Navigating Inquiry Group Professional Learning for In-Service Teachers With Mainstreamed English Language Learners: A Practitioner Action Research Study

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Navigating Inquiry Group Professional Learning for In-Service Teachers

With Mainstreamed English Language Learners:

A Practitioner Action Research Study

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Jennifer Wnuk

Montclair State University

Montclair, NJ

January 2021
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

Navigating Inquiry Group Professional Learning for In-Service Teachers
With Mainstreamed English Language Learners:
A Practitioner Action Research Study

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Abstract

For this study, I initiated an inquiry group to research how to meet the needs of mainstreamed English language learning (ELL) students. I chose a practitioner action research design with a socially critical lens in order to address the injustice inherent in the district where I currently work and inform future policy. Although what we learned about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students was important to our individual professional development, the research did not yield new findings for the body of educational research on instruction for language learners. The primary contribution of this practitioner action research study was how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). As we engaged in this inquiry group, we discovered a different approach to professional learning, one with great potential compared to the typical transmission model we previously experienced, which changed our understanding of best practices for professional learning and strengthened our understanding of our roles as educational researchers. By acknowledging the ever-changing needs of the student population, we developed an understanding of the importance of self-directed professional learning.

Keywords: English language learner, in-service teacher, professional learning, inquiry group
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the talented and hardworking teachers whose paths I have crossed. I am always inspired by the amazing work teachers do in their classrooms and always strive to offer them constructive and meaningful support and encouragement.

&

For Aiden, my son.
Acknowledgement

First and foremost, thank you to my advisor, Dr. Kathryn Herr. Your guidance brought me back to my true intentions and goal for this study, as I had gotten a little lost along the way. Thank you for this invaluable experience and all that you have taught me. I will be forever grateful.

Thank you to my committee members, Dr. Emily Klein and Dr. Jeremy Price, for sharing your wealth of knowledge and inspiring my passion for professional learning and social justice. Your constructive comments and feedback helped shape this study.

I send a special note of gratitude to the teachers who participated in this study as well as Dr. Michael Valenti for helping us facilitate our inquiry group. Your professionalism and commitment to our English language learners motivated me as I worked on this project.

I am so grateful for Dr. MaryAnn Boyd, Dr. James Heinegg, Dr. Patrick Tierney, and Mrs. Jeanne Howe who were my first professional mentors to encourage me to continue my education and complete my PhD. Dr. Boyd, you were the first principal I worked with, and you set the standard for professionalism and continuing education for educators. Dr. Heinegg, on my second day of work as an administrator, you asked me when I planned on going back to school for my doctorate. That moment has stayed with me to this day, almost ten years later. Dr. Tierney, you always told me to keep going to school until I was done. And Mrs. Howe, your high standards for leadership inspire me every day. Thank you.

A special thank you to my support system and personal cheerleaders: my husband Rich, my parents Donna and Bruce, and my aunts Pam, Lisa, and Cherie. You all encouraged me to keep going when I was frustrated and struggling to finish. I could not have gotten through this without your support.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the past three decades, the population of students attending U.S. public schools shifted dramatically due to a resurgence of immigrants (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). This resurgence led to more than double the number of English language learning (ELL) students, or students with limited English proficiency (LEP) in U.S. schools since the late 1990s (NCES, 2017). The United States Federal Government recognizes ELL students and LEP students as the same group. There are about five million ELL students who now account for almost ten percent of the U.S. public school population (NCES, 2017). Since the mid 1970s, school districts around the nation were required to provide accommodations for students with limited English proficiency due to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the Lau v. Nichols case (1974). This ruling determined that, at that time, non-English speakers were denied a meaningful education due to a lack of supplemental language instruction in public schools. As a result, school districts had to provide ELL students with “appropriate relief.” Subsequently, there have been two major reforms that deeply influenced the accommodations schools provide for ELL students. These two reforms were the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act from 2001, and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative from 2009.

First, the No Child Left Behind Act from 2001 mandated that ELL students take state tests in English, allowing for very few exceptions. In order to prepare ELL students to take state tests in English, many districts revised their language accommodations and implemented a mainstream model. Mainstreaming is when ELL students are instructed in a general education English speaking classroom for the majority of the day, and then get pulled out of the general classroom for a portion of the day to work with an English language specialist (Bunch, 2013; deJong, 2011; He et al., 2011; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2010; Santos et al., 2012). The logic
of the mainstream model is for ELL students to learn the core subjects such as reading, writing, math, science, and social studies alongside their native-English speaking peers with a general education teacher (Enright, 2011).

Second, the 2009 Common Core State Standards Initiative redefined classroom language and literacy expectations (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). While aligning curricula to the Common Core State Standards, most districts continued to provide mainstream instruction for ELL students, but moved towards a more specific approach, Sheltered Instruction (Echevarria et al., 2006). Sheltered Instruction emphasizes the value of both language and content instruction (Daniel & Conlin, 2015; Echevarria et al., 2006). The philosophy of sheltered instruction is to provide access to mainstream grade-level content, while simultaneously supporting English language acquisition (Daniel & Conlin, 2015; Echevarria et al., 2006). For example, in a Sheltered Instruction classroom, ELL students receive social studies instruction in English, while the teacher provides language scaffolds to support student understanding of both the language and the content.

Not surprisingly, these reforms have shaped the academic research and literature on teacher preparation for meeting the needs of ELL students across the United States. After the implementation of No Child Left Behind in 2001, many academic researchers focused on how to prepare in-service teachers to meet the needs of ELL students who were mainstreamed into their classrooms (e.g., Brisk, 2008; Meskill, 2005; Walker et al., 2005). Similarly, since the Common Core State Standards Initiative in 2009, there was an increase in the number of research studies about preparing in-service teachers to implement Sheltered Instruction practices for meeting the language needs of the ELL students mainstreamed into general education English-speaking
classrooms (e.g., Buxton et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2016). Through this work, researchers investigated how to implement a range of teaching strategies and programs designed to support ELL student achievement (e.g., Bunch, 2013; Garcia et al., 2010; Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010).

**Problem Statement**

Even though academic research has been conducted on teacher preparation for meeting the needs of ELL students (e.g. Calderon et al., 2011; Lucas, et al., 2018; Lucas & Villegas, 2013), in-service teachers still report they receive little preparation or professional development (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Gandara et al., 2005; Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016). The majority of general education teachers claim that they are not sufficiently prepared to teach the ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms (American Federation of Teachers, 2004; Center for American Progress, 2011). Considering these teacher reports, it is not surprising that the achievement gap for ELL students persists based upon standardized test score reports. Using the 2005 data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Fry (2007) reported that

> in the fourth grade, 35% of English language learner (ELL) students are behind in math and 47% are behind in reading when compared with their white counterparts ... [and] about 51% of 8th grade ELL students are behind whites in reading and math” (p. 2).

> “Regardless of grade or subject,” Fry claimed ELL students “trail far behind their white counterparts in the proportion of students that perform at or above the basic achievement level” (p. 12).

As substantiated by poor ELL student academic progress reports (NAEP, 2015), along with the fact that the majority of U.S. teachers report that they are unprepared to serve their ELL
students (e.g. American Federation of Teachers, 2004; Lucas et al., 2008; Sowa, 2009), the problem is clear. The United States public school system is failing this population of learners. My personal experiences as a teacher and administrator confirm the urgency and reality of this problem.

**My Positionality**

I have worked in public education for the past fifteen years. I taught elementary school for seven years, and then transitioned into an administrative supervisor role for the past eight years. The majority of my experience has been in suburban middle class school districts in northern New Jersey. Over this time, I personally witnessed a changing demographic; the population of English language learners in the schools where I worked almost tripled. Over my fifteen years in public education, I worked in two different districts and across fourteen schools, and the only action plan for ELL students that I experienced was the mainstream model. All ELL students, no matter what their language acquisition level was, were mainstreamed into English speaking general education classrooms for the majority of the day, and only received thirty minute daily lessons with an ESL specialist.

As a teacher, I had a number of ELL students mainstreamed into my classroom for the majority of the day, but never received any formal training, strategies, and/or information on their language needs. I was only informed of which students were Limited English Proficient (LEP), and their schedule for ESL each week. The ESL specialist would pull the ESL students out of my classroom for thirty minutes each day, but that was the extent of our interactions. My ELL students were with me for five hours of instruction every day. I struggled to meet their needs, and I knew I was failing them. Eventually I sought out the ESL specialist to gather
information on my ELL students’ progress, but this was not a common practice in the district where I was teaching.

As a curriculum supervisor, my overarching responsibility is to be a resource for the teachers when they are struggling to meet the needs of their students. Again and again, teachers came to me for support regarding how to meet the needs of the ELL students who were mainstreamed into their classrooms. Repeatedly, I was told that they received “very little” or “no professional development regarding ELL students.” Oftentimes, teachers expressed frustration claiming that “these students do not belong” in a mainstream setting.

The general problem that I addressed in this study was, in-service teachers are unprepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. A more specific problem that I addressed was, as an instructional leader, I am unprepared to support the teachers in my district regarding how to meet the needs of the ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms. Even though the motivation for the topic of this study stemmed from my personal experiences, as stated above, the urgency to research this issue was confirmed by poor ELL student academic progress reports (NAEP, 2015) along with nationwide concerns regarding the lack of teacher readiness for meeting the needs of ELL students (e.g. American Federation of Teachers, 2004; Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Sowa, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

I developed this practitioner action research study to systematically investigate a professional learning experience for meeting the needs of the mainstreamed ELL students in the district where I currently work. My research questions were: How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? - and How does this process inform our individual roles? The purpose of this study was to investigate how a group of educators
collectively learned to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students; we were also interested in investigating how we developed professionally as a group, as well as individuals. We used an inquiry group structure to engage in this professional learning experience so that we could conduct our research as a community of professionally diverse educators. Accordingly, the participants for this practitioner action research study were myself an administrator, an ESL specialist, and a group of five elementary educators who had ELL students mainstreamed into their classrooms.

As we collectively investigated how to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students, we not only learned best practices to support ELL students, but we also inevitably ended up studying the inquiry group style of professional learning. What we learned about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students was very meaningful. However, our findings about inquiry groups and professional learning were quite significant as well. The inquiry group experience changed our understanding of best practices for professional learning. As we engaged in this inquiry group, not only did we learn a new method for professional learning that we could routinely use to research any urgent question about classroom practice, and we also developed an understanding of our professional roles as researchers.

Summary

As discussed above, the ELL student population is rising in schools across the nation (NCES, 2017). National achievement data reports demonstrate that the ELL student population is performing below standard (NAEP, 2015). Despite research based teacher preparation efforts that include a variety of professional learning opportunities focused on specialized knowledge and skills for second language acquisition instruction. But still, in-service teachers report feeling unprepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. At the start of this study, my
district had no formalized professional learning plan for meeting the needs of our ELL students. I was also unprepared as an administrator to support my teachers to meet the needs of our ELL students. Therefore, it was of great importance for me to investigate how to address this void. To conclude, the goal of this practitioner action research study was to work with a team of educators from my district to investigate a professional learning experience for meeting the needs of our ELL students, to better inform our practice.

Definitions of Terms

*English language learner (ELL) student.* Students from pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve whose primary language is not English. Students who have difficulty performing ordinary classwork in English due to difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language as measured by an English language proficiency test (New Jersey Department of Education).

*Limited English proficient (LEP) student.* Students who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. These individuals are entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type or service, benefit, or encounter from the school district (Education Commission of the States). The terms ELL student and LEP student are used interchangeably

*Mainstreamed ELL students.* General classrooms are considered to be the mainstream. The teacher in a mainstream classroom holds a general teaching certificate without a specialty. LEP students have special language learning needs because they are not yet English proficient. When the ELL student is mainstreamed, he/she is placed into a classroom with students who do not have limited English, and a teacher who does not have a specialized language endorsement and/or certification.
In-service teacher. Teachers who have completed their preservice professional preparation and earned a certificate to join the teaching workforce. In-service teachers are teachers who are currently employed at a school, and actively teaching.

Second language acquisition (SLA). The process of acquiring a second language. Krashen and Terrell (1983) broke down the process of acquiring a second language by identifying the stages an individual goes through: Preproduction, Early Production, Speech Emergence, Intermediate Fluency, and Advanced Fluency. In order to move through these stages, individuals must engage in language input—hearing and reading the language, as well as with language output—speaking and writing the language (Krashen, 1985).

Conversational language. Cummins (1979) defined conversational language as the individual’s interpersonal communication skills of a second language. Conversational language proficiency has low cognitive demands because it only includes mastery of social vocabulary (Cummins, 1979; Cummins, 2000). Conversational language is usually acquired after two years of being immersed in a second language (Cummins, 2000).

Academic language. Cummins (1979) defined academic language as the individual’s cognitive academic language proficiency of a second language. Academic language proficiency has much higher cognitive demands because it includes mastery of instructional and technical vocabulary across content areas (Cummins, 2000). Academic language proficiency can take an additional five to seven years beyond the two years of conversational language development (Cummins, 2000).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I detail my current progress in the ongoing process of reviewing the academic research on in-service teacher professional learning experiences for meeting the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. In the first section, I describe Cochran-Smith & Lytles’ “inquiry as stance” ideology for practitioner research (2009) as a framework for my study. Then, in the second section of this chapter, I define the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Next, in the third section of this chapter, I share the findings from my literature review on in-service professional learning experiences for preparing teachers to meet the needs of their ELL students. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a summary statement and the purpose of my study.

The “Inquiry as Stance” Ideology

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) claim that, “The knowledge needed for teachers to teach well to enhance students’ learning opportunities and life chances could not be generated solely by researchers who were centrally positioned outside of schools and classrooms and imported for implementation and use inside schools.” (p. vii) They emphasize the importance of educational practitioners, especially teachers, consistently carrying out their own practitioner research in order to improve the learning experience. More specifically, Cochran-Smith and Lytle state that practitioner research enables teachers not only to improve their practice, but challenge standards, and “interrupt dominant viewpoints about equity” and contribute to larger social change (p vii). When teachers adopt an “inquiry as stance” perspective, they can conduct practitioner research within their local school setting that challenges standard practice and contributes to larger social change (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Practitioner research is a form of professional development where the practitioner is simultaneously the researcher and the subject being
studied (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). But practitioner research with an “inquiry as stance” ideology shifts the focus of simply reading general educational research and applying it to a classroom, to conducting authentic research within one’s own context in order to draw and act on more meaningful conclusions.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) use five themes to identify current developments of practitioner research:

1. *Taking on Issues of Equity, Engagement, and Agency*, which emphasizes how practitioner research empowers educators to investigate and act on educational practices to address equity within their own settings.

2. *Developing Conceptual Framework* highlights the importance of educators in the field developing theory that extends and rationalizes the publications of university researchers.

3. *Inventing and Reinventing Communities of Inquiry* describes the significance of inquiry communities and how powerful co-constructed research can be within local school settings.

4. *Shaping School Reform and Educational Policy* challenges current practitioner research practices focusing on evidence-based instruction with alternative epistemologies.

5. *Re-Forming Research and Practice in Universities* re-examines practitioner research by exposing the hierarchical connections between teaching and research as well as practitioner inquiry and university research.

This practitioner action research study reflects these themes, as well as the “inquiry as stance” ideology. Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s themes (2009) emphasize the importance of collective practitioner inquiry within local contexts that focus on improving equity in the education system. I initiated this practitioner action research study because I wanted to address
and improve an injustice that exists in the district where I currently work, my own local context. In my district, the teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of the ELL student population. I gathered a group of professionally diverse educators from my district, and we committed to an “inquiry as stance” ideology as we engaged in this professional learning experience so that we could conduct our research as a community while addressing an equity issue within our own district.

**Second Language Acquisition**

In this section I define Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Then, I outline the language interactions for acquiring a second language, linguistic input and linguistic output. Finally, I detail the stages of development for SLA. SLA is pertinent to this study, because it was the topic of our practitioner research.

SLA refers to research and theoretical work that focuses on understanding how people acquire a second language. I focus on the aspects of SLA that relate to ELL students in classroom settings. There are two essential components that make up the foundation of SLA. The first is the important role that linguistic input and output play in language acquisition (e.g., Krashen, 1981; Krashen, 1985). The second involves the stages of second language acquisition: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). I discuss each of these concepts below.

**Linguistic Input and Output**

SLA theorists emphasize the crucial role language input and output play to acquiring a second language (Ellis, 1997; Krashen, 1985, Swain, 1995). Above all, linguistic input (i.e., the content and/or language coming to the learner) must be comprehensible or accessible to the learner (Krashen, 1985). For ELL students, this means teachers’ need to modify texts, and
define vocabulary; for example, they need to provide picture supports with complex texts (He, et al., 2011; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2010; Lucas et al., 2008; Sowa, 2009). Linguistic output refers to the content and/or language the learner produces and needs support with scaffolds that focus on verbal interaction and meaning-making (Ellis, 1997; Swain, 1995). For ELL students, these scaffolds include strategies such as clarifying, contextualizing, building schema, and multiple representations (He, et al., 2011; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2010; Lucas et al., 2008; Sowa, 2009). To best approach academic content, SLA scholars claim that students need to have ample opportunities to interact with academic language by means of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Ellis, 1997, Krashen, 1985, Swain, 1995).

The Stages of the SLA Process

Krashen and Terrell (1983), divided the SLA process into five stages:

1. *Pre-production*, also known as the silent period. Learners at this stage have a vocabulary of up to five hundred words, but they do not speak the second language yet.

2. *Early production*. Learners can speak in short phrases of one or two words and typically have a vocabulary of around one thousand words.

3. *Speech emergence*. Learners’ vocabularies increase to approximately three thousand words during this stage, and they can communicate using simple questions and phrases.

4. *Intermediate fluency*. With a vocabulary of around 6000 words, learners can use more complex sentence structures to share their thoughts and opinions.

5. *Advanced fluency*, the final stage, is a level close to a native speaker’s.
One SLA researcher, James Cummins (1979, 2000), suggested that ELL students need up to two years of target language exposure to develop conversational proficiency, and five to seven years of language exposure to develop academic proficiency, potentially totaling seven to nine years before developing language proficiency. There is a clear transition period for ELL students between their second and fifth year of learning a language as they develop academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1979; Cummins, 2000). During this transition period, ELL students are cognitively capable of mastering subject area content, but need language supports to do so (Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Lucas et al., 2008; Sowa, 2009). Researchers suggested that ELL students with little or no English development will fare better if provided a bilingual educational program for one to three years (e.g., Baker, 2011; Garcia et al., 2011; Lacina et al., 2010; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Whereas, ELL students who have intermediate level language acquisition would benefit from a mainstreamed context with an aide or co-teaching situation (e.g., Brisk, 2008; Meskill, 2005; Walker et al., 2005). Although some states do offer bilingual programs—as stated in chapter 1, the majority of districts across the United States have implemented a mainstream model since NCLB. In a mainstream context, teachers still need to provide language scaffolds designed to meet the language needs of ELL students during this intermediate language acquisition period (He, et al., 2011; Honigsfeld & Cohan, 2008; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2010; Lucas et al., 2008; Sowa, 2009).

**In-service Teacher Professional Learning: Facilitating Mainstream ELL Students’ SLA**

In this section, I detail the empirical literature that I reviewed on preparing in-service teachers to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students which I used to situate my study. I did this to provide background and context for my own research. Reviewing the current academic literature helped me understand how teachers were prepared to teach mainstreamed
ELL students, but more importantly after conducting this literature review, I was able to identify gaps in the research, which I used to develop my own research questions.

**Review of the Literature**

This section is organized into three parts. First, I describe my methodology for conducting this review of academic literature on in-service teacher preparation and meeting the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. Second, I share my findings. The three themes I identified were: (1) *Teachers Learn*, (2) *Teachers Plan*, and (3) *Teachers Teach*. Finally, I reveal gaps that still exist in the research on preparing in-service teachers to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students, and the need for further investigation.

I searched four key academic databases (ERIC, Education Research Complete, Academic Search Complete, and PsychInfo) using combinations of the following key terms: *English language learner, ELL, ESL, limited English proficient, mainstream, regular teacher, professional development, professional learning, in-service teacher training, and in-service education*. The initial search resulted in 84 articles. Through a subsequent review of abstracts retrieved using these search terms yielded 48 with peer reviewed empirical studies that emphasized mainstream teacher learning about meeting the needs of ELL students. Because I was specifically looking for studies that addressed in-service teacher learning, I excluded any studies that focused on student achievement and/or preservice learning. Due to the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, schools established the practice of mainstreaming ELL students into general education classrooms for the majority of the day; therefore, I excluded any articles published before 2001. I also eliminated any studies conducted outside the United States, as the cultural context and foreign political mandates differ from the U. S. education policies and norms. Finally, any studies that did not include a detailed academic methods section were also
eliminated. Ultimately, this search resulted in thirty five studies that satisfied the criteria for inclusion.

Of the 35 articles, 15 used qualitative methods, one used quantitative methods, and 19 used mixed methods. These studies included varying sample sizes and levels of teacher expertise. The number of participants in the studies spanned a single teacher to a group of 198 teachers; although it must be said of the thirty five, seven studies included six participants or less. Both novice and experienced teachers were represented across the studies. Within the studies, the research questions focused variously on determining the impact, influence, or effectiveness of a professional learning opportunity. Researchers investigated changes in teacher knowledge and practice, the extent to which teachers used practices introduced to them in professional learning opportunities, and teachers’ perspectives on the interventions themselves. In addition to teachers’ knowledge and practice, studies also included research questions related to teacher beliefs, awareness, reflections, challenges, and self-efficacy. There were fifteen articles that used a theoretical framework as a lens for analyzing their study. The theories varied; the most commonly used framework was sociocultural theory, but other theoretical lenses (e.g., situated sociocultural perspective, dual process model of cognition, and distributed learning) were represented as well.

The analytic process I used for this literature review was open coding (Saldana, 2016). Open coding, in this case, comprised labeling elements of a text and then collating them into categories in order to develop themes that speak to the question guiding this review. There were three cycles to this process. First, each article was read closely to generate a set of possible codes (see Table 2, for example). Second, using this initial list, a more detailed qualitative examination of open coding was completed and categories developed from like codes. Finally, to address the
research questions, I interpreted these categories to report my understanding of what the
empirical literature published since 2001 tells us about teacher development when they engage
in professional learning for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students.

