DELIVERY SERVICES, LITERACY PEDAGOGY AND THE SUCCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI

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DELIVERY SERVICES, LITERACY PEDAGOGY AND THE SUCCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI

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ABSTRACT

The English Language Learner student population is on the rise in the United States. There are more students than ever entering school with a language other than English as their primary language. There is an inconsistency in the delivery service (pull-out or push-in) as well as a variety of pedagogical practices used to instruct students in literacy practices. While there is pressure to teach literacy proficiency to all students, the research is not conclusive on what delivery services and pedagogical practices are being used in classrooms. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to better understand the prevailing type of delivery services and pedagogy used when teaching literacy to English Language Learners using the Missouri Assessment Program in English Language Arts subtest in Grades 3 through 5 as a measure of proficiency. Two themes emerged from interviews: structure and pedagogy. The data showed there were structures in place including, a combination of pull-out and push-in delivery services and small group instruction. The pedagogical practices included vocabulary. Findings revealed that high performing schools had a long term commitment to English Language Learners, had districts that supported teachers and students, and had a strong emphasis on a student centered approach. Teachers within high performing schools had a general positive attitude about their work, with strong collaboration among teachers and with students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

English Language Learners face many challenges in the school setting; learning to read and write while learning a second language adds to the complexity of teaching literacy to English Language Learners. The English Language Learner student population has been growing in the United States in recent decades (Calderon, et al., 2011; Honigsfeld, 2009, National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Roy-Campbell, 2013; Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008; Teale, 2009). The term *English Language Learner* is used to describe students in the United States who are currently learning English as their second language (Calderon, et al., 2011; Honigsfeld, 2009; Luster, 2012; Roy-Campbell, 2013; Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008; Teale, 2009). The fastest growing subgroup of students in the United States are English Language Learners. It is estimated by 2030 that English Language Learners will make up 40% of the K-12 population (Honigsfeld, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Turgut, Sahin, & Huerta, 2016). There are 114 counties in Missouri and all have experienced growth in the English Language Learner student population from 1999 to 2010 (Maps of the World, 2015; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2011; Office of English Language Acquisition, 2015). In the 2015-2016 school year, there were 33,000 to 36,000 English Language Learner students in Missouri (Missouri DESE, n.d.). The need to know what is happening within the classroom in the delivery of literacy instruction, and the pedagogy of the instructional practices, is the driving force for this study. More research is needed

on delivery services and pedagogy as the population of English Language Learners continues to grow in the United States (Crawford, Schmeister, & Biggs, 2008; Fairbairn & Fox, 2009; Luster, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Achievement gaps exist in English Language Learners' literacy proficiency when compared to their native English-speaking counterparts (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Calderon et al., 2011; Turgut et al., 2016). In 2015, on the National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) of Grade 4 English Language Learners, 9% of English Language Learners were proficient in reading while 47% of native English-speaking students scored proficient (National Center for Education Statistics; 2015). In the same year, Grade 8 English Language Learners had a 3% proficiency rate, while native English-speaking peers had a 38% reading proficiency rate. The literacy gap between English Language Learners and their native English-speaking counterparts continues on state and national standardized assessments regardless of the grade level of students.

There is a discrepancy on how to address the process of teaching literacy to English Language Learners, both in delivery services and in pedagogy (Crawford et al., 2008; Hoingsfeld, 2009; Turgut, et al.; 2016). States such as Arizona, California, and Massachusetts, have legislation that directs school districts on the specific practice to be used to educate English Language Learners, while other states approach the process with ambiguity (Hoingsfeld, 2009; Luster, 2012). There are a variety of ways classroom teachers approach the teaching of English Language Learners within the United States, including bilingual education, Sheltered English Instruction and English as a Second

Language (Honigsfeld, 2009; Luster, 2012; Roy-Campbell, 2013). While the discussion continues, the classroom teacher is the one addressing the needs of the English Language Learner in the classroom on a daily basis (Calderon et al., 2011; Roy-Campbell, 2013).

Problem Statement

English Language Learners in the K-12 educational setting are on the rise, increasing more than any other group in the United States (Fairbairn & Fox, 2009; Luster, 2012, Taub, Sivo, & Puyana, 2017; Teale, 2009; Turgut et al., 2016). Historically, English Language Learners have performed lower than other students on standardized achievement tests (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Fry, 2008; Sibold, 2011). While students might exhibit proficiency in conversational English within the classroom, a gap in the proficiency levels when answering comprehension questions on standardized tests exists between English Language Learners and native students. Standardized tests in most states were developed with monolingual students, rather than English Language Learners, in mind (Menken, 2008). Educators throughout the United States feel unprepared to meet the challenge of successfully teaching English Language Learner students to the proficiency level (Luster, 2012; Taub et al., 2017; Teale, 2009).

There is research on the growth of English Language Learners and the identification of needs. However, "knowing what works with language minority students and what actually works are different" (Howard, 2017 p. 114). Honigsfeld's (2009) research stated that there needs to be a solution to an ever-growing problem, but it is important that all stakeholders be involved in working with families and students of

English Language Learners to guide the literacy instruction within all schools. This study used a basic qualitative design to examine the delivery services and pedagogy used in schools where English Language Learners exhibit high levels of proficiency, as identified by the parameters of the study.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the effectiveness of various literacy delivery services and pedagogy for English Language Learners, using the Missouri Assessment Program data to define literacy proficiency. Specifically, the study focused on the types of delivery service and pedagogy used in schools that had the highest percentage of English Language Learners on the ELA subtest of the MAP test. Two dominant ways of delivering literacy services to English Language Learner students include "push-in" services, where literacy is taught to students within their mainstream classrooms, or "pull-out" services, where English Language Learners are taught literacy outside of the mainstream classroom (Honigsfeld, 2009; Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2013; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2011). While the discussion about the various types of pedagogy used to meet the needs of English Language Learners continues, there is a lack of information on what is actually being used within the classroom (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Calderon et al., 2011; Honigsfeld, 2009; Luster, 2012; Taub, et al., 2017; Turgut, et al., 2016). Sparks (2016) stated that there is "relatively little rigorous research on the general effectiveness of each method, and evidence is particularly scarce on the most effective methods for specific

English Language Learner populations" (p. 2). This study will add to the body of research by focusing on two delivery services in Missouri and the pedagogy behind the teaching of literacy. The evidence collected during this study is applicable to school districts in Missouri (Taub, et al., 2017).

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

1. What delivery services of literacy instruction are utilized in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?
2. What types of pedagogy are considered effective by teachers in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

The purpose of the broad research questions in this basic qualitative study is to examine the current practices used in teaching literacy to English Language Learners as perceived by the teachers. This study used data collected from the Missouri Assessment Program English Language Arts test. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with English Language Learner teachers and mainstream classroom teachers in the highest performing elementary schools to provide rich data on delivery services and pedagogy utilized with English Language Learners.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical approaches, based on the work of Vygotsky and Stevick, have been used to shed light on the underpinnings for this study. Vygotsky (1997) began his work in Russia developing a theory of social interaction when teaching literacy. Vygotsky

challenged Piaget's theory of child development, stating that social learning comes before development. According to Vygotsky, social communication can include verbal and non-verbal interactions. Vygotsky stated in his 1978 work "words can shape an activity into a structure. However, that structure may be changed or reshaped when children learn to use language in ways that allow them to go beyond previous experiences" (p 28). Vygotsky asserts that a "more knowledgeable other," is a person who has a higher understanding of the concept at hand (McLeod, 2014, p 3). Vygotsky stated that this person can be an adult or teacher, but could also be a peer who has more knowledge (McLeod, 2014). Vygotsky determined that none of the theories he studied took into account students' level of function with teacher assistance. The zone of proximal development is a two-fold theory included in Vygotsky's theory of social interaction and illuminates what a student can do independently and what a student can do with scaffolding from a teacher. The zone of proximal development "is the distance between the actual development level as determined by the independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 32). Vygotsky's social interaction lends itself to literacy small group instruction.

The work of Stevick was used in this study as a theoretical framework for understanding pedagogical processes when teaching English to second language learners. In 1989, Stevick published *Success With Foreign Language* in which he noted that there are three simultaneous processes that must take place for a second language learner.

English Language Learners must combine prior knowledge and new learning by combining nonverbal material into a larger nonverbal schema (Stevick, 1989). Secondly, students must combine verbal material in which they piece together verbal images with new images. Finally, students combine verbal and nonverbal materials to make sense of the language (Stevick, 1989). Stevick's and Vygotsky's work provided a lens for examining the method of delivery services and the pedagogy of literacy instruction for English Language Learners.

Limitations and Delimitations

According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009) limitations are the limits the researcher finds that may affect research methodology and outcomes.

1. A limitation of the study is the mobility of English Language Learners. Often, English Language Learners move from district to district, so there is no consistent pedagogy; assessment results may be impacted by student movement (Calderon, et al., 2011).
2. A limitation of the study is the way each district approaches teaching English Language Learners delivery services.

Delimitations are the boundaries that the researcher sets forth.

3. A delimitation of the study will include the English Language Learner population of students in the state of Missouri.
4. A delimitation of the study is that it will include teachers of English Language Learners in Grades 3 through 5.

5. A delimitation of the study is that it will include schools with an English Language Learner population of 15% or greater.
6. A delimitation of the study will be the inclusion of elementary schools with the highest proficiency scores compared to other schools on the Missouri Assessment Program ELA subtest.

Design Controls

This study sought to detail how delivery services and literacy pedagogy have been used to teach English Language Learners. The schools chosen for inclusion in the study had 15 % or more of their student body classified as English Language Learners. The Missouri Assessment Program English Language Arts subtest in Grades 3 through 5 was used to determine the highest performing schools. The proposed research used a qualitative design, which, according to Gay et al. (2009), is the collection, analysis and interpretation of narrative data into a particular area of interest. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine the various types of pedagogy used in teaching English Language Learners. Interviews are interactions in which the researcher acquires information from the participant (Gay et al., 2009). Interviews often include perceptions and feelings by the participant (Gay et al., 2009). The researcher's current role is an administrator of an elementary school, where the English Language Learner population makes up 20% of the student body. Researcher bias is a factor to consider when conducting a study. The researcher set aside personal opinion and judgment and based the study on research on the topic of literacy instruction for English Language Learners.

Through data collection from teachers in the field, and careful analysis of the qualitative data provided through interviews, the study met criteria for the control of personal bias.

Definition of Key Terms

Below are the key terms, defined for the purpose of this study, to provide definition and clarity to the reader. The terms include delivery services, push-in services, pull-out services, limited English proficiency, high-performing schools, and pedagogy.

Basic qualitative study is defined as research "on how meaning is constructed and how people make sense of their lives and worlds… [and the purpose] is to uncover and interpret these meanings" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016 p 25).

Delivery services, for the purpose of this study, are defined as push-in or pull-out literacy services provided to English Language Learners.

High Achievement, for the purpose of this study, is defined as the student's ability to score proficient or advanced level on state or federal standardized assessments. In this study, the focus is based on achievement on the MAP ELA test.

Pedagogy, for the purpose of this study, is defined as the literacy instructional methods used in teaching English Language Learners.

Push-in services are described for this study as teaching services rendered within the mainstream classroom to English Language Learners by the English Language Learner teacher (Honigsfeld, 2009; Roy-Campbell, 2013).

Pull-out services are described for this study as teaching services rendered outside the mainstream classroom to English Language Learners by the English Language Learner teacher (Honigsfeld, 2009; Roy-Campbell, 2013; Sparks, 2016).

