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# English Language Teacher Resources for Supporting English Learners in Low Enrollment Settings

Kayla M. Tromborg
*Bethel University*, kmt97976@bethel.edu

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING ENGLISH

LEARNERS IN LOW ENROLLMENT SETTINGS


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KAYLA M. TROMBORG


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Thesis Advisor: Lisa Bekemeyer, M.A.

Program Director: Molly Wickam, Ph.D.

Acknowledgements

As a new-to-service teacher, I felt isolated and unprepared as the only EL teacher in a rural district. With no curriculum, and an extremely limited budget, it was difficult to find the resources needed to support my students. At the time, I was unaware of any low-cost, research-based resources to support my teaching. After working in a more rural area, I began working in the St. Cloud (MN) public school district, where I was given access to many new resources and support possibilities for English learners. I am forever grateful for the expert EL teachers and leaders whose mentorship, resource sharing, and belief in me as an aspiring teacher leader led me to become a fierce advocate for multilingual educational equity.

I dedicate this work to other new-to-service EL teachers, so that they can feel confident and be aware of affordable curricular options as they implement their own EL programming. To my students, you make every day a joy to teach, and push me to bring the best version of myself to teaching every day. To my husband, Marshall, for his confidence and wisdom during my first four years of teaching. To my grandparents, for their motivation and both financial and emotional support while I have been raising my babies and learning what it means to be a teacher.

Abstract

Many educators and stakeholders recognize that our English learners (ELs) need quality

support. However, districts and communities, especially with a low enrollment of ELs, lack the

resources necessary to fully meet the needs of ELs. There are many variables to consider when

putting together a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) for students who are in the

process of learning English as an additional language. At the center of EL programming,

high-quality, researched-based curriculum is of utmost importance, as well as adequate training

and mainstream curricular implementation of English language development structure by both

EL and mainstream content staff. Also included is a resource guide for EL teachers with the

hope that other EL teachers who lack access to resources will be able to utilize and build their

capacity of supporting ELs, especially in low enrollment settings.

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**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

Imagine it is the first day of school. The teacher is tasked to teach English to all of the students, and the classroom consists of students ranging from newcomers, who may not speak any English, to those who were born in the United States and are socially fluent in English. Throughout the day, there might be students from kindergarten all the way up to high school seniors that will be in the teacher's classroom. As the only EL teacher in the district, with no curriculum and an extremely limited budget, what low-cost resources would be needed to support these students? In districts with high-enrollment of English learners (ELs), there is ample funding to purchase and develop resources for supporting EL programming. In districts with low-enrollment of ELs, teachers need to be aware of affordable curricular options and be given adequate funding to implement programming that meets the needs of their diverse student population.

**Statement of the Problem**

Although funding is available for English learners (ELs), it is not clear if districts are using the money for services that directly impact students; this can affect whether teachers are able to acquire quality curriculum that could be differentiated for the varied needs of their learners. While districts are tasked with creating Language Instructional Educational Programs (LIEPs), English Language teachers face limited resources for acquiring cost-effective and researched-based curriculum to support programming. English Language teachers instruct K-12 students of all ages and from all World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) levels in a multitude of content areas. With a variety of programming models, the curriculum needs to support the English Language Development (ELD) teacher, newcomer teacher,

co-teacher, liaison, reading teacher, academic writing coach, remedial teacher, and tutor. Oftentimes, in low-enrollment settings, these roles are all wrapped up into one person.

In 2021, immigrants and children born in the U.S to immigrant parents composed nearly 26% of the U.S. Population (Migration Policy Institute, 2021). The growth in the immigrant population has also created a growth in EL funding across the public school systems. State funding provides aid to every student in public education, while ELs also generate additional aid from the state. Other resources from the state and federal governments supplement these resources so that educators can provide quality programming for ELs (Minnesota Department of Education, 2021). Federal (Title III) funding is granted to states based on statewide EL enrollment. These funds are then distributed to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) based on individual enrollment. If a LEA does not meet the minimum enrollment criteria, they can form a consortium with other smaller school districts to apply for funding. Therefore, districts and LEAs with the greatest number of students have the greatest amount of funding. Often, districts rely too heavily on federal funding to support ELs instead of integrating the needs of ELs into their state and LEA budgets. This may lead to an inadequate budget when considering factors such as time, collaboration, and structure to support both students and staff.

State and local funding are also sought in order to support ELs and staff (Bouffard, 2019). Although ELs must have equal access to education, they are "often concentrated in Title I schools that enroll predominantly low-income families and other ELs; such schools may be under-resourced, with high student-teacher ratios, high student enrollment, and comparatively low academic achievement" (Department of Education, 2017, p. 8).

Alternatively, schools with low student enrollment might be forced to spread their resources too thin. Schools need to be given the funding necessary to match the costs of

successful programming, and policies need to dictate what is required of districts to fund a successful EL program (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2015). With limitations on funding, school districts may need to choose between hiring certified bilingual teachers, EL teachers, providing culturally responsive professional development to staff, increasing support staff, supporting family engagement, or investing in the supports, resources, and materials needed to implement and maintain a strong LIEP plan.

Educators are guided by both state standards and WIDA to provide quality curriculum to ELs. Resources are provided by WIDA for academic support of ELs through research-based assessments, professional development, and educator assistance. The WIDA standards dictate what ELs can do at each EL level within the content areas. They are written to align and coordinate with state standards and promote collaboration between the English Language Development (ELD) teams and content area instructors. English Language teachers are required to design and scaffold classroom instruction and assessment tasks so the ELs can be successful (Minnesota Department of Education, 2020-21). English Learners achieving English fluency should not be a goal for EL staff alone. For learners to be most supported, EL staff and content staff, in addition to administration, need to be in constant collaboration to promote academic language development and content development and, eventually, English fluency.

Supporting ELs' academic development by expanding their language development is essential (Bouffard, 2019). English Learner teachers and content teachers must together systemically foster language development while still holding learners accountable for state standards. According to Bouffard (2019), "content teachers need to understand how to develop language and language teachers need to know how to integrate and support the content" (p. 1). While research has long supported this notion, it has still been difficult to put into practice. This

is especially true in districts with low enrollment of EL students. Educators need to examine the individual role of teachers in these districts and ensure that they understand their role in teaching and supporting EL language development. The duty to support EL language development also falls on administration, counselors, and other student support staff. It is important to ensure relevant professional training exists to support the varying needs of ELs, as well as fostering collaboration between administration and EL teachers. The success of ELs within districts cannot be left to teachers alone. It takes embedding best practices for ELs across the entire school system to ensure that instructional needs are being met.

Districts with larger EL populations seem to be more effective at embedding best practices for ELs than districts with low EL enrollments. In order for districts to be more effective, "they need to provide more time, coaching, structure, and support for teachers and administrators." (Bouffard, 2019, p. 29). Bouffard interviewed Delia Pompa, a senior fellow for education policy at the Migration Policy Institute; Pompa summarized what teachers need to do to help ELs well:

> The mindset in the district overall is important. If principals and assistant superintendents and others do not understand the language development processes that need to occur, it is hard for them to understand the budget needs, time constraints, and other conditions that enable or inhibit staff growth and student learning. (p. 29)

The specific academic needs and best practices for ELs should be included in decision making as a first thought, not as an afterthought or a modification, or treating ELs as a second group of learners. Professional development regarding ELs and defining each educator's role in serving ELs are critical.

**Overview of Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the components needed for ELs to be successful. This includes the role of educators and administrators as well as program and lesson design. This study identifies the opportunities to develop the best practices needed to achieve success for ELs. This includes early learning and support in content areas as well as type of instruction, such as inquiry-based, engaging prior knowledge, and building lessons based on the science of reading.