Table 1

Literature Review Coding Register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition of code</th>
<th>Example of data coded with this code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson plan</td>
<td>Evidence that teachers with a focus learned to analyze the language of the lesson while planning (prior to instruction).</td>
<td>“She created new curriculum materials so that the ELLs in her classroom could further their language development, extend the curriculum context, and encourage metacognitive thinking about math” (Chval et al., 2015, p. 118).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote use</td>
<td>Evidence that teachers learned to integrate ELL students’ use of their native language in the classroom (during instruction).</td>
<td>“In response to this recognition attained during our discussions, both teachers began to allow students to speak, read, and write in their native language” (DaSilva &amp; Rose, 2012, p. 40).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings

In this section, I discuss the findings. I identified three themes: (1) Teachers Learn, (2) Teachers Plan, and (3) Teachers Teach.

Teachers Learn. This first theme, Teachers Learn, describes the types of professional learning experiences that teachers engaged in within the studies reviewed for this paper as they
learned how to address the needs of the ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms. The studies’ findings include both the structures of the professional learning experiences as well as timeframes.

A variety of professional learning structures and experiences were implemented and/or studied across the thirty five studies including: summer institutes, workshops, graduate courses, university partnerships, co-lesson planning/study groups, ESL and general education teacher partnerships, and video reflections. Every type of professional learning documented in these thirty five studies resulted in reported positive teacher development in understanding how to meet the needs of ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms. However, a relationship between the type of learning opportunity and the extent of learning itself could not be identified based upon the data reported in these articles. Yet, it is important to note that twenty seven of the thirty five studies focused on documenting a sustained professional learning experiences that lasted between one and five years (Adamson, et al., 2013; Chval, et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton, et al., 2014; Estapa, et al., 2016; Lee & Maerten-Rivera, 2012; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; O’Hara, et al., 2013; Peercy, et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012; Shea, et al., 2012). Therefore, based on the literature reviewed for this analysis, teacher learning for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students did not seem to depend on the type of professional learning experience. And even though teachers reported learning when they were engaged in professional learning for even just one week, the majority of the studies reviewed that resulted in teacher development for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students included professional learning experiences that were ongoing spanning at least one academic year.

Teachers Plan. The second theme, Teachers Plan, describes the what teachers reported learning about lesson planning after engaging in professional learning experiences for meeting
the needs of ELL mainstreamed ELL students. The findings include three categories: (1) teachers learned to lesson plan with a focus on language; (2) teachers learned to lesson plan based upon the developmental language readiness of their ELL students, (3) teachers learned to integrate contexts that are meaningful to their ELL students when they lesson plan.

**Teachers Plan Lessons with a Focus on Language.** After engaging in professional learning experiences for meeting the needs of ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms, teachers reported that they learned to lesson plan with a focus on language in six of the articles (Burstein et al., 2014; Chval et al., 2015; O’Hara et al., 2013; Peercy et al., 2015; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Shea et al., 2012). In particular, these teachers reported that they learned to examine the language demands of the lessons from the perspective of an ELL student. When these teachers applied this language focus to their planning, they reported that they adjusted their plans and materials to better serve the linguistic needs of the ELL students who had been mainstreamed into their classrooms. Many of the teachers reported that they learned to analyze the content of the texts the students would be reading, and identify target language that the ELL students would struggle with (see Burstein et al., 2014; Chval et al., 2015; Peercy et al., 2015; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Shea et al., 2012). Additionally, the teachers reported that when they planned with a language focus they learned to critique the existing curriculum and alter, enhance, or even create their own original materials to control the language choices and structures made available in their classrooms in order to benefit the ELL students who had been mainstreamed (see especially Chval et al., 2015; Peercy et al., 2015; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Shea et al., 2012).

**Teachers Plan Lessons Based Upon Developmental Language Readiness.** After engaging in professional learning experiences for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL
students, ten of the documented that teachers reported using the ELL students’ developmental language readiness to inform their lesson planning in two ways (Adamson et al., 2013; Aguirre-Munoz et al., 2008; Deaton et al., 2014; Hart & Lee, 2003; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; McIntyre et al., 2016; Peercy et al., 2015; Russell, 2105; Shea et al., 2012). The teachers reported learning two things. First, they learned to identify and understand the level of their mainstreamed ELL students’ language proficiency and acquisition (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Shea et al., 2012). Second, the teachers reported learning to prepare language scaffolds based upon the ELL students’ language proficiency into their lesson planning routines (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Shea et al., 2012). The teachers learned to identify where the ELL students would struggle in the lessons, based upon the level of their language development, and then plan supports to meet their needs (Adamson et al., 2013; Aguirre-Munoz et al., 2008; Deaton et al., 2014; Hart & Lee, 2003; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; Russell, 2015; Shea et al., 2012).

**Teachers Plan Lessons with Contexts that are Meaningful to ELL Students.** In five studies teachers reported learning to present the lesson objectives and content through contexts that would meaningful and familiar to their mainstreamed ELL students during their lesson planning (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Hart & Lee, 2003; McIntyre et al., 2016). The teachers reported that they learned to consider how ELL students often bring significant experiences that are not always represented in the curriculum itself (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Hart & Lee, 2003). The teachers expressed that they recognized that the nature of the contextual situations were critical for ELL students comprehension (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014). Preparing how to present the objectives and content through authentic and familiar contexts to the ELL students who had been
mainstreamed became a part of their lesson planning practice (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Hart & Lee, 2003). First the teachers recognized the cultural differences and experiences the ELL students were bringing to the classroom (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014). Then the teachers made a conscious effort to research the mainstreamed ELL students’ backgrounds and home lives in order to plan lessons that contextualized the objectives and content using the ELL students’ prior knowledge and their real world experiences (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014).

**Teachers Teach.** The third theme, *Teachers Teach*, describes the practices teachers reported implementing after engaging in professional learning experiences for meeting the needs of ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms. Five teaching practices were identified: (1) promoting the use of ELL students’ native language or languages, (2) vocabulary development, (3) representing concepts in multiple ways, (4) encouraging ELL student participation, and (5) inquiry based practices.

*Promoting the Use of ELL Students’ Native Language or Languages.* After engaging in professional learning experiences for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, teachers reported that they learned to implement practices to promote ELL students use of their native language or languages in five of the studies (Adamson et al, 2013; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Hardin et al., 2010; Minaya-Rowe, 2004; Peercy et al., 2015). The teachers reported that they modified their instructional practices to include opportunities for their ELL students to use their native language in order to mediate text comprehension (Adamson et al, 2013; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Hardin et al., 2010; Minaya-Rowe, 2004; Peercy et al., 2015). They also began to allow students to speak, read and write in their native language (Adamson et al, 2013; DaSilva & Rose,
Vocabulary Development. In 12 of the articles, the teachers reported that they learned to implement practices focused on vocabulary development, after engaging in professional learning experiences for meeting the needs of ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms (Adamson et al., 2013; Aguirre-Munoz et al., 2008; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Estapa et al., 2016; Green et al., 2013; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Lee et al., 2008; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). The teachers described, when they considered how word definitions and meanings vary, they understood the importance of supporting ELL students’ vocabulary development especially in different contexts and content areas (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Estapa et al., 2016; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). The teachers reported that they began to focus on implementing methods to foster vocabulary development that used multiple modes of representing the words and their meanings; these practices included presenting the vocabulary with visuals, gestures, synonyms and antonyms, and translations (Adamson et al., 2013; Aguirre-Munoz et al., 2008; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Estapa et al., 2016; Green et al., 2013; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Lee et al., 2008; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). The teachers also expressed that they provided ELL students with opportunities to use new
vocabulary and produce academic phrases through discussion (DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Peercy et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). Specifically, the teachers began to release the responsibility for vocabulary application to the students by allowing for language input and output that highlighted the vocabulary words (DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Peercy et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012).

**Representing Concepts in Multiple Ways.** In 14 studies, teachers reported that they learned to present the objectives using multiple representations in fourteen of the articles after engaging in professional learning experiences for meeting the needs of ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms, (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2007; Lee & Maerten-Rivera, 2012; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; O’Hara et al., 2013; Peercy et al., 2015). Teachers reported that they learned to present the objectives and content material through multimodal methods including visual, gestures, spoken and written language, and hands on interactions as linguistic supports (Adamson et al., 2013; Choi & Morrison, 2013; Chval et al., 2015; Crawford et al., 2008; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Hardin et al., 2010; Hart & Lee, 2003; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Lee & Maerten-Rivera, 2012; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; O’Hara et al., 2013; Peercy et al., 2015). Although all of these variations were reported, the most common representation identified was visual representation (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; Deaton et al., 2014; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014). The visual images the teachers used supported the ELL students with making quicker links to the language being discussed (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; Deaton et al., 2014; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014). These visuals acted as concrete models, allowing the students to make instant connections to the language and therefore understand directions faster and more confidently, as well as comprehend
Beyond visuals, the teachers also reported other methods for presenting the content through multiple representations (Adamson et al., 2013; Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2007; Lee & Maerten-Rivera, 2012; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; O’Hara et al., 2013; Peercy et al., 2015). Teachers began to repeatedly summarize important language from the lessons, to engage students in additional language input (Chval et al., 2015). For example, science teachers implemented hands on learning activities for the ELL students to interact with the content and language and subsequently reported high ELL student engagement after implementing these activities (Deaton et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2012).

Finally, teachers in the article of O’Hara et al., (2013) reported that they used technology to present objectives and represent the content using multiple representations. These alternative representations included interactive whiteboards and student writing assignments where the students were expected to integrate hypermedia elements (O’Hara et al., 2013). These examples demonstrate that not only did the teachers report learning to present the objectives and content using multiple representations, but they also expected the students to demonstrate understanding by representing their own learning in alternative ways as well (O’Hara et al., 2013).

**Encouraging ELL Student Participation.** After engaging in professional learning experiences for meeting the needs of ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms, teachers reported that they learned to implement practices that encourage ELL student participation and engagement in language input and output in eleven of the articles reviewed (Adamson et al., 2008; Choi & Morrison, 2014; Chval, et al., 2015; Crawford et al., 2008; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton, et al., 2014; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Johnson et al.,
2016; Peercy, et al., 2015; Russell, 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). Accordingly, the teachers reported that they learned to create a safe, accepting, and accessible learning environment for the ELL students who had been mainstreamed, so they would be willing to participate (Deaton et al., 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). Also, the teachers reported that they learned to implement activities that encouraged ELL students to participate, especially ‘student talk’ interactions (DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012).

The teachers reported that they learned to create an inclusive classroom environment for all of their students, including ELL students (Deaton et al., 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). They focused on preparing ELL students for active participation and learning in the mainstream classroom (Peercy et al., 2015). This included setting participation norms and expectations for whole group, small group, and guided instruction (Deaton et al., 2014; Peercy et al., 2015). ELL students were given additional time to think and process language (Chval et al., 2015; Peercy et al., 2015). Following these shifts in instruction, the teachers reported that the ELL students demonstrated a willingness to participate and contribute, they became more active and confident participants within the mainstream classroom (Chval et al., 2015; Deaton et al., 2014; Peercy et al., 2015).

More specific to instructional practices, the teachers reported that they implemented student talk activities that encouraged and sometimes required ELL students to engage in language input and output through student talk (Adamson et al., 2008; Choi & Morrison, 2014; Chval, et al., 2015; Crawford et al., 2008; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton, et al., 2014; Hutchinson & Hadjoannou, 2011; Johnson et al., 2016; Peercy, et al., 2015; Russell, 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). These activities were based on releasing the learning responsibility to the students and moving away from teacher centered instruction (Adamson et al., 2008; Choi &
Morrison, 2014; Chval et al., 2015; Crawford et al., 2008; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Johnson et al., 2016; Peercy et al., 2015; Russell, 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). The student talk activities were integrated in whole group, small group, and guided instruction structures (Chval et al., 2015; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). The teachers guided the ELL students to talk more and modeled academic talk structures (Peercy et al., 2015). After implementing student talk activities throughout instruction, the ELL students produced more academic phrases and content vocabulary than previously measured (DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Peercy et al., 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012). The teachers reported that when they implemented student talk activities the ELL students engaged in classroom idea sharing and collaborative learning experiences (Adamson et al., 2008; Choi & Morrison, 2014; Chval et al., 2015; Crawford et al., 2008; DaSilva & Rose, 2012; Deaton et al., 2014; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Johnson et al., 2016; Peercy et al., 2015; Russell, 2015; Shanahan & Shea, 2012).

**Inquiry-based Practices.** After engaging in the professional learning experiences, teachers from ten of the articles reported and/or demonstrated that they learned to include their mainstreamed ELL students in their classroom inquiry based learning activities (Adamson et al., 2008; Crawford et al., 2008; Deaton et al., 2014; Estapa et al., 2016; Hart & Lee, 2003; Johnson et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2007; O'Hara et al., 2013; Peercy et al., 2015). Teachers began to assign learning tasks that required more complex thinking to successfully complete to their ELL students, rather than maintaining a learning activities at the behavioral level (Deaton et al., 2014; Estapa et al., 2016; O'Hara et al., 2013; Peercy et al., 2015; 74). Rather than alter the objectives completely, or assign the ELL students with low level thinking tasks, teachers reported that they began to maintain the complexity of the content, texts, and student activities, but instead offer
linguistic scaffolds (Adamson et al., 2008; Crawford et al., 2008; Deaton et al., 2014; Estapa et al., 2016; Hart & Lee, 2003; Johnson et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2007; O'Hara et al., 2013; Peercy et al., 2015). Some of the teachers reported that they learned to focus more on implementing learning tasks that were accessible for all students, rather than generating simplified tasks based on student demographic labels (Deaton et al., 2014; 74). However, even after engaging in the professional development, a number of teacher participants reported that they still did not include their mainstreamed ELL students in the more sophisticated inquiry based and analytic learning tasks they assigned to the other general education students (Adamson et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2007).

**Implications for Future Research**

Continuing to research how to prepare teachers to meet the needs of ELL students is important, since the number of ELL students entering United States schools is growing, and teachers still report feeling unprepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. It is necessary for all students’ needs to be met through our education system. By committing to systematic and thorough research about how to prepare teachers to meet the needs of ELL students, the education of the entire student population will improve.

As demonstrated in this chapter, there are research based professional learning experiences that prepare in-service teachers to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. However, there are gaps in the research on this topic that still exist. A number of possible implications for future research on this topic emerged as a result of this literature review. First, larger scale studies should be conducted to address how to prepare in-service teachers to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Because the majority of the studies reviewed were conducted with such small sample sizes, it is hard to determine the implications
for the larger education field; the findings may only exist within these very specific populations. Second, more systematic studies should be conducted to target the types of professional learning experiences that are most effective for learning to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. There were no consistent measures used. A common reliable measure would support valid findings that could be used to determine the development of the teachers’ knowledge and practice for meeting the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. Additionally, a common reliable measure would support valid findings that could be used to determine the effectiveness of professional learning experiences.

Conclusion

Of the empirical research I reviewed on preparing in-service teachers to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students, the findings were broad, and generalizability was limited for a number of reasons. First, the sample sizes were very small. Second, there was not a common measure used to gauge teacher learning. Third, there was not a systematic method used to identify types of professional learning experience, and/or specific content for preparing teachers to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. However, it is important to acknowledge, with any education research involving teachers and students, human interactions can be unpredictable and ambiguous; even if these studies were replicated in the same manner, the findings could vary. Due to the complex properties and context of teaching, difficulties in accurately generalizing findings often arise (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, districts still need to do their own additional research to determine how empirical findings can apply to their particular context. Districts are missing a significant opportunity if they only take findings from research and immediately apply them to their schools. Each district is unique and complex, made up of varying populations, community members, administrators, teachers, and students. It is the
district’s responsibility to conduct their own research to determine how empirical findings can be effective in their particular context. I used this approach to design my study for how to investigate preparing educators in my district to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students.

I used the literature presented in this chapter to design my study on preparing in-service teachers to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. I created an inquiry group with a team of educators; we collectively engaged in professional learning to learn how to meet the needs of the mainstreamed ELL students in the district where we currently work. I conducted this study to inform, and improve my own professional learning practices, as well as the professional learning practices of my district for supporting teachers with meeting needs of our mainstreamed ELL students.
Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the methodology of my practitioner action research study. First, I introduce the practitioner action research method. Then I name my research questions, detail the context of this study, and outline how I conducted the collection, analysis, and management of my data. Finally, I end the chapter by evaluating the trustworthiness and limitations of this study.

I conducted this study to systematically investigate a professional learning experience about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students in the district where I currently work. The purpose of this study was to research how a group of educators learned to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. This study was designed to address the following research questions: How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? - and How does this process inform our individual roles? I used a practitioner action research design to investigate these research questions.

The purpose of general action research is for an investigation to be conducted with people rather than to people in order to make sense of the world and influence meaningful change (Anderson et al., 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Herr & Anderson, 2005). More specifically, practitioner action research is a systematic and intentional investigation method conducted by individuals about their own environment; it lends itself to problem solving as well as possibly informing a larger audience (Anderson et al., 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Herr & Anderson, 2005). Practitioner action researchers follow a cycle of plan, act, and observe in order to enact change (Kemmis & Carr, 1986). While engaging in practitioner action, the researcher does not only conduct the study, but he/she acts as a participant in the study itself (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Therefore, in this case, I became a participant in the study while
simultaneously documenting the research experience about professional learning and meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students.

I initiated this practitioner action research study because I wanted to address and remedy an injustice that exists in the district where I currently work. In my district, teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of the ELL student population. Furthermore, as an instructional leader, it is my responsibility to support these teachers, but alarmingly, I am unprepared to do so. For this reason, I used a socially critical lens to guide the design and execution of this study. I was motivated to produce, share, and use our socially critical practitioner action research about how we learned to meet the needs of ELL students to inform our district’s future decisions. Socially critical action researchers examine the notions of equality (Tripp, 1990). Socially critical action researchers assume that society is unjust, but capable of becoming less unjust when formal research is conducted by critically oriented professional communities (Tripp, 1990).

The most important aspect of this research design was our collective approach. I chose to use an inquiry group structure for this study so that we could conduct our investigation as a community of professional educators. At my suggestion, we designed our group based on clinical methods for practitioner action research, more specifically, coupled inquiry (Dunkhase, 2003; Martin-Hansen, 2002). The coupled inquiry approach emphasizes a collective research design. Coupled inquiry starts with a common question; then all participants design and participate in the investigation while communicating results along the way (Dunkhase, 2003). The group is advised through this collaborative research process by a guide (Dunkhase, 2003). In this case, I acted as the guide for our inquiry group. In addition to these qualities, coupled inquiry also includes an open inquiry component that seamlessly aligns to practitioner action research;
participants are encouraged to investigate independently as well as with the group (Dunkhase, 2003).

Our inquiry group consisted of educational professionals with varying roles, including me, the curriculum supervisor/teacher educator, an ESL specialist/coach, and five elementary general education teachers. We acted as an inquiry group and collectively investigated how to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students. Based on our individual professional roles, we each brought differing perspectives and expertise to the group. We also investigated how and what we could learn from each other in order to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students. In addition to our common goal, we reflected on our individual development as educators throughout this process and how our own practice was impacted. I was hopeful that this inquiry group experience would not only inform our understanding of how to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, but I hoped it would also inform our understanding of best practices for professional learning. My investigation was guided by the following research questions: How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? How does this process inform our individual roles?

Context

In this section, I describe the setting of my research site, an elementary school in northern New Jersey. I also describe the participants of this study.

Setting

New Jersey has 2,516 schools across 590 districts, of which 2,005 are elementary schools (NJDOE, 2018). Although the majority of the population of northwest New Jersey elementary schools has historically been White, middle class, and monolingual, the student body has shifted and now includes more ELL students, as well as students who qualify for free or reduced priced...
lunch (Education Law Center, 2017). Districts with elementary schools in northwest New Jersey employ at least one ESL teacher who works with students identified as LEP.

The particular school where I conducted this study was Madison School, an elementary school located in a small town in Morris County, New Jersey. Madison School serves 327 children from Kindergarten through second grade. As most elementary schools in northwest New Jersey, the population of Madison School has also been historically White, middle class, and monolingual, but now the student body is composed of 30.3% ethnic minorities, 5.5% ELL students who speak either Spanish, Gujarati, Polish, Macedonian, or Japanese, as well as 13.2% students who qualify for free or reduced priced lunch. Madison School employs one part time ESL teacher who works with the ELL students. Although the ELL student population is growing in Madison School, it is not yet large enough to require bilingual instruction, so ELL students are mainstreamed into the general education classrooms for the majority of the day and pulled out for ESL instruction for thirty minutes a day, five days a week.

Participants

Including myself, there were seven educators who participated in this study. Five were general education classroom teachers who all had ELL students mainstreamed into their classrooms for the majority of the day. One was an ESL specialist, and I was the final participant, a K-12 English Language Arts supervisor, an administrator. I used purposeful sampling to select the five in-service general education teachers. Purposeful sampling is a technique for the intentional selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use when there are limited resources (Patton, 2005). To maintain the focus of the study, I restricted possible participants to classroom teachers in Madison School who had ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms at the time of the study from Fall 2018 to Winter 2019.
Participation was voluntary; the teachers earned professional development hours for participating in this study. I emailed the teachers who had ELL students mainstreamed into their classrooms at that time, and invited them to attend an information session about my study. Every general education classroom teacher who I invited attended the information session and elected to participate in the study. The sixth participant was the certified ESL teacher who specializes in teaching ELL students and the only ESL teacher at Madison School. I asked her to join the study; she voluntarily accepted. And I was the seventh participant, a K-12 English Language Arts supervisor, an administrator.

We represented a wide range of teaching experience including individuals in their twenties with seven years of experience to 30-year veterans in their sixties. Each grade level from the K-2 school was represented, two Kindergarten teachers, two first grade teachers, and one second grade teacher. The ESL specialist worked exclusively with the K-2 grade levels at Madison School. All of the participants were female and White. Five of the seven educators had completed bachelor’s degrees in elementary or early childhood education, and the two others had completed bachelor’s degrees in psychology and attained their teaching certification through the state’s alternate route program. In addition, two of the participants completed Master's degrees. No one had received any in-service district professional learning specific to ELL students. Besides the ESL specialist and myself, only one teacher had completed coursework specific to ELL students. During the duration of the data collection for this study, the five general education classroom teachers had between one and four ELL students mainstreamed into their classrooms for the majority of the day, at least five of the six instructional hours. The ESL specialist was currently working with a total of fifteen ELL students. She pulled the ELL students out of their homeroom class to a separate room to provide ESL instruction for 30 minutes daily; the ELL
students were mainstreamed with the general education teacher for the remaining five and a half hours each day. The five general educators reported having taught between two and thirteen ELL students while working at Madison School, while the ESL specialist has taught over one hundred, and I had about five total over my seven years in the classroom.