Summary

Chapter one introduced the problem of the increasing number of English Language Learners and the lack of consensus on how to effectively educate students for literacy proficiency on a standardized assessment. There are a variety of ways that school districts can educate English Language Learners. However, there is a need to understand effective teaching strategies to increase standardized assessment proficiencies.

In chapter two, the history of the student population of English Language Learners will be explored along with the diversity within this population of students. Language acquisition of students and the pedagogy of teaching reading along with the structure of teaching English Language Learners will be discussed. The lack of teacher preparedness and professional development will be analyzed along with the standardized assessment process. In chapter three, details of the methods will be provided, including the participants, selection of schools, research setting, and research design. Details of the instrumentation, including the demographic questionnaire and survey questions, are given. In addition, statistical treatment of the data is explained. In chapter four, the findings are presented. Finally, in chapter five, implications and recommendations for further research are given.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The English Language Learner student population has been growing in the United States (Calderon, et al., 2011; Honigsfeld, 2009, National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Roy-Campbell, 2013; Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008; Teale, 2009). By 2030 is estimated that English Language Learners will make up 40% of the K-12 population (Honigsfeld, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Turgut, Sahin, & Huerta, 2016). The review of literature for this study investigated prior research concerning English Language Learner literacy education within the United States. The review looked at the history of the English Language Learner population, along with the diversity of English Language Learners. Language acquisition, the delivery services for providing instruction for English Language Learners, and the current types of pedagogy that drives literacy instruction was included. The review investigated assessment practices, teacher preparation for English Language Learners, and ongoing professional development for teachers. The literature review provided a context for the basic qualitative study.

History and Legislation of English Language Learner Student Population

Before 1972, there were no mandated modifications for students in the United States who spoke a language other than English. Students, who today would be classified as English Language Learners, spent 100% of their school day in the mainstream

classroom (Moran, 2005; Sparks, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). In 1974, the Supreme Court ruled in *Lau v. Nichols* in favor of approximately 1,800 students of Chinese descent, who claimed the San Francisco school system denied them an appropriate education (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). In 1970, a memorandum was sent to all schools where 5% of the student population spoke a second language. The communication mandated that school districts develop a program to address the needs of students acquiring English skills, and refrain from placing students in special education classes because of limited English proficiency. In addition, the memorandum required schools to establish a plan to close the achievement gap for language minority students, to provide a system of accountability, and to invite parents to attend events at the public school (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011; Moran, 2005; Office for Civil Rights, 2014).

In the 1981 ruling in *Castañeda v. Pickard*, the Fifth Circuit Court made a decision that set a standard for educating language minority students (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a). This standard included three elements of an English Language Learner program; the program must be based on sound educational theory, have qualified staff, and institute an evaluation of the program (Mora Modules, n.d.; U. S. Department of Education, 2015b). Even though the court decision did not mandate that English Language Learner programs meet this standard, progress towards these goals was expected. In 1982, in, *Plyler v. Doe*, the Supreme Court handed down a 5 to 4 decision that stated schools could not deny students an education based on immigration status (American Immigration Council, 2016).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 required English Language Learners to meet the same proficiency requirements as native English speakers on state tests (Shoffner, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). NCLB also mandated that states continue to increase their capacity to assist English Language Learners and encourage parental involvement. Along with the NCLB, Title III Part A, English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act also served the purpose of developing academic rigor for English Language Learners, in order to meet proficiency requirements on state testing at the same level as their monolingual peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, 2015b). The purpose of the act was to ensure that states developed and built high-quality language instruction for English Language Learners, and gave flexibility for local schools to implement a program tailored to the needs of students in each school district (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a). A portion of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in December of 2015, also known as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was designed to keep the commitment to English Language Learners by creating innovative programs and practices ("News Briefs", 2016; Shoffner, 2016). States and school districts were advised to continue to take actions so that English Language Learners could "participate meaningfully in schools' educational programs." (Sparks; 2016 pg. 2)

Diverse Population of English Language Learners

A diverse population of English Language Learners exists in the United States due to language differences, time spent in the country, and levels of formal schooling

(Hickey, 2011; Lenski; Ehlers-Zavala, Daniel, & Sun-Irminger, 2006). Despite the diversity, English Language Learners are often lumped into one category, as students who struggle in reading, writing, and speaking English (Calderon et al., 2011; Lenski et al., 2006). One type of diversity is shown through the lens of the educational background of the English Language Learner population. The range of formal schooling extends from private schooling in their native country to an interruption of schooling for students who come to this country as refugees (Calderon et al., 2011). Klein (2016) and Lenski et al. (2006) concur that the amount of English spoken in the home and the amount of time spent in the United States are contributing factors to the students' learning experience. Some students are known as "lifers" (Klein, 2016; Lenski et al., 2006). Calderon et al. (2011), Hickey (2011), and Roy-Campbell (2013) agreed that this group of students were typically born in the United States and have been in an English Language Learner literacy program but have not graduated from the program by middle or high school. Students classified as "lifers," are fluent in social English, but lack skills in academic English, which results in lower reading and writing scores on standardized assessments. The lack of reading and writing skills prevent students from exiting the English Language Learner program (Calderon et al., 2011; Hickey, 2011; Roy-Campbell, 2013). A particularly complex group of English Language Learners is composed of those who have recently arrived in the U.S. but have limited formal schooling (Roy-Campbell, 2013). This lack of education could be due to the continual migration of parents for the purpose of finding work, or due to political unrest in their native country. These students often struggle with

achievement tests and have limited native and English literacy skills (Hickey, 2011; Lenski et al., 2006).

Another group of students is comprised of those who have been in the United States less than five years and have received formal schooling in their home country (Lenski et al., 2006; Roy-Campbell, 2013). These students often perform at grade level in their first language, and their parents are educated speakers of their native language (Calderon et al., 2011; Lenski et al., 2006). These students often struggle with standardized testing, but demonstrate potential to make rapid progress in English and find it relatively easy to acquire a second or third language (Lenski et al., 2006). A final group of English Language Learners are children who have been simultaneously exposed to two languages. Lenski et al. (2006) and Roy-Campbell's (2013) research shows these students were born in the United States and raised in households where their native language was spoken. This particular group of students often changes between languages when having nonacademic conversations, which causes extensive translation or code switching, and can result in difficulties with language mastery (Lenski et al., 2006). Sometimes skills lacking in the first language lead to problems in developing proficiency in a second language (Lenski et al., 2006). The diversity of the English Language Learner population continues to present challenges in schools in the United States (Hickey, 2011).

Language Acquisition for English Language Learners

According to Hill and Flynn (2006) and Gregory and Burkman's (2011) research, the first stage for learning a new language, during a period from zero to 6 months, is

known as the preproduction stage where students with limited English proficiency nod at questions and typically do not verbalize their answers (Hill & Flynn, 2006). If students verbalize an answer, it is typically in their native language (Gregory & Burkman, 2011). The second stage for English Language Learners is early production or emergent, in which students can respond with one to two-word utterances. Coleman and Goldenberg (2009), Gregory and Burkman (2011), and Hill and Flynn (2006) agree that in this stage, English Language Learners can answer yes/no questions, along with simple who, what, when, and where questions. This developmental language stage typically lasts from 6 months to 1 year. In Hill and Flynn (2006), and Gregory and Burkman's (2011) research, the third stage of second language attainment is during the 1 to 3 year range where English Language Learners can produce simple sentences but might misinterpret more complex conversations, such as those including humorous stories by peers or adults. This is considered to be social English and includes the use of nonverbal clues to comprehend the meaning of the language. Researchers concur (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Gregory and Burkman, 2011; Sousa, 2011) that during this time, English Language Learners can also follow one-step directions in an academic context.

Coleman and Goldenberg (2009), Gregory and Burkman (2011), and Sousa (2011) agreed that the intermediate fluency stage begins in years 3 to 5 during which English Language Learners have comprehension skills and make few grammatical errors. In years 5 to 7 and beyond, also known as the fluent stage, students are fluent in the

second language, and follow multifaceted instructions. English Language Learners in the fluent stage also write similar to native English speakers.

Along with second language acquisition, English Language Learners often struggle with conversational versus academic language. Hill and Flynn (2006) and Pu (2010) agreed that students can become fluent in conversational English without mastering the academic language required in the educational setting. Because of this conversational ability, English Language Learners' fluency can be deceptive. At this level, students can hold nonacademic conversations about the previous night, weekend happenings, or a favorite video game they played, and teachers often misinterpret the students' understanding of conversational English with their ability in academic English. Hill and Flynn (2006), and Pu (2010) concur that in reality, students still need support from teachers for academic English. Because English Language Learners traditionally understand conversational English more quickly than academic English, teachers can find ways to blend the two. This can be done when teachers spend time scaffolding the specific types of English for students. If students can retell what television show they watched the previous night, a teacher can build upon the skill of retelling in a reading text selection (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010a; Hill & Flynn, 2006).

While English Language Learners have a diversity of language acquisition and prior experience, they are often labeled as one homogenous group (Calderon et al., 2011; Lenski et al., 2006). Lenski et al., (2006) proposed that teachers use a predictability log to get to know their students, which helps clarify what type of literacy experiences students

have had in the past. Potential questions to ask students could include the student's cultural background, what type of language the student uses at home, and what type of stories the student enjoys reading. Based on the research from Pillars (2016), teachers who took the time to get to know their students were better able to meet their students' academic needs.

Delivery Services

There is a lack of agreement among researchers on how to address the process of teaching literacy to English Language Learners, both in delivery services and in pedagogy (Crawford et al., 2008; Hoingsfeld, 2009; Turgut, et al., 2016). Delivery services can take many forms including pull-out or push-in. School districts have differing goals for English Language Learners, including bilingualism or English language proficiency (Honigsfeld, 2009). Two approaches that highlight delivery services are English as a second language and Sheltered English Immersion.

English as a second language. A survey in 2002 of English Language Learners found that 60 % of students in the United States experienced schooling in an environment where English was the only language taught (Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). These students were taught using either a push-in or pull-out model of literacy delivery (Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). English Language Learners were pulled out of the classroom for modified reading instruction, also known as pull-out services (Roy-Campbell, 2013; Sparks, 2016). Students were placed in small homogenous groups based on their proficiency level in English and had modified, personalized lessons specifically

designed for students' individual language needs, or the curriculum mirrored the mainstream classroom (Honigsfeld, 2009). The English Language Learner teacher frequently provided literacy instruction. Schools with high numbers of English Language Learners often used the pull-out method, but students spent most of their day in the mainstream classroom (Honigsfeld, 2009; Roy-Campbell, 2013; Todd, 2013).

In contrast, English Language Learners who received reading instruction within the classroom participated in a push-in delivery service, in which both the classroom teacher and the English Language Learner teacher provided reading instruction (Sparks, 2016; Todd, 2013). Honigsfeld (2009) stated there are several issues to consider when students receive push-in services, including space for small English Language Learner groups, time and location of instruction, targeted curriculum, modifications, and collaborative lesson planning. Push-in services created a co-teaching atmosphere that benefited both teachers and students (Honigsfeld, 2009). Both push-in and pull-out services should be carefully evaluated before beginning implementation (Honigsfeld, 2009).