**Definition of Terms**

The following recurring terms are used throughout this study. These terms, as well as a brief definition, are provided below.

*Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS)*

ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 is a large-scale test for ELs to measure their academic and social English-language proficiency growth in a secure way. Students are tested on their listening, reading, speaking and writing proficiencies.

*Dual Language Learner (DLL)*

Dual Language Learner refers to children learning two or more languages at the same time, including those learning a second language while developing their first language.

*English Language Development (ELD)*

English Language Development refers to instruction for ELs in the domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening development.

*English Language Teacher*

English Language Teachers are those who provide instruction to help English learners develop proficiency in English.

*English Learner (EL)*

An EL is a student aged 3-21 who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English. These students have difficulties speaking, writing, reading, and/or understanding English so that they are not able to meet State academic standards (Department of Education, 2017).

### *Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP)*

A Language Instruction Educational Program is a guide to providing English learners with English Language Development based on their English proficiency levels.

### *Low-Enrollment School*

For the purpose of this paper, a low-enrollment school is considered to have less than 10% of the student population identified as an English Learner.

### *Recently Arrived English Learner (RAEL)*

A Recently Arrived English Learner is an English Learner enrolled for less than 12 months in a U.S School.

### *Sheltered English Language Development Teacher*

English Language Development Teachers provide the necessary language skill instruction to allow students to effectively communicate and comprehend the English Language.

### *Students with Disabilities*

Students with disabilities include students who have a disability under Section 504 or the Americans Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as students who meet the definition of "child with a disability" under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Department of Education, 2017).

### *Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)*

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education are English learners who have come to the United States after second grade, and who have two or fewer years of schooling than their peers when entering school. Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education are functioning at least two years below expected grade level in reading and math and may have a low-literacy level in their native language due to missed schooling.

**Guiding Questions**

Three research questions guided the study:

1. How do the roles of educators, administrators, and implementation of program and lesson design impact the success of ELs?

2. How does early learning, support in content areas, and types of instruction develop the best practices needed to achieve success for ELs?

3. What key strategies and resources are available for districts and EL teachers to support ELs?

**Conclusion**

The growth in the United States immigrant population has increased EL funding across school systems. However, throughout the United States there are teachers in low EL enrollment districts experiencing obstacles obtaining quality and affordable resources to teach their students. Guided by WIDA standards, EL and content teachers must work together to implement researched-based supports to develop the academic language of ELs.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Literature Search Procedures

To acquire literature and information for this thesis, searches of ERIC, Ebook Central Academic Complete, EBSCO MegaFILE, Academic Search Premier, Gale Virtual Reference Library, Google Scholar, and ProQuest were conducted from 2010-2024. The key words that were used in these searches included "English Language Learners," "role of educators and administrators," "program and lesson design," "support in content areas," "inquiry-based instruction," "prior knowledge," and "science of reading". This chapter will include the role of teachers and administrators, as well as highlight practical, available resources to support a range of services necessary to support EL instructional needs. Investigating and compiling the existing resources is critical to support new-to-service EL teachers as they also take on roles of programmers within their districts.

### Contextual Ideologies

The rising enrollment of Recently Arrived English Learners (RAELs) in U.S schools has created a need for language support in both mainstream and intervention classrooms (Umansky et al., 2018). Although many programs exist, the success of the English Learner (EL) program relies on the ability of the EL programmer to provide a research-based Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP). The LIEP must provide students with access to rigorous and grade level content that also supports their literacy development and meets them where they are as learners.

The types of sources identified for this review include quantitative, qualitative, and peer reviewed sources. This encompasses case studies that explore collaboration, limitations, and support needs amongst teachers and district leadership personnel. English Language teachers

serve as leaders and mentors to other staff in the building, which helps foster a collaborative environment while educating ELs. By implementing inquiry-based pedagogy as a strategy for supporting ELs, content and EL teachers can collaborate to build on prior knowledge of ELs to support their educational success and language development. The science of reading implemented as an intervention for struggling readers emphasizes strategically teaching reading using evidence-based practices to support the domain of reading for ELs.

**Role of Teachers**

The research studies by Esch (2018) and Bouffard (2019) show the importance of content, EL, and support staff throughout the building in supporting ELs. Esch (2018) and Bouffard (2019) also emphasize the professional development of the personnel, building cooperation, infrastructure (i.e. setting the EL schedules first), and collaboration between teachers.

### *The Importance of Staff Throughout the Building*

Esch (2018) investigated how to improve instruction for ELs through EL-focused teacher leadership. Esch examined the practices of two teachers from two separate schools and collected qualitative data regarding: "In what ways do EL-focused teacher leaders provide instructional leadership and facilitate a shared vision for the teaching and learning of ELL students?" (p. 157). The criteria for selection included being an EL-focused elementary school teacher-leader. The author hypothesized that EL-focused teacher leaders would play an important role in driving change regarding the teaching of ELs within their districts.

Esch (2018) collected data through observation and recordings while following the day-to-day activities in a yearlong study of the two focal teachers and their district. Data included meetings and interviews. All data was analyzed and coded to identify themes within

the data. Esch found that EL teacher leaders were instrumental to improving opportunities for ELs within the district through delegating the responsibility for EL success to all teachers and administrators rather than a small team of EL-focused staff.

Similarly, the Philadelphia Education Research Consortium (PERC) examined the challenges faced by Philadelphia area schools regarding academic success for ELs (Rowland et al., 2016). The study examined the areas of instruction, infrastructure, and collaboration as well as strategies for improving overall programming within these areas. The committee identified how to meet the needs of students while closing the achievement gap between ELs and their mainstream peers. This qualitative study included at least 20 interview participants from stakeholders including: the Deputy Chief of Multilingual Curriculum, Multilingual Managers, Curriculum Specialists, administrators, EL program leads, EL teachers, general education teachers, and a Bilingual Education Advisor.

The committee's research noted that ELs needed high quality instruction and predetermined support to achieve academic success (Rowland et al., 2016). The key infrastructure that was identified included personnel, instructional resources and supports, assessments, administration, and outreach. The brief detailed the issues found within their infrastructure and specific strategies for improvement.

Rowland et al. (2016) noted that trained and certified personnel working with ELs should "understand the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the students, patterns in second language acquisition, specific education needs, and strategies for involving ELs in meaningful ways in instructional activities" (p. 2). This includes hiring bilingual personnel, and teachers who utilize multilingualism as a scaffold within content and sheltered instruction classrooms. Additionally, personnel needs should match recommended LIEP ratios as provided by the state

so students can receive the support time that they need within sheltered classroom environments as well as within their content area classrooms.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies) (2017) discussed supporting the success of ELs within the classroom so that they find success in American society.  Research revealed that providing literacy component instruction, academic language instruction during content instruction, visual and verbal supports, peer mentorship, multilingualism, and additional small group enhanced intervention supports are all essential for ELs' success in grades K-5. In grades 6-8, the first language (L1) of the EL should be used to develop academic English through collaborative learning opportunities and instruction should be at the students' grade level.

The study by the National Academies (2017) also found that overall, there were no significant differences in outcomes between bilingual programming and English only programming. However, the review found that ELs in bilingual programs have a higher likelihood of becoming proficient in English and meeting ELA standards. They also found that ELs in dual-language programs outpaced ELs in other programs. Dual language programs allow for ELs to collaborate with English speaking students, while still receiving instruction in their native language. This helps students learn English and be a productive member of the learning community, while also achieving grade level standards within the content area. The review additionally noted that students' development of L1 may provide better opportunities for knowledge transfer to the students' second or additional language.