From the background information I collected on the participants, I learned that only one of the five general education classroom teachers reported knowing the English proficiency levels of their ELL students. When asked what the English language proficiency levels were, the other four teachers recorded their ELL students’ Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. The ESL specialist knew the English language proficiency levels of all fifteen of her students. All five of the general educators reported that they felt they could successfully communicate with their current ELL students, but only two of these classroom teachers reported that they felt they could successfully communicate with the parents of their current ELL students. The ESL specialist reported that she feels she can always communicate with her ELL students. However, she also reported that she feels she can only communicate with the parents of her ELL students sometimes. Four of the five general educators reported that they do not adequately understand the cultural backgrounds of their ELL students, while the ESL specialist reported that she does understand the cultural backgrounds of her ELL students.
Table 2

*Participant Demographic Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Professional Title</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>K-12 Supervisor</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>ESL Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Kindergarten Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>Kindergarten Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>First Grade Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison</td>
<td>First Grade Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtney</td>
<td>Second Grade Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

**Participant Teaching Experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Title/Grade Level</th>
<th>How long have you been teaching?</th>
<th>What is your highest level of education?</th>
<th>What was the content area of your highest degree?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Supervisor/K-12</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Teacher/ESL</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>Master’s +15</td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Teacher/K</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>Teacher/K</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>Teacher/1st</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Master’s +15</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison</td>
<td>Teacher/1st</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtney</td>
<td>Teacher/2nd</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

**Participant Classroom Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>How many ELL students</th>
<th>How many previous ELL students</th>
<th>Do you know the proficiency levels of the ELL students you teach?</th>
<th>Do you feel you can communicate with the ELL students you currently teach?</th>
<th>Do you feel you can communicate with the parents of the ELL students you currently teach?</th>
<th>Do you feel you can adequately understand the background of your ELL students and their parents (education, literacy, culture etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Over 100</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>mostly</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>mostly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>not all of them</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Data Collection**

In this section, I describe the data I collected from Fall 2018 through Winter 2019. I triangulated the data by collecting multiple sources. The data sources include the ELL inquiry group meeting transcriptions, reflection surveys, and my researcher journal.

**ELL Inquiry Group Meeting Transcriptions**

I coordinated, recorded, and transcribed our bi-weekly inquiry group meetings. The agendas are included in Appendix A. Including the initial information session, we met a total of nine times. Throughout this inquiry group experience, we collectively decided to investigate two fundamental second language acquisition topics, the social emotional needs of ELL students and the instructional needs of ELL students. And throughout this inquiry group experience, we engaged in a variety of professional learning activities as we studied these two second language acquisition topics. We also collectively decided the types of professional learning activities we wanted to engage in. These activities included presentations, reviewing WIDA resources, tasks for building background knowledge, and videos.

Our inquiry group followed the practitioner action research cycle plan, act, and observe (Kemmis & Carr, 1986). First, we planned by identifying areas in need of improvement regarding instruction and our mainstreamed ELL students. The ESL specialist or any other participant who had education and/or experience with the identified area of concern shared his/her relevant second language acquisition expertise. Then, we acted; the five general education classroom teachers implemented the second language acquisition techniques in their individual classrooms. Last, we observed by discussing the experience and setting future goals based on our progress.
**Reflection Surveys**

Another data source were the reflection surveys. I administered two formal surveys, one before we started the research process, and one at the conclusion of our study. The first survey was titled, Background Information Questionnaire (Appendix D), which included questions generated across three themes, demographic information, teaching experience, and the classroom profile. The final survey was titled, ELL Inquiry Group Reflection Form (Appendix L), and was composed of questions prompting the participants to reflect upon the inquiry group experience. The ELL Inquiry Group Reflection Form was anonymous. I chose to collect this data anonymously because, when a survey is anonymous, respondents are often more inclined to discuss problems and provide honest feedback (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Furthermore, anonymous surveys allow individuals to respond more openly (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The purpose of both these reflection surveys was to gather information about what we learned and how we developed from the beginning to the end of this practitioner action research study. Additionally, gathering this survey data outside of our inquiry group meetings, allowed the participants, including myself, the opportunity to expand upon our individual reflections about our research with extended time.

**Researcher’s Journal**

I consistently recorded my own observations, thought processes, questions, and weekly development related to this study in my researcher journal. To keep track of my progress, I also recorded notes on my decision making throughout the study. This researcher journal served as an additional record of my process and journey, contributing to the detail and depth of this study.

**Data Analysis and Data Management**

In this section, I describe how I analyzed and managed the data for this practitioner action
My data collection and data analysis process was qualitative in nature. I specifically followed Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) characteristics of good qualitative research, with the necessary adaptations of practitioner action research. This study was conducted in a natural setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Anderson et al., 2007). We used our knowledge of the research site to support the decision making throughout our investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Anderson et al., 2007). I used an emergent design, allowing our research process to develop based on our progress as we worked over time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Anderson et al., 2007). Inductive data analysis allowed me to make meaning of the complexities of my findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Anderson et al., 2007). I interpreted the data for our particular site and local context, but plan to share the findings with the larger education field (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Anderson et al., 2007).

**Data Analysis**

Throughout my study I analyzed how our inquiry group learned to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students. As stated above, data sources included ELL inquiry group meeting transcriptions, reflection surveys, and my researcher journal. There were two parts to my data analysis process. The first part was the ongoing data analysis that I conducted while the research was being collected. The second part was the formal analysis I conducted once the study was over where I evaluated the totality of our research.

While the study was taking place, I used the ELL inquiry group meeting transcriptions and my researcher journal for ongoing data analysis. I began this ongoing analytical process after the second inquiry group meeting. Although I did not follow the clinical process for open coding (Saldana, 2016) this early on in the study, I did structure my ongoing analysis based on it. For example, as I transcribed the ELL inquiry group meetings, I noted general patterns and recurring
ideas. I recorded these as initial findings in my researcher journal. To determine whether or not these initial findings of our inquiry groups were accurate, I shared them at the beginning of each meeting and invited the participants to comment on, change, make additions to, and ask questions about them. Additionally, we used our reflections on these initial findings to drive our research decisions for moving forward in the study. By sharing my initial findings, I was able to involve the participants in the ongoing analysis process.

In addition to the ongoing data analysis during the time of study, to evaluate the totality of our research, I also conducted a formal analysis once our research was complete. With a complete data set, I used open coding (Saldana, 2016) to formally analyze the ELL inquiry group meeting transcriptions, the reflection surveys, and my own researcher journal on a much more complex level. There were three cycles to this formal open coding analysis process. First, I read each data source closely, and generated a set of possible codes. Second, I conducted a more detailed qualitative examination of the initial list of codes and categorized them. Finally, to address the research questions and report my understanding of how our inquiry group learned to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, I interpreted the categories and developed themes and subthemes.
### Table 5

**Data Analysis Coding Register**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition of code</th>
<th>Example of data coded with this code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and guidance in an inquiry group</td>
<td>Evidence of how we developed a balance of leadership and collective research throughout our inquiry group experience.</td>
<td>“After reviewing the teacher surveys, I realized that they felt the inquiry group was a positive learning experience. I was concerned that they would feel that it was too unstructured and/or not enough information. They recommended doing this across the district, and reported that they felt it was valuable. Although I think I balance and integrate a variety of learning experiences when I develop PD plans, after running these inquiry groups, I think I need to continue to explore alternative learning options. I would like to continue to explore options where I guide/lead teachers through the learning process but give them more responsibility about both what we learn as well as how we learn. This has opened my eyes to the different ways that teachers learn” (My researcher journal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry group practices for balancing leadership and collective work</td>
<td>Evidence of the participants' acknowledgement of the protocol and the balance between leadership and collective work.</td>
<td>“I loved it. I loved sitting and talking with peers and a supervisor sharing what we've experienced and tried while getting research and evidence examples. I feel bouncing my own strategies off of my peers helped with my confidence and thoughts that I am doing the right thing for my ELLs” (Teacher participant, ELL Inquiry Group Reflection Form).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The school to home connection with ELL families

Evidence of the participants' experiences about communicating with ELL families.

“There is definitely a communication barrier. Like with some directions, I was asking the student to walk and stop at the library and when I would say that he would just stop in the middle of the hallway. I said you know, keep going and stop at the library, and then he would stop. He walked four steps and then stopped. So those I can work out. But it is really with the parents. I feel like I have very little communication with them” (Mary, Session 1).

Introducing academic vocabulary before instruction

Evidence of teachers reflecting upon and/or using the language strategy of introducing academic vocabulary before instruction

“You know, we did a nonfiction book in the guided reading group today with them … once we went over the vocabulary words that we were working on . . . it was easy for him [the ELL student]” (Allison, Session 5).

**Data Management**

In this section, I explain how I handled and organized the data, and generated an audit trail in order to maintain the confidentiality of my participants. The participants and school were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity. Furthermore, I did not specifically name the school and/or district, but only described the region and demographics where I conducted the study. Every inquiry group meetings were recorded on a password protected laptop computer. I transcribed and housed the inquiry groups digitally in my password protected Google Drive account. Paper copies of these transcriptions were used for coding and kept in a locked file cabinet in my personal home office. The first survey was administered on paper; these were stored in a locked file cabinet in my personal home office. The final survey was administered using Google forms; it was stored digitally in my password protected Google drive account. I
collected and filed my researcher journal entries digitally in the password protected Google drive. My password protected Google drive account is also where I filed my Google sheets with the coded data and digital thematic maps.

**Trustworthiness**

I instituted a number of strategies throughout this practitioner action research study to ensure the trustworthiness of my claims. First, to establish credibility, my data collection design included prolonged engagement in the field, multiple sources of data, and collaboration with my inquiry group (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To further establish credibility, I used “member checking” (Creswell & Miller, 2000); I gathered feedback from my participants on my initial findings to determine whether or not my interpretations of their responses were accurate. Additionally, regarding credibility, I had multiple sources of data, from different points in time which allowed me to triangulate my analysis. Furthermore, I described my positionality in Chapter 1, by doing so, I acknowledged my own biases as a researcher, and how my interpretations of the participants’ responses to the data were judged by me and my evaluation. I continually reflected upon my researcher biases, and documented my reflections in my researcher journal. Finally, I started working with my critical friend after my first drafts of my dissertation were assembled. She was a fellow doctoral student in the same program. I met with my critical friend virtually through Skype on a monthly basis to troubleshoot and discuss the clarity of my dissertation, but I also reached out to her for support as needed.

**Limitations**

Limitations include issues of reliability, validity, and generalizability (Merriam, 2015). In educational research, human interactions can be unpredictable and ambiguous (Merriam, 2015). Even if this practitioner action research study was replicated in the same manner at this same
exact site, the findings could vary. Furthermore, the purpose of this study was specific to improving practice at the district where I currently work. Therefore, due to the very small sample size, as well as the uniqueness of the site, the findings are not generalizable to all in-service teachers with mainstreamed ELL students, although they may be transferable.

The more pressing limitation is transferability. As aforementioned in my problem statement, across the state and nation, there is a lack of teacher readiness to meet the needs of the growing population of ELL students in our public schools. Teachers need to develop the specialized knowledge and skills to meet the needs of ELL students. To address this problem, research on teacher preparation for the specialized knowledge and skills for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students must continue to be conducted. My practitioner action research study on professional learning about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students directly informed and helped my district prepare our teachers, but it is not readily transferable to every district since each district, teacher, and student population is entirely unique. However, because this issue exists across the state and nation, my study can be used as a model for the much needed ongoing and larger scale research on preparing teachers to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students.
Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, I share the findings from this practitioner action research study where I worked with a team of educators from my district as an inquiry group. Our purpose was to investigate how to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, in order to understand and inform our practice. This study was designed to answer the following research questions: *How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? How does this process inform our individual roles?* Even though we were investigating how to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, we inevitably ended up discovering how powerful the inquiry group professional learning structure can be.

In this chapter, I chronicle how an inquiry group process resulted in powerful professional learning. Although the initial focus for this practitioner action research study was to investigate how to support mainstreamed ELL students, after analyzing the data, I discovered that what we learned about ELL students was thoroughly intertwined with what we learned about the benefits of being in an inquiry group. The primary finding of this practitioner action research study turned out to be *how* we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) by engaging in an inquiry group professional learning experience as we investigated meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Although I had expected to learn a great deal about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, the essential finding that emerged from this study was what we discovered about professional learning and inquiry groups.

In the district where I currently work, fundamental methods for meeting the needs of ELL students have not consistently been included in professional learning plans, and therefore, have not been uniformly practiced in the classrooms. As an inquiry group, we identified what we did not know about second language acquisition and meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Even though all of the participants, including myself, were certified teachers with seven
to thirty years of experience, who had completed preservice coursework and received some in-service ESL professional development, we determined that we were unprepared to implement even the most basic practices for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. This confirms what was shared in Chapter 1, just as teachers across the nation have reported (e.g. American Federation of Teachers, 2004; Lucas et al., 2008; Sowa, 2009), educators in the district where I currently work, including myself, are unprepared to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Consequently, for this study, our inquiry group collectively chose to investigate basic methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Because our inquiry group ended up researching basic methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, our findings about instruction and language learners did not yield unique outcomes. Although this was disappointing at first, I learned that what we discovered about professional learning and inquiry groups was paramount.

Following the final inquiry group session, I was consumed with coding data and analyzing what we learned about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. I struggled to identify findings about instruction and language learners that were unique to current research. I worried that our findings about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students only reinforced data that had already been researched and established. However, as I returned to my initial coding, specifically in my researcher journal and from the participants’ final surveys which were anonymous (ELL Inquiry Group Reflection Form Appendix L), I kept noticing the extremely positive reflections about the inquiry group learning experience. The participants’ responses were exclusively positive. This surprised me. The participants shared positive reflections about co-learning, the small and intimate learning atmosphere, and feeling safe in the inquiry group learning environment. Participant reflection responses included statements such as:
“I think this was a great experience because I learned a lot of useful information. I also liked the fact that it was a small group, and we learned from each other's experiences.” “I was glad to be a part of the group, and learned a great deal from my colleagues.” “I loved bouncing my ideas, feelings, and thoughts off my peers and hearing their advice and reactions. I think the sessions were very useful and I appreciate being a part of it. Thank you for this experience.” In my eight years as a supervisor, having executed at least five professional learning sessions each year, so over forty total, I had never encountered such positive teacher reflections from follow up surveys as I did with these about our inquiry group. It was clear that the inquiry group process was a powerful and positive professional learning experience for all of the participants. After identifying the unusually positive reflections about our professional learning experience, I decided to investigate our inquiry group experience further. I shifted the focus of my analysis from what we learned about meeting the needs of ELL students to our inquiry group professional learning experience.

I was intrigued by the participants' reflections about the inquiry group learning experience for two reasons. First and foremost, the purpose of this study was not to specifically investigate inquiry groups. Second, the inquiry group was a new professional learning structure for all of the participants, including myself. When we started, I was unsure of whether or not this professional learning structure would result in teacher learning at all. Using an inquiry group as the structure for our research was the greatest risk I took with this study, a risk that resulted in very meaningful findings about best practices for professional learning.

What we learned about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students was of course important to our individual professional development, but those findings did not result in any new information that could contribute to the already well-established educational research about
instruction for language learners. However, our primary finding about how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) by engaging in an inquiry group professional learning experience is definitely a unique outcome and certainly contributes to existing educational research. As I described in Chapter 2, when teachers adopt an “inquiry as stance” perspective, they can conduct research within their local school setting that challenges standard practice and contributes to larger social change (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). We learned a radically different approach for professional learning, an approach that resulted in authentic and meaningful development. This finding is especially important because schools across the nation are in the very same position as ours; teachers are unprepared to meet the needs of their growing ELL student population. Other schools could learn from our inquiry group professional learning experience in order to improve their own practices for meeting the needs of ELL students. Or even more generally, this inquiry group method could be used to investigate any urgent question about classroom practice.

As we engaged in this inquiry group, we discovered a different approach to professional learning, an approach with great potential as compared to the typical transmission of knowledge model we had all experienced in the past. This inquiry group experience changed our understanding of best practices for professional learning while calling our professional roles into question. As we engaged in this inquiry group, not only did we learn a new method for professional learning that we could use routinely to research any urgent question about classroom practice, but we also developed an understanding about our professional roles as educational researchers. By acknowledging the constantly changing needs of the ever-evolving student population, we developed an understanding of how important self-directed professional learning is. In this chapter, I illustrate how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of
mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) by engaging in an inquiry group professional learning experience as we investigated meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. In this chapter, I describe our authentic findings about instructional language practices, but because our inquiry group only investigated fundamental methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, these findings are not novel to already established educational research about instruction for language learners. Most importantly, in this chapter, I present the findings about our inquiry group experience, our process, and how our inquiry group developed over the course of the study.

In order to illustrate our experience, I detail the provocations that fueled our inquiry group throughout this study. I first describe how we found our way into the inquiry group research process. Then, I detail how we used the inquiry group research process to investigate meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. As we figured our way through the inquiry group process, we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind, which legitimized our professional roles as educational researchers. In order for us to learn as an inquiry group, we had to establish ourselves as a community of researchers.

This chapter is organized into two themes. In the first section I describe theme one, The Role of Leadership for Inquiry Group Professional Learning, how the interaction of both leadership and collective work had a positive impact on our inquiry group’s professional learning experience. In the second section I describe theme two, The Synergy of Individual and Collective Research for Inquiry Group Professional Learning, how the interaction of both individual and collective work had a powerful effect on our inquiry group’s professional learning experience. I narrate this chapter from my point of view, but present evidence by describing how the
participants interacted throughout the inquiry group experience as they started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind.

The Role of Leadership for Inquiry Group Professional Learning

In this section I unpack theme one, The Role of Leadership for Inquiry Group Professional Learning. Leadership had a great impact on our inquiry group experience. Having never participated in, or executed an inquiry group in the past, I initially believed that gathering the teachers together and guiding everyone to focus on a common goal would result in professional learning. However, we found taking too much of a collective approach was unfocused and unproductive. We needed some leadership and guidance to constructively engage as an inquiry group. For our particular group to be successful, we needed a leader to provide specific guidance about how to conduct research as an inquiry group, especially since none of us had participated in an inquiry group previously. Our inquiry group benefited from the leadership and guidance I provided about conducting collective research.

In this section, I outline how our inquiry group shifted away from the typical top-down transmission professional learning structure, but ultimately found that we did need a degree of leadership to productively engage in collective research. I detail two subthemes: (1) Inquiry Group Leadership Practices and (2) The Intention of an Inquiry Group Leader. In part one, I name three leadership practices that I used to engage our inquiry group in collective research, and I detail how our group responded to each one. In part two, I describe how I changed my leadership approach to combat our group’s unproductivity, as well as how our inquiry group responded to this change. I conclude this section by reflecting on how this experience helped us develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Inquiry Group Leadership Practices
In this part, I present the subtheme, Inquiry Group Leadership Practices. I share evidence about how I engaged our inquiry group in collective research using three leadership practices, as well as how our group responded. There were three practices I intentionally put in place to guide our inquiry group through the collective research process, (1) unifying with a common purpose, (2) gathering input from all, and (3) implementing a protocol. I share how I executed these three practices, as well as how they impacted our experience. I chose these three practices based on my past professional learning experiences as a teacher and administrator. I pulled from my formal training in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) along with my graduate studies in Instructional Leadership and Teacher Education and Teacher Development. By describing these three practices, I chronicle the steps that I took as a leader to guide our inquiry group, as well as how these practices shaped our collective research. Through this analysis of these three leadership practices, I share the findings about how we found our way into the inquiry group process. This subtheme is important, because this was the first time any of us had participated in an inquiry group, and these three leadership practices helped us engage in the collective research process and in turn develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind.

**Unifying with a Common Purpose**

The first leadership practice that I used to guide the participants through the collective inquiry process was unifying our group by evoking a commitment to our common purpose. We elected to engage in this inquiry group in order to improve our methods of meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. We were focused on professional learning and teacher outcomes. Therefore, our common purpose for participating in this inquiry group was to improve teacher practice for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. There were three actions that I implemented to establish a commitment to our common purpose.
The first action I used to establish a commitment to our common purpose, was contextualizing the broad problem that most teachers feel unprepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students, for our particular setting. First, I prompted our inquiry group to analyze a general problem statement about ELL students. During Session 1, I shared an abbreviated problem statement from my dissertation proposal (Appendix B). From this problem statement, I highlighted the following with the teachers:

The ELL student population is rising in schools across the nation (NCES, 2017). National achievement data reports demonstrate that the ELL student population is performing below standard (NAEP, 2015). Research based teacher preparation efforts have included a variety of types of professional learning opportunities focused on specialized knowledge and skills for second language acquisition instruction. But still, in-service teachers report feeling unprepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students.

Then, I prompted the group to begin contextualizing this larger problem for our specific setting. I started by reiterating how I was a co-learner in the study, and that I myself did not know how to properly support teachers who had ELL students mainstreamed into their classrooms. I shared:

As you know I have convened this group, because really my question is, how can I as an administrator learn to do this better? How can we all work together to do this better? So I think all coming in knowing that we are all participants in this, and we all have something to learn from it.

Next, to continue to develop a context of the larger problem for our setting, I used a questionnaire (Background Information Questionnaire, Appendix D) to gather information about the participants' past experiences with mainstreamed ELL students. Based on the participants’
answers, every classroom teacher from our inquiry group reported that, like me, they struggled to communicate with, as well as understand the backgrounds of their mainstreamed ELL students. Additionally, four of the five general education teachers shared that they had never engaged in any type of professional development about instruction for language learners. To finalize contextualizing the problem that most teachers feel unprepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students for our setting, I asked the participants to describe the professional learning for ELL students they had attended in the past. Every general classroom teacher shared that like me, they felt they had not been properly prepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. During Session 1, I prompted, “We’ll start by sharing the types of professional development you have engaged in and how they’ve prepared you.” “Are you talking about professional development for ELL students?” asked Mary. “Yes.” I replied. In a concerned tone, Mary expressed, “None!” She then elaborated on how she received support from the ESL teacher on an individual basis, but had never participated in any formal professional development. Lauren responded to Mary’s statement by expressing the following:

For me, when it comes to ELL kids, I feel I’m mostly in a fog with them because it’s not that I only know one way to teach, but I know how to teach an English kid, because they can speak English.