Sheltered English instruction. Another type of English Language Learner instruction is Sheltered English Instruction (SEI). The SEI classroom is intended for English Language Learners new to learning English, or struggling with learning academic English, and the primary focus is learning English. In various studies, students were not in a mainstream classroom and the SEI classroom had multiple grade spans with students staying for one or multiple years (Honigsfeld, 2009; Montana Office of Public

Instruction, 2013; Smith et al., 2008). However, English Language Learners in SEI classrooms were typically placed for one academic school year or less to increase their academic knowledge in English (Sparks, 2016). In California, 48% of English Language Learners were initially placed in SEI classrooms (Luster, 2012). Additionally, a Massachusetts elementary school found success with a combination of pull-out instruction and the SEI model, adapting to each individual students' need. In this study, the researcher found that an academic team comprised of the English Language Learner teacher, principal, and classroom teacher, met to discuss student progress more frequently in the SEI classroom (Smith et al., 2008).

Discussion surrounding the best delivery method of teaching English Language Learners continues with English as a second language and SEI. English as a second language delivery services include pull-out or push-in. The goal of all English Language Learner programs is to enable students to read, write, and communicate in English. At this time, there is no research-based evidence that one type of English Language Learner delivery service yields higher long-term reading proficiency for language minority students (Honigsfeld, 2009).

Literacy Pedagogy

Reardon, Valentino, and Shores (2012) stated "literacy is a prerequisite not only for individual educational success but for upward mobility both socially and economically" (2012, p. 18). In this section, a discussion about five types of literacy practices are presented. Guided reading, developed by Fountas and Pinnell in the 1990's,

place students in small groups to guide specific literacy skills (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Running records are a quick literacy assessment used with students (Castañeda, Rodríguez-González, & Schulz, 2011; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). McElvain (2010) stated literature circles combine scaffolding from the teacher and peer interactions in a small group setting. Dorn and Jones (2012), Ford (2016), Fountas and Pinnell (1996, 2001), and Richardson (2009) agreed that students should have the opportunity for a balanced literacy block throughout the school day. Hill and Flynn (2006) modified Marzano's research to develop strategies for the purpose of increasing literacy knowledge for English Language Learners in the classroom.

Guided reading. Ford and Opitz (2011) stated that the focus of guided reading is planned and intentional reading instruction. Teachers select a text at the student's level within guided reading; give a brief introduction, and then students read the text. According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996) during the implementation of guided reading (a) teachers work with small groups of students, (b) students are similar in reading comprehension and text level, (c) teachers introduce reading texts and scaffold for student learning, (d) all students read the given text, (e) students are able to read independently, (f) the difficulty of the text increases over time, and (g) students are in flexible groups. During the guided reading lesson, students read independently, and teachers listen to students reading individually. Teachers make observations and record students' reading behaviors through running records or anecdotal notes, provide problem-solving strategies to chunk words or discover root meanings, support students by

expanding reading capabilities, and coach students as needed (Clay, 1991; Dorn & Jones, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Richardson, 2009). According to Montero, Newmaster, and Ledger, (2014) guided reading has been beneficial for English Language Learners who have limited schooling in their native language.

Several researchers have studied a modified version of guided reading for English Language Learners (Avalos, Plasencia, Chavex, & Rascon, 2007). Avalos et al. (2007) found that one reason for modified guided reading lessons is that English Language Learners are learning a new language and supplementary language support is given in the classroom with the modified lesson. The research of Avalos et al. (2007) found that English Language Learners had gains in reading as measured by an informal reading inventory at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The researchers found that middle school English Language Learners made 1.3 to 1.8 grade levels' worth of growth using this modified structure of guided reading (Avalos et al., 2007). English Language Learners produced understanding of reading at a higher level and also created meaning from the text by using a modified guided reading approach (Avalos et al., 2007). Researchers Avalos et al. (2007) found that modifications included longer time spans of three or more days in a guided reading group and having teachers read texts aloud to model fluency. In this way, teachers reinforced correct strategies, and provided in-depth word work and vocabulary journals for students (Avalos et al., 2007).

Coleman and Goldenberg (2009) and Herrell and Jordan (2008) found that focused vocabulary lessons during guided reading were important for English Language

Learners. They found that teachers who centered lessons on vocabulary development, which included front-loading new vocabulary, individual scaffolding, and small group verbal interactions, saw gains in student understanding of the new vocabulary. Additionally, vocabulary was explicitly taught to English Language Learners by teaching specific words. While teachers sometimes assumed new words had been learned, research showed more time was needed for English Language Learners to master the vocabulary (Irujo, 2011; Purdy, 2008; Sibold, 2011). English Language Learners did not have the proper context when making connections to the vocabulary (Irujo, 2011) and needed to hear explicit descriptions of new words, act words out, or draw images that reflected vocabulary contexts (Marzano, Pickering, & McTighe, 1993; Medina-Jerez, Clark, Median, & Ramirez-Martin 2007; Sousa, 2011). Sibold (2011) stated another effective strategy for vocabulary development focused on English Language Learners repeating words and working with a partner to create sentences with the new words. These strategies utilized during guided reading lessons made a difference in English Language Learners literacy development (Marzano, Pickering, & McTighe, 1993; Medina-Jerez, Clark, Median, & Ramirez-Martin 2007; Sibold, 2011; Sousa, 2011).

Purdy (2008) stated that teachers of English Language Learners are challenged to find ways for limited English proficient students to increase reading comprehension in guided reading lessons. The research of Gunderson (2009) and Hill and Flynn (2006) showed that teachers of English Language Learners had more success with students when they found specific ways to help students make meaning of their reading. Gunderson

(2009) and Purdy (2008) agreed that English Language Learners had success in finding meaning by asking questions throughout lessons and encouraging conversations between students and their peers. After students had begun talking in a guided reading group, questioning was used at the higher levels to invoke understanding and meaning from the text (Gunderson 2009; Purdy, 2008). Sousa (2011) added that teachers of language minority students can pre-teach a reading assignment in the content areas; in this case, the teacher would discuss the reading assignment with the students prior to the student reading and would teach unfamiliar vocabulary. Another strategy was to use a chart where students list what they already know, want to know, and what is to be learned, also known as a KWL chart to prepare the student for the upcoming reading experience (Sousa, 2011).

Running records. Castañeda, Rodríguez-González, and Schulz (2011) and Fountas and Pinnell (2012) concur that teachers have used informal running records for a variety of purposes to include: (a) evaluation of text, (b) grouping of students accurately, (c) monitoring students' progress, and (d) observing reading difficulties. Running records, which are usually taken during guided reading (Castañeda, et al., 2011), were used throughout the course of the school year to drive reading group instruction. Teachers used reading conferences to probe students' thinking as well as to ask questions that expanded students' knowledge. Teachers planned individualized or group reading instruction depending on the information gathered from running records (Castañeda et al., 2011; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Literature circles. According to Daniels (2002) and McElvain (2010), literature circles combined peer interactions in a small group setting along with teacher support. In literature circles, teachers were typically less directive, and students controlled more of the time they spent together (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005) by choosing texts, sharing ideas and opinions, and making personal connections. McElvain (2010) found that English Language Learners who were in literature circles made one year's growth in reading in only 7 months as compared to 15 months for those who were taught using the basal reader method. Daniel (2007) found that as English Language Learners became confident in their reading, students selected reading texts on their own, which was motivating for students to learn and comprehend English. Students listened to peer language models, practiced speaking skills, and built higher level thinking skills, which increased literacy development (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005; Howard, 2017; McElvain, 2010). Carrison and Ernst-Slavit (2005) stated that literature circles provided English Language Learners different strategies for reading and sharing and showed promising literacy development.

Balanced literacy. Dorn and Jones (2012), Ford (2016), Fountas and Pinnell (1996, 2001), Pinnell and Fountas (2007) and Richardson (2009), agreed that along with guided reading, students have made progress in reading proficiency by participating in a balanced literacy block throughout the school day. This strategy included read alouds, shared reading, and independent reading. Read alouds, coupled with strategic pauses to enrich students' understanding of the text, provided opportunities to learn new

vocabulary in an engaging format (Ford, 2016; Myers & Ankrum, 2016). Ford (2016) and Richardson (2009) concurred that teachers chose specific places to pose questions, and students were engaged in the learning process. Through read alouds, teachers modeled reading fluency and influenced students to apply skills in other academic subjects throughout the day (Dorn & Jones, 2012; Ford, 2016; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; 2001).

Shared reading is another aspect of a balanced literacy program. Dorn and Jones (2012) and Fountas and Pinnell (1996, 2001) agreed that during shared reading, teachers used an enlarged text to model their thinking out loud. Students often had a copy of the text or saw the print via technology. A specific strategy for meaning and comprehension such as character traits or making inferences was taught during shared reading (Dorn & Jones, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001). Lastly, in independent reading, students read silently (Dorn & Jones, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001). Dorn and Jones (2012) stated that when students initially began reading independently, teachers helped students by giving them controlled choice through limited options at their reading level. Fountas and Pinnell (2012) added that as students progressed into older grades, they chose their books based on their personal interests.

Strategies for teaching literacy. Hill and Flynn (2006) provided nine proven strategies, based on the research of Marzano, Pickering, and Pollack (2001), which teachers used in mainstream classrooms with modifications for English Language Learners in literacy and other content areas. The nine instructional strategies used were: (a) setting objectives and providing feedback, (b) nonlinguistic representations, (c)

cooperative learning, (d) summarizing and note taking, (e) homework and practice, (f) reinforcing effort and providing recognition, (g) generating and testing hypotheses, and (i) identifying similarities and differences (Hill & Flynn, 2006; Marzano et al.; 2001). The authors noted that more research must be done in the field with language minority students. According to Daniel (2007), setting clear, measurable objectives with students is important. English Language Learners were learning a new language, as well as learning how to read, so setting a clear target was optimal. Students could then filter out what was important for them to take note of, and what they could eliminate as they processed new information. Both an objective for content and a language objective was helpful for English Language Learners (Daniel, 2007; Hill & Flynn, 2006). Another highly recommended strategy was nonlinguistic representation. Four researchers suggested using nonverbal information including real pictures, objects, and graphs or charts (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010b; Daniel, 2007; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Pang, 2010). Additionally, Pang (2013) agreed that using visual representations with English Language Learners was key for students to learn to recall what they had just read, aided with comprehension of the English language.

Curtin (2005), Daniel (2007), and Hill and Flynn (2006) agreed that using cooperative learning strategies to teach limited English proficient students is beneficial. Hill and Flynn (2006) elaborated by suggesting three considerations that should guide placing students together in cooperative learning groups. In Hill and Flynn's study, the groups were kept small, giving English Language Learners more opportunities to speak

using English. Next, learning groups included English Language Learners and monolingual peers. Monolingual peers modeled English as well as asked questions so that the English Language Learners could respond. In addition, cooperative learning, designed for students to share understanding of others, was a valuable strategy when teaching English Language Learners to read, because teachers were able to assess students' comprehension in a small group setting as opposed to a whole class setting.