Additionally, the National Academies (2017) investigated oral proficiency development in ELs because of the importance of oral proficiency for success within the content areas. The review found that instruction in phonics, vocabulary, listening comprehension, and narrative

skills bolster oral proficiency. Verbal interaction between ELs and native speaking peers was effective for advancing oral proficiency. Immediate feedback and focusing on the domain of speaking in instruction helped develop English proficiency.

The National Academies (2017) also researched district wide practices that were beneficial to the progress of ELs. They found that universal design and a culture of high expectations for learners led to higher proficiency levels amongst ELs. The district level cultural shifts included shared responsibility and accountability for learners and learning, professional learning communities that promoted instructional development, and a mindset shift of determining what students need for success within the classroom. Students were expected to work with grade level materials, and were given intensive instructional support as needed in addition to ELD classes. Additionally, the committee found that investment in low-cost preschool, curriculum redesign focused on equity, and collaboration amongst stakeholders was essential.

The study by the National Academies (2017) noted that effective practices for teachers included providing explicit instruction in vocabulary, reading comprehension, fluency, and phonics. It also emphasized developing general and academic vocabulary knowledge, grammar structures, language functions, and language discourse. It recommended providing visual and verbal support such as short videos, embedded visuals, and graphic organizers. They also encouraged providing opportunities for peer assisted and verbal interactions with peers in order for EL students to clarify content and ask questions. Finally, they recommended capitalizing on students' home languages and cultural assets.

The National Academies (2017) also investigated the impact of diversity of educators in the education system. In general, research "shows that ELs are better able to transfer their

knowledge and skills from their first language (L1) to English when the L1 is spoken in the classroom" (p. 435). Hiring bilingual educators and staff may improve educational outcomes. It is also apparent that staff need more training on teaching ELs in order to best support their learning.

### *Collaboration Among Staff Members*

Along the same lines, Vintan and Gallagher (2019) investigated collaborative relationships among four EL teachers and their general education counterparts. They examined barriers and best practices for improving collaborative efforts. This qualitative study followed four EL teachers as they furthered their connections with general education teachers by using interviews, observations, and artifact analysis. The data was coded and analyzed, and three themes emerged: Collaboration was an important tool, there were many barriers to effective collaboration, and that more accessible and usable resources are needed to supplement ELL instruction.

Across the research by Vintan and Gallagher (2019), EL teachers as educational leaders in their schools and districts were at the forefront of promoting EL success. English Language teachers who shared their leadership strategies and ownership of EL learning with administrators, general education teachers, and staff in their buildings found the most success with driving positive change regarding the instructional methods, climate, and resources for educating ELs in their respective classrooms. While collaboration was found to be important, other critical components included having trained EL teachers, equity-forward administrators, access to high quality and appropriately leveled curriculum, and appropriate assessment strategies.

Vintan and Gallagher (2019) recommended teacher collaboration as a strategy for supporting ELs. Collaboration can be implemented in a variety of ways, including co-planning, push-in support, and co-teaching. Within co-planning, EL teacher mentorship of content teachers can be achieved through sharing of ESL methods and materials. Additionally, EL teachers can support content teachers with modifying curriculum, and implementing individual language plans.

Vintan and Gallaher (2019) found that collaboration is shifting into in-classroom support for ELs rather than the pull-out model. Pushing into classrooms for support offers more collaboration between the EL teacher and content teachers, as well as accommodates the language-based needs of ELs within the content classroom environment. When EL teachers are in the classroom or co-planning with content teachers, they can modify tasks for ELs and identify barriers and solutions so students can access and learn the curriculum without taking away from the immersive English experience that students need to learn a new language.

Vintan and Gallager (2019) also found that when EL teachers push into the classroom, they are more likely to share resources with the content teacher, and support accessibility for the EL. By integrating first language usage into the curriculum, students can use their first language literacy skills to participate in grade level standards. One way to support first language accessibility for EL and content teachers is to co-plan using shared documents through Google Drive. Content teachers can share their unit plan with the EL teacher, and the EL teacher can accommodate for the EL without having to step foot into the classroom or use common prep time. The EL teacher might use Google Drive to accommodate ELs through translations, vocabulary explanations, or modified assignments. Through Google Drive and other means, EL

teachers can put together a bank of resources or toolkits for content teachers that can be used again and again.

**Role of Administrators**

An interview with Delia Pompa discussed education policy for ELs. She emphasized the crucial importance of overall district mindset: if administrators do not understand the complex processes of language development, then it is difficult for them to understand the "budget needs, time constraints, and other conditions that enable or inhibit staff growth and student learning." (as cited in Bouffard, 2019, p. 29). Pompa discussed types of funding available for ELs and how they should be used to improve the quality of teaching for ELs. This guide also discusses educational development and socioeconomic needs for a broader community serving the ELs including counselors, support staff, LEAs, parents, and other stakeholders.

Pompa identified a critical point for staff: "it's not enough for all staff to have knowledge about English learners and how they learn. Everyone also needs to know their individual role in supporting these students" (as cited in Bouffard, 2019, p. 29). Content teachers need to also be language development teachers for ELs, and EL teachers need to support the content that students are learning in their mainstream classes. This concept can be more difficult for districts with lower EL enrollment. Districts can re-shape their practices when it comes to training content teachers in language development through the curriculum that they purchase or develop. When purchasing or developing curriculum, the needs of ELs should be addressed and supported within, without needing additional resources as an afterthought of support.

*Building Infrastructure*

Administration should prioritize finding qualified bilingual and/or EL staff to support the ELs in their district so that bilingual programming can be integrated with fidelity (Rowland et al., 2016). Teacher caseloads need to be manageable and research-based when it comes to the number of students that EL teachers are serving, so that students can receive the support that they need. In addition to academic support, ELs also need to be supported with adjusting to school culture in the U.S., socio-emotional needs, basic literacy instruction, and filling in gaps in knowledge.

Districts also need to provide educators with systemic and research-based curriculum that allows EL teachers and content teachers to support the content and language development of their ELs. This should include materials that are specifically made to support and serve ELs as well as access to bilingual material for teachers and students. Rowland et al. (2016) found that online resources, such as Lexia, were an intervention solution for supporting language growth and reading development for students with low English proficiency levels.

Rowland et al. (2016) found the need for districts to implement a data tracking system to monitor the progress of ELs and their English proficiency. The ACCESS test is an adaptive test that responds to EL students' proficiency within the domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Quintana-Toomey, 2018). The test is administered to all ELs from K-12th grade and it is designed according to the WIDA English proficiency standards of Social Language, Language Arts, Language of Math, Language of Science, and Language of Social Studies. Administrators and EL Teachers are given the test scores, resources from WIDA, and other research-based curricula that help EL teachers identify instructional strategies for supporting the ELs at their given English proficiency level within the domains and grade-levels. The test is used to monitor the progress of ELs.

Rowland et al. (2016) found that some teachers felt that using the ACCESS test results as a primary method of data tracking led to challenges with timely planning of language supports, as well as that the testing results were not accurately portraying the English proficiency levels of their learners. By tracking the progress of ELs using a variety of measures including observed skills within the domains, language learning needs, content learning needs, social or emotional needs, classroom engagements, in-class work and assignments, out of class work and assignments, make up works, and classroom assessments. The ELs can be more accurately identified for Special Education services and other tier 2 and tier 3 supports when necessary. Tracking and monitoring a variety of data points taken in by various stakeholders such as: the students themselves, administrators, content teachers, EL teachers, and family members could also increase collaboration amongst teachers and staff.