We all agreed that, just as the larger population of teachers across the nation, we are also unprepared to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELLs. We were all committed to this inquiry group so we could learn how to improve our methods for meeting the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students. This action of analyzing the general problem statement about ELL students, and then contextualizing it for our inquiry group setting, helped us further commit to our common purpose.
The second action I used to establish a commitment to our common purpose, improving our methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, was prompting the teachers to generate a shared research question, as well as individual research questions. For the shared research question, I provided two sample questions as a starting point. My intention in presenting these sample questions was to jumpstart the research question development process by providing an example, especially since we only had 30 minutes. However, I later learned that in doing so, I actually came across as dictating, leading, and telling the participants what our research questions should be. I discuss this pitfall further in the next part. From Session 1, I shared:

Alright so I drafted a collective question, just to get us started, of what we want our group question to be. So just take a look at it, and you can jot on it or mark it up. If you think there is anything you might want to change, or rephrase, you can do it on the back, or you can just leave it.

I handed out small slips with the suggested shared research questions printed on them. Since it was the first session and we were still establishing ourselves as a group, I was not surprised that no suggestions were made. The participants agreed on both of the shared research questions, _How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? How does this process inform our individual roles?_ For the individual research questions, I prompted the participants to consider our common purpose, improving our methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, and then generate a research question specific to their own experiences working with ELL students. During Session 1, I shared:

Okay, so then this one is more your individual questions. So who you are, what grade you teach, what you want to inquire about, improve upon, gain from this experience. It could be more professional development wise, or it could be more specific to a student, a type
of student, obviously it has to be about an ELL student, but it could be someone who has no English, it could be someone who has a lot of English and you are not sure, or it could just be that you are hoping to learn specific strategies for second grade, or whatever it might be.

The participants reacted, and shared topics for their individual research questions. The topics of the individual questions varied, but all related to our common purpose. Mary shared how she was interested in researching the school to home connection with ELL families, “Could it involve the parents? For me it is really the communication with the (ELL) parents that I am struggling with.” “That is a great question.”, I encouraged her. Lauren shared how she wanted to investigate strategies to help ELL students with their writing application: “My ELLs can do a lot of whole group instruction, and they understand, they comprehend, but it is their writing [that is weak].” “The application?”, I responded. Lauren, “Yeah, it’s the application from how they speak, to of course putting it down on the paper that I need help with.” Then Kate, the ESL specialist, shared how she was interested in researching future ESL professional development topics for the general education teachers in the district:

I think as a district, I am not quite sure sometimes how much background knowledge you have in the world of ESL. So there are ways that even just on a PD level, an introduction of what it looks like-what the language levels look like would help. I could share all the components that I look at all the time, you know the websites, WIDA . . . all that stuff. That kind of thing, if that is helpful for you guys? You know the other side of it is sometimes our students need super specific instruction whether it is in phonics, or reading, or whatever it is, or the writing, the writing is really hard for them. So maybe presenting different strategies.
When we established our two common research questions, *How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? How does this process inform our individual roles?*, we were all deciding to engage in collective research by investigating the same thing. By creating these two common research questions, we were starting to act on our commitment to our common purpose, improving our methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. On the other hand, the individual research questions allowed each of us to autonomously investigate our own specific concerns related to the common purpose. For example, Mary was interested in investigating the ELL student school to home connection, Lauren decided to research writing application strategies for ELL students, while Kate (the ESL specialist) planned to investigate professional learning topics to support general education teachers. By creating individual research questions related to the larger problem, we were able to further commit to our common purpose, improving our methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, in more specific and varied ways.

The final action that I used to support an ongoing commitment to our common purpose, improving our methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, was restating the problem and collective research questions at the beginning of each session. As I generated the agendas for the sessions, I made the first agenda item for each meeting: Review the problem statement and research question. From Session 3, I shared the following:

So quickly, just reviewing our collective inquiry questions, how do we learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? And, how does this process inform our individual roles? Just reflect back quickly on your personal inquiry question, which was on your note card. Hopefully some things are coming up and you are starting to think about them a little bit deeper.
Even if reviewing the problem statement and research questions seemed redundant at times, it reminded us of our common purpose, improving our methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Our research topic was broad, and our common research questions were also broad, making it easy for teachers to digress. I was concerned that the participants might get stuck on the challenges of language barriers and/or how the student population has changed, rather than focusing on investigating how to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. I did not want our inquiry group sessions to become a time for complaining. I used this brief, but direct review of our research questions, to remind every participant of the problem statement, our research questions, and the common purpose throughout the process.

**Gathering Input from All**

The second leadership practice that I used to guide our inquiry group through the collective research process was gathering input from all participants. As stated in the previous part, we followed a collective research design for our inquiry group. In order to engage in collective research, all participants need to contribute to the research design, conduct the investigation itself, and communicate results along the way. I used three actions to elicit input from all stakeholders throughout the process.

The first action I used to encourage participation so that I could gather input from all of the participants was prompting the group to develop norms. I anticipated that a set of norms would set the tone for collective research by creating a safe space for participation. Although initially, the group was reluctant and hesitated when I asked them to generate a set of norms, I persisted by suggesting a list of general norms that could be used for any group professional learning. Based on the participants’ feedback, I revised the initial draft of the norms and reviewed the edits at the following session. From Session 2, I reminded the group of our norms:
We are comfortable speaking openly. We are a close faculty. We share stories openly. I don’t feel uncomfortable saying I don’t know. We will participate in conversations. We will be honest about our experiences both good and bad. We’ll respect what we are sharing with each other.

We approved and finalized the norms for our inquiry group. Throughout the study, I observed the participants enact these norms. Although at first, the participants did not fully embrace them, by Session 3, I observed evidence of the participants enacting them. I reflected upon member participation based on the norms in my researcher journal following Session 3, “To my surprise, every member of the group participated and reacted throughout the thirty minutes.” I continued to see evidence of the participants adhering to the norms for the remainder of the process. During Session 5, Allison openly shared a positive reflection about her ELL students’ reading fluency with the group, “They are reading the book. They are working through the book with me. They are buddy reading it with someone in their group, and then they are going home and reading it to their parent. So by the time they are reading it on their own, they sound like rock stars.” During Session 5, Lauren also reflected openly on the great progress her ELL students were making, and other members of the group demonstrated support. Lauren shared, “My group that I had predominantly ESL kids in, is now reading at a level G.” I reacted, “That is awesome! Allison also reacted, demonstrating respect for her group member, “That’s great!” Lauren continued to reflect, “Yeah so they have just like taken off. The one, she is testing out (of Basic Skills Instruction). She doesn’t need it anymore.” Additionally, the participants began to openly share about the difficulties they faced working with mainstreamed ELL students. For example, during Session 6, Kate shared her frustrations about students coming in with very little background knowledge:
Umm so we have a situation with a new student where she has very little background knowledge coming in, and it’s incredibly frustrating to try and get her to where she should be. A lot of your kids will come in with some background knowledge not as much as you might anticipate. Culturally they are different, they may not identify.”

These examples demonstrate how we enacted our group norms. These norms encouraged every inquiry group member to participate, supporting the collective research process. Additionally, every inquiry group member consistently demonstrated respect for one another during our inquiry group sessions. Throughout this process, I did not observe any evidence of disrespect. We reviewed the norms at the beginning of each session. We followed these norms throughout the study.

The second action I used to encourage participation so that I could gather input from every group member, was consistently including every participant in the research design process. I prompted the group to collaborate as we engaged in decision making about what topics to research, as well as when we decided how to conduct our research. Basically, I asked the group what they wanted to learn about regarding ELL students, as well as how they wanted to learn.

During Session 2, I prompted the group by asking what ELL topics they wanted to investigate:

Alright, so I actually was surprised as I went back and listened to the last session because it seemed like the school to home connection was what came up most frequently as we were talking. It wasn’t the topic I was expecting us to choose to investigate, but it is obviously something we are interested in learning more about. Does any of that sound familiar? Is there something specific that you think you want to focus on?
Lauren responded to my prompt, and expressed interest in learning about strategy groups for ELL students, “So that is what I want to focus on, the little strategy groups.” I prompted her further to clarify, “Strategy groups, and then specifically to get ELL students to apply the objectives?” “Yeah! Yeah!” confirmed Lauren. Kate, Mary, and Lauren expressed interest in learning about supporting ELL students during math by focusing on vocabulary. “Even with math, a lot of times, I’ll take her (ELL) kids, and give them a math test with much more simple language. I don’t know if everyone knows how to modify.” said Kate (the ESL specialist). Mary chimed in and confirmed her interest in investigating how to support ELL students with math vocabulary, “The math vocabulary is very tough for them. I don’t know how to help them (ELL students).” “The directions on the math test are impossible for them.” Kate responded. Then, Lauren shared how she was also interested in investigating math supports for ELL students, “Yeah, I switched to Guided Math this year. They (ELL students) are all in the same group, because there are a lot of concepts in that math program where they look at it like [Lauren made a confused face], so I have to go step by step. . . like okay put the red counter there.” “So you are interested in studying math language supports for ELL students too?” I sought clarification. The teachers confirmed by nodding their heads, or responding yes.

I also asked the participants what types of professional learning activities they wanted to engage in, how they wanted to learn. From Session 1, I shared the following:

So just some ideas I was thinking of . . . we can share articles. We can share our own experiences because we have a lot of different experiences. You have been to different courses. You are an ESL specialist. You’ve had experiences with larger classrooms/larger sizes. So there are lots of different things we can do, to help us through this process. We can introduce strategies, try them and bring them back to the group for discussion. We
can try different things with the parents and see if they work or not. I mean conferences are this week too right? Or next week? So that is kind of good timing, you know if you think about that as well. So what are some ideas before we set certain things that you guys find helpful as professional development?

The participant responses to this prompt, set the stage for our research design. “For me, it is not reading. I can read until I am blue in the face. It’s really trial by error that I need. And to try things and see how they work.” said Mary. Then Nicole added, “I like getting ideas from other people. Like Kate will say something, and I will be like-Why didn’t I think of that?” Rather than giving directions and telling the group what topics to investigate, and how to conduct the research, I asked the participants to contribute to the research decision making process. Collectively, we chose what topics we wanted to investigate, as well as how we wanted to conduct our research.

The third action I used to encourage participation so that I could gather input from every group member, were theme check ins. I transcribed each session directly following the meetings, and then used my initial findings to inform and generate the upcoming agenda. As I reviewed the agenda with the participants at the beginning of each session, I sought out their feedback regarding the accuracy of my initial coding and meaning making so we could collectively determine our next steps. From Session 2, I shared what I noticed while I was transcribing the data:

...the lack of background knowledge about ELL students. So specifically language levels, and for language acquisition, what actual proficiency is. Is there something else that you think you want to focus on more than background knowledge about ELL students? If we want to stay with this home to school connection, we can too. It is really
up to all of us to decide. That was just one of the other things I wanted to make sure I highlighted, because I definitely pulled it out when I was coding our last meeting. Courtney responded, “I think that is a good idea.” I continued to look for clarification from the other participants, “Does that sound like it would be helpful? Or is there something else specific?” “No, that is a big piece,” confirmed Mary. Instead of only using my own analysis of our group’s progress and findings, this technique prompted the participants to reflect upon, contribute, and shape the group’s course of action. Because I included the participants in the meaning making process throughout our group work, everyone had ownership in the direction our inquiry took.

**Implementing a Protocol**

The third and final leadership practice I used to guide the participants through the collective research process was implementing a protocol. Since this was our first time working as an inquiry group, I proposed a protocol as a guide for conducting collective research. First, I created a draft protocol, presented it to the group as an idea, and then requested feedback. I developed this protocol based on my own experiences as an administrator using my background in collaborative leadership (e.g. Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Gardner, 2011; Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2018). I presented a draft to the group to receive feedback. The protocol included the following five steps:

1. We state what we already know about the topic/question,
2. Kate and/or any participant shares expertise on the topic/question,
3. We reflect on new understandings or ideas,
4. We plan to put any new learning into practice, and
5. We implement the new practice in our individual classrooms, and share progress.
I first used the protocol during Session 3, which had a packed agenda, but we were able to go through the first four steps of the protocol. To my surprise, every member of the group participated and reacted throughout the thirty minutes; my immediate reflection on Session 3 was much more positive. Up until that point, and based on Session 1 and 2, I was very concerned that our inquiry group was going to become a place for complaining and/or simply sharing observations rather than deeper inquiry work. For the first time since we started meeting, I felt that our group was productive, focused, and the participants were engaged and reflective.

As we continued to work through the five step cycle of the protocol, I began to note that every member was willingly and consistently participating during the inquiry group sessions. From my Session 4 researcher journal, “The group members shared more specific observations and interactions regarding their mainstreamed ELL students than they had in the first three sessions.” For example, during Session 4, Mary shared a reflection about how she was implementing the instructional language supports that we were investigating for the ELL students in her own classroom, “Since we had that last meeting, I definitely have been taking note and introducing vocabulary, more so.” Then later on during Session 4, Mary also shared, “We just switched seats yesterday, so I put her (ELL student) right in between my two students that speak Spanish fluently.” Session 4 ended with Allison sharing an insightful reflection about our discussion as a whole, “I think that all these things are just good for all of them, especially in first grade or kindergarten, like I feel like they all need that (language supports).”

Then during Session 5, as we started our second round of the protocol, I observed even more in depth inquiry group work. Three different members of the group shared their expertise about supporting mainstreamed ELL students. This was a shift from the previous sessions where Kate (the ESL specialist) and I presented the majority of information. Additionally, the
participants' reflections during Session 5 demonstrated deeper inquiry work. For example, the participants shared the various instructional strategies they implemented with their ELL students since we last met, and they also elaborated on the student progress of their ELL students. “You know we did a nonfiction book in the guided reading group today, and once we went over the vocabulary words they were working on, it was like easy for him (ELL student),” Allison shared. Allison continued to elaborate on the instructional practices she was trying out in her classroom:

They (ELL students) are buddy reading with someone in their group (English speaking student). Then they are going home and reading it to their parents. So by the time they are reading it (on their own), they sound like rock stars.

During Session 5, the teachers also shared more insight regarding their beliefs about their ELL students compared to the previous sessions. Mary shared a personal insight, and revealed a personal vulnerability:

Pretty much the major takeaways from this (ESL graduate course) is I am glad I took it, because I understand them a little more. I feel bad saying this but prior to taking this course I was kind of like come on, like you (ELL student) should just learn the way that everyone learns.

As we followed the protocol, we engaged as an inquiry group and collectively researched how to improve our practice for meeting the needs of mainstream ELL students.

As we went through additional cycles of the protocol, an even deeper level of investigation and analysis became the standard for our inquiry group. We finally moved towards engaging in collective research about instructional language practices and away from only focusing on observations of ELL students. Furthermore, from the ELL Inquiry Group Reflection
Form, one participant elaborated on how she benefited from the protocol of our collective inquiry process:

I grabbed the info from the group and brought it back to my room to try. Then the following week, I was able to discuss how it worked, or if it didn’t work for me in my room. I loved bouncing my ideas, feelings and thoughts off my peers and hearing advice and reactions.

During Session 6, Kate (the ESL specialist) engaged the teachers in background knowledge building activities. Kate prompted discussions about how difficult it is for ELL students to make meaning when there is a lack of background knowledge. Kate:

Even if you are talking about animals’ tusks, horns, like different animal characteristics, you know tails or whatever it is, a lot of times they (ELL students) don’t know what those are. Even when they seem to be very fluent. We are going to do a unit with my first graders on penguins now, and learn about webbed feet. What are webbed feet? You know they (ELL students) don’t know those things.

As we continued to follow the protocol, I observed the participants share in depth reflections about the instructional language practices we had investigated and how they implemented them in their own classrooms with their ELL students. Participants shared their reflections on the practices they had learned, how they used them over the two weeks in between Session 6 and 7, and how this shift in instruction impacted their mainstreamed ELL students.

Lauren shared:

Kate (the ESL specialist) gave [a copy of the WIDA Can Do Descriptors] to me [for] a little boy in my room from Ireland who spoke Chinese, so bright, so with it, in every form and every which way because the mentality of course at home was, you come home, you
don't play, you just work, work, work, work… like he had his own classroom in his house. But I was having a hard time understanding him and I remember saying to Kate, “He can't really verbally communicate with me, but he can write it down on paper.” So, if I talk to him, he could not speak to me so much in very good English. But if I were to say to him, “Okay, write it down,” he would write it almost in perfect English … So … I kept [the WIDA Can Do Descriptors] next to me every time I met with him in a guided reading group or I conferred with him or whatever. And I kept referring back to it because [Kate] went through and she circled what level he was at for reading, what level he was at for writing. For everything, she just went through and she circled everything for me. And I kept that next to me the whole time. So, for me, I feel like I may actually copy this and go through it for each of my ELLs.

Mary confirmed how her ELL students also benefited from this resource:

Yeah, I like having it (WIDA Can Do Descriptors). I did not circle it yet, but I do like having it identified for each ELL child. And then having it during the groups or having it during the conferring session or using it to at least to plan what I want to work with them on.

I proposed this protocol to guide our inquiry group. It helped us engage in collective research for the first time. As we followed the protocol cycle after cycle, our collective approach became more progressive. At first, the protocol was a guide for us, as we were just learning to act as an inquiry group, but eventually the protocol became a guide for our inquiry group that fostered meaningful collective research.

In this part, I described the subtheme Inquiry Group Leadership Practices. The three practices were (1) unifying a common purpose, (2) gathering input from all, and (3)
implementing a protocol. I elaborated on my reflection about how our inquiry group reacted to these three practices using evidence from our collective research experience.

**The Intention of an Inquiry Group Leader**

In this part, I present the subtheme, The Intention of an Inquiry Group Leader. I describe how I changed my leadership approach from the top down approach of dictating inquiry group directions, to offering guidance that cultivated the collective research process. I detail how this change affected our group. I illustrate how we went from an unproductive group of educators attempting to conduct collective research, to a functioning inquiry group engaging in meaningful professional learning. Most importantly, I identify how my role as the leader/administrator developed throughout this experience, and how this change impacted the group.

As I initiated this practitioner action research study, I was keenly aware of my role as an administrator. I was determined not to execute a traditional professional learning experience aligned to the hierarchy of our professional titles. I was determined to implement an inquiry group that genuinely engaged in collective research. At my suggestion, we designed our group based on clinical research methods for practitioner action research, more specifically, coupled inquiry (Dunkhase, 2003; Martin-Hansen, 2002). As described in Chapter 3, the coupled inquiry approach emphasizes a collective research design. Coupled inquiry starts with a common question; all participants design and participate in the investigation while communicating results along the way (Dunkhase, 2003). The group is advised through this collaborative research process by a guide (Dunkhase, 2003). In this case, I acted as the guide for our inquiry group. However, as I began to plan our first meeting, I struggled with generating an agenda. I was not sure how much guidance to provide. I was not sure how to ask the teachers to spontaneously begin the inquiry process without dictating how to do so. I ultimately returned to my research on
best practices for professional learning, practitioner action research, and coupled inquiry to determine how to launch our inquiry group.

Specifically, I reviewed how the inquiry group philosophy is based on participation and actions such as developing a collective question, contributing to the investigation process, and communicating results along the way (Dunkhase, 2003). With this philosophy in mind, I developed the initial inquiry group agendas with two guiding components, a common purpose, and input from all stakeholders. For example, I provided the group with a sample collective question to support a common purpose. I also prompted the group members to contribute to our research plan about how and what we were going to investigate. Unfortunately, after the introductory information meeting and the first two thirty minute inquiry group sessions we were still lacking a common purpose, and most of the teachers were not participating. I was very disappointed. In my researcher journal, I described our first two inquiry group sessions as “passive and unproductive.”

In my researcher journal entry after Session 1, I wrote:

Throughout the session activities, the participants were very passive. For example, when I first prompted the group to establish norms, the participants did not contribute. Most paused and stayed silent, even after I made additional suggestions. Similarly, when I shared a “draft” collective inquiry question as an example, no one offered alternative wording or input; everyone simply settled and agreed to what I had shared. I worried that the participants were just agreeing with me due to my position as a supervisor. Because this was an inquiry group structure, I was attempting to give the participants ownership of how we would proceed, but instead, this resulted in inactivity. I struggled with how to balance pushing the participants to take action along with giving them wait time to
develop a sense of identity as an inquiry group. Based on this reflection, I decided to prepare a hybrid experience for Session 2. I prepared a set of norms for the teachers, and generated agenda items that prompted them to set goals for our sessions.

Then, in my researcher journal entry after Session 2:

Again, I observed the participants as a disengaged inquiry group. I was disappointed that the teachers did not formally record any critical incidents following Session 1. They shared experiences, which served as data, but they did not demonstrate a commitment to recording evidence in a more formal research manner. I felt as if Kate (the ESL specialist) and I were leading rather than collaboratively investigating with the teachers. Throughout Session 2, the teachers responded to the content shared about how to develop a school to home connection with parents of ELL students, but the collaborative and research elements of the inquiry group itself were not observed. I felt a degree of frustration and uncertainty.

Following Session 2, I was actually concerned that this inquiry group process was not going to result in any constructive professional learning, but rather become more of a chat group. Motivated by this concern, I decided to reflect upon my role in the process. I reread the transcripts of Session 1 and 2, and considered how my actions were affecting the group. I realized that my actions represented a fairly top down leadership style, exactly what I was trying to avoid. I had prepared and presented a set of norms, a working question, and the agendas. Through this reflection, I realized that I had to shift my leadership approach in order to cultivate a stance of inquiry for our collective research. Subsequently, I decided to focus my efforts on how to encourage engagement and participation, rather than on our findings about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. So I created a protocol to guide us through the inquiry
group process. After following the protocol step by step for two rounds, we began to internalize the process and developed our own natural rhythm for collective research; the protocol structure I originally imposed became less necessary.