Hill and Flynn (2006) stated that classroom teachers often think that challenging English Language Learners intellectually can be too taxing for students while learning the new language. Hill and Flynn (2006) asserted that summarizing, note taking, and modified assignments for English Language Learners were beneficial in meeting their needs. For example, when students used pictures or a comic strip instead of using a paragraph, that process helped them to summarize. Pang (2013) found that graphic organizers with modifications were appropriate to use with English Language Learners. He suggested using graphic organizers by classifying facts, analyzing a problem within the text, summarizing main points, and evaluating decisions made by the author. English Language Learners also benefited from homework to increase their English language knowledge. Curtin (2005), Sousa (2011), and Hill and Flynn (2006) recommended English Language Learners have time to discuss assignments with peers during class time, and found that this process increased language understanding. Generating and testing hypotheses also benefited students. An example of "if-then" situations helped English Language Learners process new information. Lastly, Hill and Flynn (2006) stated

that recognizing and reinforcing effort increased positive student attitudes and beliefs about school. Student effort and achievement was tracked through the use of graphs or rubrics to help students realize when goals were achieved.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) used both content and language objectives at grade-level curriculum to help English Language Learners meet grade-level expectations (Perez & Holmes, 2010; U.S Department of Education, 2013). Developed through a national research project from 1996 through 2003, SIOP used eight components to address learning in reading, literacy, or content areas (SIOP, n.d.). Medina-Jerez et al. (2007) stated the SIOP method of lesson planning was essential in order to modify lessons for English Language Learners. The eight components of SIOP included: (a) lesson preparation, (b) building background, (c) comprehensible input, (d) strategies, (e) interaction, (f) practice and application, (g) lesson delivery, and (h) review and assessment. Early research found that using the eight strategies with English Language Learners increased students' writing assessments in narrative and expository texts. Medina-Jerez et al. (2007) used SIOP in their research and the strategies supported academic gains for English Language Learners in the content area. However, there is more research needed to determine the lasting effects of SIOP in core content areas and English language development (SIOP, n.d.).

English Language Learners who were part of a bilingual approach received instruction in both their native language and English (Gunderson, 2009; Honigsfeld, 2009). Bilingual programs in the U.S have historically focused on Spanish-speaking

students, beginning in Florida during the 1960s. Bilingual programs were often in school districts in which a predominant language was spoken where English Language Learners spoke the same language (Sparks, 2016).

A different approach within a bilingual program was a gradual progression away from students using their native language in the academic setting. In kindergarten, most instruction was delivered in students' native language, rather than in English. As the English Language Learners' English skills became more proficient, less instruction was delivered in the native language. As a result, students eventually received all instruction in English (Goldenberg & Coleman 2010; Gunderson 2009; Todd, 2013). To see continued growth of English Language Learners in a bilingual program, a model of 90/10 or 50/50 had to be determined before beginning a program (Honigsfeld, 2009). A 90/10 bilingual program was defined by 90% of students' academic day spent in their home language, while 10% was spent in the English language. In a 50/50 bilingual program, English Language Learners received half of their instruction in their home language and the other half of instruction in the English language (Honigsfeld, 2009). Proponents of a bilingual program said that students were truly bilingual and were able to read, write, and communicate in two languages (Honigsfield, 2009; Scanlan & Zehrbach, 2010). Martinez, Slate, and Martinez-Garcia (2014) analyzed language minority students' reading proficiency and whether the student was part of a 90/10 or 50/50 program. After the 3-year study, there were no significant findings to show that either program was more effective than its counterpart (Martinez et al., 2014).

Studies done by Curtin (2005), Daniel (2007), Hill and Flynn (2006), Medina-Jerez et al. (2007), and Pang (2010, 2013) yielded initial gains in literacy for English Language Learners. However, no long-term increases on standardized assessments have been documented. Researchers agreed that classroom practices that are good in the regular classroom are also advantageous for English Language Learners. Research has focused on a variety of strategies using conversations, interactions, and the arts to help guide a comprehensive literacy classroom for English Language Learners, although no long-term solution has been reached.

Assessment of English Language Learners

As students enter school, English Language Learners are adjusting to a new life and a new culture of assessing their language ability. Schools have an entry test for placement services, grade advancement, and high-stakes state testing (Menken, 2008). The Department of Education requires English Language Learners to make adequate yearly progress in English proficiency (Menken, 2008). However, there are large performance gaps between English Language Learners and their monolingual peers on standardized literacy tests (Abedi, 2014). English Language Learners performed 40-60% lower than their monolingual peers in literacy.

English Language Learners often spend most of their day in the mainstream classroom. This creates a challenge for classroom teachers concerning how to assess students. Lenski et al. (2006) found that multiple forms of literacy assessment worked best when assessing English Language Learners. Lenski et al. (2006) stated that it is

"critical for teachers to identify the purpose of the assessment" (p. 27) before assessing a student. Lenski et al (2006) found that multiple forms of assessment, including running records, anecdotal notes, checklists, rating scales, and portfolios have been used to gather information when working with English Language Learners. Hamilton (2013) and Lenski et al. (2006) found that through modified formative assessments and reteaching by the classroom teacher, students increased their reading proficiency more than when using traditional assessments.

Missouri Assessment Program. The instrument used to measure all students in the state of Missouri in Grades 3 through 5 is the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) test. Missouri Assessment Program data are reported on a yearly basis by school and district. The Missouri State Board of Education recognizes that the MAP test has several purposes including: "students' mastery towards post-secondary readiness, identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, communicating expectations for all students, serving as the basis for state and national accountability plans, evaluating programs and providing professional development for teachers" (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016c, p. 2).

According to researchers, the standardized testing process has not adequately addressed the complexity of assessing English Language Learners. Abedi (2002) and Menken (2008) found in their extensive research of United States standardized assessments, English Language Learners consistently performed lower than monolingual peers when the assessment focused on English literacy abilities. Menken noted that many

states offered accommodations, but could not completely rid English Language Learners of the problems resulting from a language barrier when taking the standardized test. Menken noticed that the validity of English Language Learners' scores was questioned when making decisions about student placements or graduation.

ACCESS test. Thirty-six states and provinces, along with Missouri, give the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS) for English Language Learners annually (Missouri DESE, 2015b; World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment [WIDA], 2015). The ACCESS uses four language domains to assess English Language Learners, and results are reported in three ways. The four domains include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Results are reported through raw scores, scaled scores, and English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels. The levels include Entering, Emerging, Developing, Expanding, Bridging, and Reaching (WIDA, 2015). In many states, the ELPs are used to determine graduation from an English Language Learner program (Fox & Fairbairn, 2011). Each state determines the criteria in which language minority students exit an English Language Learner program (Fox & Fairbairn, 2011; WIDA, 2015).

The ACCESS test provides different layers of testing that allows teachers to have a deeper understanding of the English Language Learners' knowledge (Fox & Fairbairn, 2011; Kenyon, MacGregor, Li, & Cook, 2011; WIDA, 2015). In the 2015-2016 school year, the ACCESS was administered electronically to students in Grades 1 through 12 (DESE, 2015b). Fox and Fairbairn (2011) examined the ACCESS test and noted some

strengths such as utilizing a tiered system for scoring proficiency and making practice items available prior to taking the test. Even though there are strengths, Fox and Fairbairn suggested that analyzing the test and developing a norm reference system would be advantageous, as well as exploring other states' accommodations for English Language Learners.

Teacher Preparedness

As the United States continues to experience growth in the English Language Learner student population, teacher preparation programs face challenges to keep up when preparing teachers for the mainstream classroom. English Language Learners often are in the mainstream classroom with a classroom teacher who has little to no professional development in teaching reading to English Language Learners (De Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013; Sousa, 2011). As the English Language Learner population continues to rise in the United States, there is a need for teachers to be prepared to meet the needs of students (De Jong et al. 2013).

Cartiera (2006), Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010), and Webster and Valeo (2011) conducted studies focusing on the training of preservice and beginning teachers in regard to English Language Learners. Overall, each study had a reoccurring theme that preservice and beginning teachers felt unprepared to meet the needs of English Language Learners in the classroom. Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) also found that veteran and preservice teachers lacked training in effectively teaching English Language Learners. Webster and Valeo (2011) found that elementary preservice teachers in Canada lacked

knowledge in working with English Language Learners, but still had positive interactions with these students in their practicum placements. Most of these preservice teachers wanted more in-depth training in linguistics and language acquisition (Webster & Valeo, 2011).

Researchers have argued that preservice teachers need specific and targeted course work before teaching English Language Learners (Cartiera, 2006; Durgunoglu and Hughes, 2010; Webster & Valeo, 2011). Webster and Valeo (2011) stated "there is evidence that well-intentioned teachers lack the competence necessary for effective classroom practice" (p. 105). Batt (2008) conducted a study that revealed that 22% of the participants felt unprepared to teach English Language Learners in the elementary setting. Four separate studies, Batt (2008), Cartiera (2006), Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) and Webster and Valeo (2011), highlighted how preservice and beginning teachers were unprepared to teach the English Language Learner population. Batt (2008) recommended that professional development keep up with current demands placed on mainstream teachers and that teacher education programs include offerings such as ESL methods or sheltered instruction courses. Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) also suggested that preservice teachers participate in a preparation program that includes how to best teach English Language Learners.

Professional Development

Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) found that veteran or practicing teachers needed professional development focusing on effective instructional strategies to use with

English Language Learners. Haneda and Wells (2012) concurred that teachers need to feel confident in meeting the needs of English Language Learners. Professional development for all teachers was most effective when given over time, and when focused on the English Language Learner population (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010c). However, only four states have specialized coursework for educators to be certified to teach English Language Learners (Roy-Campbell, 2013).

Crawford, Schmeister, and Biggs (2008) conducted a study on the effects of professional development on teachers in a sheltered instruction environment. The teachers participated in specific professional development to increase their capacity to serve English Language Learners in their classrooms. Two observations occurred before the professional development was deployed, and two took place after professional development had occurred. The participating teachers were interviewed before and after professional development had occurred. The overall averages in each of the nine components of teaching increased in regard to English Language Learners. The most significant increase was in status reporting and performing (Crawford et al., 2008). The Levels of Use Protocol was used in both interviews. The researchers concluded that specific professional development targeting English Language Learners was effective in increasing teacher knowledge regarding how to best meet the needs of English Language Learners. A similar study (De Jong et al.; 2013) explored an ongoing professional development model for teachers. This study included specific training for teachers before beginning the school year and monthly observations with pre and post conversations. The

focus of all professional development was centered on increasing instructional practice with English Language Learners (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010c). De Jong et al., (2013) conducted a study on how teacher preparedness or professional development can increase English Language Learners' ability to navigate their surroundings in school. The three main foci for their research concluded that mainstream teachers need to be taught to understand the bilingual learners' cultural and linguistic experience, to increase their knowledge and skills related to language for English Language Learners, and to create mainstream practices to include English Language Learners in all learning environments. The researchers concluded that professional development in these three areas would assist the ever-changing classroom to meet the challenges of the English Language Learners (De Jong, et al., 2013).

Summary of Literature Review

As the United States continues to have an influx of English Language Learners, schools must be prepared to teach these students literacy skills in the most effective way possible. "The issue of helping English Learners become capable and engaged readers is certainly one of the greatest challenges facing educators today" (Teale, 2009 p. 699). This chapter summarized the categories regarding English Language Learners, including the history, diversity of the population, language acquisition, pedagogy in teaching literacy, structures of instructional delivery systems, assessment, teacher preparedness and teacher professional development. Currently there are few answers on how to effectively organize and implement literacy instruction for English Language Learners. Teale (2009)

summarized that good literacy practices for monolingual students are also good for English Language Learners. However, he cautioned that there is much more research to be done in teaching literacy to English Language Learners. Luster (2012) stated that teachers needed to continue to develop their skills in literacy instruction and work with limited English Language Learners to create literacy success for them.