Rowland also identified that qualified staff need to prioritize ELs when planning academic EL services, schedules, and content intervention. The ELs' schedules should be prioritized so that students can get the EL courses they need, as well as content and enrichment classes that prioritize push-in intervention and grouping with same-language peers. When EL student schedules are completed first, students have a higher likelihood of being enrolled in classes that meet their language development needs, as well as their unique timeline for meeting graduation requirements (Rowland et al., 2016).

**Best Practices for English Learners**

Best practices for EL success include supporting early learning opportunities, supporting ELs in the content areas, and professional development. All educators must integrate English language development strategies within the content areas, and should focus on inquiry-based pedagogy, multimodalities, and opportunities for multilingualism. An emphasis should be

placed on building off of prior knowledge and ensuring that students are being instructed on reading development through explicit evidence-based instruction.

***Early Learning Opportunities***

The early learning period from birth to elementary school is a critical time of development for all students, but especially those who come from families that are low-income or disabled or include immigrants, ELs, and dual language learners (DLLs) (Department of Education, 2017). The Department of Education (2017) discussed resources for EL success in early learning centers and elementary schools. They provided resources to better serve EL students and their families and emphasized the importance of promoting educational equity. Early learning opportunities are critical, especially for immigrant students. In low EL enrollment areas, families may face barriers such as affordability of early learning programming and accessibility to the programming.

In order to boost immigrant family participation in early learning programs, the Department of Education (2017) recommended districts need to eliminate barriers for accessibility of the programming. By simplifying the enrollment process, districts can make it easier for families to access early learning programming. Districts can simplify the enrollment process by decreasing the number of forms, having clear requirements, availability of information in many languages, offering translation services and enrollment assistance, and providing transportation for the children attending the programming.

The programming offered should be welcoming to all, and culturally inclusive so that staff can build trust and rapport with the families. A welcoming environment can be fostered by acknowledging that some families may be hesitant to trust government agencies, respecting and demonstrating diversity through the classroom and school environment, offering events and

support in the families native language, offering cultural events such as story reading, music, and dance that represent the different cultural background, and showing empathy and actively listening to family concerns with a focus of collaboration and support.

The Department of Education (2017) stated that for success in early learning programming, districts can strengthen relationships with multilingual families by increasing outreach to build a sense of community between school districts and families. Outreach includes strong relationships with immigrant-serving organizations and social service agencies as well as hosting community events, posting translated fliers within the community, and investing and increasing bilingual and community outreach programs. Districts should help build relationships among the schools, the students, their families, and community organizations such as churches, medical clinics, local businesses, and other community leadership. Districts should also partner with community advocates and services to ensure that students and families have resources to support the family holistically. By investing in bilingual staff who focus on family and community outreach, families can build trust within the community, and have their basic needs met while eliminating barriers to education.

A section of this guide also discussed effective instructional strategies while providing small group instruction to ELs struggling with ELD. The content of the small group instruction should "target students' identified needs" (Department of Education, 2017, p. 24). The groups should consist of three to five students. Time should be spent on basic foundational reading skills if applicable and also on developing vocabulary and comprehension strategies. Time should also be spent further investigating students' needs with an awareness of the language acquisition process to determine if they "require additional services or qualify as a student with a disability under IDEA" (Department of Education, 2017, p. 24). Instruction should promote

bilingualism and biliteracy using research based programming models, and staff should be trained on cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as how to address any harassment that students and families may face.

Districts should engage families so that families can support their students at home during the early learning process (Department of Education, 2017). Districts can provide resources for families to talk, sing, and read in their native language or second language with students, provide learning opportunities for families to engage in with students, host family nights in the school community where staff can connect with families, involve families in decision making and curriculum development, offer trainings on child development, and offer opportunities for parents to become leaders within the district.

The Institute of Education Sciences and the U.S. The Department of Education created a guide of best practices for teaching academic content and literacy to ELs based on research findings (Baker et al., 2021). The research found four recommendations for supporting the language and literacy skills within the areas of academic vocabulary, content-area instruction, writing instruction, and small group intervention for struggling ELs.

The first recommendation from the Institute of Education Sciences is for teachers to teach academic vocabulary words for several days using multiple modalities (Baker et al., 2021). Five to eight academic vocabulary words should be chosen from a short informational text. In addition to teaching the vocabulary, teachers should model strategies to support independently identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words. Strategies might include teaching the meaning of individual word parts and cognates. The text chosen should be at grade level, and the teacher should read the text aloud to begin the lesson, while scaffolding the text to support English learner understanding. The text chosen should be intriguing and provide

opportunity for sharing of different perspectives. English learners struggle with abstract academic vocabulary and with multiple-meaning words, so an emphasis should be made to incorporate both word types into lesson development. The vocabulary words chosen from the text should be essential to understanding the text, frequently used in the text, words that cross multiple content areas, words with multiple meanings, words with affixes, and words that have cognates to native language found in the classroom. Teachers should provide students with student friendly definitions, examples, non-examples, and concrete representations using graphic organizers such as word maps. Teachers should provide students with questions that might include matching definitions, or open-ended questions and require students to explain why they chose each definition.

The second recommendation from the Institute of Education Sciences (2021) is to teach oral and written English instruction, content-related vocabulary, and general academic vocabulary within the content-areas. Teachers should use a variety of tools, which may include videos that are five minutes or shorter, graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams or cause/effect organizers, and visuals such as pictures, experiments, models, and demonstrations to help students understand the content. Students should be given structured opportunities to verbally discuss the new content with their peers each day and should be given opportunities to extend their learning through writing. Teachers should provide students with dictionaries and glossaries so that students can understand the meaning of other unfamiliar words that they might find throughout the lessons. Throughout discussion time, students can engage in role play, discussion of academic vocabulary meaning, think-pair-share, paired reading, summarizing, predicting, or answering teacher given questions together with a partner while supporting their answers with evidence from the text. Teachers should provide a variety of sentence frames and starters that

support developing each key area of the expected writing submission as well as model examples of writing.

The third recommendation from the Institute of Education Sciences (2021) is to provide students with frequent and structured opportunities to develop written literacy skills by providing content related writing assignments that focus on developing academic language using evidence from texts. The assignments should be scaffolded to help students initiate and develop their writing and should include opportunities for students to work and discuss with their peers throughout the writing process. The teacher should assess student writing so that they can support instructional needs and provide constructive feedback. Students should be required to use the academic vocabulary they are learning in their writing activities. The teacher should introduce writing routines to help students organize their writing, and guide students through the drafting process. The teacher should also explicitly teach usage of academic vocabulary, transitional and linking words, and key features of the targeted writing style. Teachers should provide students with sentence frames and starters to guide the discussion process between peers. Students should work with peers to discuss spelling concerns, sentence structure, brainstorming, organization, completing graphic organizers, identifying main ideas, and citing text evidence. Teacher assessment and feedback should primarily focus on the goal of the lesson, rather than a complete evaluation of the writing submission.

The fourth recommendation from the Institute of Education Sciences (2021) is to use assessment to identify students to teach using targeted small group intervention for students who are struggling with ELD and literacy (Baker et al., 2021). The groups should consist of three to five students, and should include basic foundational reading skills, vocabulary development, and listening and reading comprehension strategies. Previously learned content should be

reviewed frequently in a scaffolded way to support memory. Teachers might use modeling and think-alouds to support students with instructional tasks, immediate corrective feedback, frequent checks for understanding, and frequent review of previously learned material.

***Supporting English Learners in the Content Areas***

In 2019, Bauler et al. found that core practices that support writing sensitive to the development process of the EL student, modeling, and opportunities for verbal interaction within the classroom provided essential support that identified strengths and needs of the students while also supporting the content and language development of the students. The study followed two teachers in a first-grade classroom in New York for one academic school year. The teachers involved in Bauler et al.'s study also interacted with families in the form of a survey to gather information on students' strengths, personalities, academic progress, and needs.