At first, I was worried that implementing a protocol could shift us even further towards the typical professional learning hierarchy that we were all used to, where I act as the administrator, dictate our path, and the teachers follow my direction. I was nervous about such an outcome. At the same time, I felt responsible for the group, and wanted to shift my leadership approach and guide the inquiry group to engage in collective research. In an effort to combat falling into this familiar professional learning pattern, I decided to share the protocol by proposing it as an idea and asking the other participants for feedback. Unfortunately, after I shared the proposal, no one offered any insight; everyone simply agreed and complied. At the beginning of Session 3 I shared,

So after last time, I wanted to make a little bit more of a clear protocol, so we kind of get moving, because the 30 minutes does go by very quickly. So I thought what we could do is, state what we already know about the topic or question that comes up when we have questions about. Then ask Kate (ESL specialist) to share what she knows, her expertise on the topic or question about our ELL students. Next, reflect what we take out of that, so respond to what she shared with us. And then finally, plan to try some of those things out in the classroom before the next meeting. What do you think? (No one responded. The participants simply nodded their heads and expressed agreement.)

This did not surprise me, as compliance was not only the norm of our group at that point, but it was also the teacher participants' established tone for professional learning from past experiences, ingrained by the hierarchy of their professional titles. I also contributed to the
group’s compliance by preparing and presenting the protocol, instead of asking the participants to collectively create one. In just three thirty minute sessions, I had attempted to shift our group, including myself, away from the standard professional learning process we had all become accustomed to. We needed scaffolds to unlearn this process. In the end, the protocol helped us engage in collective research and develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind.

As we began Session 3, I led the group by following the protocol. I was very aware of my position. I was very careful only to guide the group through the steps of the protocol. I did not want to lead the conversation in any direction and/or press for specific decisions. During Session 3, every member of the group contributed for the first time. I approached Session 4, with the same intention. Just as with Session 3, I was careful to focus on guiding the group through the collective research process, rather than leading them in a particular direction. I still provided an agenda, reviewed norms, reread the research questions, and reminded the group of the protocol, but I took a step back from leading the group move by move. And, during Session 4, I noticed a shift in the group members’ contributions. The observations they shared were more detailed. The participants began to express deeper reflections, what puzzled them, as well as their instructional successes demonstrating a shift towards an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind. For example, Nicole shared her experiences working with ELL students in the past:

They listen and they try, because I have had students before, many of them that have spoken no English whatsoever. And it is amazing how quickly they pick it up. Like they won’t be able to talk to you, and then a week later they will be trying to talk and use words, and it is funny because they’ll start and they’ll try, and I would be like wait, what word was that, like it sounded like it should be, but it wasn’t exactly it. So then I always did a lot of repeating. Like when they would ask to go to the bathroom, they would have
to say bathroom. And we’d practice saying bathroom, and just to like get the sounds right, because they try, but they’re not, like you said they don’t hear it necessarily, the right way because you think they are hearing it from 5 year olds who aren’t necessarily saying all the sounds the right way. So I always did a lot of repeating and having them repeat back to me.

Kate (the ESL specialist) responded to Nicole, and built on her reflection by generalizing her point. Kate made the connection about how some instructional practices for English language learners are simply best practices for all learners. Kate shared how second language supports can help all learners:

Some of it is best practices too, that we try to incorporate. These are best practices for special ed. These are best practices when you have kids that are struggling, you know? And so they really do cross over out of the ESL world, and [are] really just best practices for everybody.

Kate also shared a reflection about how ELL students’ struggle to demonstrate their proficiency because of their lack of English acquisition, “It is just eye opening. And I think these kids . . . I think we sometimes forget how capable [the ELL students] are; they just can’t get the language out to us.”

Then, Mary offered a reflection that complicated the discussion. Mary responded by highlighting the other side of the learning spectrum, ELL students that may have learning disabilities. Mary highlighted how students with a lack language proficiency can mask not only capabilities but also disabilities as well. Mary reflected on one of her ELL students’ processing time:

Academically, even when he is working in a small group, with either of us, he’s still stuttering, he’s still struggling to get the words out. And I just said to Kate earlier, I
wonder if there is something more . . . Often, we say, oh well it’s their (the ELL students’) language, [but] maybe there are other learning issues that we might not always quickly identify. Because it is obviously their language, but what about the rest of it? That is why, with him, just doing that activity, maybe it is that he’s taking a lot longer to be able to process.

Lauren extended the discussion even further. Lauren shared a reflection about ELL students’ native language:

The interesting thing that I found was that too many times we have programs and we train teachers, but we don’t specifically tell the teachers that sometimes the most valuable learning for an ELL learner is to teach them in their own language first, and then teach them that same concept in the English language. It is a disservice that many of us don’t have the language to communicate with those kids in their initial language first, and then take that same concept and move it into the English language. It is so much easier to take that concept, rework it in their brain, and sputter you out the answer, because they have already been exposed to it in their first language.

This discussion demonstrates a crucial shift in my role as the leader, as well as in our group’s stance towards inquiry. I began to realize my leadership role and how to facilitate an inquiry group by focusing on guiding them through the process, and letting the members concentrate their energy on inquiry. By implementing the protocol, but not dictating every step each time, I was able to take a step back as the leader, and the participants were able to engage in the inquiry process more naturally. This shift also freed me up to act more as a participant of the inquiry group, which was the intention of this study to begin with. This Session 4 discussion was the first time we collectively investigated our research question by engaging in an evidence based
conversation about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Although we were not discussing advanced instructional practices for language learners, we were starting to act as an inquiry group for the first time. These were our first steps for developing an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind.

By the time we got to Session 6, we were still following the protocol, but I was no longer guiding the group step by step. My role had shifted. I still generated the agendas and reminded the group of the protocol. Sometimes we deviated from the explicit steps, but eventually we always found our way back to the essence of the protocol. More importantly, we were moving fluidly through the process, contributing openly, and sharing successes and failures about our research on meeting the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students. Once this shift happened, I was able to move from a leadership role to an authentic participant of the inquiry group. I was able to engage more as a participant because I was no longer focused on directing the group.

For example, in the following discussion from Session 6, Kate (the ESL specialist) took the lead and engaged the group in two professional learning activities. We all participated and responded, but we did not strictly follow the protocol steps. Kate started Session 6 with an activity (Appendix H):

So let’s start. This is one of the trainings I do. We’ll look at it (powerpoint presentation, Appendix H) really quickly and then I have a 2 minute video to show you guys. Okay, so background knowledge has a huge impact on our students, but it feels as if it even has a bigger impact on our ESL students.

After the powerpoint presentation and video about building background knowledge with ELL students, Allison shared a specific science curriculum example demonstrating how she was making sense of the instructional language practice. She shared this example without being
prompted. In earlier sessions, I tried to prompt the participants by eliciting responses, and
sometimes even then they did not contribute. This example shows how my role shifted, and how
our inquiry group developed. Allison shared:

> It is good to have the second grade unit on penguins, because in first grade you know we
do chicks, we do birds. So then having that background knowledge before we get to the
penguin unit in second grade will be helpful.

Without a hesitation, Kate seamlessly extended Allison’s point further by emphasizing the
instructional language practice, building background knowledge, and even referred the group
back to the slides. Kate offered this type of ongoing support throughout this discussion. This
example demonstrates how our inquiry group began to move fluidly through the collective
research process. Kate responded:

> Right, so a lot of times I like to base the reading I do with the ESL kids on science and
social studies, because that gives them a ton of vocabulary that they don’t have, and it
just helps, and it is interesting for them. They like to learn about that stuff. So it says [she
referred back to the Power Point], best practices to building background: connect to their
prior experiences, connect to past learning, and focus on key vocabulary.

After the professional learning activity, two teachers brought their individual concerns
about their ELL students to the group. In earlier sessions, the participants did not use our inquiry
group as a support system to find solutions for difficulties they were having with their
mainstreamed ELL students. I encouraged this type of collective, timely, and authentic
investigation. This example depicts how our inquiry group began to seek out help by engaging in
collective research. First, Mary shared:
We’ve been talking a lot about a student who came in September with no English, which isn’t ideal. So for me, I feel a little off because in September there are so many things that get lost because they don’t know where they are and they have no language. Kate has been adding a lot of her extra time and spending time with her, but it is very challenging. I am finding it hard to give her that extra time myself. And I feel like I am neglecting her because I am not giving her all that extra time. I still have to teach the 19 other kids.

Kate offered supportive information and responded, “Some of her job is just to be listening for the language, and absorbing it. And that is hard too, and that is hard on her. But that’s okay. We’ll take that.” Then, Lauren brought a different concern about her ELL students to the group:

I did have a question about my ELL students. They are doing great with me reading in class, but they did terribly on the benchmark, which is what’s keeping them in Basic Skills Instruction. So is there something that we can do with the benchmark? I am thinking about kids who are special needs kids, do they get accommodations when they take the benchmarks? Is there something that we can do for them?

I also offered a possible solution:

Yeah, I can talk to the Basic Skills Team and definitely see. You know we can have some different criteria for ELL students in general, or we can have it read to the ELL students, or do it one on one. There are definitely things we can come up with to address that.

Kate added onto my solution and offered additional support to Lauren, “That is something you and I can discuss and figure out.” During Session 6, we successfully engaged in the inquiry group without strictly following the steps of the protocol or succumbing to the hierarchy of our typical professional roles. By Session 6, not only did other participants besides myself take the lead, participants openly brought concerns about their ELL students to the group to investigate.
We were finally starting to collectively function as an inquiry group, as opposed to an administrator leading a group of teachers.

In my final researcher journal entry, I acknowledged the leadership and guidance our inquiry group needed in order to engage in collective research:

After reviewing the teacher surveys, I realized that they felt the inquiry group was a positive learning experience. I was concerned that they would feel that it was too unstructured and/or not enough information. They recommended doing this across the district, and reported that they felt it was valuable. Although I think I balance and integrate a variety of learning experiences when I develop PD plans, after running these inquiry groups, I think I need to continue to explore alternative learning options. I would like to continue to explore options where I guide/lead teachers through the learning process, but give them more responsibility about both what we learn as well as how we learn. This has opened my eyes to the different ways that teachers learn.

In this part, I presented the subtheme, The Intention of an Inquiry Group Leader. I shared evidence about our inquiry group experience, specifically how my role as the leader/administrator developed as we learned that we needed guidance about conducting collective research. I described how I changed my leadership approach from giving directions to a group of teachers, to offering guidance that cultivated a productive inquiry group. I learned that as the leader, I needed to focus on guiding the inquiry group through the process of conducting collective research.

In this section, I described theme one, The Role of Leadership for Inquiry Group Professional Learning. I described how we learned that we needed some leadership and guidance to productively participate in an inquiry group. Even though the participants initially expressed
that they were already an established community of learners, we struggled to engage in the collective research process, especially in the beginning. We had to determine a process to follow for conducting collective research as an inquiry group. As described in this section, this did not happen easily, naturally, or without leadership. For our particular group to be successful, we needed a leader to provide specific guidance about how to conduct research as an inquiry group, especially since none of us had participated in an inquiry group previously. Our inquiry group benefited from the leadership and guidance I provided about conducting collective research, especially the three practices I put in place to (1) unifying a common purpose, (2) gathering input from all, and (3) the protocol. This theme reflects Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) “inquiry as stance” habit of mind. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) describe the significance of inquiry communities, and how powerful co-constructed research within local schools can be. By abandoning the typical transmission professional learning structure that we were all accustomed to, and committing to an inquiry group model, we were able to conduct authentic collective research in order to improve our practices for meeting the needs of our ELL student population.

The Synergy of Individual and Collective Research

In this section I unpack theme two, The Synergy of Individual and Collective Research for Inquiry Group Professional Learning. As described in Chapter 3, as well as in the section above, we designed our inquiry group based on clinical research methods for practitioner action research, specifically coupled inquiry (Dunkhase, 2003; Martin-Hansen, 2002). And as aforementioned, the coupled inquiry approach emphasizes a collective research design and is advised by a guide (Dunkhase, 2003). In this case, I acted as the guide for our inquiry group. Coupled inquiry also includes an open inquiry component that seamlessly aligns to practitioner
action research. With coupled inquiry, participants are expected to investigate independently as well as with the group (Dunkhase, 2003).

For our practitioner action research study, the interaction of both our individual and collective research efforts had a great impact on our inquiry group professional learning experience. Our practitioner action research experience would not have been as meaningful if we had only conducted individual investigations about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Likewise, our practitioner action research experience would not have been as meaningful if we had only investigated meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students as a group. It was the synergy of the simultaneous individual and collective research actions that greatly affected our inquiry group’s professional learning.

In this section, I describe how our inquiry group simultaneously conducted individual and collective research. Our inquiry group generally followed a pattern that provoked both individual and collective research. First, we collectively investigated practices for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Then, we individually implemented these practices in our individual classrooms. Finally, we examined our progress with the practices as a group. This pattern was embedded in the protocol described in the section above.

In this section, I identify two subthemes: (1) Learning to Support ELL Students’ Non-Academic Needs, and (2) Learning to Support ELL Students’ Instructional Needs. In part one, I depict how we individually and collectively researched the non-academic needs of ELL students’. Then in part two, I explain how we individually and collectively researched ELL students’ instructional needs. As aforementioned, the practices that we researched as an inquiry group were fundamental methods for meeting the needs of ELL students. Some of the participants had previously taken it upon themselves to investigate best practices for teaching
ELL students on an individual basis. For example, Lauren had voluntarily taken a graduate class about meeting the needs of ELL students simply because she was interested in the topic. But, as stated in the previous section, in my district, basic practices for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students had not typically been included in past professional learning plans, and therefore, were not uniformly practiced in the classroom. Subsequently, the primary purpose of this theme and section is to describe our inquiry group professional learning experience, specifically the process we used to simultaneously conduct individual and collective research. I conclude this section by reflecting on how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

**Learning to Support ELL Students’ Non-Academic Needs**

In this part, I share examples from our inquiry group’s professional learning experience about meeting ELL students’ non-academic needs. The practices we investigated were (1) building the school to home connection with ELL families, (2) understanding the varying backgrounds of ELL students, and (3) empathizing with ELL students. The primary reason I share these examples is not to describe *what* we learned about meeting ELL students’ non-academic needs, but rather to highlight *how* our group learned by simultaneously conducting individual and collective research.

**Building the School to Home Connection with ELL Families**

One of the first topics our inquiry group chose to investigate was how to build a school to home connection with ELL families. First, as a group, we collectively investigated practices for building the school to home connection with ELL families. Kate (ESL specialist) prepared professional learning material about building the school to home connection with ELL families,
and presented it during Session 2 (Appendix E). Kate highlighted four tenets for building the school to home connection with ELL families:

1. Look for ways that ELL parents can help even if they have limited English skills (e.g., encourage parents to check homework, have parents ask kids what they learned each day);
2. Find ways to communicate with ELL families (sometimes this involves a translator);
3. Respect parent intentions and encourage native language use at home; and
4. Remember the parents’ education may be nothing similar to what we do here, so explaining what school is like is helpful.

The group members also contributed to this collective investigation about building the school to home connection with ELL families by sharing their own experiences. Lauren shared a method she learned from previous professional learning about meeting the needs of ELL students and building connections with their families, “Yes, making a big multicultural day, parents can come in and they can learn about all different cultures so it makes a community.” Courtney responded, “Right, but I also read that it shouldn’t be limited to just a day like that. It should be an ongoing thing around the year.” We all acknowledged the importance of making the school to home connection an ongoing endeavor. Mary then referred back to Kate’s presentation, specifically what Kate presented about communicating with ELL families. Mary shared her own personal struggle, “For me, it is really the communication with the parents that I am struggling with to even start.” The participants agreed with Mary. Allison reflected, “I was trying to say it was difficult to communicate with her (ELL parent), because English is not her first language. It was just trying to go back and forth, and keeping it really simple.” Even though translating is the most basic practice for building the school to home connection with ELL families, we realized
that providing these services was the necessary first step towards establishing a partnership with ELL families. Therefore, as a group, we collectively decided to investigate building the school to home connection with ELL families by focusing on translating parent communication.

We collectively decided to investigate methods for translating written communication to ELL families, as well as using a translator at conferences with ELL families. Then the participants individually investigated these different methods for translating, and followed up by sharing their experiences with the group. Nicole reflected upon successfully using Google translate for written communication to parents, “They understand! I used it to write notes to parents. And you can tell it helped them to understand.” And Mary worked with a translator during a parent conference for the first time. She shared, “So I did have the translator. She would just translate, and she helped communicate with the parents.” However, challenges did arise with translating as well. Even with all the resources we had, sometimes we could not accommodate for every language. Mary explained, “We need a translator of all languages on hand.” Unfortunately, that was not possible. Mary had tried to send home leveled readers translated in the ELL student’s native language to read with their parents, but she found there were certain dialects that we were unable to translate to, for example Urdu. The group could only commit to doing the best with the resources we did have for translating.

In this part, I detailed how we functioned as an inquiry group by collectively and individually researched methods for building the school to home connection with ELL families. First, we collectively explored methods for building the school to home connection with ELL families. Then, we individually investigated translation supports to communicate with our ELL families. Finally, we examined our progress as a group. The translation practices we investigated were very basic, but they were meaningful to our development for supporting our mainstreamed
ELL students’ non-academic needs. Even though our orientations towards ELL students were developing, we were not yet advocating beyond what was currently available. We did demonstrate a clear commitment to our ELL students, and took strides to look beyond classroom instruction and support the whole child by involving their families.

**Understanding the Varying Backgrounds of ELL Students**

As we engaged in our inquiry group work, we discovered how each ELL student had a unique background story. By investigating our ELL students’ backgrounds, we began to see each one as an individual rather than just a classification, Limited English Proficient. First, we collectively and individually explored our ELL students’ backgrounds by examining how ELL students and their families describe the schooling experience in their own way. Then, we collectively and individually explored how ELL students exhibit different competencies of their own backgrounds. We did not intentionally set this as a topic for investigation, but it naturally became one over time.

**Different Schooling Experiences.** First, as a group, we collectively reflected by sharing our observations of how our ELL students and families describe the schooling experience. For example, Mary had the following insight:

> So I also think it is a cultural difference. We know in some cultures, the importance on education is extreme and huge.[The students’ parents] are grinding on them, and they are going to Kumon and Huntington (private tutoring vendors) outside of here on top of all the stuff we give them. And [other parents] are like, “Yeah they get it in school. That’s it. We don’t have to do it.

Mary expanded on her statement by giving specific examples from her class:
I can think of my ELL students now, you know. Two of their parents are very much into education, very dominating, in their face, and then the others are like “-Eh,” because they might not just understand [its] necessity . . . we have very high standards for what we expect of these kids.

Another example was when Lauren explained how one of her ELL students told her that his mother allows him to miss one day of school a week. She shared how the student said, “No, tomorrow is my day off. My mom said I get one day off a week. Tomorrow is my day off.” Lauren expanded on the interaction:

That’s what [my student] told me: “My mom went to school, but not a lot in her country.” And when she came here, she was like, “What . . . you have to go to school all these days?” And I was like, “Yes, you need to come to school all these days. That’s how you are going to learn.”

These examples demonstrate how we previously struggled on an individual basis to understand the different schooling experiences of our mainstreamed ELL students and families. However, by engaging in this type of reflective work, both individually as well as collectively as a group, we began the process of facing our own biases towards these students. We took the initial steps to confront our own beliefs about the value of education by simply naming what we observed about the different schooling experiences of our mainstreamed ELL students and families. Collectively, we began to understand that each ELL student brings their own unique schooling experiences with them. In doing so, we were starting the inquiry work to become better prepared to meet the various non-academic needs of our ELL students.

**ELL Students Exhibit Different Competencies of their own Backgrounds.** First, as a group, we collectively explored how ELL students exhibit different competencies of their own
backgrounds by sharing our observations from our own experiences. During Session 5, Lauren made a comparison of her ELL students’ varying levels of cultural background knowledge, “Tell me if I am wrong, but she (ELL student) doesn’t seem to know about, and this is what I am finding, she doesn’t know a lot about her culture as the other three (ELL students) do.” Kate (ESL specialist) shifted the group discussion to focus on ELL students’ individual differences by referencing their socio-economic status and emphasizing how each ELL student has had unique experiences:

There’s a lot of pieces, and sometimes, you know, it even comes down to a financial status. Umm you know, my middle school student was asked to write about “The best trip you ever went on,” and I said to the other ESL teacher, “She may never have had the opportunity to be on vacation like that.” It is a really hard topic if you’ve never been away. You know, you and I think about going to the beach; we don’t think twice. We go for the day, and we’re back. You know, even a trip like that. They don’t always have the exposure to know.

In response to that discussion, and in order to better understand how to meet the non-academic needs of our mainstreamed ELL students, we decided to investigate how the background knowledge of ELL students’ varies. First, during Session 6, we revisited the concept that each ELL student has their own unique background. Kate launched this discussion by sharing an individual concern:

So we have a situation with a new Kindergarten student where she has very little background knowledge coming in, and it’s incredibly frustrating to try and get her to where she should be. A lot of your kids will come in with some background knowledge, not as much as you might anticipate. Culturally they are different, they may not identify.
Then, during Session 7, we compared the backgrounds of two very different mainstreamed ELL students in the district in order to develop an understanding of the varying backgrounds of our ELL student population. First, Lauren described one of her mainstreamed ELL students from the prior year, a boy from Ireland who was Chinese:

So bright, so with it, in every form and every which way—because the mentality of course at home was you come home; you don't play. You just work, work, work, work, work, like he had his own classroom in his house. But, I was having a hard time understanding and I remember saying to Kate like, he can't really verbally communicate with me, but he can write it down on paper. So like, if I talk to him he could not speak to me so much in very good English. But if I were to say to him okay X write it down. He would write it almost in perfect English.