Chapter Three highlights the methodology used in this study. By researching the practices of schools with high levels of proficiency on the state standardized test, a contribution will be made to the pedagogical and curricular discussion about the process of teaching literacy to English Language Learners. Chapter Four will analyze the findings from the data collected. Chapter Five will make recommendations for future research in the area of literacy proficiency for English Language Learners.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

English Language Learners face many challenges in the school setting. Learning to read and write while learning a second language, along with a variety of prior school experiences, add to the complexity of teaching English Language Learners. In addition, the number of students who speak a second language other than English is on the rise in the United States (Calderon et al., 2011; Honigsfeld, 2009; Luster, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Roy-Campbell, 2013; Smith et al., 2008; Teale, 2009). "The percentage of public school students in the United States who were English Language Learners was higher in school year 2004–05 at 9.4 percent or 4.6 million students, than in 2014–15 with 9.5 percent or 4.8 million students" (National Center for Education Statistics; 2018, para 1). California and Texas were reported to have the highest percentages of English Language Learners in the public school system. In California, 25% of public school students were considered English Language Learners while in Texas the percentage was nearly 20% (Crawford et al., 2008). Accountability for student proficiency within in the United States public education system extends to English Language Learners (Roy-Campbell, 2013) and the expectation from the Department of Education is that English Language Learners make adequate yearly progress in English proficiency on the state standardized assessment (Menken, 2008). Currently, according to data provided by Turgut et al. (2016) English Language Learners

are not reaching proficiency levels on standardized assessments that are used to determine adequate yearly progress.

This basic qualitative study was designed to investigate teacher perceptions about the types of delivery services and pedagogy used in high-performing schools. When studying perceptions, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that researchers who conduct a basic qualitative study would pay close attention to "(a) how people interpret their experiences, (b) how they construct their worlds, and (c) what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p 24). There are two predominate delivery services for teaching English Language Learners. Student push-in services occur when an English Language Learner teacher pushes into the regular mainstream classroom for a period of time in the school day (Honigsfeld, 2009; Roy-Campbell, 2013). Pull-out services are described as students receiving their literacy instruction outside of the regular mainstream education classroom by the English Language Learner teacher for a period of time during the school day (Honigsfeld, 2009; Roy-Campbell, 2013; Sparks, 2016). The second focus of this study was to determine the pedagogy used when teaching literacy to English Language Learners. The importance of this study was to help further the research for English Language Learners in the United States (Fairbairn & Fox, 2009).

Student assessment data were collected from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to determine schools that fit the parameters of the study. Interviews were conducted with educators within the highest performing elementary schools in Missouri with a population of at least 15% or higher of English

Language Learners in the student body. For the purpose of this study, a high-performing school was one in which the English Language Learner population of students had a combined proficiency rate of 50% or higher. The proficiency rate was limited to English Language Learners who scored as proficient or advanced on the MAP ELA subtest in Grades 3 through 5. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers to determine the types of pedagogy being used to deliver instruction to students.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Throughout this basic qualitative study, the examination of teaching practices for English Language Learners as well as the method of delivery were explored. The questions that drove the research included:

1. What delivery services of literacy instruction are utilized in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?
2. What types of pedagogy are considered effective by teachers in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

Participants

The participants included principals, mainstream classroom teachers, and English Language Learner teachers at schools with Grades 3 through 5 in Missouri who had an English Language Learner population greater than 15% and the highest proficiency rates on the Missouri Assessment Program ELA subtest. The researcher examined the Missouri Assessment Program ELA standardized test data to determine which schools fit the

parameters of the study. The principals from schools that met the criteria were asked to identify four mainstream classroom teachers and one English Language Learner teacher for the researcher to interview. The teachers that were recommended by the principal were contacted and a request for participation was made. The request for participation is located in Appendix A and Appendix B. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with highly qualified English Language Learner teachers as well as four mainstream classroom teachers.

Interviewees remained anonymous throughout the study through the use of a coding system. In accordance with the guidelines for Southwest Baptist University regarding the protection of human participants, a request for review was submitted to the Research Review Board (RRB) for approval to interview the appropriate participants for this study. After receiving RRB approval, participant recruitment and data collection began. Participant consent was given through participation in the interview process.

Research Setting

The elementary schools identified as having at least 15% of their student body classified as English Language Learners were retrieved from the Missouri Comprehensive Data System. The highest performing schools scoring proficient and advanced on the Missouri Assessment Program ELA test were identified. In Grades 3 through 5, the proficiency levels included below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. Standardized assessment results for Spring 2016 Missouri Assessment Program were retrieved and used to determine the school's' participation in the study.

Research Design

A basic qualitative study is designed for the researcher to examine the research setting in depth and to have an intense understanding about the way things are, as well as the perceptions of the participants (Gay et al. 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that in a basic qualitative research design data collection can include interviews, observations or supporting documents. The research is inductive and comparative and throughout the research themes or categories begin to emerge. In a basic qualitative study, it is the job of the researcher to "understand how people make sense of their lives and experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016 p. 25)

Schools were identified that had English Language Learners in Grades 3 through 5 who had the highest proficiency rates on the Missouri Assessment Program ELA standardized test. The five schools with the highest rates of English Language Learners scoring proficient and advanced were asked to participate in the interviews. Interviews were conducted in five selected schools because the researcher wanted to know how high-performing schools addressed the needs of students. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine the type of delivery service and pedagogy behind the practices used in high-performing schools. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that in semi-structured interviews, "the researcher has a guide that includes questions, but is not limited to the questions, questions had flexibility, and the largest part of the interview was guided by the list of questions or issues to that are explored" (p 110).

The semi-structured interviews were held in each school with four mainstream classroom teachers and one English Language Learner teachers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine what pedagogy was behind the English Language Learners' literacy instruction used at the highest-performing schools. The interviews took place in person with English Language Learner teachers individually, and the mainstream classroom teachers as a group. The time for each semi-structured interview was approximately 60 minutes and the researcher asked open-ended questions to determine the pedagogy of highest performing schools. The interview questions are in Appendix C.

The semi-structured interview questions included the type of literacy delivery services provided by each school, the ways English Language Learners participate in small group literacy instruction, collaboration of teachers and students, and strategies that teachers use to bridge the gap between day to day learning and standardized test proficiency. The timeline for collection of the interviews was 3 months. The qualitative data were analyzed for themes and trends.

Data triangulation uses multiple data sources within the same study for validation (Hussein, 2009). The validity of this study was addressed through multiple data sources including proficiency levels of English Language Learners obtained from Missouri DESE MAP scores and semi-structured interviews with five mainstream classroom teachers, and separately, and English Language Learner teachers. Questions were edited based on feedback from peers.

Interviews. Interviews were conducted with personnel from the schools who had the highest proficiency rates for their English Language Learners. The researcher made the assumption that the information provided by mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers would be informative to this study. The interview data that were collected consisted of transcriptions and audio recordings. The semi-structured interviews took place over a 3-month time period. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The interviews included a group of mainstream teachers and a separate interview of the English Language Learner teacher. According to Frey and Fontana (1991) group interviews were a "more efficient use of resources and as a means of adding valuable insight into the interpretation of a social or behavioral event" (para. 1). The interview questions were guided by the overarching research questions as well as review of literature, taking into consideration the unique challenges that English Language Learners face throughout their schooling. The semi-structured interviews probed for understanding of the current English Language Learner literacy practice used in high-performing elementary schools. The questions were piloted with elementary principals who did not meet one of the two qualifiers for being considered high performing. Feedback was given on the questions asked and modifications were made. All principals interviewed in the pilot group had at least 15% of their student population classified as English Language Learners. After the semi-structured interviews were conducted, coding of the qualitative data took place. Coding included a process of referencing words or short phrases throughout all interviews. This process allowed the

researcher to determine patterns and construct meaning from the interviews (Gay et al., 2009).

Missouri Assessment Program Test. The instrument used to measure all students in the state of Missouri in Grades 3 through 5 is the Missouri Assessment Program test. Missouri Assessment Program data are reported on a yearly basis by school and district. The Missouri State Board of Education recognizes the Missouri Assessment Program test has several purposes for the assessment: "students' mastery towards post-secondary readiness, identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, communicating expectations for all students, serving as the basis for state and national accountability plans, evaluating programs and providing professional development for teachers" (Missouri DESE, 2016b, pg. 2). In 2016, the Missouri Assessment Program test was based on the Missouri Learning Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, using Data Recognition Corporation's (DRC) college and career ready item pool for testing (Missouri DESE, 2016a).

The Missouri Assessment Program assessments are based on the Missouri Learning Standards. Administration of the Missouri Assessment Program included various types of questions in an online platform. The types of questions included multiple choice; short text items, which required students to type in their response; and technology-enhanced items. The technology-enhanced items entailed students dragging and dropping items into a response box. The ELA subtest in Grade 5 also included a writing prompt for students. The writing performance event in Grade 5 asked students to

demonstrate their proficiency in writing. Each grade level had a blueprint of items to be tested including reading, writing, research, and speaking and listening (Missouri DESE, 2015a, 2015c, 2016b; 2016d). In Grades 3 and 4 there are three sessions to be administered (Missouri DESE, 2016e). Each session had various times estimates, but no session had a time limit. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education hired the Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to administer the Missouri Assessment Program test to students. The DRC Insight platform used to administer the Missouri Assessment Program test prides itself on finding the appropriate test and flexibility for its clients (DRC, n.d.).

The 2016 Missouri Assessment Program test was developed by DRC staff using items from DRC's college- and career-ready item pool. The test item writers were trained for the appropriate content areas. The item writers had to have a bachelor's degree or higher in the appropriate content area, as well as an in-depth understanding and knowledge of writing standards-based multiple-choice items, depth of knowledge questions, bias consideration, and development of technology-enhanced items (Missouri DESE, 2016a). The item writers also had to participate in a specific training workshop (Missouri DESE, 2016a). The item banks of questions have been nationally field tested in 15 different states using 5,000 questions across multiple grade spans (Missouri DESE, 2016a). Each Missouri Assessment Program assessment at the grade levels was designed for universal participation, or the widest range of students possible. The components of universal design included nonbiased item questions, using accommodations as needed for

specific students, simple and clear instructions, and maximum readability, in which sentence structure and difficult words were kept to a minimum (Missouri DESE, 2016a). A test administration manual was also distributed, which was universal for all districts within Missouri, and included step-by-step directions for administration before, during, and after Missouri Assessment Program testing, to minimize errors (Missouri DESE, 2016a).

In the short writing and writing prompt, human scorers were used and contracted by Stafforward and DRC (Missouri DESE, 2016a). Each scorer was required to have a bachelor's degree and had an interview in which applicants were asked to score using a rubric. After being hired by Stafforward, the scorers were trained om conducted range-finding activities in which 500-700 student responses for Grades 5 and 8 were scored to obtain a rate in which way students responded to questions posted. The DRC staff along with Missouri DESE collaboratively identified responses that would be used as anchor papers for Missouri students in Grades 5 and 8. To maintain daily accuracy, scorers were given an already scored writing prompt, without knowing it had previously been scored, to see if the examiner could give the same score. If a scorer inaccurately scored the writing prompt, they were counseled and retrained (Missouri DESE, 2016a). Two human readers scored approximately 10% of the items to ensure calibration of the scoring (Missouri DESE, 2016a). For each writing item scored, a quadratic weighted Kappa statistic was used and 0.81-1.00 was considered a Very Good rating. Items in Grades 5 and 8 of the ELA received either Moderate 0.41-0.60 or Good 0.61-0.80 Kappa value.

One writing item in ELA Grade 5 received 0.21-0.40, or a Fair rating for the Kappa value (Missouri DESE, 2016a). The Missouri Assessment Program ELA test was considered reliable, indicating that if students were to take the same test again, the scores would be relatively stable. The MAP was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient in which the reliability of the Missouri Assessment Program ELA ranged from 0.90 to 0.91 (Missouri DESE, 2016a). A score of 1 was considered a reliable test. Correlations were computed to assess the validity of the Missouri Assessment Program ELA test. The correlation coefficients ranged from 0.72 to 0.76 for Grade 3 through 5. To minimize bias for subgroups of the population, DRC conducted differential item functioning studies (Missouri DESE, 2016a).

