacher preparation programs in the U.S. currently lack professional accreditation, relying only on their college's or university's general and insufficiently focused accreditation status to certify their quality. A shortage of qualified EL teachers, combined with high demand for their

services, can result in ELs being taught by individuals not trained to teach English as a second language. The Department of Civil Rights reported that half a million EL students in 121 school districts are not enrolled in an ELL program and do not receive special instruction to learn English (Office for Civil Rights, 2022). ELs require specialized instruction and support to develop English proficiency and succeed academically. Without access to an ELL program, these students are at high risk of struggling to keep up with their peers and experiencing long-term academic difficulties. The shortage of ELL teachers can also lead to larger class sizes and a lack of individualized attention for students. This can negatively impact the students' academic performance and overall educational experience.

It is also important to note that EL learners come from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds and may have varying English proficiency levels. Children at the beginning stages of learning English are relatively largely supported in their learning by specialist English language or bilingual teachers. However, this support commonly decreases after the learner is past the initial stages of language learning (Gibbons, 2015). During this stage, ELLs are typically mainstreamed into regular classrooms, where they are expected to participate in academic subjects taught in English. This transition can be challenging for ELLs, who may still be developing their English language skills and struggle to keep up with their peers. It is also important to recognize that supporting the ongoing language development of ELLs can be a complex and challenging task and that homeroom teachers cannot do it alone. Schools and districts must provide adequate resources, support, and training for homeroom teachers to help them effectively meet the needs of their ELLs. However, most EL learners in the second stage spend most of their school lives in regular classrooms where the homeroom teacher carries the dual responsibility for their subject learning and ongoing language development (Gibbons, 2015). For this reason, the following central question will guide the literature review in Chapter II: What are the common

perceptions of English Language Learners, and how do they impact ELLs' academic success in school? Moreover, how do we support English Language Learners to achieve academic success?

This literature review project aims to research "common perceptions of English Language Learners and how to support English Language Learners' academic success in the school by understanding their needs," so ELL programs can be revised to serve not only the purpose of teaching the language but also to support ELL's success in the school by changing the common perceptions of ELLs. This literature review also aims to understand English Language Learners' needs better if educators clearly understand their perceptions, resulting in higher academic achievement of ELLs.

Definition of terms

Before delving deep into the analysis of literature and implications, it is essential to define key terms that will invariably clarify meaning and deepen understanding. The key terms are as follows:

English-language learners, or **ELLs**, is a term used to describe individuals who are in the process of learning the English language. The term is commonly used in educational settings to describe students who are non-native speakers of English and are still developing proficiency in the language. ELLs may have different backgrounds, cultures, and English proficiency levels, but they all share the goal of improving their English language skills. Other terms used to describe ELLs include English as a second language (ESL) students, English language learners (ELLs), and multilingual students. They are students who cannot communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in English and their academic courses (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).

Perception means the action of perceiving. Perception is "awareness of something

which related to previous knowledge." The perception process produces meaningful experiences of the world, which is the basis of reality and attitude. Information is collected through organ senses, which help to preserve the natural environment, and artificial things and actions have been done according to this that help to discover new things and phenomena (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, n.d.). In the context of education, a teacher's perception of their students, the subject matter they are teaching, and the learning environment can all play a crucial role in shaping the educational experience for the students. For example, a teacher who perceives their students as eager to learn and motivated will likely create a more positive and engaging learning environment compared to a teacher who perceives their students as uninterested or unmotivated.

Teacher expectations. Teacher expectations refer to the beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions a teacher has about their students and their learning ability. These expectations can have a powerful impact on a student's motivation, engagement, and achievement in the classroom. Teachers with high expectations for their students are likely to set challenging goals, provide supportive feedback, and create a positive learning environment that encourages students to do their best. Teachers have been found to overestimate the achievement of high achievers, underestimate that of low achievers, and be least accurate in predicting the responses of low achievers (Coladarci, 1986; Hoge & Butcher, 1984; Patriarca & Kragt, 1986). Babad (1985) reported that less experienced teachers, teachers who believe integration will result in great improvement or no improvement, and teachers who prefer the lecture method more often had biased expectations.

Academic achievement refers to a student's success in completing academic tasks and reaching educational goals. This can include a range of metrics such as grades, test scores, graduation rates, awards, and honors. Academic achievement is often used to measure the effectiveness of educational institutions and programs and the progress and potential of

individual students. It is an indicator of knowledge and skills acquired, motivation, and dedication to learning (OECD, 2018). It represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university. School systems mostly define cognitive goals that apply across multiple subject areas (e.g., critical thinking) or include acquiring knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain (e.g., numeracy, literacy, science, history). Therefore, academic achievement should be considered to be a multifaceted construct that comprises different domains of learning.

Self-efficacy is the belief that one can achieve a specific goal or outcome. It refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to execute the behaviors required to produce a desired result successfully. Various factors such as past experiences, social and emotional support, and mastery experiences can influence this belief. It means a person's judgment of his/her capabilities to complete a specific task with the skills he/she possesses (Bandura, 1997). It is usually described as task and context-specific (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Highly efficacious students usually meet challenges and are more persistent, while lowly efficacious students are more likely to avoid difficult tasks (Stevens, Olivarez, Lan, & Tallent-Runnels, 2004). Previous studies indicated that self-efficacy predicts students' academic achievement (Pajares & Graham, 1999; Shih & Alexander, 2000). "People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Search Procedure

To locate theories and research regarding the scope of this thesis, searches of Google Scholar, Education Journals, ERIC, JSTOR, and EBSCO were conducted for publications from 1990 to 2022. Sources were narrowed and refined by only reviewing studies from peer-reviewed journals that emphasized best practices for supporting English Language Learners and addressed the guiding questions of this thesis. Search results were chosen based on their use of evidence-based studies, a clear hypothesis, and an application of research to the field of language learning. The keywords that were used to search for these studies were "English Language Learners," "ELL student support," "teacher's perception and the students' achievement," "setting a higher expectation," "perception and achievement," and "Self-efficacy."