Bauler et al.'s research (2019) found that educators can support ELs by integrating ELD into content areas. When students are supported with ELD in the content areas, they have a more authentic environment to practice the academic content as well as the language development content that they are learning (Bauler et al., 2019). Through co-teaching between an equal partnership of a content teacher and EL teacher, ELs can receive the academic language support that they need while also receiving the ELD scaffolding that they need. When shifting to a co-teaching model, the instructional focus of the classroom also needs to shift from a complete academic focus to the integration of a language focus. During planning, the co-teachers must establish their individual roles and responsibilities in the classroom. English learner teachers can collaborate with the content teachers to help scaffold academic writing, and other technical skills required of the domain that support the state standards when it comes to the features of academic language.

The teachers involved in Bauler et al.'s case study used teacher modeling between the EL teacher and content teacher to teach writing strategies and examples. After modeling, the students had time to engage verbally using scaffolds and resources provided by the teachers. After working with peers, the students had time to apply the newly learned skills independently or with a partner. The turn and talk time helped learners engage prior knowledge, build schema, and develop academic language (Bauler et al., 2019).

Some additional strategies of scaffolding and support for integration into the content areas include providing "short videos, visuals, and graphic organizers" as well as "explicitly teaching the content specific academic vocabulary, as well as the general academic vocabulary that supports it" (Department of Education, 2017, p. 24). Students also need to engage in daily conversations about the content in small groups, as well as write about the content to promote understanding. Language support should be given to students to support writing development. Small group language intervention should be provided when targeted with a focus on vocabulary development, reading, and listening comprehension.

### *Professional Development*

Rowland (2016) studied the EL professional development in four school districts across Philadelphia and found that staff requested professional development on how to support and integrate ELs into the classroom as well as the school community.  Through interviews with the Chief of Multilingual Curriculum Programs, two multilingual focus groups, and interviews with administrators and program leads, he found that teachers would like more time to collaborate with EL specialists so that content teachers can better support ELs. One challenge that staff faced is having a deficit lens when it comes to viewing ELs. Rowland found that professional development that is asset-based, but also addresses needs, is necessary to better understand what

prior knowledge students have that teachers can access, while still supporting their academic needs. By having a community focused mindset when it comes to integrating ELs into the classroom, students and teachers can feel more connected and supported within the school environment. By investing in community building, schools can lift up ELs as leaders within the classroom, incorporate their culture and heritage, and support academic growth.

In addition to quality personnel, all teachers need ongoing EL professional development. This professional development should include strategies for bilingually supporting ELs, and how to foster an asset and growth mindset within teachers so that they can uphold high standards for their ELs while preserving cultural integrity and fostering a multilingual community not only socially, but academically within classroom spaces (Rowland et al., 2016). Instructional resources and support should be "designed to ensure adequate progress toward both academic proficiency in English and achievement of content standards" (Rowland et al., 2016, p. 4).

### *Types of Instruction for English Learners*

The type of instruction used for supporting academic and language development is critical in both the content classroom and ELD classroom. Inquiry-based learning, building on EL student's prior knowledge, and using structured opportunities for ELs in the classroom are all effective strategies shown to challenge and support ELs.

*Inquiry-based Learning.* Early and Kendrick (2020) discussed contemporary research regarding opportunities and challenges for inquiry-based approaches to EL language, literacy, and content learning in today's K-12 curriculum. There are many types of inquiry-based approaches, including problem, project, case, and design based as well as scientific inquiry.

Today's inquiry-based approaches put an emphasis on critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. English learner educators must also include facilitating active participation, multi-modality, as well as "personalized learning that promotes positive personal and cultural identity" (Early & Kendrick, 2020, p. 142). Eight educators with expertise regarding language and literacy curriculum and instruction were interviewed to generate data regarding the potential of inquiry-based learning. Inquiry-based pedagogy enhanced ELs' understanding of content knowledge by providing opportunities to "build on background knowledge, access content knowledge, and represent their understandings through preferred multimodal pathways" (Early & Kendrick, 2020, p. 145). This research included play-based, interactive, and collaborative learning. Inquiry-based pedagogy also showed the importance of language and literacy while promoting respect for diversity. Finally, it allowed for learners to utilize online tools for content learning while amplifying the voices of ELs.

A key piece to Early and Kendrick's (2020) research included that in addition to multimodality, inquiry-based instruction also should be multilingual. Inquiry based learning allows for the learner to be at the center of knowledge acquisition and embraces all facets of the learner's identity as resources. This type of multimodality approach can also better support Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) students, who could use voice translation in order to construct their written responses.

**_Building on an English Learner's Prior Knowledge._** Instructional practices devoted to connecting to ELs' prior knowledge can lead to positive academic outcomes amongst ELs (Johnson, 2016). Student motivation is tightly connected to student growth in education. Intrinsic motivation of students is essential and can be fostered through greater connection between teachers, students, and families. Engagement can be fostered amongst students through

the instructional practice of personalized learning. Personalized learning allows for students to integrate their background knowledge into the new content that they are learning.

Johnson (2016) discovered that teachers can also integrate home communication, home visits, engaging family, and student-chosen activities to motivate and build a sense of community in the classroom. By integrating students' cultural and background experiences into education, students will be able to bring their interests and experiences into the classroom to achieve academic goals. This will help foster an asset-based approach to viewing ELs and put an emphasis on fostering the social emotional aspect of students and its effect on motivation.

Johnson's (2016) study focused on two ELs and their personalized learning project within a content area. The study followed how student involvement in the development of classroom activities impacted their motivation and investment when integrating the student's prior knowledge and cultural background. The teachers acted as facilitators, and were given technical support, but students were expected to be leaders in preparing their personalized learning projects. The teachers also took time to do home visits with the two students and their families to learn more about the socio-economic background of the families, as well as their personal interests and successes. By conducting the home visits, the teachers were better equipped to prepare lessons and implement strategies to support each individual student's needs. The findings of the study found that both students were very engaged within the personalized learning project and appreciated a role of leadership within the classroom. The students enjoyed the family involvement of their personalized learning projects, and there was a noticeable shift within the students' academic progress and engagement in future learning. The students also showed increased focus and confidence after the personalized learning process (Johnson, 2016).

***Using Structured Opportunities for English Learners Within Classrooms.*** Mainstream teachers should consider their English language learners before creating lessons for their ELs. The program director at the Center for Applied Linguistics discussed how mainstream teachers can effectively develop lessons that support ELL needs (Moore, 2016). Teachers must build in explicit teaching and support of oral and written language that relates to the content that they are teaching, but that also is supported by giving students ample time to practice using the content that they are learning within the domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They should also include vocabulary lessons that support understanding and communication regarding the content covered. The vocabulary lesson should not just focus on word meaning, but also on language forms and functions. Teachers should focus on giving EL students structured opportunities to use and practice the language that they are acquiring in the classroom within each domain, and with support of their native language. When planning the classroom environment, students should be grouped heterogeneously based on English Language Proficiency.

However, in order for mainstream teachers to incorporate these practices, they need resources and varied forms of support from their district, and from within their building (Moore, 2016). Resources that mainstream teachers may need access to include translation support, teacher or student developed dictionaries, newcomer centers, and access to training on instructional practices that support ELs. Mainstream teachers of ELs should receive peer coaching, and collaboration with an EL-focused specialist to ensure that curriculum and lesson design is aligned with students' language acquisition needs.

Dictionaries that are created specifically to support the classroom content that students are learning can be essential to the content acquisition process. Dictionaries should include

space for student or teacher placed images, sample sentences, bilingual translations, and synonyms. They should also include paraphrasing and vocabulary structures (Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic, 2016).