Each student is assigned a scaled score after they have taken the Missouri Assessment Program ELA assessment. The scaled scores are ranges for each proficiency level and differ by grade level (Missouri DESE 2016a, 2016b). Student performance is also reported in proficiency levels of Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced (Missouri DESE, 2016a). The levels of achievement were determined by Missouri teachers, Missouri citizens, the Missouri legislature, and Missouri DESE. The levels were determined by the Bookmark Standard Setting workshop in 2016 (Missouri DESE, 2016a). The scaled score and proficiency levels represent the students' knowledge of the Missouri Learning Standards at their current grade level (Missouri DESE, 2016c).

Data Analysis

Gay et al. (2009) stated that "qualitative researchers collect descriptive, non-numerical data to gain insights into the phenomena of interest. The data collection is largely determined by the nature of the problem" (p 366). By looking at the five highest performing schools in Missouri on the MAP ELA subtest, a greater perspective was gained. Interviews were audio recorded, listened to multiple times by the researcher, as well as transcribed by the researcher. Recording the interviews reduced the risk of the researcher's bias or opinion (Gay et al. 2009). The analysis of the data occurred simultaneously with the data collection. Data triangulation was achieved by using multiple methods of data collection to ensure a complete picture was being represented and cross checked throughout the study (Gay et al., 2009). Interview transcripts were sent to the participants with the opportunity to clarify previous statements and offer additional comments.

The researcher conducted the first round of interviews with four mainstream classroom teachers and one English Language Learner teacher and the interviews were transcribed. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), it is appropriate for the researcher, in a semi-structured interview process, to review the initial interview transcripts and begin a coding process. Merriam and Tidsell (2016), stated that during a qualitative study the "preferred way to analyze data is to do it simultaneously with data collection" (p 197), creating a constant comparative method throughout the research. The researcher captured tentative themes and hunches based on the first round of interviews. The

researcher modified the interview process and one interview question was added based on the results of the first interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The second round of interviews was conducted. The researcher made a comparison, therefore, which informed the upcoming interviews. This process continued throughout the five rounds of interviews.

The procedure of open coding guided the process to develop key phrases and terms. The process of open coding, also known as category construction, allows the researcher to turn delineating concepts into meaningful data. Descriptive coding included key words or phrases and assisted the researcher in categorizing the recurring phrases that were stated through multiple interviewees (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldaña, 2011). Initial themes emerged, using a tree model to assist in summarizing the categories in the interview process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Weller, 2015). Axial coding also took place throughout the analysis process. Strauss and Corbin (2015) describes axial coding as "linking action-interaction within a framework of subconcepts that give[s] meaning and enable[s] it to explain what interactions are occurring, and why and what consequences real or anticipated are happening because of the action-interaction" (pg 156). After initial key phrases or themes emerged through the interviews, they were sorted into categories. Merriam and Tidsell (2016), state that researchers are to "create file folders, each labeled with a category name" (p 209). The researcher named each category by using the exact words of participants.

Examination of each interview took place by the researcher. The interview transcripts were read initially, and overall themes were summarized from English Language Learner teachers and four mainstream classroom teachers on the first round of interviews. Interviews were reread and notes were taken. After conducting a second round of interviews, the researcher completed the same coding process to see if the same themes or key words appeared. The researcher read the notes without the questions, only looking at the respondent's answers. After the initial coding, new categories or trees appeared. The researcher read again, listening to both the questions and responses from the interviewees and the notes were typed. This multilayered approach of reading the interviewees responses more than one time allowed initial themes and underlying themes to emerge.

Summary

Participants were chosen by looking at the top 5 schools in Missouri schools with the highest proficiency levels of English Language Learners on the MAP ELA subtest in Grades 3 through 5. Interviews were conducted with English Language Learner teachers and mainstream classroom teachers from identified schools. Multiple layers of coding were used in the data analysis. The notes were organized into categories which were narrowed by frequency of occurrence (Gay et al. 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). In Chapter Four, the data obtained from semi-structured interviews was analyzed. In Chapter five, after the data have been analyzed, recommendations for further research based on the analysis of the data will be made.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

Chapter Four presents the results of this basic qualitative study, the goal of which was to gain a better understanding of the prevailing type of delivery service and pedagogy used when teaching literacy to English Language Learners using the Missouri Assessment Program in English Language Arts subtest in Grades 3 through 5 as a measure of proficiency. The study explored the types of delivery services and pedagogy used in schools that had English Language Learners who had achieved proficiency on the ELA subtest of the MAP test. This basic qualitative study aspired to expand understanding and knowledge by focusing on the highest performing school districts in Missouri. This study was viewed through the lens of five school districts' mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers. This study adds to the body of research by focusing on two delivery services used predominantly in Missouri and the pedagogy behind the teaching of literacy. The evidence collected during this study is applicable to school districts in Missouri (Taub et al., 2017). Stevick's (1989) and Vygotsky's (1997) theoretical work provided a lens for examining the data collected during this study. The guiding interview questions for this study were chosen from the review of literature, and refined throughout the interview process.

Chapter Four is organized into three parts. Part I focuses on the participants and the setting. Part II reports the results of the data. Part III will address the questions that guided the research:

1. What delivery services of literacy instruction are utilized in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?
2. What types of pedagogy are considered effective by teachers in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

Part I: Demographics of the Participants

The participants of this study were mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers. The setting was limited to the state of Missouri and described in detail below. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in five high-performing schools.

Participants. The participants from this study were purposefully selected mainstream classroom teachers in Grades 3 through 5 and English Language Learner teachers within the same schools. School principals identified four mainstream classroom teachers at each school district. Mainstream classroom teachers were chosen from Grades 3 through 5. School principals in each school district also identified one English Language Learner teacher. Some English Language Learner teachers taught students at the third-, fourth-, or fifth-grade level, and others worked with a grade span that included Grades 3 through 5. There were varying levels of teacher experience ranging from less than five years' experience to over 20 years' experience. Both male and female teachers

were represented; however, there was only one male represented in the interview process. To maintain anonymity of the participants, transcripts were void of any individual identifying information. The compilation of data did identify mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers separately. The researcher was welcomed by each principal, who spent time with the researcher giving a tour of the schools. Each principal was courteous and willing to assist the researcher. Participants were enthusiastic to cooperate and willing to share their strategies, pedagogical practices, and collaboration with the researcher and each other. One participant in one setting was dominant and answered each interview question before other participants had the opportunity to speak. Overall the general tone of the interviews was positive and showed a willingness to assist the researcher. Initially the researcher intended to gather data from the five highest performing elementary schools in Missouri. Upon further investigation, the researcher determined that 4 out of the 5 highest performing elementary schools were in the same school district in Missouri. This posed a problem, as the data collected would be from only two separate school districts. A purposeful decision was made to gather interviews from the five highest performing school districts, rather than the highest performing individual schools. This decision was made because the researcher wanted to gather data from multiple high-performing school districts in Missouri.

Setting. All five high-performing school districts were in an urban or suburban area of Missouri. The proximity of school districts to each other ranged from 15 to 260 miles across the state. Three schools were in general proximity to each other in one area

of the state and the other two schools were within 15 miles of each other. The five schools had an English Language Learner population ranging from 15% to 30% of the student body. The student enrollment ranged from just under 400 students to just under 800 students in Grades K-5. The free and reduced lunch rate ranged from 37% to just under 92% of the student body. Mainstream classroom teachers were interviewed together and English Language Learner teachers were interviewed separately. The interviews took place in a variety of locations throughout the school building including the teacher workroom, teacher conference room, office area, library, and teacher classrooms.

Interviews. An interview protocol was established from the major themes that emerged through the literature review. This protocol was originally presented to the directed research committee and suggestions were given and revisions were made. A pilot group of principals was determined by one of the two qualifiers for the study. The pilot group members were interviewed individually and gave feedback to determine if the answers would help meet the overall research questions. The pilot group answers contributed to the direction of the study.

Interview data consisted of audio transcriptions. The interviews took place over a 3-month time period. The time increased from the initial projections due to conflicting schedules of the researcher and school districts. Weather was also a factor in timeline of collection of interviews. On one occasion the researcher drove 3 hours to a school district and stayed overnight. The next morning the school district cancelled classes due to an ice

storm. The researcher audiotaped and then transcribed each interview session. The interview questions guided the interview process (Appendix C). Interviews were conducted with a group of four mainstream classroom teachers and separately with one English Language Learner teacher. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What delivery services of literacy instruction are utilized in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?
2. What types of pedagogy are considered effective by teachers in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

During the first interview process, information that was not initially included in the interview surfaced and was discussed by the participants. After the researcher conducted School District 1 interviews and transcriptions were completed, a sixth question was added to the interview questions list (Appendix C). The question added to the semi-structured interview protocol: Describe how vocabulary is taught, including purchased curriculum or teacher created resources. The first part of Chapter Four listed the participants, setting, and interview protocols.

Part II: Analysis of the Data

The researcher studied the transcripts multiple times. After the researcher transcribed the interviews, the transcripts were sorted by school district and by the order of the interview questions for the purpose of finding key words or phrases that might lead to themes. The researcher used Google Sheets to categorize, color code, and sort the data using tabs for each school district. Using the chronology of school districts and question

order, the researcher was able to start the process with a sense of organization. After reviewing the data in this configuration, the researcher looked for other ways to organize the data.

The researcher reread transcripts and organized data by headings to support the guiding research questions. Headings included delivery services of pull-out or push-in, support systems, curriculum, teaching strategies, content standards, literacy services model, culture, collaboration, and other. The data were sorted by each school district, separating mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers. The use of headings allowed the researcher to view the data through a different lens and a conceptual view began to appear.

After the process of reorganizing the data, headings were condensed into three areas that emerged: structures, pedagogy, and collaboration. Key words and phrases were reorganized under these three categories in order to analyze the strength of each category. The question was asked, "Does the data support these categories?" Throughout the process, data were colored coded by school district. A table was created for each school district that showed the headings of structure, pedagogy, and collaboration. After viewing the data in this format, it was determined that the data from all school districts should be combined into one document. The resulting organization of the data included the three areas of structure, pedagogy, and collaboration. The following section will examine the results of the data.

Part IV: Results of the Data

Structure. The data showed that there was a combination of pull-out and push-in delivery services, an ample amount of English Language Learner teachers, small group instruction, one-to-one conferences with students, looping, additional services from a reading teacher, and cooperative learning structures. These structures were identified in the data analysis using the transcribed interviews. Four out of the five school districts analyzed had a similar delivery service method for English Language Learners. This included a combination of pull-out and push-in instructional services. "All of the English Language Learners teachers, they work inside our classrooms daily or pull students daily," a participant responded, and was the sentiment that was heard many times throughout the interviews. Each school district interviewed had a slightly different process of delivery services provided; however, overall students who were new to the language or new to the country were pulled-out of the mainstream classroom for literacy instruction and push-in services were provided for writing, and state-tested areas of the curriculum. One school district had an English Language Learner center, where students were bussed from their home school to a center once a week for the entire day for English Language Learner support. "We really do focus in on things as seen in their classroom [as] opposed to tinkering here and there with a little bit of English" was stated by a participant.

All of the high-performing school districts had multiple English Language Learner teachers who supported student learning. A mainstream classroom teacher

asserted part of the students' success was because "we have some great, top-notch English Language Learner teachers." Throughout the interviews it was mentioned that there was a high level of support for students because multiple English Language Learner teachers were available. Some schools had additional support from paraprofessionals who assisted English Language Learner instruction.