Teachers' perceptions of ELLs and their achievement

Accurso, Rodriguez, and Lopez (2019) brought up deficit perspectives on English Language Learners. English Language Learners are often regarded as academically incapable in a system that defines success from a white, middle-class, monolingual cultural standpoint. They stated that the association of ELLs with failure and dropout stems from a widespread belief that "difference is a deficit" (Mitchell, 2013, p. 348). According to Adair (2015), deficit perspectives seriously damage students' academic, social, and emotional trajectories. She reported the impact of discrimination on young children's early schooling experiences of children from immigrant families at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) on November 20, 2014. The perceptions of deficits can prompt discriminatory practices that reflect low expectations of children's cognitive sophistication or potential. Children affected by these perceptions learn they are not meant to excel and are not ready for the same intellectual stimulation as their peers (Adair, 2015, p. 8). Researcher Kally (2017) used parallel mixed

methodology to examine how teachers' perceptions toward their English Language Learners (ELL) shape their pedagogical practices. The quantitive and qualitative data were collected from 10 early childhood classrooms, ranging from pre-K to third grades, in one suburban school with a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. Quantitative data was gathered through the administration of Pohan and Aguilar's (2001) Professional beliefs about diversity Likert scale, and qualitative data were collected through survey responses and interviews. The research result revealed that teachers' perceptions positively relate to ELLs learning.

Furthermore, teachers' attitudes and expectations affect pupils' achievements and interactions with pupils, pupils' interactions with teachers and other pupils, pupils' involvement in classroom activities, and pupils' attitudes toward other pupils (Chiner et al., 2015). Researchers Chiner et al. (2015) expressed that teachers with a highly positive attitude toward diversity also have higher sensitivity levels. In addition, teachers' attitudes toward pupils who differ from the majority influence their responsiveness to these pupils and their needs (Chiner et al., 2015). Thus, teachers' attitudes influence their teaching and level of support to the ELLs' learning.

Regarding the misconceptions about ELLs, researcher Garcia et al. (2019) researched whether students' English language learner (ELL) status predicted teachers' reports of students' Executive Functions beyond what would be expected based on direct assessment. Data were drawn from a school-based study of third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade 558 students in 33 classrooms and eight schools. They used path analysis to control for the contribution of the direct assessment of EFs. They found systematic ELL status disparities in teachers' reports of students' EFs while controlling for direct assessment. Schools documented whether children who did not speak English as a first language were classified as ELLs. For the analyses, children who spoke English at home or spoke a language other than English but

were never classified as ELLs were considered "English-dominant." Children who spoke a language other than English at home and who were still classified as ELLs because they had not yet reached proficiency benchmarks on the California Standards Test (CST) and the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) were considered "limited English." Finally, children who had been classified as ELLs upon entering school but who had reached proficiency on the CST and CELDT were considered "reclassified." The data presented those students with limited English proficiency had significantly worse EFs than English dominant students at 0.39 and 0.43, respectively. In contrast, students who had been reclassified out of ELL status had significantly better EF scores than English-dominant students at 0.52. This result of the research reveals the potential biases for ELLs in teacher-report. Although teacher-reported EFs are designed to measure students' EF-related behaviors in the classroom, they are also influenced by teacher-child relationships, students' demographic characteristics, and teachers' prior knowledge of students' academic achievement (Garcia et al., 2019). It is also likely that teacher-reported EFs capture a variety of students' experiences in the classroom that contribute to academic achievement. Thus, the teacher's perception of their ELLs contains the possibility of contributing to their performance on academic assessments.

Concerning the teachers' perception of ELLs and their achievement, de Boer et al. (2018) researched how the attitudes and expectations of teachers regarding English language learners (ELLs) affect their academic achievement through a meta-analysis and narrative review of nineteen teachers. They found a meaningful link between the cultural mismatches between teachers and minority students and their achievement gaps. They distinguished three types of interventions: changing teacher behavior, creating awareness of expectancy effects, and addressing the beliefs underlying the expectations. A meta-analysis of the studies which provided quantitative data yielded an average effect on teacher expectations of Hedges' $g = 0.38$ and student achievement of 0.30. The narrative review also suggested that the

intervention type did not affect the effectiveness, but teacher support for the intervention did. The review included ten teacher expectation interventions describing the effect on student achievement. Four of them found a positive effect, and three found effects that were not significant but did show changes in the desired direction. The results indicated that it is indeed possible to raise teacher expectations and that it is also possible to increase student achievement with teacher expectation interventions. Biased negative expectations are likely to significantly impact educational inequalities because, at present, research result indicates that they systematically affect students with low socio-economic status and poor previous academic outcomes, with an ethnic minority and/or immigrant status, and with learning disabilities (de Boer et al., 2018).

It has been found that teachers' attitudes vary by gender, race, ethnicity, and the native language of the learner (Washington, 1982, p. 60). Sirota and Bailey (2009) have presented research showing that teachers have different expectations of their students based on race or ethnicity. They researched the impact of teachers' expectations on diverse learners' academic outcomes. They examined the teachers' views of ELL students by interviewing methods. The coded interview data showed that the knowledge gap exists between minority and non-minority children. One factor contributing to this problem was that teachers expect minority children to learn subject matter slower than their counterparts. Teachers' negative expectations can critically affect the opportunities for children to learn and their actual achievement. This research has shown that minority students are graded unfairly because of their race and ethnicity (Sirota & Bailey, 2009). Tettegah (1996) refers to this notion as the "cultural mismatch" between teacher and student. This mismatch has been closely tied to the quality of education a child is likely to receive and his learning opportunity. This phenomenon might account for the learning gap between minority and non-minority children. Thus, we can see that the teachers' attitudes toward their ELLs contribute to their

performance on academic tests.

Supporting English Language Learners

Teacher expectations are the "inferences that teachers make about the future behavior or academic achievement of their students, based on what they know about these students now" (Good & Brophy, 1997, p. 79). Many researchers found that teachers form their expectations based on factors including student academic achievement, classroom engagement, and behaviors, as well as student demographic features, such as ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and special education status (Dusek & Joseph, 1983; Wang et al., 2018). The perceptions of English Language Learners impact many aspects of their development, including their motivation to learn the language, their level of engagement in the classroom, and their overall academic success. Researchers studied how ELLs' beliefs and attitudes toward themselves as language learners and towards the language they are learning influence their language development (Barreiro, 2018; Elfers & Stritikus, 2013; Toliver, 2019). Research has shown that beliefs and attitudes can significantly influence an ELL's language development.