Teachers should be trained on instructional practices that reinforce interaction amongst peers, and between teachers and students, as explicit interaction with the content is critical for language acquisition. Interaction focused supports such as think pair share, circle chats, Generating Interactions between Schemata and Text (GIST), contextualizing, text charting, using past experiences, connecting experiences to text, double-entry journals, restating or paraphrasing in-text vocabulary, explicitly teaching roots and affixes, and lesson plan templates are just some examples of instructional practices that teachers can use to support interaction with the content. Moore recommended having students respond to reading complex texts that represent different cultures in dialects. The summaries should be in their first language, which the student can then translate to English (Moore, 2016).

### *Science of Reading*

Another instrumental foundation of EL programming is intervention involving the science of reading. The science of reading is a research-based approach to teaching reading using evidence-based practices that support the process that the brain uses for literacy development. Although there are many curricula and materials that support the science of reading, in reality, it is an instructional shift that focuses on reading development instruction through the teaching of letters, sounds, and common patterns as well as through identifying the relationships between letters and sounds in English (Hiebert, 2023). Through the explicit instruction of common patterns in English and increased repetition, students can build automaticity to become more fluent readers. Students apply these new language patterns to a

decodable text after teacher-led practice and manipulation of the patterns. As students master foundational skills, teachers can begin to teach the morphology of words to increase reading comprehension.

Hiebert (2023) indicated that not only are personnel needed with the knowledge of these best practices, but districts need to make materials and content accessible for ELs. This may include academic templates, sentence frames, translation cards, direct translation or translation devices, grade level content within lower leveled texts, and bilingual texts.

As teachers, there are two main methods of teaching phonics instruction (Castles et al., 2019). The synthetic approach refers to teaching grapheme-phoneme correspondence and blending phonemes. Students then apply new and previously learned skills to a context based reading where they can practice decoding words as well as reading comprehension. As students become more skilled readers, teachers should integrate morphological instruction, so that learners can utilize prefixes and suffixes to unlock the meaning of advanced academic language.

For ELs, there is an additional challenge of learning to read in a language that the learner is still learning to speak and understand (Goldenberg, 2020). Furthermore, ELs have additional literacy-related challenges. Low socioeconomic status may have affected literacy acquisition in their home language, as preschoolers or early learners. Learners from low socioeconomic status may also have had a lack of materials or resources.  Lack of resources when learning a first language can inhibit language transfer when acquiring an additional language.

Goldenberg (2020) advises that while ELs still need to learn alphabetic principles, extra time may need to be spent on letter names and sounds, phonological awareness, and developing oral language and vocabulary. Effective reading lessons still focus on grapheme-phoneme correspondence, and sight word irregularity, however there must be an additional focus on oral

and written comprehension as it relates to the ELs. An additional focus on vocabulary words and meanings, the process of speech, and the syntactic binding of letters in English is critical to language acquisition. Phonics instruction for ELs should include bilingual instruction to support the literacy instruction and deepen understanding of the phonics lesson. However, in addition to bilingual instruction, students should also be encouraged to discuss the text bilingually while they are learning the English language. English learners should be led in small groups or paired discussions of the books they are reading, vocabulary they are learning, as well as assisted with decoding while they are reading decodable texts. Immediate correction feedback should be given to students for errors. Reading instruction for ELs should be accompanied by illustrations, gestures, models, read-alouds, and listening comprehension activities. Teachers can support ELs in reading comprehension by pairing the instruction with relevant videos, organizers, scaffolded discussions, cognates, and translations to enhance the literacy development process while still maintaining a focus on grade level, high-interest content and vocabulary that is culturally relevant and appropriate.

<div align="center">**Key Strategies and Resources for Supporting English Learners**</div>

**District Resources**

At the district level, there are many resources and tools available to support EL departments and mainstream teachers. Resources such as ELLevation, LIEPs, WIDA, and promoting early literacy experiences for families at home can help students access grade level content in a supported way so that they can learn and grow.

***ELLevation***

The resource ELLevation is an online platform for educators containing strategies for teachers to support ELs (ELLevation, 2024). The platform is divided into three broad sections:

management, strategies, and math. The management platform supports EL data, goal setting, monitoring, and planning, including options for an individualized plan for each student. These plans can be managed by an EL teacher, but monitored by many stakeholders, including mainstream teachers.

The strategies' section provides professional development for teachers in supporting language acquisition among the domains and within different contexts. The professional development is excellent for EL teachers and content teachers. Educators can search for strategies specific to a class (for example, language arts, math, science), or a domain (reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking). The platform gives real life training examples, as well as graphic organizers and other support so that the teacher can implement the learning seamlessly into their own classroom. The graphic organizers are adaptable, so that they can be modified to fit a variety of grade levels and content areas. The math specific section of ELLevation focuses on academic language in math by frontloading key vocabulary concepts and providing scaffolded practice that support the domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (ELLevation, 2024).

### *Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP)*

Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) templates are available in many different states through the Department of Education. They provide guidance for how schools can adhere to state statutes and federal requirements by describing the services that they are offering to students identified as ELs. The templates break down the process of creating an LIEP plan, and guide districts to ensure that all criteria are met within the LIEP in accordance with research based best practices (Minnesota Department of Education, 2020).

### *World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)*

World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) has redesigned their ELD standards framework to better support teachers and learners (WIDA, 2024). The framework covers the Big Ideas, ELD Standards, Key Language Uses, and Proficiency Level Descriptors. The ELD standards connect language development and content, with examples across the disciplines for supporting ELs.

The Key Languages Uses section helps educators focus on common language students need to meet content standards. These are cross-discipline uses that should be embedded within all the disciplines. The proficiency level descriptors help educators understand where EL students are at, as well as what growth they are making within their language development.  The framework book is affordable, available for free online or via a printed version priced at $40 (WIDA, 2024).

There are many additional free resources and support for EL teachers through WIDA. By creating an online profile, one has access to webinars, resources, and professional learning such as engaging newcomers, developing language for learning, math, engaging ELs in science, equity focused professional learning communities, and home languages in the classroom.

*Supporting Literacy at Home*

Supporting early literacy can be done through recommendation of resources such as Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a program that families can enroll in to receive free books in the mail until age five (Parton, 2024). Many of the books are bilingual, and families receive a new book each month. Families can apply online, and the website includes translations to aid multilingual families in application completion.

**Teacher Resources**

*Templates*

There are also many resources available for EL teachers. Templates can be provided by the teacher for student completion. Templates should include images, sample sentences, translations, and synonyms. Teachers can restate and paraphrase key vocabulary to demonstrate word meaning (Moore, 2016).

One resource for implementing dictionary templates in the classroom is Show Me, an application for the iPad or iPhone (Show Me, 2024). It functions as an interactive whiteboard. Teachers can record over whiteboard tutorials, easily adding images and notes to share online with students.

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) includes lesson plans and activities to help support ELs in the mainstream and sheltered classrooms (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2024). Many of the plans are templates that teachers can modify to fit their personal lessons and individual student's needs.

### Diverse Texts

***Epic!*** Providing students with diverse texts is another strategy that EL teachers and content teachers should use to support EL students. Texts should include diverse cultural backgrounds and dialects of English to support ELL engagement and representations (Moore, 2016).

Epic School is an online website (with applications available) that offers students and teachers free access to over 20,000 leveled books on weekdays from 7am-3pm (Epic, 2024). The website includes non-fiction and fiction books, including graphic novels, audiobooks, and educational videos. There are beginner reading books all the way up to chapter books.