Then Kate described the background of one of the district’s high school students who could not read in his native language:

We have a boy who's in 10th grade now, who I started with when he was in fifth grade in my old district, and what happened was we realized very quickly that he didn't even have a good command of Spanish. He had no command of English and he could not read. And when we went back to the family and had a meeting very early on, we said, “You know, what happened when you were in Mexico?” And the families said, “Well they told us he didn't have enough vitamins to learn to read.” That was the answer because they don't test these kids (for special education). They don't—they just tell them they don't have enough vitamins, or “We don't know what to tell you.” The educators themselves don't have the answers as to why a student is not learning. They're not experienced enough to know.
The classroom teacher participants reacted in a surprised manner to this group discussion; it seemed as though they had not considered how drastically unique the background of each ELL student could be. Following these group discussions the classroom teachers individually explored the varying backgrounds of the mainstreamed ELL students in each of their classrooms.

In this part, I shared examples to exemplify how our inquiry group learned that the backgrounds of mainstreamed ELL students can vary quite drastically. We investigated this topic by sharing individual reflections, and then collectively examining the varying backgrounds of our mainstreamed ELL students. In the past, we never had a forum to explore these types of differences of our mainstreamed ELL students. Our inquiry group provided the space for us to identify and examine this issue as a collective concern. Learning to respect the individuality of each ELL student helped us better understand their varying needs.

**Developing Empathy for ELL Students**

Over the course of our research, a common topic that emerged was how we, the participants, felt about ELL students. As we engaged in the inquiry group process, we explored the frustrations ELL students experience when they are mainstreamed into general education English speaking classrooms. We engaged in a variety of professional learning activities and reflected on the lived experiences of ELL students in the classroom as well as at home. In doing so, we learned what the ELL students couldn't relate to, as well as a world beyond our own experiences that ELL students were bringing into the classroom every day. Developing empathy for our mainstreamed ELL students created a sense of reciprocal growth. The following examples represent our inquiry group’s individual and collective development of empathy for mainstreamed ELL students.
During Session 4, Kate led an activity that she had learned from her ESL certification coursework. Kate directed each of us to tell a partner about our weekend without using the letter D. After this activity, Kate asked us to reflect upon our own frustrations when trying to communicate with a language deficit. Kate finally prompted us to relate this experience to how ELL students might feel in an English speaking classroom. I shared my individual reflection, “I knew a great deal about what I wanted to say, but I was limited by getting the language out. And that must be very frustrating for these students sometimes, especially in this academic setting.” Kate followed up with her individual reflection, “It is just eye opening. And I think, these kids (ELL students), I think we sometimes forget how capable [the ELL students] are, but they can’t get the language out to us.” Then, we collectively engaged in a discussion about ELL students who have little to no English acquisition when they enter our school. Mary reflected upon one student who entered the school mid-year, and how she empathized with the student, “I know-knowing no English-I can’t imagine, I was thinking about her yesterday and how frightening that must be, just coming in and sitting there.” Obviously our empathy for ELL students wasn’t fully developed after one activity, but rather this launched an ongoing reflection process that we engaged in throughout our sessions.

During the following inquiry group session, Session 5, we continued to collectively discuss the transition period for new ELL students and how we empathized. Kate shared the following:

I feel like that is a big part of my job when, um, I get a new kid who’s crying all day … and it is very normal for me. The first day that Jane came, people in the building were flipping out because she just cried all day long, and I felt bad. She still cries sometimes, you know she gets frustrated, then she can’t express herself, and she’ll start to cry … She
wants mommy, she wants to go home. It’s too much. Umm and I feel bad, but this is just what it is. You know, we got to keep moving on.

Courtney interpreted Kate’s account and offered a more compassionate lens by adding, “But if you put yourself in their position (ELL students), it’s got to be pretty scary, I would think. You know?” This interaction demonstrates how we continued to build our empathy for ELL students by exploring how they might feel in different situations. During this session, we collectively focused on examining the feelings of frustration new ELL students might feel. We challenged one another to consider how a new ELL student might feel genuinely scared and frustrated, by putting ourselves in the ELL students’ shoes.

Additionally, during Session 8, we viewed a professional video of a classroom experience from an ELL student’s perspective. The boy was given a math word problem about distance and street blocks, but initially did not understand because he interpreted blocks as toy blocks. Mary shared her individual reflection on the video:

I thought it was just so interesting how you see his mind imagining and looking at blocks and carrying blocks, and realizing that blocks meant something else. Right? We know that, but that he's able to figure it out... I love that he was able to figure it out-the problem, but then it also was so interesting that he couldn't explain his answer. When he was having trouble, the (other) boy obviously stole his answer, and they were all laughing at him, and it just made me really sad.

Allison empathized, “It was really sad. It's really sad.” This interaction demonstrates how our empathy for ELL students was evolving with each professional learning activity. We collectively reflected on how frustrated the ELL student from the video must have been since he knew the
right answer and understood the math problem, but was unable to articulate his explanation in English.

In this part, I portrayed how we functioned as an inquiry group by collectively and individually exploring our feelings and beliefs about our mainstreamed ELL students. In these examples, we learned by individually considering ELL students' experiences first, and then collectively discussing how we empathized. Through this inquiry we began to develop empathy for ELL students by reflecting upon the language struggles they face in the mainstream classroom setting.

Unfortunately, through the analysis of this subtheme, it also became clear that our group held a deficit view of our ELL students. Almost all of our discourse revealed a narrative that pitied ELL students, rather than celebrated how nontraditional qualities could enrich the classroom. There was only one record of a reaction that highlighted a positive view of our ELL students, during session 4 when Kate the ESL specialist shared, “It is just eye opening. And I think these kids . . . I think we sometimes forget how capable [the ELL students] are; they just can’t get the language out to us.” And this statement still cued a deficit viewpoint at the end. This of course is very concerning. With only five months and eight 30 minute sessions, we were unable to even identify our beliefs about ELL students and/or develop proper empathy for them, but we were able to start the foundational work to do so. As aforementioned, in the past, we never had a forum to safely explore our beliefs about ELL students, but this inquiry group provided the space for us to begin the groundwork to do so. I detail further implications of this deficit view of ELL students in Chapter 5.

Learning to Meet ELL Students’ Instructional Needs
Next, I describe our inquiry group’s learning experiences about meeting the instructional needs of mainstreamed ELL students. The instructional practices we investigated as we followed the protocol and engaged in individual and collective inquiry were:

1. English language proficiency data-driven instruction,
2. introducing academic vocabulary before instruction,
3. integrating L1 resources, and
4. increasing English language input opportunities.

Kate and I determined which instructional practices to investigate. Based on the discourse of Sessions 1 and 2, we realized that even the most basic language supports were not being consistently implemented in the general education classrooms. Therefore, we worked together and chose three instructional practices that we felt would be accessible for the teachers, as well as meaningful for the students. Just as above, the primary reason I present these examples is not to share what we learned about meeting the needs of ELL students, but rather to highlight how our group learned by simultaneously conducting individual and collective research.

**English Language Proficiency Data-Driven Instruction**

For the first instructional practice, we individually and collectively researched how to identify and use ELL students’ English language proficiency levels to drive instruction. As indicated by the participants’ Background Information Questionnaires (Appendix D), as well as the transcripts from Session 1 and 2, the classroom teachers seemed unaware of their mainstreamed ELL students’ English language proficiency levels. After I consulted with Kate, we decided to present the proficiency levels for language acquisition in combination with the WIDA standards (Appendix F) for language learning during Session 3. During Session 3, Kate presented the WIDA standards rubrics:
So our standards (for ESL) are different than the standards you guys look at all the time. Although I do tend to incorporate a lot of those in there as well when I am looking at my lesson and what I’m planning for the kids when I am pulling them out. It’s definitely a little bit different than the way you guys do it. So we have WIDA. WIDA is like the bible of ESL. It’s a consortium in Wisconsin. Wisconsin, that’s where it started and that’s where the research continues to go on and they provide a lot of great information for people like me. Basically, what happens is a Level 1 student that’s entering has very little knowledge of English very little ability to use their English. The four main skills I look at are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills vary. You can be somebody who is almost here (Kate pointed to Level 4), in the writing part, but they are hardly able to really express themselves (pointed to Level 2 in the speaking column). Although that is rare, it does happen.

I followed up with additional information I had prepared about the WIDA standards:

What Kate is referring to with the speaking and writing as opposed to the listening and reading, we are also talking about language input and language output. Right, so what is coming in, what is being told, so how they are listening and then reading, that is all information coming into them. And then output, how they are writing and then speaking about it, right? So we have to kind of balance both of those, that goes along with the difference between academic and conversational language, so what I highlight here, and what was most shocking to me if we actually start on the blue side, the conversational side, conversational language is usually acquired after two years of being immersed in a second language, but academic language proficiency can take an additional five to seven years. So sometimes we are looking at up to nine years, even more for a student really to
become proficient. The WIDA standards are written for academic language, right so we want them to gain proficiency in the academic world where they are with us. But sometimes we have to help them build that social and conversational language first. So that’s just a quick hand out for that. And then one more thing before Kate goes deeper into the standards. This is just the leveling again, Kate was just describing all in one spot, so again, Kate can tell you where your students are, or where they tested, most recently on their ACCESS score. Again, she kind of already went over this, but this just gives you a quick general description. So you might want to kind of look and think . . . Where would you say most of the students are?

The teachers expressed how they never knew about or saw the WIDA rubrics before. Allison, “I never knew about this (WIDA Rubrics).” The classroom teachers had never considered the varying language needs of their mainstreamed ELL students. Following Session 3, Kate and I encouraged the teachers to begin using these rubrics in their individual classrooms to support their mainstreamed ELL students. During Session 7, we revisited the rubrics, and collectively examined our progress. Lauren shared her successful experience with the language acquisition rubrics and how she used them to set individualized language goals with her mainstreamed ELL students:

Yeah, I think highlighting taking notes right on this (WIDA rubric). You don't need another form. I'm sure we're all inundated with paperwork anyway. This could become, like you said, just make a copy of it and that can become their conference sheet. You can have notes on the bottom, or on the side, or even just highlighting what they were able to master and or what they need to continue to work on.
I presented these examples to demonstrate how we individually and collectively researched using the ELL students’ English language proficiency levels to drive instruction. First, we collectively investigated the WIDA rubrics and studied the various English language acquisition proficiency levels of our ELL students. Then, the classroom teachers individually utilized these rubrics in our classrooms. Finally, we examined our progress with the rubrics as a group.

**Introducing Academic Vocabulary before Instruction**

For the second instructional practice, we individually and collectively researched how to introduce academic vocabulary before instruction for ELL students. Kate and I defined various methods for introducing academic vocabulary before instruction, and then reviewed examples as a whole group during Session 3. Following Session 3, the classroom teachers had time to individually implement this practice in their classrooms with their mainstreamed ELL students. Then, during Session 4, we shared our individual reflections about introducing academic vocabulary before instruction with the group; collective feedback and support was offered.

From Session 3, Mary shared her individual reflection about introducing academic vocabulary before instruction:

I guess it is more of an a-ha moment right now. I never really thought about that. I usually teach the lesson for understanding, but not really thinking about the deeper part, that there are other parts of the lesson, other words, other whatever that might just not be understood. I’m trying to teach how to make a group of five. Do they (ELL students) know what a group is? Do they know what the word *group* means? I don’t know, I never really thought about it that way.
And then the following session, Session 4, the same participant, Mary, shared her experience about introducing academic vocabulary before teaching a lesson. She had been implementing the strategy for two weeks with her mainstreamed ELL students; Mary shared, “Since we had that last meeting, I definitely have been taking note and introducing vocabulary. I already did, but [I am] really making a point of it more so for these students (ELL students).” This example demonstrates how Mary engaged in both collective and individual inquiry by first studying this instructional practice with the group, and then investigating it further by implementing it in her own classroom.

Our investigation of introducing academic vocabulary before instruction did not stop at Session 4; group members continued to research this practice with mainstreamed ELL students in their own classrooms. As individuals implemented this practice in their classrooms, they brought back their findings to the larger group so we could continue our investigation collectively. During Session 5, Allison shared her individual reflection about introducing academic vocabulary before instruction, “You know, we did a nonfiction book in the guided reading group today with them . . . Once we went over the vocabulary words that we were working on . . . it was easy for him (the ELL student).” Then, during Session 6, we engaged in another collective discussion about introducing academic vocabulary before lessons for mainstreamed ELL students. Mary reflected:

Well, I am just thinking, the other 2nd grade class and my class are going to be doing a project with our buddies, and it is asking them if they like sno or if they don’t like snow. Well, one comes from a country with no snow. And I don’t know if she’s had a chance to see snow, so I will just have to show her, I’ll just pull it up on an iPad before the lesson.
I used these examples to represent how the participants responded to the inquiry group experience when we researched how to introduce academic language before instruction, in order to support mainstreamed ELL students. This was an ongoing process. We did not simply name the instructional practice, try it out, and then reflect on. Rather, we simultaneously learned as individuals and as a collective group in an ongoing manner. We continuously revisited how to introduce academic vocabulary before instruction as a group, as the classroom teachers continued to individually research and refine this instructional practice in their classrooms.

**Integrating L1 Resources**

For the third instructional practice, we individually and collectively researched how to integrate an ELL student’s native language (L1) into the classroom experience. First, during Session 2, we shared any past experiences we had with integrating L1 resources into the classroom. Then, Kate and I defined various methods for integrating L1 resources and reviewed examples as a whole group during Session 3. Next, the classroom teachers had time to individually implement this practice in their classrooms with their mainstreamed ELL students. Finally, during Session 4, we followed up by sharing individual reflections about the experience of using this instructional practice with the group, and collective feedback and support was offered.

From Session 2, Mary shared her individual reflection, “I also printed out the Raz-Kids books, a few of them in Spanish, I wasn’t sure if I should print out some of them in Hindi.” Kate responded, “You could. They always appreciate it. You’d be surprised.” Then during Session 4, Mary shared how she tried another L1 strategy by grouping her Spanish speaking students together so they could help each other translate. Mary reflected:
We just switched seats yesterday, so I put her right in between my two students that speak Spanish fluently. And the girls were so excited because one of them is much quieter, and less self-confident, and the other one is very boastful and in your face like she has it all together, and the other one she doesn’t. But I think that will help the one with the low self-confidence to really help translate.

Mary’s reflections portray her professional growth as she engaged in our inquiry group process. She simultaneously participated in both individual and collective research in order to process this strategy. First, she simply provided texts in the ELL students’ native languages (L1), but her investigation of this strategy did not stop there. She continued to research this strategy by attempting to group ELL students who shared the same native language together so they could communicate using their L1. Each time Mary implemented a version of this strategy in her own classroom, she always brought her individual experience back to the inquiry group, so we could collectively reflect and learn together.

**Increasing English Language Input Opportunities**

Finally, for the fourth and final instructional practice, we individually and collectively researched, how to increase English language input opportunities for ELL students. First, during Session 3, we listed ways we had increased English language input opportunities from our past classroom experiences. Then, during Session 3, Kate and I defined various methods for increasing English language input opportunities for ELL students and reviewed examples with the group. Next, the classroom teachers individually implemented some of these new English language input methods in their own classrooms with their mainstreamed ELL students. Finally, we followed up by sharing reflections about increasing English language input opportunities with the group; collective feedback and support was offered.
During Session 5, the classroom teachers shared various methods they used to increase English language input for their ELL students. Allison shared:

They (ELL students) are reading the book. They are working through the book with me. They are buddy reading it with someone in their group, and then they are going home and reading it to their parent. I will stick a post-it note, especially for that group (ELL students). So by the time they are reading it on their own, they sound like rock stars.

Lauren also shared:

She comes to something when she wanted to write about a snowman, how to build a snowman, I gave her an iPad and I found a little scene on YouTube. And I gave it to her and I’m like, “Watch this.” And then when she got back she was able to put it in step by step, how to build a snowman.

I shared these examples to demonstrate how the participants responded to the inquiry group experience when we investigated how to increase English language input opportunities, in order to support mainstreamed ELL students. There was not an exact formula we followed in order to implement this instructional practice. By first investigating the strategy of increasing English language input opportunities as a broad method, the classroom teachers were able to individualize how to research the strategy further in their own classrooms.

In this section, I described theme two, The Synergy of Individual and Collective Research for Inquiry Group Professional Learning. I detailed our inquiry group experience and how we balanced individual and collective work in order to engage in the collective research process. This theme reflects Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) “inquiry as stance” habit of mind. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) describe the significance of inquiry communities, and how powerful co-constructed research within local schools can be. We learned that the interaction of
both our individual and collective research efforts had a powerful effect on our inquiry group professional learning experience. Our experience would not have been as meaningful if we had only conducted individual investigations about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Likewise, our practitioner action research experience would not have been as meaningful if we only investigated meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students as a group. It was the synergy of the simultaneous individual and collective research actions that greatly impacted our inquiry group’s professional learning. At the end of this experience, the teacher participants' reflections about our inquiry group process confirmed how powerful this collective research experience was. For example, one ELL Inquiry Group Reflection Form participant response about simultaneously engaging in individual and collective research was, “I grabbed info from the group and brought it back to my room to try. Then, the following week, I was able to discuss how it worked or didn't work for me in my room. I loved bouncing my ideas, feelings and thoughts off of my peers and hearing their advice and reactions.”

Conclusion

In this chapter, I shared the findings from my practitioner action research study. This study was designed to answer the following research questions: How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? and How does this process inform our individual roles? I detailed how the primary finding of this practitioner action research study turned out to be how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) by engaging in an inquiry group professional learning experience as we investigated meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. I summarized the findings from this practitioner action research study using two overarching themes, The Role of Leadership for Inquiry Group Professional Learning, and The Synergy of Individual and
Collective Research for Inquiry Group Professional Learning. In section one, I described how the interaction of both leadership and collective research had a powerful effect on our inquiry group’s professional learning experience. Then in section two, I described how the interaction of both individual and collective research had a powerful effect on our inquiry group’s professional learning experience.

Through this inquiry group professional learning experience, we discovered how powerful co-constructed research within a local setting can be. This was a meaningful learning experience; as we engaged in the inquiry group, our stance shifted from passive professional learners to inquiring researchers. Our inquiry group experienced a new type of professional learning which resulted in a shift in our professional outlooks. As a result of this experience, we all learned how powerful this type of professional learning was. We walked away with a new stance towards professional learning. We learned how inquiry and research are ingrained in our roles as educators. We learned how professional learning should no longer be a separate responsibility, but something we do naturally and on an ongoing basis both individually and collectively.

More specifically, in this chapter, I described how we experienced a sense of disequilibrium as we started our inquiry group work. All of us had participated in many professional learning experiences in the past, but these previous experiences never required us to act as researchers. And therefore, these previous professional learning experiences never required us to develop a plan of action to learn. Before I implemented the protocol, the disequilibrium paralyzed our progress. As detailed in this chapter, the inquiry group process caused discomfort and uncertainty, but it revealed a very powerful way to learn.
Once we worked through our uncertainty, and I took the lead by guiding our inquiry group rather than micromanaging, we were able to collectively conduct authentic research. And eventually, after committing to, engaging in, and reflecting on this inquiry group process, our perspectives about professional learning shifted. By the end of our study, we no longer saw ourselves as defined by our professional titles; rather, we were empowered by not only the research process itself, but also by the potential of collective inquiry. This experience led us to understand and sanctify ‘inquiry as a stance’ for professional learning. Although, analyzing the data for what we learned about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students was informative, the more meaningful finding was how our inquiry group experience resulted in powerful and authentic professional learning. I elaborate on the implications of this conclusion in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

In this chapter, I discuss the implications of this practitioner action research study. First, I summarize the findings and revisit the research questions: How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? and How does this process inform our individual roles? Then, I present the implications of this study for professional development in my district, teacher education and development, and ongoing research.

Discussion

The initial purpose of this practitioner action research study was to work with a team of educators from my district as an inquiry group and investigate how to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students to better understand and inform our practice. This study was designed to answer the following research questions: How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? and How does this process inform our individual roles? Although we set out to study how to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, we inevitably discovered unforeseen benefits of inquiry group professional learning. The primary finding of this practitioner action research study was how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) by engaging in an inquiry group professional learning experience. Contrary to my expectation that we would learn the most about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, the essential findings that emerged from this study were our insights on professional learning and inquiry groups. It is important to acknowledge that there was no magic to setting up our inquiry group. We did not all of a sudden move towards an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind, but in just five short months, there was a shift in our understanding of our roles as educators. And if a group like ours could keep moving forward with this type of professional development, it could be quite powerful. The hope is that
over time, inquiry group members become vulnerable and uncensored eventually facing and challenging their own beliefs, which would open up the door for critical inquiry and research. Inquiry based professional learning has the real potential to support educators as they tackle the truly complex nature of teaching, something the top down transmission of knowledge structure cannot achieve.

**Summary of the Study**

As discussed in Chapter 1, the ELL student population is rising in schools across the nation (NCES, 2017). Unfortunately, this growing ELL student population is performing below standard on national achievement assessments (NAEP, 2015). This is not surprising since in-service teachers report feeling unprepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students (American Federation of Teachers, 2004; Center for American Progress, 2011). My personal experiences as a teacher and administrator confirm the reality of this problem. The district where I currently work has no formal professional learning plan for preparing teachers to meet the needs of our growing ELL student population. Additionally, as an administrator, I am unprepared to support my teachers when they struggle to meet the needs of the ELL students in their classrooms. I initiated this study with a socially critical lens in the hopes of generating findings to address an injustice in my district.

As this study was a systematic and intentional investigation of my own environment, I chose a practitioner action research design (Anderson et al., 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Herr & Anderson, 2005). I simultaneously participated in the study while documenting the research experience. Starting with a common question (how to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students), this study specifically employed the coupled inquiry method; all participants designed and participated in the investigation while communicating results along the
way (Dunkhase, 2003; Martin-Hansen, 2002). As the curriculum supervisor, I formed the inquiry group and advised the participants through this collective research process. Besides myself, the participants included an ESL specialist and five elementary general education teachers.

**Findings**

As detailed in Chapter 4, because our inquiry group ended up researching basic methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, our findings about instruction and language learners did not yield unique outcomes. However, our primary finding about how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) by engaging in an inquiry group professional learning experience was definitely a unique outcome. As we engaged in this inquiry group, we discovered a different approach to professional learning, an approach with great potential compared to the typical top down, transmission model we had all experienced in the past. This inquiry group experience changed our understanding of best practices for professional learning while calling our professional roles into question. Not only did we learn a new method for professional learning that we could use routinely to research any urgent question about classroom practice, we developed an understanding about our professional roles as educational researchers. By acknowledging the ever-changing needs of the evolving student population, we better understood the importance of self-directed professional learning.