Additionally, studies have shown that teacher expectations can also play a crucial role in shaping ELLs' beliefs and attitudes towards themselves as language learners and their language development (Rubie-Davies, 2010; Toliver, 2019). Teachers who set high expectations for ELLs and provide appropriate support and resources can positively influence ELLs' beliefs and attitudes toward language learning and their academic success. On the other hand, low teacher expectations can result in negative attitudes and lower academic achievement for ELLs (Gottfredson et al., 2010; Rubie-Davies, 2010). Therefore, teachers need to be aware of the impact their expectations have on their students and to set high expectations while providing appropriate support and resources for all students, including ELLs.

Shifting the perception

Regarding the teachers' efforts of inclusion and ELLs' achievement, researcher Barreiro (2018) revealed a meaningful connection between the lack of efforts for inclusion and the behavior and motivation of ELLs through a qualitative case study. Three high school teachers in southeast Texas were interviewed with a set of questions. The interview data were coded under bilingualism and relationship, ELL behavior and academic challenge, and behavior linked to motivation and learning. Two rounds of individual interviews revealed that the teachers who lack efforts for inclusion experience more issues in the behavior and motivation of ELLs. Interestingly, all the teachers in their interview mentioned that ELLs depend too much on each other's company and support, which they thought resulted in them missing out on opportunities to engage with other students outside their ELL group. However, a large part of the problem with student codependence comes from the curriculum and the administration. The lack of effort for inclusion can significantly impact the behavior and motivation of English Language Learners (ELLs). The research reveals when ELLs are not properly included in the educational process, they can feel isolated, excluded, and unvalued, leading to negative attitudes toward school and learning. The data revealed that students who feel a sense of belonging in their educational environment are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and achieve academic success. Conversely, their motivation can suffer when students feel excluded or marginalized, and their behavior may become disruptive.

According to Elfers and Stritikus (2013), the systemic support of ELLs leads them to academic success in the classroom. Researchers Elfers and Stritikus (2013) examined ways for schools and district leaders to support classroom teachers' work with English Language Learners. The research utilized a qualitative case study design with a strategic sample of four school districts in Washington state. They examined the nature of support experienced by general education teachers and others working with EL students in specific school and district

contexts. The data on the efforts of school and district leaders to bring about instructional change was collected through interviews and classroom observations, and document analyses. In the four case study districts, change was partly driven by necessity, given the growing numbers of EL students, their lack of academic achievement, and concerns about equity. The overall move to serve EL students within the context of the general education classroom meant that teachers needed to adapt their instructional practices and work more closely with support staff. In analysis, the school leaders in the case study districts generally agreed that disaggregating the data for EL students had brought their attention to their cause in advocating for more resources and more substantial support for teachers, which means EL students will be able to benefit from a variety of supports that provide explicit assistance and a chance to learn about effective, appropriately differentiated instruction. Thus, providing systemic support to ELLs is crucial for their academic success in the classroom. The research suggests educators help these students reach their full potential and achieve academic success by providing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to supporting ELLs.

From the case studies of 29 3rd-grade ELL students in U.S. public schools, researcher Toliver (2019) also linked meaningful relationships between culturally responsive pedagogy and a supportive and enriched learning environment to meet the needs of ELL students. This case study investigated the research on the instructional approaches used by a teacher who has demonstrated expertise in supporting ELLs in a linguistically diverse classroom. The classroom consisted of a diverse group of students, most ELLs. Analysis of observations and interviews revealed several important themes related to her successful instruction. Especially the setting of high-expectation teaching strategies to create a supportive and enriched learning environment rated higher in meeting the needs of ELL students in the class. Culturally responsive pedagogy and a supportive and enriched learning environment are essential components in meeting the needs of English Language Learners

(ELLs). They are interrelated and support one another to provide an effective learning experience for ELL students. Culturally responsive pedagogy is an approach to teaching that recognizes students' cultural backgrounds and experiences and incorporates this understanding into the teaching and learning process. This approach helps ELL students feel valued and supported in the classroom, enabling them to connect their experiences and the material being taught. A supportive and enriched learning environment provides ELL students the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed academically. This includes a safe and inclusive atmosphere where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes, access to high-quality materials and technology, and opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning. The data reveals that these two elements create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive for ELL students and supports their academic, social, and emotional development. Thus, culturally responsive pedagogy and a supportive and enriched learning environment are critical components in meeting the needs of ELL students and are key to creating a positive and effective learning experience for all students.

Setting higher expectation

Research has shown that setting higher expectations for English Language Learners (ELLs) can effectively support their academic and language development when combined with appropriate support and resources. Several researchers have studied this approach, including Gottfredson et al. (2010), Rubie-Davies (2010), and Wong et al. (2020). Rubie-Davies (2010) found that when teachers set high expectations for ELLs and provided appropriate support and resources, the students were more likely to progress in their language development and academic achievement. The study emphasized the importance of creating a positive classroom environment and providing individualized support for ELLs to help them meet high expectations. Similarly, Wong et al. (2020) found that setting high expectations for all students, including ELLs, can positively impact their academic achievement. However,

they also noted that high expectations should be accompanied by appropriate support and resources, as setting high expectations alone may lead to widening achievement gaps. Gottfredson et al. (2010) also emphasized the importance of providing appropriate ELL support when setting high expectations. They found that when schools provided targeted instructional support, such as English language development classes and individualized support, ELLs were able to meet higher expectations and make progress in their academic and language development. Overall, research suggests that setting high expectations for ELLs can be an effective approach to support their academic and language development. Still, it should be accompanied by appropriate support and resources to ensure success. Creating a positive classroom environment, providing individualized support, and offering targeted instructional support is crucial for helping ELLs meet high expectations and achieve success in their academic and language development.