Epic offers books and videos in English, Spanish, French, and Chinese. The books available are from well-known publishers including Scholatica, National Geographic, and

Andrews McMeel Universal. Teachers are given access to reading habits of students and can assign and share books with their classes or individual students in their classrooms. There are also reading comprehension quizzes available and a built-in dictionary for student use (Epic, 2024).

*Saddleback Books.* Saddleback Publishers offer library options for EL and newcomer teens (Saddleback Educational Publishing, 2024). These books are also a great option for SLIFE students, as these stories are created for older students who are at or below a second grade reading level. Their book options include non-fiction and fiction texts with stories of interest for teenagers, in a chapter book format with age-appropriate pictures and topics. Books are available in sets starting at about $100, with many components and options available to supplement.

*Storybooks Canada.* Storybooks Canada is a free resource, with 40 African stories available in over 30 different languages (Global Storybook Project, 2018). Most of the stories are folktales that can be sorted according to reading level. Students are able to choose the language they want to read in and can listen to an authentic voice read the story to them in each language while the students follow along with the written text.

### High Standards for English Learners

Content and EL Teachers must maintain high standards for EL students. This can be achieved through a variety of language-rich strategies and routines such as providing students access to complex texts and introducing students to a variety of language routines (Moore, 2016). The language should be scaffolded by the teacher so that students can access the texts.

*Language Routines.* Key vocabulary and language instructional routines are essential for supporting ELs (Moore, 2016). Using dictionaries, paraphrasing, and teaching root words

and affixes are strategies for teachers to use to support key content vocabulary. One resource

that teachers can implement as a language routine are circle chats. Teachers provide students

with questions, and students pair up and discuss in the form of an inner and outer circle.  After

each question, students rotate to meet with a new partner.

    An additional resource that teachers can implement as a language routine is Generating

Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST) (Moore, 2016). Students increase clarity through

discussion of a text in small groups. Students predict and use text charts to create a one sentence

summary of their reading. One reporter from each group is selected by the teacher to share the

one sentence summary with the rest of the class.

    Nominalization can also be used to support students, where students turn verbs or

adverbs into nouns verbally with a partner to better understand the processes that they are

learning in the classroom (Moore, 2016). Text charting can also be used. With text charting,

students use who, what, where, when, and how to create connections between their prior

knowledge and the text that they are reading. Students make predictions before, during, and

after reading the text to increase clarity in their comprehension. With the Think-Pair-Share

strategy, students are given a question and think time and they respond independently. Then,

students discuss their answers to the questions with a partner. The teacher then selects pairs to

share their answers with the rest of the class (Moore, 2016).

    *Math at Home.* In regards to math intervention, Math at Home is an online resource for

learners who may need extra practice on specific math concepts (Math at Home, 2024). This

website provides practice for students on K-5 math concepts in a game setting. It is a free

resource, and each game states what concept and grade level topic that the game is supporting.

This could be a great support for K-12 teachers supporting students on grade level topics or

individualized basic math support intervention. Math at Home is appropriate for ELs because it encourages discourse regarding the mathematical process, introduces a predictable math routine for learners, provides math practice in a scaffolded way, and encourages problem solving in a variety of ways so that there is not just one correct answer to each problem. Students are also encouraged to draw models and leave voice recordings explaining their thinking, which could be done bilingually.

### Scaffolding Native Languages in All Classrooms

Allowing participation in the students' native language supports English language acquisition and supports student identities. Lesson development should encourage connections between the students' personal lives and the content. Students should have access to a bilingual teacher, staff member, or student to help with translation of key information from content areas, in addition to translation technology and translated or translatable materials.

***Google Translate.*** The Google Translate application for mobile devices or iPads is able to do text translation, tap to translate, offline translation, photo translation, and translation of real time conversations or audio (Google Translate, 2024). The instant camera translation is able to translate text in images instantly by just pointing the camera. This includes written text in books, on whiteboards, on another screen, in a notebook, or any other legible written form. The translations can then be saved and organized in folders for later use. The translations can also be played back in voice form. The application version of Google Translate has different features than the online version of Google Translate. Most noticeably, the online version does not include the instant camera translation. This application is free for Android and Apple users in the Google Play store or Apple store.

***ScribJab.*** Another resource available to content and EL teachers is ScribJab. ScribJab is an application for the iPad or iPhone where students can create stories using multiple languages (Simon Fraser University, 2014). The benefit of this application is to aid students in second language acquisition and build on their prior knowledge through creation of graphic novels.

### Science of Reading

***American Reading Company.*** American Reading Company (ARC) offers many resources including curriculum that emphasizes a synthetic approach to reading intervention, the Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA), Estructura para la evaluación (ENIL), and the 100 Book Challenge, as well as other frameworks for assessing and growing independent reading level (American Reading Company, 2024). These frameworks align with common core standards. The classroom libraries that are available include decodable texts, thematic sets, as well as are separated according to text complexity.

The American Reading Company (2024) curriculum and materials are appropriate for ELs needing literacy support because they focus on foundational reading skills such as decoding and language comprehension. Reading development coaching for teachers of ELs is a companion to the IRLA curriculum to support linguistic development. The curriculum is scaffolded, beginning with active reading strategies and initial consonants, then moving into high-frequency words and initial blends and digraphs for beginning readers. For intermediate readers, the curriculum supports onset and sight word rime as well as two syllable words and then moves onto multisyllabic words and irregularly spelled words as well as longer texts. For advanced readers, the curriculum supports tier two and three vocabulary words, Latin and Greek roots, as well as expanding into a variety of genres. Finally, the curriculum finishes with

supporting knowledge of the author's craft, point of view, bias, and literary analysis as well as support of college and career readiness within literacy skills.

The IRLA is a leveled reading system that includes a grade-level/lexile associated color level with "skills, standards, and habits that students need to master at that level" (American Reading Company, 2024, p.1) before students can progress to the next reading level. It is independently paced. American Reading Company offers classroom libraries with book options for each independent reading level. There is also an online platform, SchoolPace, that tracks student growth and follows the students throughout their reading journey.

Although the book sets and online trackers are a large expense, staff can order the IRLA Assessment book for $150, and the skills cards for $40. After assessing students using the IRLA, there is a guide in the manual to transfer the IRLA color level to the corresponding lexile level or other commonly used reading leveling systems. Students are encouraged to independently choose and read books that they are interested in, switching between different genres (recommended genres for students are given on their corresponding common core skills cards). Students read their text, then work to answer the questions on their skills card regarding the texts that they choose. Once students complete all tasks on their skills cards, they should be ready to move on to the next color level. The teacher meets with students frequently as they work independently to help them reach their reading goals (American Reading Company, 2024).

There are many other curricula supports available through ARC (2024). The ENIL is the Spanish complement for IRLA. Spanish speaking students are able to be supported as they transition from literacy in Spanish, to biliteracy in Spanish and English. Additionally, the 100 Book Challenge is a framework to help teachers scaffold students in reading a variety of genres of texts, but also to foster independence and a love of reading amongst learners.

***Dyslexia Logic.*** Another resource that supports students who are struggling readers is Dyslexia Logic. Dyslexia Logic is an online resource to support students with reading difficulties (Frendo, 2024). There are many free student and teacher resources to use in the classroom, as well as helpful information discussing dyslexia, dysgraphia, and tips for supporting learners who may be struggling with reading. In addition to the free printables, there are inexpensive ($45) paid programs available to support literacy. This resource supports literacy development for ELs because it has a multimodal emphasis on sensory learning; including pictures, gestures, and rhymes to support learning.