The five high-performing districts analyzed in Missouri continuously worked with students in small groups throughout the school day, using the workshop model approach. This finding supported the work of Fountas and Pinnell (2012), who asserted that small group instruction "provides instruction to the students in ways that allow them [teachers] to observe students' individual strengths while working toward further learning goals" (p. 114). The frequent use of small groups allowed English Language Learners to discuss information they had received for purposes of conversation and clarification. Throughout the interviews, teachers had positive statements about small groups, "The small group setting really helps them," stated one of the participants. Others talked about "small group time, where they can focus on academic language," and "the more [they are] in small group, the more they get to practice," as well as "in a small group, [we] can see what they need." In addition, other teachers commented, "in small group, [we are] meeting them where they are at," and one teacher pointed out in small group "...they are able to feel more comfortable talking to me." One teacher stated that English Language Learners "participate just as much as other students" in the small group setting. Student interaction and dialogue in small groups allowed English Language Learners to use

language in an authentic way (Coleman & Goldenberg; 2010b). A teacher stated, "I think that they are getting a lot of one-on-one or small group setting, it really helps." Guided reading and literature circles were structures used frequently in the classroom. The small group setting is an effective structure as perceived by teachers and was a resounding theme throughout each school district's data that were analyzed.

Mainstream classroom teachers discussed multiple times in almost every school district that one-to-one conferences occurred regularly with students. One participant stated, "That is where I can really get into what strategies and skills they need to work on, really comprehending what they are reading." In another interview, a participant stated that during conferences, students "get to work with each other." One-to-one conferences assisted in finding academic gaps in the students' learning as well as understanding student proficiency in reading or writing. It was apparent that one-to-one conferences was an expectation set forth in 4 out of the 5 high-performing schools and students were benefiting from this practice. One teacher stated that "conferring one-on-one...we see where they are at and where they need to go," which is the basis and purpose of one-to-one conferences.

There was a variety of different structures in place throughout the five high-performing schools; however, it is important to note that looping appeared throughout the interview responses. In two school districts, looping was instituted in which teachers instruct the same group of students for 2 years. Looping appeared in Grades 2 and 3 and Grades 4 and 5. A teacher stated that students "know the expectations, that is why

looping helps so much." Three school districts had a reading teacher or specialist who worked with English Language Learners in addition to the mainstream classroom teacher and English Language Learner teacher. One participant stated that English Language Learners see a "reading specialist if that is something that they need," and another added "we have a lot of reading specialists. They get a lot more attention in that area. We are able to pull those kids out and really dig deeper with them." Lastly, two school districts mentioned that students participated in cooperative learning structures. "I have tried to incorporate Kagan [cooperative learning] structures...turn to a partner, shoulder partner."

It was obvious from the structures that were observed through the interactions with participants that decisions by administrators were intentionally made to support English Language Learners. Resources such as having English Language Learner teachers at each grade level, bussing to a learning center for English Language Learners, small group instruction, one-to-one conferences with students, looping, additional services from a reading teacher, and cooperative learning structures were heard throughout the interviews. These deeply rooted structures in the school set the tone for the pedagogical practices in each school district.

Pedagogy. There were various pedagogical practices that were deemed effective by mainstream and English Language Learner teachers during the interview process. The practices included vocabulary, peer interactions, purchased literacy programs, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), modeling, anchor charts, data collection, goal setting, standards, and technology. English Language Learners often lack commensurate

vocabulary as native speakers of English. Both mainstream and English Language Learner teachers stated that vocabulary was an extremely important part of instruction for students. As stated by a respondent, "something I have noticed more than other schools...the integration of vocabulary for each subject and on the lesson plans." All school districts had varying ways of teaching vocabulary, from using specific models, to employing learning of vocabulary in small group settings or in the content areas. Vocabulary development was integral in the proficiency of English Language Learners. Coleman and Goldenberg (2009) stated that best instructional practices in small group included front-loading new vocabulary. A teacher responded by stating, "A lot of my vocabulary work is done in small group." English Language Learner and mainstream classroom teachers also agreed with this practice for students throughout the interview responses. Multiple teachers in multiple school districts stated that students need to be able to discover and represent new vocabulary. One teacher had students discover vocabulary by asking questions, "what does it look like, what does it sound like, feel like...building on that." This included the specific strategy of a foursquare in which students, draw a picture, write the definition of the term, write a sentence of their own understanding, and indicate synonyms or antonyms of the term. Best practices of learning vocabulary reiterated by Marzano et al. (1993), Medina-Jerez et al. (2007), and Sousa (2011) concurred that students need to be able to hear explicit descriptions of new words, act words out, or draw images that reflect vocabulary contexts.

In the interviews in each school district, teachers emphasized that English Language Learners often worked with a peer throughout the school day. One teacher who had worked in another district stated, "In another district, they would just read and share occasionally. [Here] they are sharing every day, with a buddy, reading, writing, they are always talking about their reading." A different teacher stated, "students also like to collaborate in the progression... they can be used as teaching models." Multiple school districts had English Language Learners work in pairs to share information in a variety of contexts including whole group and small group lessons. "Modeling, get with a peer and go over it and get to see how the peer interprets what they wrote. It's good for them to see and discuss," as a teacher stated in regard to having students interact within writing. Participants were positive about small group and how students collaborated with one another. "Naturally in small group they are more willing to share and feel confident," stated one teacher, while another teacher stated, "partners are working within small group." Teachers cited the curriculum and standards in their schools being deep and richly rooted in small group instruction with an emphasis on vocabulary. Hill and Flynn (2006) stated that during partner talk or cooperative learning structures English Language Learners should be paired with a monolingual peer to hear the language spoken. In one school district students took on the role of peer coach and worked on editing and revising writing pieces. With newcomers who were new to the country or language, students were paired with a peer model to assist the student in various aspects of a typical school day.

Howard (2017) and Sibold (2011) also agreed that pairing English Language Learners with another peer in the classroom is a valid instructional strategy to be used.

Teachers in each school district mentioned a professionally prepared pedagogical program and specifically taught strategies for English Language Learners, which they considered to be effective due to increased student literacy knowledge. Lucy Calkins and Colleagues Units of Study was the most mentioned pedagogical program with three school districts employing the program. Calkins' framework is built on the workshop model, with each lesson beginning with a minilesson, independent work time, small group time, midworkshop teaching point, and sharing with peers (Lucy Calkins and Colleagues, n.d.). Two teachers commented on Calkins work: "Lucy Calkins curriculum had helped a lot" and "we use Lucy Calkins, we have strategy groups...It has been great." Other purchased programs included Being a Reader, Being a Writer, and Making Meaning. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was employed by one high-performing school district. All teachers including mainstream classroom teachers, English Language Learner teachers, and other teachers were trained using the SIOP methods. A mainstream classroom teacher validated the usefulness of SIOP, saying it "is very language based, they are reading it, writing it, saying it...they have 50 chances a day to verbalize their thinking...has a lot to do with it." Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol uses language objectives at each grade level to help students meet the grade-level expectations (Perez & Holmes, 2010; U.S Department of Education, 2013). Classroom teachers considered the use of anchor charts as an effective teaching strategy.

Pinnell and Fountas (2007) agreed that in writing, the teacher and students could create anchor charts of the desired skills or brainstorming of ideas. The anchor chart can be a model for students to refer to in various situations. Teachers also considered modeling an effective strategy to increase student achievement. Modeling can be in both whole and small group settings. "When in small group we do a lot of paraphrasing, breaking down words, a lot of modeling," stated a teacher. Teachers often model an example of the given task at hand before students are expected to complete an assignment independently.

The data collection of student work and progress to be analyzed by the mainstream classroom teacher with guidance from the English Language Learner teacher was mentioned as a pedagogical practice. An English Language Learner teacher stated that "it is important to look at distinct data on each child so that you can look, how are they learning vocabulary, how is their literacy improving, and how are they speaking." She continued "I believe that is a very big part of why it pushed the English Language Learner kids into the next level." Additional data that were discussed included individual student progress reports, formative or summative assessments, pedagogical programs data, the ACCESS test, and anecdotal notes.

Student goal setting along with teacher guidance in reading or writing became apparent as one mainstream classroom teacher perceived effective practice used within the classroom: "After the focus lesson, I go out and confer with kids and set goals with them." Another teacher stated that after a whole group lesson, the English Language Learner teacher helped students set a "goal for the day. It is always based on what we are

teaching." One teacher stated, "We make a weekly goal" for our English Language Learners. It was apparent that goal setting with students was an effective practice in high-performing schools in Missouri.

Technology was embedded into the daily practices of students in various ways including Google Classroom and Google Docs. Technology is a "way for kids to communicate digitally. They can express it in different ways. They can draw a picture, or a combination of a picture and video clip or something," stated one teacher. English Language Learners used technology-based pedagogical programs such as Jolly Phonics and Imagine Learning that were purchased by the school district, specifically designed for English Language Learners. The programs were purchased to increase language of English Language Learners in a variety of avenues. The importance of pedagogical practices became apparent to the researcher as they were discussed several times throughout the interview process. In summary, pedagogical practices included vocabulary, peer interaction, purchased literacy programs, SIOP, modeling, anchor charts, data collection, goal setting, standards, and technology.

Collaboration. Collaboration along with communication and strong collegial relationships were deeply rooted themes throughout all school districts. Collaboration in grade-level teams was the most often noted. An English Language Learner teacher stated, "Well I definitely think that the teacher-to-teacher collaboration has a big effect on the students." Collaboration with the mainstream classroom teachers and the English Language Learner teacher occurred at least one time a week. Collaboration took place in

a variety of settings including team meetings, e-mail, Google Calendar, and "pop-in checks." Along with teacher collaboration, communication amongst staff was perceived as a component of success with English Language Learners. A mainstream classroom teacher agreed, stating, "She [English Language Learner teacher] just communicates with us all the time."

"The key to everything within the students, within the staff, within the parents is relationships," one participant stated. A theme throughout the interview process concluded that relationships with students and families must be built to ensure the likelihood of student success. It was reiterated with a statement from one respondent: "One of the most important things that I feel has really attributed to our success is the fact that we build very positive relationships with our families regardless of the language they speak." Teacher-to-teacher collaboration as well as communication and relationships with students and families became a contributing factor to the overall success of English Language Learner students in the high-performing schools, according to the participants.

Part III: Guiding Research Questions

Part III will address the primary overarching questions that guided the research:

1. What delivery services of literacy instruction are utilized in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?
2. What types of pedagogy are considered effective by teachers in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

Research Question 1. What delivery services of literacy instruction are utilized in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

The insight into this guiding research question emerged throughout the collection of data. Interviews conducted indicated that the majority of school districts participated in a combination delivery of literacy instruction for English Language Learners. Four of the school districts participated in a combination of pull-out and push-in literacy services. The type of service depended on each individual student and the student's language proficiency. The term pull-out was mentioned 22 times and push-in was mentioned 14 times throughout the interviews. One high-performing district had an English Language Learner center that students attended one day a week for additional literacy services.

Small group instruction was indicated as a key structure for delivery of services with English Language Learners. Honigsfeld (2009) stated that "ELLs [English Language Learners] benefit from small group instruction" (p. 169). Data analysis indicated that mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers concurred that students were successful in the small group setting. Small group instruction was discussed 30 times throughout the interviews and was present in each high-performing school district. One-to-one conferences surfaced as an effective strategy when working with English Language Learners. This allows teachers to know gaps in students' academic competencies. The impact of pull-out and push-in literacy services, one-to-one conferences, and small group instruction was key to English Language Learners success in the high-performing school districts in Missouri.