Researchers Wong et al. (2020) examined the stability and trajectories of teacher expectations within a school year by using three-time points of teacher expectation data. They interviewed 48 Chinese, mathematics, and English teachers and their 1199 students from 10 junior high schools to study the stability of teacher expectations. They reviewed at the individual-student level and student-group level, respectively. The teachers indicated the level each student would achieve in the subject they taught by the end of the school year using a scale of 1 to 13 to show their expectations for their student's achievement. The result revealed that students in the high-achieving group were systematically overestimated, and the extent of overestimation increased over a school year for the Chinese and mathematics subjects. In contrast, students in the low-achieving group were systematically underestimated across the school year. This study presents the possibility of teachers enhancing or exacerbating the existing achievement differences between students by expecting more from the high achievers and unjustifiably less from the low achievers. Teacher expectations significantly

impact student achievement and behavior (Wong et al., 2020). The study results revealed that students in the high-achieving group were systematically overestimated, and the extent of overestimation increased over a school year for the Chinese and mathematics subjects. In contrast, students in the low-achieving group were systematically underestimated across the school year. The study's findings highlight teacher expectations' significant impact on student achievement and behavior. By having higher expectations for high-achieving students and lower expectations for low-achieving students, teachers may be inadvertently contributing to the achievement gap between students. This suggests that teachers should be aware of their expectations and strive to have high expectations for all students, regardless of their achievement level, to help support student success. These findings also represent that teachers may be enhancing or exacerbating the existing achievement differences between students by expecting more from high achievers and unjustifiably less from low achievers. The study emphasizes the importance of teacher expectations in shaping student achievement and highlights the need for teachers to be aware of the potential impact of their expectations on student outcomes. By recognizing the impact of teacher expectations, teachers may be better equipped to support all students in achieving their full potential.

Rubie-Davies (2010) compared how teachers with very high or very low expectations for all their students would rate their students' personal attributes. By coding the questionnaire in the survey, six high-expectation (HiEx) teachers and three low-expectation (LoEx) teachers and their 220 students participated in this study, and they were asked to rate their students on characteristics related to attitudes to schoolwork, relationships with others, and home support for the school. Interestingly, contrasting patterns were found in the data for HiEx and LoEx teachers. The result reveals correlations between expectations and all student factors that were significant and positive for HiEx teachers, while for LoEx teachers, the significant correlations were negative. Correlations between student achievement and all

student factors were also positive and significant for HiEx teachers, while for LoEx teachers, only one positive correlation was found. The study presents the importance of expectations for student learning. Teacher moderators relate to differing teacher beliefs and attributes and hence may lead to variance in the instructional and socio-emotional climate of the classroom. The result presents teachers with high expectations for all their students and are likely to rate their students' attributes above average. These teachers believe that their students have the ability to perform at a high level and they encourage them to set their sights high. They may see their students as hardworking, capable, and motivated and emphasize these positive attributes when evaluating their students' progress. On the other hand, teachers with very low expectations for all their students may have a tendency to rate their students' personal attributes as below average. These teachers may see their students as lacking motivation, being disinterested, or having the low ability, and they may emphasize these negative attributes when evaluating their students. This can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, as students may begin to believe that they are indeed not capable or motivated, leading to a decline in performance. Thus, it's important for teachers to have realistic expectations for their students, considering each student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. This can help to foster a positive learning environment and support students in reaching their full potential.

To reduce disparity in educational achievement across race and sex, Gottfredson et al. (2010) conducted a study of implementing teachers' expectations and student achievement. By implementing Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA; Kerman, Kimball, & Martin, 1980) in an elementary school, the researchers digitized the Achievement test scores, attitudes toward school and self, perceptions of teacher practices, and grade retentions. The data were compared for the 306 students of teachers who volunteered to participate in the experimental program, as well as students in the same school (n = 329) and

in a different school (n = 250) whose teachers did not participate. The TESA participants started the current school year with the disadvantage of having been retained at a higher rate in the previous year but with the advantage of having higher reading test scores. The observation data appears that grade 1 teachers have the least well-implemented TESA, and overall the Achievement test score was higher when the TESA score was high. Although the results differed depending on which comparison group was used, the within-school comparison implies a small positive effect. Thus, this study provides some degree of support for the positive effect of the teachers' attitudes toward students' achievement. It also can be evidence that teachers' expectations can significantly impact student achievement. Research has shown that when teachers have high expectations for their students, it can lead to increased motivation, engagement, and, ultimately, better academic performance. It is clear that teachers can have a powerful influence on students and help create an environment that fosters academic success.

Implementing the Sense of Belonging

English Language Learners in schools frequently struggle with the cultural and linguistic demands of the classroom while concurrently grappling with issues of identity and belonging. A strong sense of belonging in a school or academic setting can positively impact a student's academic success and motivation. Researchers found there is a strong relationship between students' sense of belonging and their academic outcomes (Habib & Hossain, 2018; Khalandi, 2022; Varela, 2010). Studies have shown that students who feel a strong sense of belonging in their school community are more likely to attend school regularly, engage in class, and perform better on assessments. They are also more likely to have higher levels of self-esteem and a greater sense of control over their academic experiences. Thus, a strong sense of belonging is crucial to students' academic success and well-being. Schools and educators must prioritize creating inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Researchers Habib and Hossain (2018) elucidated students' sense of belonging, grades, academic achievement, and school satisfaction from students' psycho-emotional perspectives. The Bangla version of the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) Scale (Goodenow, 1993) was used to measure students' sense of belonging to the school. The PSSM Scale is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure students' sense of belonging and connection to their school. It was developed by researchers Stephen Goodenow and Thomas O'Brien in 1977. It consists of 18 items that assess students' perceptions of their school environment, including their relationships with peers and teachers, their level of support, and their overall satisfaction with the school. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Seven schools participated in this study, with 869 boys and 574 girls from junior/lower secondary years six, seven, and eight. The study found that students who report higher levels of school satisfaction also tend to have higher academic achievement. The study by Habib and Hossain (2018) aimed to examine the relationship between students' sense of belonging, school satisfaction, academic achievement, and grades. The data indicated positive and significant relationships among school satisfaction, academic achievement, and school belonging. A meta-analysis of 59 studies also found a small but significant positive correlation between school satisfaction and academic achievement (Suldo et al., 2009). This suggests that when students feel happy and satisfied at school, they may be more motivated to engage in learning and perform better academically. These results are consistent with a meta-analysis of 59 studies that found a small but significant positive correlation between school satisfaction and academic achievement (Suldo et al., 2009). This suggests that when students feel happy and satisfied at school, they may be more motivated to engage in learning and perform better academically. Thus, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of creating a positive and supportive school environment that fosters students' sense of belonging and satisfaction. By doing so, educators may be able

to improve students' academic achievement and overall well-being.