The primary finding of this practitioner action research study was how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) by engaging in an inquiry group professional learning experience. First, we learned that we needed leadership and guidance to productively participate in an inquiry group. For our particular group to be successful, we needed a leader to provide specific guidance about how to conduct research as an
inquiry group, especially since none of us had previously participated in one. Second, we learned that the synergy of both our individual and collective research efforts had a powerful effect on our inquiry group professional learning experience. It was the synergy of the simultaneous individual and collective research actions that greatly impacted our inquiry group’s professional learning.

Our inquiry group shifted away from the typical top-down, transmission of knowledge, structure for professional learning, but we learned that we still needed a degree of leadership for productive engagement. Following the coupled inquiry research design, I implemented three leadership practices to guide our inquiry group in the collective research process: (1) unifying with a common purpose, (2) gathering input from all, and (3) implementing a protocol. However, even with this guidance, our group still struggled to productively engage in the collective research process. In an attempt to combat our inefficiency, I changed my leadership approach from issuing directions to offering guidance to the teachers. I learned how to better facilitate our inquiry group by advising the members through the process and letting them concentrate their energy on inquiry.

Furthermore, we cultivated a productive inquiry group by following a pattern that prompted both individual and collective research. First, we collectively investigated practices for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, which we then implemented in our individual classrooms and later evaluated as a group. We quickly realized that we were not familiar with even the most basic language supports for ELL students. Therefore, we decided to study fundamental practices for meeting their non-academic and instructional needs. For their non-academic needs, we examined (1) building the school to home connection with ELL families, (2) understanding the varying backgrounds of ELL students, and (3) empathizing with ELL students.
To support their instructional needs, we focused on: (1) English language proficiency data-driven instruction, (2) introducing academic vocabulary before instruction, (3) integrating L1 resources, and (4) increasing English language input opportunities.

Although our findings about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students were important to our individual professional development, they did not add new insights to the well-established body of educational research on instruction for language learners. However, our primary finding about how we started to develop an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) by engaging in an inquiry group professional learning experience is definitely a meaningful outcome. We learned a very untraditional approach for professional learning, an approach that resulted in authentic and meaningful development. This finding is especially important because schools across the state and nation are in the very same position as ours; teachers are unprepared to meet the needs of their growing ELL student population. Other schools could learn from our inquiry group professional learning experience in order to improve their own practices for meeting the needs of ELL students. Or even more generally, this inquiry group method could be used to investigate any professional learning topic.

Implications

In this section, I propose four major implications of this practitioner action research study on (1) flattening the hierarchy of professional titles in education, (2) professional development for my district, (3) teacher education and development, and (4) future research.

Flattening the Hierarchy of Professional Titles in Education

Through this inquiry group professional learning experience, we faced the hierarchy of our professional titles. As a supervisor to these teachers, I obviously had administrative power. The ESL specialist had expertise regarding the ELL student population and their specialized
learning needs, and the veteran teachers had more experience than the novice teachers. However, we were able to establish our positions as equal participants in this inquiry group by affirming that we were all unsure of how to best meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students. We then set the collective intention of improving our methods of meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. By detaching from the hierarchy of professional titles, the inquiry group format allowed us to combat potential power struggles and focus on our common status as educators trying to improve our practice.

As a supervisor, every professional learning plan I previously developed was ultimately determined by me. In the past, I surveyed teachers to collect information about topics that interested them and conducted classroom walkthroughs to determine goals for professional development, but that was the extent of the input I ever gathered to plan and implement professional learning. If I had decided the inquiry group’s topics or how the learning would occur, then the hierarchy would have been clear: I would have been the administrative leader and the other group members would have been the teacher participants. Instead, we collectively determined what and how we would learn. However, this process entailed more than simply convening teachers, calling it an inquiry group, and stating that we were all equal participants. I highlight below the implications of this practitioner action research study for my role as an administrator as well as the professional roles of teachers.

**My Role as an Administrator.** The findings from this practitioner action research study directly informed my role as a curriculum supervisor. A large part of my job is spent generating and executing the English language arts professional development plans for the district. These plans are created for over one hundred K-12 teachers. Looking back on the professional development plans I generated in the past, I now realize how I created them in isolation and
based on my own understanding of what the teachers “needed” to learn about. I determined what the teachers would learn and how they would learn it. In the past, the teachers had very little choice or input. I did not utilize their professional experiences or background knowledge.

These findings have affected my identity as an administrator. In the past, I thought I was taking a collaborative approach to leading and working with teachers by conducting district wide professional learning interest surveys and openly communicating clear professional learning goals and plans with the teachers. After reflecting on this practitioner action research study, I realize that I was still following a top-down, transmission of knowledge, model. This experience has taught me how powerful the inquiry group model can be for professional learning. It is not my job to speak for the teachers but to create and curate a space for them to grow as professionals. I have already seen a shift in my own practice. For the most recent K-5 model lessons I coordinated, I decided to let the teachers propose the instructional practices they wanted to investigate, some examples included writing workshop mini lessons, strategy based reading groups, and methods for conferring with readers. I honestly believe the teachers had never been given this option. They were so used to being told what to improve upon, they initially had a difficult time suggesting a focus and continued to await my instruction. Although this was not necessarily an inquiry group, I used the same principle of treating the teachers as professionals and giving them the autonomy to direct their own learning.

These findings will shape how I execute professional learning in the future. I will consider how to work with each school’s principal to create spaces for inquiry groups. I will support teachers who are interested in engaging in inquiry groups. Most importantly, I will enable teachers to redefine the typical expectations of their positions by encouraging them to
engage in ongoing research in their own classroom settings. By sharing their investigations with their peers, teachers will be able to adopt an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind.

The Professional Roles of Teachers. This experience similarly influenced the teacher participants’ views of their own roles as professionals. They went through a metamorphosis throughout this process. Our initial inquiry group sessions were unproductive and predictable because their idea of compliance was ingrained in their past learning experiences, which followed the hierarchy of professional titles. They awaited my direction to tell them what to research and how to investigate it. However, by the end of the study, the teacher participants were independently researching methods for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students in their individual classrooms and sharing their progress with the group. Furthermore, in the group setting we supported each other by collectively investigating one another’s achievements and struggles. Even in this short timeframe of only five months, these actions indicate how their views of their professional roles had shifted. By taking ownership of their own learning, the teachers started to see themselves as inquiring researchers. No longer passive, they started to develop and act upon inquiry as a stance. It is of great importance that these teachers continue to develop this habit of mind by engaging in authentic professional learning experiences such as collective research and inquiry groups on an ongoing basis.

Professional Development for my District

Below, I propose the implications of this practitioner action research study for professional development in my district. I outline two topics: preparing teachers in my district to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students and improving professional learning practices in my district.
Preparing Teachers in my District to Meet the Needs of Mainstreamed ELL Students. It was unsettling to uncover the reality of my district’s unpreparedness to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. Despite our positions as certified teachers with seven to thirty years of experience who had completed preservice coursework and received some inservice ESL professional development, we were unprepared to implement even the most fundamental practices to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. This is especially concerning because there was already a growing population of ELL students in our district.

I propose ongoing inquiry group professional learning, so the teachers from this study can confront their views of ELL students and families. Throughout this study, as we determined what we wanted to investigate regarding learning to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students, it became clear that the teachers held a deficit view of their ELL students and their families. Almost all of our discourse focused on what ELL students didn’t know, as well as the challenges of working with ELL students. We did not face this concern during the time we had. With only five months and eight 30 minute sessions, we were only able to scratch the surface of our investigation; this study was just a starting point for our investigation about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. However, with more time and effort in an inquiry group learning environment, the teachers would have the opportunity to challenge their beliefs and move away from this deficit perspective by engaging in deeper meaning making. The goal would be to keep up with the individual and collective inquiry group research; the ESL specialist would continue to provide scaffolds to prevent the reinforcement of negative stereotypes. Time in this group would allow the teachers to become vulnerable and uncensored. Then they could challenge their own beliefs, and move on to tackle the complex nature of teaching and nurturing ELL students.
Even though this group was a small sample size, it is very likely that the larger teacher population of the district has similar beliefs. So, to generally address this issue, I propose a district-wide survey to gauge the teachers’ preparedness for supporting ELL students. The survey results could then be used by the assistant superintendent and all of the content area supervisors to develop and implement an inquiry group professional learning plan district wide.

**Improving Professional Learning Practices in my District.** Throughout this process, we learned a new and powerful way to engage in professional learning. In the district where I currently work, we follow a very traditional format for professional learning. It would benefit the district, administrators, teachers, and students to investigate and implement more progressive methods for professional learning that support an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind, inquiry groups, being one option. Other options include practitioner action research, instructional rounds, lesson study, and reflection practices.

I plan to share my findings from this practitioner action research study with the Board of Education, my fellow administrators, and my department with the intention of gaining support to implement professional learning that is founded by inquiry and can be conducted both individually and collectively. I will urge the central office administrators to reevaluate our expectations for professionalism. My district could set the standard for this type of professional learning by outlining these progressive expectations within the evaluation systems for both administrators and teachers. Right now the expectation for professional learning is that teachers complete 20 hours of professional development each year. However, the definition for what counts towards those 20 hours is very broad. If the district required and/or even just encouraged inquiry based professional development, a shift away from our traditional methods for
professional development to more progressive methods for professional learning that support an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind, would be possible.

**Teacher Education and Teacher Development**

In this part, I highlight the implications of this practitioner action research study for teacher education and teacher development. I detail two topics: preparing teachers to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students and meaningful inquiry group professional learning.

**Preparing Teachers to Meet the Needs of Mainstreamed ELL Students.** As previously mentioned, our inquiry group found that we were unprepared to implement even the most fundamental practices for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. However, in the district where I currently work and where this study was conducted, this shortcoming is not the exception, but rather the norm. As I shared in Chapter 1, the ELL student population is growing nationwide (NCES, 2017); therefore, teachers’ insufficient knowledge to support ELL students is a wide-ranging issue (American Federation of Teachers, 2004; Center for American Progress, 2011). Teacher educators must prepare future teachers for the reality of the student populations they will face, including ELL students. This could be accomplished in a single course where pre-service teachers investigate varying student demographics and their needs (including ELL students), and then plan accordingly. District leaders must constantly evaluate their ever-changing student populations and properly support their teachers by preparing them to identify and meet the needs of all learners, including their mainstreamed ELL students. We learned how ELL students’ needs may vary quite drastically, and respecting the individuality of each ELL student helped us better understand their varying needs. Districts that struggle to evaluate the needs of their student groups should consider conducting research on unique populations using the inquiry group method that we found so effective.
Meaningful Inquiry Group Professional Learning. The concept of following a rigid formula for teacher professional learning has become the norm and is most obviously observed through state mandates. The NJDOE has so many professional development requirements for districts (e.g., Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Student Growth Objectives (SGOs), Professional Development Plans (PDPs), etc.) that little room is left for administrators to build in time for more authentic professional learning experiences like inquiry groups. These state requirements for teacher learning are structured by formulas and scripts, and are driven mostly by student achievement rather than teacher development. I am very concerned how such stringent practices simplify the complex process of teacher learning. Teachers need the space to act as professionals. When excessive parameters such as the scripts and formulaic goal setting of PLCs, or the teacher evaluation scores of SGOs are placed on them, it is very difficult to engage in authentic inquiry and/or meaningful professional learning.

It is important for teacher educators and administrators to acknowledge the complexity of teacher development and how providing authentic and autonomous experiences, such as inquiry groups, can result in positive and powerful professional learning. Teacher educators and administrators need to offer learning experiences that establish the foundation for an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind. Inquiry and research need to be ingrained in the roles of educators. Professional learning should no longer be a separate responsibility but something educators do naturally on an ongoing basis—invidually and collectively with their peers. This cannot be accomplished in a single course, or PD workshop. Rather, this philosophy needs to be infused throughout teacher education coursework, as well as considered when developing district professional learning plans and evaluation systems.

Future Research
Below, I share the implications of this practitioner action research study for future research. I discuss two topics: preparing teachers to meet the needs of English language learners, and professional learning methods that promote an “inquiry as stance” habit of mind.

**Preparing Teachers to Meet the Needs of English Language Learners.** Academic research has been conducted to show why teacher preparation is essential to the needs of ELL students (e.g. Calderon et al., 2011; Lucas et al., 2018; Lucas & Villegas, 2013); however, in-service teachers still report receiving little to no professional development (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Gandara et al., 2005; Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016). It is alarming that the established research has not been transferred to the classroom. Just like the teachers in this study, the majority of general education teachers across the nation also claim that they are not prepared to teach the ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classrooms (American Federation of Teachers, 2004; Center for American Progress, 2011). Therefore, additional research must be conducted to determine how to transfer these findings into practice. Additionally, as the makeup of the ELL student population constantly changes, ongoing research about best practices for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students should be conducted.

**Professional Learning Methods that Promote “Inquiry as Stance”**. We initiated an investigation on how to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students by engaging in an inquiry group and conducting collective research, but what we really learned was a powerful method for conducting professional learning: the inquiry group method. Through the “inquiry as stance” habit of mind, we started to envision ourselves as inquiring researchers rather than just passive professionals. Despite this meaningful finding, this practitioner action research study was limited by issues of reliability, validity, and generalizability (Merriam, 2015). Due to the very small sample size and the fact that the purpose of this study was specific to improving practice at the
district where I currently work, the findings are unique to our participants. Although our findings may not be generalizable to all in-service teachers, they could be transferable. This practitioner action research study can be used as a model for ongoing research about inquiry group professional learning on a larger scale.

The leadership structures I implemented to guide our inquiry group through the collective research process (unifying with a common purpose, gathering input from all, and implementing protocol), seemed to invite inquiry. Further research on how to best utilize these structures with inquiry groups should be conducted. Moreover, the type of leadership and guidance I provided throughout our inquiry group supported our collective inquiry and helped us shift away from the traditional top-down model. Additional research on leadership strategies for implementing inquiry groups should be conducted. We also learned that it was the synergy of the simultaneous individual and collective research actions that greatly impacted our professional learning. Further research on inquiry group operations, specifically individual and collective research actions, should be conducted. The most significant implication of this study for future research is for districts, administrators, and teachers to systematically continue to conduct and research inquiry group professional learning experiences. While engaging in an inquiry group for a short period of time, only five months, we came to appreciate the significance of inquiry groups and how meaningful co-constructed research within local schools can be. Therefore, it is important to continue to research, report, and refine practices for inquiry group professional learning for the larger education field.
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Hansen-Thomas, H., Grosso Richins, L., Kakkar, K., & Okeyo, C. (2016). I Do Not Feel I Am


Lee, O., & Maerten-Rivera, J. (2012). Teacher Change in Elementary Science Instruction with English Language Learners: Results of a Multiyear Professional Development Intervention across Multiple Grades. *Teachers College Record, 114*(8).


Appendix

Appendix A

Meeting Agendas

10/17/18
Initial Meeting Agenda
- Thank you so much for coming to this initial meeting.
- The purpose of this meeting is to provide you with information about my study, so that you can decide whether or not you want to be involved.
- Overview of the study
- What is the commitment-
  - Inquiry Meetings
  - Reflections/Critical Incidents
  - Potential Interviews
  - Inquiry Meeting Dates: biweekly for November-
    - What days of the week work best?
    - What time works best? Before or After School
ELL Inquiry Group

Session: 1
Date: 11/6/18
Time: 11:45am-12:15pm

Agenda:
- Consent Form
- Background Questionnaire
- Review Overview of this study.
- Review Purpose of this study.
- Establish Norms.
- Draft a collective inquiry question.
- Draft your own personal inquiry question.
- Determine our plan of action.
- Data collection.
  - You can:
    - Jot reflections.
    - Critical incidents are brief and memorable descriptions of actions that a person or group performs in particular situations that lead to either effective outcomes (successes) or ineffective outcomes (failures or near misses). Record: 1. Description of task 2. Description of the critical incident. 3. Result of the action: Success/Failure

ELL Inquiry Group Timeline:

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ELL Inquiry Group
Session: 2
Date: 11/27/18
Time: 11:45am-12:15pm

Just a reminder:
- Review our collective inquiry question-How do we learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students?
- Review your personal inquiry question.
- Review Norms.
  - We are comfortable speaking openly.
  - We are a close faculty. We share stories openly.
  - I don't feel uncomfortable saying I don't know.
  - We will participate in conversations.
  - We will be honest about our experiences both good and bad.
  - Well respect what we are sharing with each other.
- Plan for Inquiry Groups Moving Forward
- ESL Specialist-School to Home Connection
- Goal for December 4, 2018
- As you go back to your classrooms, and over the next two weeks, pause when you notice anything in your instruction that relates to either your inquiry question, and/or this topic in general. If you think it would help you can jot a quick reflection, and/or complete a critical incident entry.

Back up questions:
So let’s start our first discussion:

1. What type of professional development have you engaged in regarding mainstreaming ELL students? Do you feel that it prepared you to meet this population’s needs?
2. What comes to mind regarding your own practice and meeting the needs of your mainstreamed ELL students that you would like to share?

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ELL Inquiry Group

Session: 3  
Date: 12/4/18  
Time: 11:45am-12:15pm

Just a reminder:
- Remember our collective inquiry question:
  - How do we learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students?
- Remember/Review your personal inquiry question.
- Review Norms.
  - We are comfortable speaking openly.
  - We are a close faculty. We share stories openly.
  - We are comfortable saying, “I don't know.”
  - We will participate in conversations.
  - We will be honest about our experiences, both good bad.
  - We will respect what we are sharing with each other.
- Plan/Protocol for Inquiry Groups Moving Forward
  - 1. We state what we already know about the topic/question.
  - 2. What does the ESL specialist say about the topic/question?
  - 3. Reflection. We reflect on new understandings or ideas.
  - 4. We plan to try some things out, and/or just be more aware of our ELL students based on what we learned to bring back for next time.
- Reflect on last week.
  - Handout-School/Home Connection
- Inquiry Group Topic-Background Knowledge for ELL Students
  - 1. We state what we already know about background knowledge for ELL students.
  - 2. What does our ESL specialist say about background knowledge for ELL students?
    a. Conversational vs. Academic Proficiency (Handout 1)
    b. What are the levels of language acquisition/proficiency? (Handout 2)
    c. What are the components of language acquisition?
  - 3. Reflection
  - 4. What can you try? How can you use this information to design instruction?
    a. Technique 1-Increasing Language Input (Handout 4 pg. 3)
    b. Technique 2-Introduce Academic Vocabulary (Handout 4 pg. 4-8)
- Goal for January 15, 2019
  - As you go back to your classrooms, and over the next four weeks, pause when you notice anything in your instruction that relates to either your inquiry question, and/or this topic in general.
  - Over the next four weeks, try encouraging language input, as well as introducing academic vocabulary before lessons.
  - If you think it would help you can jot a quick reflection, and/or complete a critical incident entry.

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ELL Inquiry Group

Session: 4  
Date: 1/15/19  
Time: 11:45am-12:15pm

Just a reminder:

- Remember our collective inquiry question-
  - How do we learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students?
- Remember/Review your personal inquiry question.
- Review Norms.
  - We are comfortable speaking openly.
  - We are a close faculty. We share stories openly.
  - We are comfortable saying, I don't know.
  - We will participate in conversations.
  - We will be honest about our experiences—both good and bad.
  - We will respect what we are sharing with each other.
- Plan/Protocol for Inquiry Groups Moving Forward
  - 1. We state what we already know about the topic/question.
  - 2. Kate shares her ESL expertise on the topic/question.
  - 3. We reflect on new understandings or ideas.
  - 4. We plan to try some things out, and/or just be more aware based on what we learned.
  - 5. We will share progress.
- So we have had some real time to put some things into practice, and really take note of our interactions with our ELL students.
  - What did you notice about your ELL students and/or your interactions with your ELL students? Did you try the techniques we talked about?
    - Increasing Language Input
    - Introducing academic language before lessons?
  - How did it go?
- Kate Background Building Activity
- Lauren Presentation
  - Lauren name new topic.
  - What do we already know about this topic?
  - Lauren share expertise from class.
  - Reflection on new understandings from this presentation.
  - Plan to try some of these ideas out, and/or just be more aware when interacting with our ELL students based on what we learned.
- Goal for January 29, 2019

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ELL Inquiry Group
Session: 5
Date: 2/5/19
Time: 11:45am-12:15pm

Just a reminder:
- Remember our collective inquiry question-
  - How do we learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students?
- Remember/Review your personal inquiry question.
- Review Norms.
  - We are comfortable speaking openly.
  - We are a close faculty. We share stories openly.
  - We are comfortable saying, I don't know.
  - We will participate in conversations.
  - We will be honest about our experiences-both good and bad.
  - We will respect what we are sharing with each other.
- Plan/Protocol for Inquiry Groups Moving Forward
  - 1. We state what we already know about the topic/question.
  - 2. Kate shares her ESL expertise on the topic/question.
  - 3. We reflect on new understandings or ideas.
  - 4. We plan to try some things out, and/or just be more aware based on what we learned.
  - 5. We will share progress.
- Share what you noticed and/or practiced with your ELL students since we last met.
- Lauren Presentation Continued.
  - Lauren name new topic.
  - What do we already know about this topic?
  - Lauren share expertise from class.-WE LEFT OFF HERE.
  - Reflection on new understandings from this presentation.
  - Plan to try some of these ideas out, and/or just be more aware when interacting with our ELL students based on what we learned.
- Courtney Share General Modifications for ELL Students
- Kate Share Modifications for ELL Students
- Goal for February 19, 2019

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ELL Inquiry Group
Session: 6
Date: 2/19/19
Time: 11:45am-12:15pm

Just a reminder:
- Remember our collective inquiry question-
  - How do we learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students?
- Remember/Review your personal inquiry question.
- Review Norms.
  - We are comfortable speaking openly.
  - We are a close faculty. We share stories openly.
  - We are comfortable saying, I don't know.
  - We will participate in conversations.
  - We will be honest about our experiences-both good and bad.
  - We will respect what we are sharing with each other.
- Plan/Protocol for Inquiry Groups Moving Forward
  - 1. We state what we already know about the topic/question.
  - 2. Kate shares her ESL expertise on the topic/question.
  - 3. We reflect on new understandings or ideas.
  - 4. We plan to try some things out, and/or just be more aware based on what we learned.
  - 5. We will share progress.
- Share what you noticed and/or practiced with your ELL students since we last met.
- Kate Share Modifications for ELL Students
- Jenny share conferring resources.
- Goal for March 5, 2019

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ELL Inquiry Group

Session: 7  
Date: 3/5/19  
Time: 11:45am-12:15pm

Just a reminder:
- Remember our collective inquiry question-
  - How do we learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students?  
- Remember/Review your personal inquiry question.  
- Review Norms.  
  - We are comfortable speaking openly.  
  - We are a close faculty. We share stories openly.  
  - We are comfortable saying, I don't know.  
  - We will participate in conversations.  
  - We will be honest about our experiences—both good and bad.  
  - We will respect what we are sharing with each other.  
- Plan/Protocol for Inquiry Groups Moving Forward  
  - 1. We state what we already know about the topic/question.  
  - 2. Kate shares her ESL expertise on the topic/question.  
  - 3. We reflect on new understandings or ideas.  
  - 4. We plan to try some things out, and/or just be more aware based on what we learned.  
  - 5. We will share progress.  
- Share what you noticed and/or practiced with your ELL students since we last met.  
  - Share new understandings or ideas after reviewing the Can Do rubrics.  
- Kate-Background Knowledge Activity  
- Goal for 3/19/19-Final meeting

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ELL Inquiry Group

Session: 8  
Date: 3/19/19  
Time: 11:45am-12:15pm

Just a reminder:

- Remember our collective inquiry question-
  - How do we learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students?
- Remember/Review your personal inquiry question.
- Review Norms.
  - We are comfortable speaking openly.
  - We are a close faculty. We share stories openly.
  - We are comfortable saying, I don't know.
  - We will participate in conversations.
  - We will be honest about our experiences—both good and bad.
  - We will respect what we are sharing with each other.
- Plan/Protocol for Inquiry Groups Moving Forward
  - 1. We state what we already know about the topic/question.
  - 2. Kate shares her ESL expertise on the topic/question.
  - 3. We reflect on new understandings or ideas.
  - 4. We plan to try some things out, and/or just be more aware based on what we learned.
  - 5. We will share progress.
- Reflect on the video Kate sent.
- ELL Inquiry Group Takeaways
  - Google Slides doc
  - Reflect upon this inquiry group and learning experience.
- Where would you like to go from here?
  - Where would you like your learning to go now?
  - What would really support you?