***Equipped for Reading Success.*** Equipped for Reading Success is an inexpensive program for building strong readers as well. For $50, this book provides an in-depth look into the science of reading as well as how to apply these findings into the classrooms when working with students on phonemic awareness and fluent word recognition (Kilpatrick, 2024)

***Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS).*** As a training for both EL teachers and content teachers, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) is a literacy instruction focused professional development that provides training on understanding how the brain learns to read, how one should be instructing the brain to learn how to read, and how to meet individual students needs based on where they are at in the complex process of learning how to read (Moats, 2024). The LETRS program is not a prescribed curriculum, but rather an approach that helps teachers be more informed on the science of reading so that they can teach readers in an informed way. This is a free training provided by Lexia in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education. It is a very comprehensive training, including two textbook-like volumes to read, an online platform with

videos, journals, and quizzes, and eight live interactive modules via zoom to dive deeper into topics related to the science of reading.

**Sonday System of Reading.** Orton Gillingham Reading Intervention is a multisensory phonics approach for struggling readers (Windsor Learning, 2024). The Sonday System of Reading by Orton Gillingham offers Sonday 1, Sonday 2, Sonday LPL, among other components. The Sonday System 1 is for beginning readers through the end of the second grade reading level. The Sonday System 2 is created for "intermediate readers in reading levels from 3rd to 8th grade." (Windsor Learning, 2024). The LPL curriculum is for preschool through Kindergarten students. The curriculum is typically taught in small group settings. To purchase all of the kits is expensive, however as a supplemental curriculum, one could purchase a learning plan book for around $379 and a word book for approximately $55 and have enough to support the beginning reader EL students or SLIFE students who have missed out on early literacy instruction.

# CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

## Summary

The higher level enrollment of English Learners (ELs) in the United States has increased the need for language support in content areas as well as in intervention classrooms. The roles of educators and administrators can impact the success of ELs by creating and following a district Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) and creating ample opportunities for collaboration and program and lesson design amongst staff. Designating EL staff as leaders and mentors for the building and district as well as creating a culture that prioritizes high expectations of English learners and staff creates a shift that includes a shared lens for instructional development of ELs in a positive and engaging environment that prioritizes the individual identities of learners.

Through an interview with Pompa, Bouffard (2019) emphasized that professional development for content teachers and staff must explicitly unpack the language development process of ELs and collaboratively build EL programming that best supports the language development process within the content area classroom. Additionally, the National Academies (2017) found that when content teachers held ELs accountable for meeting high content-related expectations, students found more language development and academic successes in the classroom.

The National Academies (2017) recommended that professional development for content teachers emphasizes providing literacy instruction, academic language routines, and visual and verbal support. Also, peer and small group mentorship and intervention support through collaborative learning is essential to help develop English proficiency within content classrooms. Small group intervention should consist of three to five EL students and focus on

foundational reading skills as well as vocabulary and comprehension development (Department of Education, 2017).

Rowland et al (2016) found that administration needs to implement LIEP ratio recommendations provided by the state so that students can receive both sheltered classroom and content area support as needed. When EL teachers push into classrooms to support ELs, teachers can better collaborate and accommodate the language development needs and accelerate content area learning (Vintan & Gallagher, 2019). Having EL teachers in the classroom or co-planning routinely with content teachers increases modified tasks for ELs, and helps find support for eliminating barriers within the classroom. Furthermore, hiring bilingual staff and creating opportunities for multilingual communication within the content area classrooms scaffolds both content and English language development for ELs.

Implementing a science of reading intervention program founded on evidence-based practices can support reading development amongst struggling EL readers through phonics and vocabulary development. The National Academies (2017) recommended that teachers provide explicit vocabulary instruction, and focus on reading comprehension and fluency as well as language functions and discourse. Teachers must provide visuals support such as short videos, visuals, and graphic organizers to support learning.

Early learning, support in content areas, and types of instruction develop the best practices needed to achieve success for ELs by activating students' prior knowledge, implementing WIDA standards, maintaining a manageable learning environment, and structuring academic language opportunities for English learners within classrooms.

There are key strategies and resources available for districts and EL teachers to support ELs. Online platforms for EL data monitoring and individualized education plans for learners

can create a professional development plan within different contexts. Making data accessible and understandable as well as providing specific resources for relevant staff and students centers ELs in a data-based approach to targeted interventions. Platforms that are research-based yet affordable provide graphic organizers, real-life examples, and access to appropriate EL texts as well as routines that structure language rich engagement opportunities.

## Professional Application

School districts must look carefully at how they are allocating EL funds to support their LIEP and meet the needs of their ELs. By having a vision on what an EL school experience should look like, stakeholders can work together to support that shared vision and eliminate barriers to equitable instruction. Implementing programming that uses evidence-based practices to support language development within the content classroom as well as the intervention classroom supports students with scaffolded grade level content. Supporting ELs in an intentional and cross-discipline approach that facilitates collaboration amongst administrators, EL teachers, content teachers, and support staff prioritizes ELs and their success while highlighting the different expertise of stakeholders. All staff should be provided with clear expectations of how ELs must be supported within the different various educational environments.

The Institute of Education Sciences (2021) recommended teaching five to eight vocabulary words a day related to content using a short informational text. Teachers should also model strategies for students encountering unfamiliar words with a focus on abstract vocabulary and multiple meaning words, as well as cross-discipline vocabulary. The vocabulary routine should include tools for students such as short videos, graphic organizers, pictures, and demonstrations so that students can structure their learning, and then verbally discuss the new

content with planned peer activities such as role playing, think pair share, paired reading, summarizing, predicting, or answering questions. Teachers should provide sentence starters and frames for learners to use to craft their responses prior to completing writing activities.

Type of instruction is critical for supporting academic and language development of ELs. Engaging ELs in inquiry based learning includes problem, project, case, design, and scientific inquiry approaches to learning. These multi-modality processes help students build on background knowledge, access content knowledge, and create their own learning pathway that allows ELs to integrate their own culture, background knowledge, and diverse experiences into the learning process. Personalized learning increases the intrinsic motivation of ELs, and leads to higher engagement and motivation.

## Limitations of the Research

The research pool included strategies that support a successful grade-level appropriate academic experience for ELs. Limitations of this research pool include a lack of evidence-based and affordable templates or real-life applications that are based on best practices. The research pool is limited due to a lack of policies that designate how funding must be spent by districts to support an LIEP. The policies that do exist contain vague recommendations for LIEP requirements, and allow districts to determine the amount of FTE and service minutes that each learner will receive. Additionally, there does not seem to be a process for holding districts accountable for integrating research-based best practices into their LIEP plans. Furthermore, there is an absence of high-quality materials for ELs that align with grade level standards. Additionally, the 9th-12th grade demographic was not fully addressed in the research pool.

## Implications for Future Research

Additional research on developing multiliteracy, dual-language educational opportunities, and opportunities for students to engage in career-readiness that builds off of student assets would impact EL student achievement. Investigating how educational systems can better support and provide opportunities for multilingual families through community partnerships could create growth and support within the community. Research also needs to be conducted on professional development opportunities for all teachers regarding intentionally supporting ELs through tangible classroom routines, bilingual and multilingual classroom supports for content area teachers, and cultivating an asset-based mindset amongst all teachers and staff towards supporting ELs.

## Conclusion

It is essential for educators to have access to obtainable evidence-based approaches that support EL achievement. By examining the roles of educators and administrators, the success of ELs via educational leadership takes a proactive approach to implementing policies and strategies for EL academic growth based on best practices, individual student assets, and data. Program and lesson design, early learning, and support in content areas develop the best practices needed to help ELs achieve through engagement within the content area classroom and grade level materials. Key strategies and resources are available for districts and EL teachers to support ELs and create learning environments that support both content and language development.

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