Researcher Khalandi (2022) collected quantitative data to study the relationship between students' sense of belonging and student GPA, attendance rate, and discipline in four high schools in one district in a large Midwestern state in a suburban setting. The results of this study revealed that there was a statistically significant though the moderate positive correlation between students' sense of belonging and GPA., $r = 0.251$, $p < 0.001$. The positive correlation indicated that a higher GPA was associated with a higher sense of belonging score. It indicated a significant and positive association between GPA and school belonging. The relationship between attendance and sense of belonging was positive but weak, $r = 0.104$, $p < 0.001$. One-way ANOVA test revealed that a sense of belonging was a significant predictor of student discipline; $p = <0.05$. (Khalandi, 2022). His study revealed that fostering a safe and supportive school environment creates a connection between students and the building, improves students' attendance, lowers students' behavior issues, and increases academic success. Fostering a safe and supportive school environment creates a connection between students and the building, improves attendance, lowers behavior issues, and increases academic success in school (Arledge, 2020). Research has also found a positive relationship between school belonging and academic achievement. When students feel a sense of connection and belonging to their school, they are more likely to be engaged in school and motivated to achieve academically (Goodenow, 1993). A study of 107,000 students in the United States found that school belonging was a stronger predictor of academic achievement than family background, socio-economic status, or prior academic achievement (Blum & Libbey, 2004). These findings suggest that creating a sense of belonging is crucial for academic success and positive school experiences. Teachers and administrators should prioritize creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students, including English learners and students from diverse backgrounds. This can involve

promoting positive relationships among students, providing opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities, and encouraging student voice and input in decision-making processes. Additionally, it is essential to recognize that a sense of belonging is not solely the responsibility of students; educators and school leaders must actively work to create a supportive and inclusive school culture.

Researcher Varela (2010) surveyed the most important considerations for the instruction of English learners to the grade-level teachers, special education teachers, reading specialists, and ELL teachers in both elementary and secondary schools. The interviewees agreed that the SIOP model covers primary instructional issues, and additional issues, including if students are to work together and learn from each other, unity in the school and classroom must be created. The study revealed that a mainstream approach to teaching English learners by including students in grade-level classes with English-speaking peers enables higher visions of capitalizing on these students' strengths and abilities in the learning experience. This method also raises the bar by having high expectations for all learners. One of the most important considerations for the instruction of English learners that Varela stated was the need to provide a supportive and engaging learning environment. This includes creating opportunities for learners to interact with native speakers of English and providing exposure to a variety of English language materials, such as books, films, and other media. Additionally, Varela mentioned the importance of teacher training and development and the need for teachers to deeply understand the students they serve. Varela's research highlights the importance of creating a supportive and engaging learning environment for English learners, which includes providing exposure to a variety of English language materials and opportunities for learners to interact with native speakers of English (Varela, 2010). Providing individualized instruction and opportunities for authentic language use are also essential considerations for the instruction of English learners. Her research highlights the importance

of taking a learner-centered approach to instruction and considering English learners' entire classroom experience.

'Being, belonging, becoming' from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace (2009) states that belonging is essential in education since children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. Relationships are essential to a sense of belonging in early childhood and throughout life. Having a sense of belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become. Belonging refers to the feeling of connectedness that individuals have with others, communities, and their environment. This sense of connectedness is important in defining one's identity and shaping who they can become. Relationships are a key component of belonging, and students' relationships with others can influence their sense of self, their learning, and their development. Therefore, creating a sense of belonging is essential for ELLs' well-being and their ability to thrive in educational settings.

Supporting participation by incubating self-efficacy

English Language Learners (ELLs) face unique challenges in acquiring a new language. Their self-efficacy, or belief in their ability to successfully perform a task, plays a significant role in their language learning journey (Wong & Zhan, 2020). Researchers have shown that a strong sense of self-efficacy can help ELLs increase participation in learning activities and, ultimately, academic achievement (Kim et al., 2015; Kudelich, 2018; Lee et al., 2021; Ossa, 2022). Research has also demonstrated that self-efficacy is closely related to the use of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies among ELLs (Lee et al., 2021). ELLs who have a high sense of self-efficacy tend to use more effective SRL strategies, such as rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, metacognitive self-regulation, and time management (Lee et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2015). On the other hand, those with low self-

efficacy may avoid challenging learning tasks and use less effective SRL strategies, such as memorization and repetition (Kudelich, 2018). Therefore, it is important for educators and language instructors to recognize the significance of self-efficacy in ELLs' language learning and help foster their self-efficacy beliefs. This can be done by providing appropriate feedback, offering opportunities for success, and teaching self-regulatory learning skills (Kim et al., 2015; Wong & Zhan, 2020). By promoting self-efficacy and effective SRL strategies, educators can help ELLs achieve greater language proficiency and academic success.