Research Question 2. What types of pedagogy are considered effective by teachers in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

There were several pedagogical practices employed by mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers that emerged throughout the data analysis. Vocabulary was deeply rooted in the practices of teachers. "We focus a lot on vocabulary. There is a gap...so we focus on that," stated one mainstream classroom teacher. Pang (2013) agreed that "if ELLs [English Language Learners] are unable to understand the key vocabulary, they may not be able to understand the entire sentence or even the whole paragraph" (p. 52). The high-performing school districts in this study had varying ways of teaching vocabulary, from including specific models to employing learning of vocabulary in small group settings or in the content areas. When introducing vocabulary, teachers stated that front-loading or using a specific organizer with English Language Learners was effective in aiding the student's understanding of the new word. One participant had students make meaning with new vocabulary using interaction with peers, "They have to talk with a partner. I listen for the vocabulary usage." Peer models, coaching, and students working together were powerful pedagogical practices when working with English Language Learners. Carrison and Ernst-Slavit (2005), Howard (2017), and McElvain (2010) concurred that listening to peer models increases literacy development of English Language Learners. Additionally, the high-performing schools utilized professionally developed pedagogical programs with students.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to better understand the prevailing type of delivery service and pedagogy used when teaching literacy to English Language Learners using the Missouri Assessment Program as a measure of proficiency. Chapter Four presented the analysis of the data. It included a description of the participants, setting, and themes that emerged from interviews. Each theme identified in this study was supported by respondents' quotes, key words, and phrases. One quote that summarized the beliefs and actions of the participating schools was "…the best practices for ELLs [English Language Learners] are really best practices for all." The participants provided insight to the delivery services and pedagogical practices within their respective school districts. Data resulting from the interviews were used to answer the two research questions for this study. Chapter Five will include conclusions and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This basic qualitative study aimed to determine the impact of literacy services and the pedagogy implemented with English Language Learners in high-performing elementary schools in Missouri using the Missouri Assessment Program in English Language Arts subtest in Grades 3 through 5 as a measure of proficiency. This study explored the type of literacy delivery services provided and effective pedagogical practices for English Language Learners. This basic qualitative study aspired to expand the knowledge and understanding of proficient English Language Learners by focusing on the structure and pedagogy practiced by high-performing schools. The study was viewed through the lens of teacher perception in five high-performing school districts where interviews were conducted with mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers. In this chapter, a summary of the study, a discussion of the limitations, and general conclusions from the study are presented along with implications for current practice. Recommendations for further research are also presented.

This study explored the services provided and pedagogical practices of teaching English Language Learners that were effective as perceived by mainstream and English Language Learner teachers. The overarching primary research questions were as follows:

1. What delivery services of literacy instruction are utilized in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

2. What types of pedagogy are considered effective by teachers in high-performing schools when teaching English Language Learners?

These questions were designed to guide the study and construct meaning about how services were provided and what pedagogical practices were in place for English Language Learners.

This study analyzed data from interviews with a total of 20 mainstream classroom and English Language Learner teachers in five school districts across the state of Missouri. The basic qualitative study used semi-structured interviews to gather data. Themes emerged as the data were analyzed to determine the results of the study. The central themes that emerged included a long-term commitment to English Language Learners by the school district, a high level of support for teachers and students, a strong emphasis on student-centered approaches, a general positive attitude and a sense of self-efficacy from the participants about their work, collaboration among teachers, and a collaborative learning environment for students.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included researcher bias in regard to the educational process of teaching English Language Learners, as the researcher is an administrator in an elementary school where 15% or more of the students were identified as English Language Learners. In this basic qualitative study, participant bias was a limitation, because the data results depended on the truthfulness and willingness of the participants. Each participant answered the interview questions based upon their experience in

working with English Language Learners in Grades 3 through 5. Credibility of the study was strengthened by the focus on schools where at least a 15% of the student body were English Language Learners, and were also among the highest performing schools on the Missouri Assessment Program English Language Arts subtest. The researcher also drew on the experience of a pilot group of principals who took the interview questions and made recommendations for changes prior to implementation of the study.

The scope of this study was limited to the geographic region of Missouri. There were 92 schools that qualified for the study with 15% or more of the English Language Learner student population. Of this population, five schools that had the highest proficiency on the Missouri Assessment Program English Language Arts subtest were chosen. If this study was replicated, it could produce different results. Even though the results might be slightly different with a different group of participants, it does not diminish the context of the research.

Results

The two research questions that guided this study were addressed through semi-structured interviews. The questions from interviews were designed around delivery services and pedagogical practices of high-performing schools. The findings provided insight into the research questions. Two overarching areas that emerged from the analysis of the data were structure and pedagogy, which provided a framework for analyzing the data. It was apparent to the researcher that structures were in place that fostered a long-term commitment to providing services to English Language Learners by each of the

school districts in the study. Decisions had been made by each school district to support English Language Learners and there was a longitudinal plan in place. There were specific strategies that were working to produce positive results and the school districts were committed to long-term implementation of successful practices. Standards and curriculum were tightly connected within the schools that were studied. Teachers cited that the curriculum and standards in their schools were deeply and richly rooted in small group instruction. There was a high level of support for students and teachers. The evidence to support this finding included multiple English Language Learner teachers who supported student learning in a variety of ways. There were some school districts that had English Language Learner teachers at each grade level. English Language Learner teachers assisted students in the delivery of services in a pull-out or push-in environment. English Language Learner teachers also supported teachers by collaborating at team meetings and individually with teachers.

Each school district had a strong student-centered approach. This was evident by the use of small groups in all five elementary schools. A strong student-centered approach was also apparent by the use of one-to-one conferences with students. English Language Learners also worked with peers in a variety of classroom settings, including peer models. The collaboration between teachers and students was apparent, due to the one-to-one conferences. The delivery model of services provided by each school was dependent on the students' needs, rather than on adult-centered time management or schedules.

An unintended result that came from the data analysis was the collaboration among teachers. Multiple times throughout the interview process, both mainstream classroom and English Language Learner teachers noted that they enjoyed collaborating with each other. This collaboration took many forms including team meetings and planning time. The researcher perceived a high level of self-efficacy among participants who knew they were making a difference in the lives of their students. In each interview setting there was a willingness to cooperate and share with the researcher. The general mood of the participants was upbeat and positive. Participants had a positive attitude about their work and enjoyed working with English Language Learners. The evidence of self-efficacy, the openness of the participants, and their joy of working with each other and students demonstrated the power of their positive attitudes.

The research questions were addressed through the interview process. The results of the data revealed that the type of delivery service varied according to student needs. One type of delivery service was not preferred over another. A variety of push-out and pull-in delivery services was used in all schools, indicating that the type of delivery service was not critical in building successful programs for English Language Learners. Other structures in place were more important factor than the delivery service.

Implications for Practice

Leaders wanting to better meet the needs of English Language Learners can look at the results of this basic qualitative study and apply best practices in their school environment. The types of pedagogy used within the schools that were studied were

based on best practices in education. A strong emphasis on vocabulary was a factor that teachers consistently saw as critical in the development of English Language Learners. This factor, teachers agreed, is why students were successful on the standardized test. While the type of pedagogy is important, it is the consistency of the structures in place and pedagogy based on best practice that creates an environment for success. In addition the district's financial and consistent support provided the foundation for the schools to create and implement a program based on best practice.

Recommendations for Future Research

One recommendation for future research would be to replicate the study with a larger sample of the population of mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers. Another recommendation for future research would be to conduct interviews of principals or district-level administrators to determine what process was used for the implementation of the longitudinal plans that were made to support English Language Learners. The focus of interviews could include the presence of the financial and system-wide support across the district. Another recommendation for future research would be observations of mainstream classroom teachers and English Language Learner teachers in high-performing schools along with interviews. Observations would deepen the researchers' knowledge of pedagogical practices embedded into the high-performing schools. The use of classroom observations would provide a view of each unique classroom of English Language Learners and provide a deeper view of teachers' pedagogical practices. Another recommendation for future research would be to dissect

how English Language Learner teachers and mainstream classroom teachers implement pedagogical practices with students who have language differences, differing time spent in the country, and varying levels of formal schooling.

Summary

This study showed that teacher perceptions in schools with high-achieving English Language Learners believed that long-lasting structures for learning and a variety of pedagogical practices provide an environment for success. According to this study, in order to deeply engage with English Language Learners, schools and school districts must have a long-term commitment to support teachers and students, a strong emphasis on a student-centered approach, a general positive attitude about their work, and collaboration among teachers and students. These structures were deeply rooted in high-performing schools in this study. In addition to the structures that enabled student success, the intentional student-centered use of strong pedagogical practices bridged the gap between day-to-day learning into standardized test proficiency for five high-performing schools.

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APPENDIX A

Request for Participation

Spring 2018

Participant Name

Participant School

Dear Participant,

I am a current doctoral student at Southwest Baptist University and am working on my doctoral dissertation. It will be a qualitative approach focusing on English Language Learners literacy mastery using the Missouri Assessment Program, English Language Arts subtest for Grades 3 through 5. I would like to request your participation in this study, because your school meets the following criteria established for the research. Your schools population of ELL students is 15% or higher and your school has the highest Missouri Assessment Program ELA proficiency rates for English Language Learners.

This study will help determine if there is a connection to the type of literacy practice with ELL students and proficiency levels of the Missouri Assessment Program assessment. The second phase of the research will include the school's literacy practice or pedagogy.

Your involvement will require setting a time aside for an interview of five questions about the literacy practice or pedagogy of your school in regard to ELL students.

If you would like to participate, we will set up an interview time that is convenient for you. Please contact me via phone or email below.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sara Shevchuk, Doctoral Student, SBU 417-224-7027, sshevchuk82@gmail.com

This projects has been reviewed by the Southwest Baptist University Research Review Board for research and research-related activities including human subjects (417) 326-1659.

APPENDIX B

Request for Recommendation

Spring 2018

Principal Name

Participant School

Dear Principal,

I am a current doctoral student at Southwest Baptist University and am working on my doctoral dissertation. It will be a qualitative approach focusing on English Language Learners literacy mastery using the Missouri Assessment Program, English Language Arts subtest for Grades 3 through 5. I would like to request your recommendation of mainstream classroom teachers in Grades 3 through 5 and an English Language Learner Teacher, because your school meets the following criteria established for the research. Your schools population of ELL students is 15% or higher and your school district has the highest Missouri Assessment Program ELA proficiency rates for English Language Learners.

This study will help determine if there is a connection to the type of literacy practice with ELL students and proficiency levels of the Missouri Assessment Program assessment. The second phase of the research will include the school's literacy practice or pedagogy.

Your involvement will require recommendation four mainstream classroom teachers and one English Language Learner teacher for interview purposes. After identifying these five teachers, the researcher will contact the potential participants for interview.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sara Shevchuk

Doctoral Student, SBU 417-224-7027, sshevchuk82@gmail.com

This project has been reviewed by the Southwest Baptist University Research Review Board for research and research-related activities involving human subjects (417) 326-1659.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1. You have the highest MAP ELA scores in the state. To what do you attribute this achievement?
2. What type of literacy delivery services for literacy instruction does your school provide (such as push-in or pull-out) and what results do you believe you get from that method?
3. Describe in what ways ELL's participate in small group literacy instruction?
4. In what ways does collaboration influence the learning of ELL's? (This can refer to teacher collaboration, or student interaction, such as ELL's processing their learning)?
5. What strategies do you use that bridge the gap between day to day to learning and on standardized test proficiency?
6. Describe how vocabulary is taught, including purchased curriculum or teacher created resources.