Researchers Kim et al. (2015) used latent profile analysis (LPA) to examine different patterns of English learning as a Second Language (ESL) learners' self-efficacy for learning English. In order to make valid and reliable tools to assess ESL learners' self-efficacy, they used the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE), which was developed with 32 items and was measured on a 7-point rating scale from 1 to 7 designed to measure the areas of self-efficacy for listening, self-efficacy for speaking, self-efficacy for reading, and self-efficacy for writing. When 167 undergraduate students in Korea completed it, the LPA results revealed three groups representing low, medium, and high self-efficacy profiles. With the application of LPA, the study revealed three distinct profiles of English language learners' self-efficacy, low, medium, and high self-efficacy. The high and medium self-efficacy profiles represent students who spent more years studying English and are disproportionately compared to the low self-efficacy profile. The low self-efficacy profile was significantly different from the medium and high self-efficacy profiles concerning its self-regulated learning strategies and language interpretation strategies. The study proved the evidence of the psychometric properties by confirming a positive relationship between self-efficacy. As self-efficacy is a predictor of academic achievement in general and language learning outcomes in particular (Diseth, 2011), classroom teachers are encouraged to help students develop higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs by providing them with appropriate feedback on their performance and

helping the students develop self-regulatory learning skills. The study by Kim et al. (2015) uses latent profile analysis to examine patterns of self-efficacy in ESL learners is an interesting approach. The study's findings that revealed three distinct profiles of self-efficacy for learning English (low, medium, and high) are important because they suggest that different factors may influence self-efficacy in language learning. Moreover, the study's results also showed that students with high and medium self-efficacy profiles had spent more years studying English, indicating that language learning experience may contribute to self-efficacy development. The study's conclusion that self-efficacy is a predictor of academic achievement in general and language learning outcomes, in particular, is consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura posits that self-efficacy beliefs influence individuals' motivation and efforts to learn and achieve. As you mentioned, teachers can play a critical role in fostering students' self-efficacy beliefs by providing appropriate feedback and helping them develop self-regulatory learning skills. The study contributes to the understanding of self-efficacy in ESL learners and highlights the importance of developing self-efficacy to improve language learning outcomes.

Researchers Lee et al. (2021) explored the relationships between Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulated learning strategies of English Language Learners. To understand how to better support ELLs, 117 ELL college students enrolled in an English language course at a Midwestern university have participated in this study. The researchers investigated the relationships between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies of English language learners (ELLs) from a social cognitive perspective. They adopted the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) developed by Pintrich et al. (1991) to measure ELL students' self-efficacy. The MSLQ was developed to assess students' motivation and use of learning strategies using a 7-point Likert scale from "not at all true of me" to "very true of me.". The simple linear regression model was statistically significant ($F(1, 88) = 35.47$, p

< .01) and indicated that self-efficacy accounted for approximately 29% of the variation of the use of SRL strategies (R^2 = .29). Self-efficacy significantly predicted SRL strategies (β = .54, p < .05). In order to examine which SRL strategies are best predicted by self-efficacy, additional simple linear regression analyses were conducted. The simple linear regression analysis results showed that ELL college students' self-efficacy significantly predicted their use of SRL strategies. The results of a one-way ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference in the use of SRL strategies between ELL students with high self-efficacy and those with low self-efficacy. The findings indicated that ELL students' self-efficacy significantly predicted their use of the SRL strategy. Specifically, ELL students' self-efficacy significantly predicted sub-SRL strategies: rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, metacognitive self-regulation, and time management. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference in the use of SRL strategies between ELL students with high self-efficacy beliefs and those with low self-efficacy beliefs. Specifically, there was a statistically significant difference in the following sub-SRL strategies between the two groups: rehearsal, metacognitive self-regulation, and time management. The study provides empirical evidence of the relationship between self-efficacy and SRL strategies in L2 settings and the crucial role of ELL students' self-efficacy in self-regulation processes. The study conducted by Lee et al. (2021) provides valuable insight into the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies of English Language Learners (ELLs) from a social cognitive perspective. The study included 117 ELL college students enrolled in an English language course at a Midwestern university, and the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) developed by Pintrich et al. (1991) was used to measure their self-efficacy and use of SRL strategies. The results showed that ELL students' self-efficacy significantly predicted their use of SRL strategies, including rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, metacognitive self-regulation, and time management. The

findings indicate that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in ELL students' self-regulation processes and can significantly impact their use of SRL strategies. The study also found a statistically significant difference in the use of SRL strategies between ELL students with high self-efficacy beliefs and those with low self-efficacy beliefs. Specifically, the two groups differed in the use of rehearsal, metacognitive self-regulation, and time management strategies. The use of simple linear regression and one-way ANOVA analysis provided a statistical foundation for the results, which can be used to inform strategies for supporting ELL students in developing their self-efficacy and self-regulation skills. The findings highlight the importance of fostering self-efficacy beliefs in ELL students to promote their use of SRL strategies, which can lead to improved academic performance and success. So, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on self-efficacy and SRL strategies in ELL settings, and it emphasizes the need for ongoing support and training for ELL students to develop their self-regulation skills and improve their academic outcomes.

Kudelich (2018) conducted a qualitative descriptive study to describe how teachers perceive the value of professional in-service training and whether this training improved their self-efficacy when teaching ELL students in elementary schools in the Eastern School District in New York State. She utilized Bandura's social cognitive theory to study the phenomenon of ELL teachers' self-efficacy in the elementary school setting, focusing on professional in-service training. The 13 elementary school teachers participated in open-ended interviews, demographic surveys, artifacts, documents, and researcher memos. Thematic analysis of collected data described their self-efficacy experiences while teaching ELL students, the value of teacher training, and its influence on their self-efficacy. Results from data analysis indicated that educators face various self-efficacy experiences while teaching ELL students. The study found that ELL students can understand, comprehend, and write independently, and the teachers value the training and feel that it influences their self-efficacy. This study

proves that teachers' training supports them to be better teachers to ELL students and become understanding of the needs of all students, including ELLs. The study conducted by Kudelich (2018) highlights the value of professional in-service training for ELL teachers and its impact on their self-efficacy in teaching ELL students in elementary schools in the Eastern School District in New York State. The study utilized Bandura's social cognitive theory to explore the phenomenon of ELL teachers' self-efficacy, focusing on professional in-service training. The study found that teachers face various self-efficacy experiences while teaching ELL students, and professional in-service training can positively influence their self-efficacy. The teachers also recognize the value of this training in helping them understand the needs of ELL students and become better teachers to all students. The use of qualitative methods, such as open-ended interviews, demographic surveys, artifacts, documents, and researcher memos, allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the teachers' experiences and perspectives on professional in-service training and self-efficacy. Thematic analysis of the collected data provided insight into the teachers' self-efficacy experiences while teaching ELL students, the value of professional in-service training, and its impact on their self-efficacy. Overall, the study highlights the importance of providing ELL teachers with professional in-service training to support their self-efficacy and improve their ability to teach ELL students effectively. The findings also underscore the need for ongoing support and training for teachers to meet the diverse needs of all students, including ELLs.

Supporting ELLs in-class participation is crucial to their academic success. Researchers conducted studies to support this by incubating self-efficacy, which means helping them develop a belief in their ability to participate and succeed in class (Kim et al., 2015; Kudelich, 2018; Lee et al., 2021; Ossa, 2022). By incubating self-efficacy in ELLs, you can help them become more confident, engaged learners who are willing to participate in class and take on academic challenges. It is proven that supporting English Language

Learners (ELLs) in their in-class participation is crucial to their academic success. Building self-efficacy is an effective way to do so. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to accomplish a task or succeed in a specific situation. When ELLs have a high level of self-efficacy, they are more likely to engage in class, take on academic challenges, and persist in the face of difficulties. Thus, incubating self-efficacy in ELLs is an important aspect of supporting their academic success and promoting their engagement and participation in the classroom.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Literature

There have been histrionic increases in the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in United States schools (National Center for Education Statics, 2022). About 5.1 million students were ELLs in 2019, representing about 10.4 percent of all students in public schools (U. S. Department of Education, 2022). However, the shortage of qualified EL teachers is a serious issue. About half a million EL students in 121 school districts are not enrolled in an ELL program and do not receive special instruction to learn English (Office for Civil Rights, 2022). Thus, I reviewed relevant literature to link the relationship between the perceptions of ELLs and their learning and to support teachers in providing the needs of ELLs for their academic success.

This thesis provides an outline and summary to study common perceptions of ELLs and support their academic success in school. The perceptions of English Language Learners impact their academic achievement in school. Many researchers proved that educators' perceptions positively link to the students' academic achievement (Adair, 2015; Boer et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2019; Sirota & Bailey, 2009). Their research data proved that the relations between the perceptions and attitudes of English language learners and their abilities significantly impact their academic achievement in school.

Adair (2015) and Kally (2017) demonstrated that teachers' perceptions positively relate to ELLs learning in their research. Adair (2015) concluded that the deficit perspectives seriously damage students' academic, social, and emotional trajectories. Chiner et al. (2015) linked that teachers with a highly positive attitude toward diversity also have higher levels of sensitivity. Teachers' attitudes toward pupils who differ from the majority influence their responsiveness to these pupils and their needs (Chiner et al., 2015). Researcher Kally (2017) also used parallel mixed methodology to prove that the perceptions of teachers toward their

English Language Learners (ELL) shape their learning. Garcia et al. (2019) quantified the misconceptions about ELLs. They proved that assessments are influenced by teacher-child relationships, students' demographic characteristics, and teachers' prior knowledge of students' academic achievement (Garcia et al., 2019). Researchers Boer et al. (2018) studied how the attitudes and expectations of teachers regarding ELLs affect their academic achievement through a meta-analysis and narrative review of nineteen teachers. Sirota and Bailey (2009) have presented research showing that teachers have different expectations of their students based on race or ethnicity. It's important to note that the perceptions of English language learners are often shaped by various factors, including previous language learning experiences, cultural attitudes, and the attitudes and support provided by teachers and peers. To help promote positive perceptions and attitudes, it is important for schools to create a supportive learning environment that values diversity and recognizes the linguistic and cultural strengths of English language learners.

Research has shown that beliefs and attitudes can significantly influence an ELL's language development. Barreiro (2018) revealed a meaningful connection between the lack of efforts for inclusion and the behavior and motivation of ELLs through a qualitative case study. He proved that students who feel a sense of belonging in their educational environment are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and achieve academic success (Barreiro, 2018). Elfers and Stritikus (2013) insist on the systemic support of ELLs which leads them to academic success in the classroom. Toliver (2019) also linked meaningful relationships between culturally responsive pedagogy and a supportive and enriched learning environment to meet the needs of ELL students. So, the research proved welcoming and inclusive for ELL students and supported their academic, social, and emotional development.

Researchers found that setting higher expectations for ELLs effectively support their academic and language development (Gottfredson et al., 2010; Rubie-Davies, 2010; Wong et

al., 2020). Wong et al. (2020) examined the stability and trajectories of teacher expectations within a school year by using three-time points of teacher expectation data. They found that teacher expectations significantly impact student achievement and behavior. Researcher Rubie-Davies (2010) compared how teachers with very high or very low expectations for all their students would rate their students' personal attributes. The result suggests that teachers with very high expectations for all their students are likely to rate their students' personal attributes as above average. Researcher Gottfredson et al. (2010) conducted a study on implementing teachers' expectations and student achievement. The results reveal that teachers' expectations can significantly impact student achievement.

A strong sense of belonging in a school or academic setting can positively impact a student's academic success and motivation. Studies have shown that students who feel a strong sense of belonging in their school community are more likely to attend school regularly, engage in class, and perform better on assessments, and they are also more likely to have higher levels of self-esteem and a greater sense of control over their academic experiences. (Habib & Hossain, 2018; Khalandi, 2022; Varela, 2010). Researchers Habib and Hossain (2018) showed the psycho-emotional perspectives of students' sense of belonging, grades, academic achievement, and school satisfaction. Researcher Khalandi (2022) proved the positive relationship between students' sense of belonging and student GPA, attendance rate, and discipline. Researcher Varela (2010) stresses the importance of teachers providing a supportive and engaging learning environment in her research.

Incubating self-efficacy support for English Language Learners (ELLs) in school can help to improve their academic outcomes and overall success in education. Researchers have shown that a strong sense of self-efficacy can help ELLs increase participation in learning activities and, ultimately, academic achievement (Kim et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2021; Kudelich, 2018; Ossa, 2022). Researchers Lee et al. (2021) linked the psychometric properties by

confirming a positive relationship between self-efficacy. Researchers Lee et al. (2021) found

the crucial role of ELL students' self-efficacy in self-regulation processes while exploring the

relationships between Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulated learning strategies of ELLs.

Researcher Kudelich (2018) proved that teachers' training supports teachers to support ELL

students better and become a better understanding of the needs of ELLs in his study.

Limitations of the Research

The research on the topic of common perceptions of English Language Learners and

how to support English Language Learners' academic success in the school was limited to

studies that pertained to teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards ELLs. It did not include

specific research conducted on other teaching skills and pedagogy. While it is true that many

studies have focused on teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward English Language

Learners (ELLs), there is actually a significant body of research on other teaching skills and

pedagogical strategies that can support the academic success of ELLs in schools. For

example, research has been conducted on the effectiveness of content-based instruction,

which integrates language learning with academic content, and sheltered instruction, which

provides ELLs with simplified language and supports to access grade-level content. Other

research has explored the benefits of peer tutoring, collaborative learning, and culturally

responsive teaching practices in supporting ELLs' academic success. Additionally, there is

research on using technology to support ELLs, such as digital games and apps designed

specifically for language learning and integrating multimedia and visual aids in classroom

instruction. Overall, while teacher perceptions and attitudes are important, a growing body of

research explores other teaching skills and pedagogical strategies that can support ELLs'

academic success in schools.

The research was also limited to the three main methods talked about in this thesis,

shifting the perceptions, setting a higher expectation, supporting a sense of belonging, and

incubating the self-efficacy of ELLs. However, it is worth noting that many other approaches and strategies have been researched and found to be effective in supporting the academic success of English Language Learners. As I mentioned in my previous response, these could include content-based instruction, sheltered instruction, peer tutoring, collaborative learning, culturally responsive teaching, and the use of technology, among others. While the methods you mentioned are certainly important and have been shown to be effective, it's worth keeping in mind that there is a wealth of research on other strategies that can be used to support ELLs' academic success and that these approaches should be considered as part of a holistic and multifaceted approach to teaching and supporting English Language Learners in schools. Other methodologies within supporting language learners exist but were not covered within the scope of this thesis.

Implications for Future Research

There is potential for further study of a particular area that helps teachers to set an inclusive environment for ELLs. There is great potential for further research in the area of language policies, teacher attitudes and beliefs, and family and community engagement that can help teachers create a supportive and inclusive environment for ELLs. In addition to the research topics mentioned above, several other areas could also benefit from further study. For example, the research could explore the impact of peer relationships on ELLs' academic success and well-being in inclusive classrooms. This research could examine how teachers can support the development of positive peer relationships among ELLs and native English speakers and how peer relationships impact ELLs' sense of belonging and academic achievement. Another area that could benefit from the further study is the use of technology to support ELLs in the classroom. Research could explore how technology can provide additional language support for ELLs, such as through online language learning resources or digital storytelling tools. This research could also examine how technology can be used to

create a more inclusive learning environment for ELLs, such as through digital portfolios that allow ELLs to showcase their linguistic and cultural identities.

Implications for Professional Application

This thesis investigates and analyzes the commonly held perceptions of English language learners (ELLs) and their impact on students' learning. By examining the implications of these perceptions for professional application and identifying effective strategies for supporting ELLs in schools, the study sought to ensure that ELL students receive the necessary assistance to attain their full academic and personal potential within and outside the school setting.

The professional application of this thesis is multifaceted, as it provides a basis for educators and school administrators to make informed decisions regarding their policies and practices concerning ELLs. Specifically, by gaining a deeper understanding of the prevalent perceptions of ELLs and their impact on student learning, educators can work towards challenging any negative biases they may hold, creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for ELLs.

One concrete application of the study's findings is for educators to adopt culturally responsive teaching practices, incorporating ELLs' cultural and linguistic backgrounds into their curriculum and instructional methods. This approach fosters a more engaging and relevant learning experience for ELLs, promoting a sense of identity and belonging in the classroom.

In sum, this thesis serves as a valuable resource for educators and school administrators in enhancing their policies and practices regarding ELLs, ultimately ensuring that ELLs receive the requisite support to fulfill their academic and personal aspirations in school and beyond.

Conclusion

English Language Learners (ELLs) are a growing population in schools across the United States. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there were over 5 million ELL students in the U.S. in 2019, representing approximately 9.6% of the total student population. Despite this growth, ELL students often face unique challenges in the classroom, including language barriers, cultural differences, and limited access to resources and support.

One of the most common perceptions of ELL students is that they are not as academically capable as their English-speaking peers. This perception is often based on a misunderstanding of the language acquisition process and a lack of awareness of the strengths and skills that ELL students bring to the classroom. ELL students have a range of language proficiency levels, and many are highly skilled in other areas, such as math, science, or art. Educators need to recognize these strengths and provide opportunities for ELL students to showcase their skills and knowledge. Another common perception of ELLs is that they are a homogenous group with similar language and cultural backgrounds. In reality, ELL students come from a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and their experiences and needs may vary widely. Educators need to recognize this diversity and work to create a culturally responsive learning environment that honors each student's unique backgrounds and experiences. To support the academic success of ELL students, educators must adopt a range of strategies tailored to this population's unique needs.

This thesis aimed to identify effective strategies and approaches teachers can use to support ELLs' language and academic development, such as setting high expectations and creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment. The research highlights that educators must recognize their biases and actively challenge them to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for ELLs. This requires ongoing professional development and

opportunities for self-reflection. Researchers proved creating a supportive learning environment is a great factor in supporting ELLs' learning. Based on the research, higher expectations of ELLs support the greatest opportunity for ELLs to improve English proficiency while learning necessary content equivalent to students in mainstream classrooms. Shifted perspectives and higher expectations of ELLs house the students in a safe environment with a community of learners with similar objectives.

ELL students are a growing and diverse population in schools across the United States. Educators must recognize the unique challenges that ELL students face and develop strategies that are tailored to their needs. This requires ongoing professional development, cultural awareness, and a commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. By acknowledging and challenging biases, developing culturally responsive pedagogy, creating a supportive learning environment, fostering a sense of belonging, and advocating self-efficacy, educators can help ELL students achieve academic success and thrive in school.

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