Please complete the reflection form.
Appendix B

Overview Of The Study From Information Session

Overview of the Study

Title: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHERS: A PRACTITIONER ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Rationale: The ELL student population is rising in schools across the nation (NCES, 2017). National achievement data reports demonstrate that the ELL student population is performing below standard (NAEP, 2015). Research based teacher preparation efforts have included a variety of types professional learning opportunities focused on specialized knowledge and skills for second language acquisition instruction. But still, in-service teachers report feeling unprepared to meet the needs of their mainstreamed ELL students.

Academic research supports the effectiveness of coaching as one professional learning method for teacher preparation and meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students (Choi & Morrison, 2014; Crawford, et al., 2008; Estapa et al., 2016; Green et al., 2013; Hardin et al., 2010; He et al., 2011; McIntyre et al., 2010; Russell, 2015; Shea et al., 2012). However, there is no research on the roles of the administrator/teacher educator and/or the specialist for this particular context. Most importantly, I am unprepared to support my teachers’ with meeting the needs of our ELL students. Additionally, my district has no formalized professional learning plan for meeting the needs of our ELL students. Thus, it is of great importance that I investigate how to address this void.

I am specifically interested in how educators learn and develop throughout a professional development experience for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. To conclude, the goal of this practitioner action research study will be to work with a team of educators from my
district to investigate a professional development experience for meeting the needs of our ELL students, in order to understand and inform our practice.

**Purpose of the Study:** I am proposing a practitioner action research study to systematically participate in, as part of a team of educators who engage in a professional learning experience for meeting the needs of the mainstreamed ELL students in the district where I currently work. The overarching purpose of this proposal is to understand how to prepare the educators to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students. The specific purpose of this proposal is to investigate how an inquiry group—a team of educators—collectively learns how to support mainstreamed ELL students.

**Research Questions:** *How do we, as a team of educators, learn to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students? How does this process inform our individual roles?*

**Methodology:** My purpose in conducting this practitioner action research study is to investigate a professional learning experience for preparing teachers to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students in the district where I currently work. I am specifically interested in the different roles of the participants in this professional learning context, as well as the relationships between the participants. To comprehensively address my research questions, my study will include me—the supervisor/teacher educator, an ESL specialist/coach, and several general educators as the participants. We will act as an inquiry group and collectively investigate how we might meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students. Based on our different professional roles, we will each bring a different expertise to the group; therefore, we will also be investigating how and what we can learn from each other in order to meet the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students. In addition to our common goal, we will also reflect on our own individual development throughout this process and how it impacts our own practice.
I will conduct a practitioner action research study to address this line of inquiry. By using a practitioner action research design, I will be able to work as part of the inquiry group, as we collectively inquire, understand, and improve our practice for meeting the needs of our mainstream ELL students. As we gain insight into the potentially complex nuances of meeting the needs of our mainstreamed ELL students, we will use what we learn to take action. I will utilize a qualitative approach for data gathering and analysis.

Specifically, my study will have a socially critical approach. Respectively, socially critical action research is comprised of five characteristics: participation, direction, consciousness, constraints, and outcomes (Tripp, 1990). The motivation for the direction of my research is to inform our practice for meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL in order to provide social justice to all of our students. As a result of this practitioner action research study, I hope we will be able to use the outcomes to inform our own future practice, as well as make recommendations to the district for preparing our teachers to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students.

Although there are varying types of action research, the practitioner action research study design will best allow me to address the research questions. Practitioner action research is a systematic intentional investigation conducted by teachers about their own school and classroom work, that lends itself to problem solving as well as possibly informing a larger audience (Anderson, Herr & Nihlen, 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Herr & Anderson, 2005). Practitioner action research emphasizes the importance of educators understanding their own practice; this method requires the researcher to not only conduct the study, but act as a participant of the study (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Practitioner action research follows a cycle of plan, act, observe, in order to enact change (Kemmis & Carr, 1986). Since my role as a
curriculum supervisor requires me to provide professional development and work alongside my teachers, this research design best meets my research needs.

I am choosing to use a collective approach by forming an inquiry group, with the aim of combatting the hierarchy between the teams’ roles of administrator, specialist, and teacher. Conducting this study as an inquiry group will allow us to grow as our own community of learners. My hope is, that by working together and bringing our varying areas of expertise to the study, we will be able to deepen our understanding of not only how to meet the needs of mainstreamed ELL students, but we will also understand how we grow and develop as professions.

I will conduct data collection from Fall 2018 through Winter 2019. I plan to triangulate the data by collecting multiple sources. Data sources could include: (1) inquiry meetings, (2) individual reflections, and (3) a researcher journal. As described above, one characteristic of practitioner action research is to use an emergent design for the study. Below I describe how I propose to collect and analyze my data, but I will allow the research design to emerge organically as we work over the course of the study, until completion.
Appendix C

Adult Consent Form

ADULT CONSENT FORM

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

**Title:** Second Language Acquisition Professional Learning for In-service Teachers: A Practitioner Action Research Study

**Study Number:** IRB-FY18-19-1245-SS

**Why is this study being done?**
The purpose of this study is to systematically investigate a professional learning experience for meeting the needs of the mainstreamed ELL students in the district where I currently work in order to inform practice.

**What will happen while you are in the study?**
The teachers will participate in an inquiry group. A possible structure for our inquiry meetings could be made up of a three phase cycle: Phase 1-Planning, Phase 2-Practice, and Phase 3-Debriefs. During the Phase 1-Planning, we would collaborate to identify areas of concern regarding instruction and our mainstreamed ELL students; the ESL specialist could provide information about second language acquisition, and the developmental needs of ELL students. For the Phase 2-Practice, the general educators would implement some of the instructional practices discussed during Phase 1. During this phase, the ESL specialist could also observe the teachers, and offer support by providing tips and/or modeling instruction on the spot. I would observe the teachers, and/or coaching sessions. Finally, for Phase 3-Debriefs, we would discuss the experience and set future goals, based on our progress. Although I am proposing these three phases based on the elements of professional learning that help teachers learn specialized skills and knowledge, these phases also align to the action research process.

**Time:** The inquiry group will meet biweekly for 4-5 month, until we meet for 8 sessions. Each session will be 30 min.

**Risks:** I anticipate that your participation in this presents no great risk.

**Benefits:** You may benefit from this study. Since our district does not have a formalized professional development plan for meeting the needs of our ELL students, but we do have ELL students who are mainstreamed into general education settings for the majority of the day, the participants will benefit from collectively investigating how to support their mainstreamed ELL students. Additionally, we will also investigate how we develop as a group, as well as individuals.
Compensation:
To compensate you for the time you spend in this study, you will receive a $50 Visa gift card.

Who will know that you are in this study?
You will not be linked to any presentations. We will keep who you are confidential. The participants and school will be assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity. Furthermore, I will not specifically name the school and/or district, but only describe the region and demographics where I conduct the study.

Although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of inquiry groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researchers would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others. Please do not share anything in the focus group, you are not comfortable sharing.

Do you have to be in the study?
You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be included in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Do you have any questions about this study?
Phone or email
Jennifer Wnuk
201-486-4619
wnukj1@montclair.edu
and/or
Kathryn Herr
973-655-6845
herrk@montclair.edu

Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?
Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or reviewboard@montclair.edu.

As part of this study, it is okay to audiotape, – include only process(es) pertinent to your study) me:
Please initial: _______Yes _______No

One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.

Statement of Consent
I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can
withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

- 

Print your name here
here

Sign your name
here

Date

- 

Name of Principal

Investigator

Signature

Date
Appendix D

Background Information Questionnaire

BACKGROUND INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Information
What is your gender? M/F

What is your ethnicity?

What is your age? (You can put a range if you prefer 22-30, 31-45, 46-65)

Teaching Experience
How long have you been teaching?

What is your highest level of education?

What was the content area of your highest degree? (e.g. Special Education, Mathematics)

What grade level do you currently teach?

Classroom Profile (Yes/No and short answer)
How many ELL students do you currently teach?

How many other ELL students have you taught in previous years?

Do you know the proficiency levels of the ELL students you currently teach?

If you know the proficiency levels of your current ELL students, what are their proficiency levels?

Do you feel you can successfully communicate with the ELL students you currently teach?

Do you feel you can successfully communicate with the parents of the ELL students you currently teach?

Do you feel you adequately understand the background of your ELL students and their parents (education, literacy, culture, etc.)?

If you would like to elaborate on any of the above responses, please do so here.
Appendix E

Google Slides Document from Session 2

Tips for the classroom teacher and assisting Families!

What Do we NEED To know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Look for ways that ELL parents can help even if they have limited English skills. Encourage parents to check homework. Have them ask kids what they learned each day!
8

Find ways to communicate with ELL families. Sometimes, this involves a translator.

7

Respect Parent Intentions and Encourage Native Language use at home!
6

Remember sometimes, the parents education was nothing similar to what we do here so explaining what school is like is helpful.
Appendix F

Handouts from Session 3

Tips for the classroom teacher and assisting Families!

- Look for ways that ELL parents can help even if they have limited English skills. Encourage parents to check homework. Have the ask kids what they learned each day.

- Find ways to communicate with ELL families. Sometimes, this involves a translator.

- Respect Parent Intentions and Encourage Native Language use at home!

- Remember sometimes, the parents education was nothing similar to what we do here so explaining what school is like is helpful.

---

**Academic language.** Cummins (1979) defined academic language as the individual's cognitive academic language proficiency of a second language. Academic language proficiency has much higher cognitive demands because it includes mastery of instructional and technical vocabulary across content areas (Cummins, 2000). Academic language proficiency can take an additional five to seven years beyond the two years of conversational language development (Cummins, 2000).

**Conversational language.** Cummins (1979) defined conversational language as the individual's interpersonal communication skills of a second language. Conversational language proficiency has low cognitive demands because it only includes mastery of social vocabulary (Cummins, 1998; Cummins, 2008). Conversational language is usually acquired after two years of being immersed in a second language (Cummins, 2000).
Performance Definitions for the levels of English language proficiency

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Reaching</td>
<td>- specialized or technical language reflective of the content area at grade level&lt;br&gt;- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level&lt;br&gt;- oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Bridging</td>
<td>- the technical language of the content areas;&lt;br&gt;- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports;&lt;br&gt;- oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers when presented with grade level material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Expanding</td>
<td>- specific and some technical language of the content areas;&lt;br&gt;- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related paragraphs;&lt;br&gt;- oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with occasional visual and graphic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Developing</td>
<td>- general and some specific language of the content areas;&lt;br&gt;- expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs;&lt;br&gt;- oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication but retain much of its meaning when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with occasional visual and graphic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Beginning</td>
<td>- general language related to the content areas;&lt;br&gt;- phrases or short sentences;&lt;br&gt;- oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with visual and graphic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Entering</td>
<td>- pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas;&lt;br&gt;- words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-questions, or statements with visual and graphic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse Dimension</td>
<td>Sentence Dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Complexity</td>
<td>Language Forms and Conventions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level 6 - Reaching**

English language learners will use a range of grade-appropriate language for a variety of academic purposes and audiences. Agility in academic language use is reflected in oral fluency and automaticity in response, flexibility in adjusting to different registers and skillfulness in interpersonal interaction. English language learners’ strategic competence in academic language use facilitates their ability to relate information and ideas with precision and sophistication for each content area.

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce...

- **Level 5 Bridging**
  - Multiple, complex sentences
  - Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas characteristic of particular content areas
  - A variety of complex grammatical structures matched to purpose
  - A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas
  - Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations
  - Words and expressions with precise meaning across content areas

- **Level 4 Expanding**
  - Short, expanded, and some complex sentences
  - Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion characteristic of particular content areas
  - Compound and complex grammatical structures
  - Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas
  - Specific and some technical content-area language
  - Words and expressions with expansive meaning through use of elaborations and idioms across content areas

- **Level 3 Developing**
  - Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity
  - Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas across content areas
  - Simple and compound grammatical structures with occasional variation
  - Sentence patterns across content areas
  - Specific content language, including cognates and expressions
  - Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas

- **Level 2 Emerging**
  - Phrases or short sentences
  - Emerging expression of ideas
  - Formulaic grammatical structures
  - Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas
  - General content words and expressions
  - Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas

- **Level 1 Entering**
  - Words, phrases, or chunks of language
  - Single words used to represent ideas
  - Phrase-level grammatical structures
  - Phrasal patterns associated with familiar social and instructional situations
  - General content-related words
  - Everyday social and instructional words and expressions
**WIDA Performance Definitions - Listening and Reading Grades K–12**

**Within sociocultural contexts for processing language...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Dimension</th>
<th>Sentence Dimension</th>
<th>Word/Phrase Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic Complexity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language Forms and Conventions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary Usage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6 - Reaching</td>
<td>English language learners will process a range of grade-appropriate oral or written language for a variety of academic purposes and audiences. Automaticity in language processing is reflected in the ability to identify and act on significant information from a variety of genres and registers. English language learners strategic competence in processing academic language facilitates their access to content area concepts and ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 5 Bridging</strong></td>
<td>Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences</td>
<td>A variety of complex grammatical structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohesive and organized, related ideas across content areas</td>
<td>Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Level 4 Expanding</strong></td>
<td>Complex grammatical structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connected discourse with a variety of sentences</td>
<td>A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expanded related ideas characteristic of particular content areas</td>
<td>Specific and some technical content-area language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Level 3 Developing</strong></td>
<td>Compound and some complex grammatical constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse with a series of extended sentences</td>
<td>Sentence patterns across content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Related ideas specific to particular content areas</td>
<td>Specific content-area language and expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Level 2 Emerging</strong></td>
<td>Words and expressions with common collocations and idioms across content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple related simple sentences</td>
<td>General content words and expressions, including cognates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An idea with details</td>
<td>Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Level 1 Entering</strong></td>
<td>Single statements or questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language</td>
<td>Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Who-questions, declaratives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Common social and instructional forms and patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>General context-related words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Everyday social, instructional and some context-related words and phrases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At what age should academic language instruction begin?

- Preschool through 3rd grade
  - students need to learn age-appropriate vocabulary and language that will give them a strong foundation for academic language in the future

- 4th grade through 8th grade
  - instruction should transition in order to teach students more sophisticated academic language skills, including vocabulary and grammatical structures

Note: Formal academic language instruction should begin in 4th grade.
At what age should academic language instruction begin? (cont.)

- 9th grade through 12th grade
  - students need to know a large vocabulary of academic words used across academic disciplines, and they need to have access to and use more complicated grammatical structures

Note: Formal academic language instruction should begin in 4th grade.
Linguistic concepts and academic language (cont.)

2. Sociolinguistic components:
   – how to use different genres with different audiences, such as explanation, summarization, persuasion, or argument

3. Discourse components
   – how to appropriately start, continue, and end discourse, as in a conversation or an essay

Note: This list was adapted from Dr. Scardella’s interview for the Doing What Works website.
Choosing what to teach in academic language instruction

• When teaching reading and choosing passages, teachers should identify words that students will have difficulty understanding and will determine student’s ability to comprehend text

• These words may be an academic word (such as “stimulate”), a grammatical structure (“either…or”), a preposition (“between”), an adverb (hardly), or a conjunction (“and”)
Academic language and word usage

- When teaching new vocabulary, it’s important to be very specific on word forms and usage

**Example:** Teach English language learners (ELLs) the difference between “stimulate” and “stimulation,” and how the different forms are used
**Academic language and word usage (cont.)**

- When teaching native speakers, a definition for a new word is often sufficient.

- ELLs need more than the definition of a new word. They need to use the word and produce accurate language with the word.

- When students talk about text, they also need to understand the definitions of related words, and how to use them.
Linguistic concepts and academic language (cont.)

- vocabulary

Example: anthropology

Teaching technique
1. Repeat word 3 times
2. Show student a sentence using the target word from their textbook
3. Talk about how it is used
4. Make up new sentences using the word
5. Have students practice using the word with partners
6. Remember that some students need more practice than others to use language accurately
Activity: Beyond definitions

1. Give students a word bank. Discuss the words in the bank and how they are used in the text. Talk about how you would use the words.

2. Provide students with the definitions and model sentences for all of the words.

3. In pairs, have students discuss usage of the words, and how the words are being used in the model sentences. What would be appropriate or inappropriate uses of these words?

https://www.colorincolorado.org/sites/default/files/Academic-Language-PPT.pdf
Appendix G

Handouts from Session 5

General Modifications for ELLs

- Use visuals/pictures/gestures/manipulatives/realia (actual objects) when appropriate throughout lesson
- Seat at the front of the class
- “Buddy” system—pair ELLs with high-achieving, friendly student/triads for student listening opportunities
- Use of a picture dictionary/bilingual dictionary
- Read to the student when possible
- Open communication with students
- Be aware of cultural differences
- Spend 1-1 time with student when possible
- Respect “silent period.” For new ELLs, this period can last 6 months. Students are taking in the language.
- Note: It takes about 2 years for conversational proficiency and 5-7 years to acquire academic language proficiency in a second language.

Lesson Presentation

- Build background knowledge prior to lesson
- Highlight key vocabulary and language objectives
- Encourage students to ask questions & participate
- Provide a model for activities
- Both oral & written instructions/directions
- Accept participation at any level
- Be aware of teacher speaking pace—repeat key concepts to ELLs
✓ Provide double or triple wait time. It takes ELLs longer to process a question and produce an answer because they are often translating from their first language.

✓ Reduce paper/pencil tasks and increase hands-on tasks
✓ Encourage students to underline/circle key words
✓ Guided outline for note taking & other graphic organizers

Assessment

✓ Modification of test length
✓ Encourage students to complete what they can on assessments and score only what they completed
✓ Provide visual/oral assessments
✓ Extended time on assignments, tests, & quizzes
✓ Prepared study guide
✓ Use of bilingual dictionary/English dictionary on assessments
✓ Modified/reduced homework to reflect language proficiency
✓ Keep portfolio of work as a form of assessment

Please feel free to contact me with any comments, questions, modifications, etc.
# Modifications for English Language Learners

**ESL Level: Early Beginner**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL Teacher:</th>
<th>School:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**General background information:**

Early beginners generally have almost no ability to communicate in English. Depending upon their prior study of English, some may be able to read and write a bit in English. The focus at this point is for students to develop basic speaking skills. Beginning students receive 72 minutes per day of ESL (K-8) or 120 minutes of ESL (grades 9-12).

**Typical Beginning students' behavior:**

- A "silent" period can last for several months. During this time, students listening skills develop, but speech is very hesitant.
- Students are often reluctant to ask for help.
- Speech is choppy, intermittent, and students often rely upon short phrases they feel comfortable with.
- Listening and speaking skills can lag behind reading and writing skills in older students.
- Students learning the English alphabetic system are especially challenged.

**What teachers can do for Beginning ESL students:**

- Ensure a supportive, low anxiety environment
- Do not force student to speak
- Use gestures and short simple sentences to convey meaning
- Use and encourage language that focuses on conveying meanings and vocabulary development
- Model correct responses
- Avoid use of idiomatic expressions
- Repeat directions
- Check for understanding using "wh" questions and model correct responses.
- Write out simplified directions for student.
- Provide copies of class notes so that student can focus on class discussion.
- Allow students to demonstrate learning in the lower portion of Bloom's taxonomy” knowledge & understanding. Ask questions that can be answered with either/or responses

**Additional information about this student:**

- Modifications for this Student:
  - Focus on recognition work (listening, reading), rather than productive work (speaking and writing).
  - Use pictures/visuals whenever possible
  - Give student before asking a question during class discussions
  - Student can contribute to small group activities
  - Oral and written production expanded
  - Help student with background vocabulary needed to understand new concepts
  - Focus on main/core vocabulary only
  - Help student understand contextual terms
  - Use graphic organizers
  - Accept verbal responses in lieu of written work
  - Student can manage some written work, with extended time
  - Modify length of reading passages, with extended time to complete them
  - Minimize homework at this time
  - Assign simplified homework with extended time to complete it
  - Assign modified/shortened homework, with extended time to complete it
  - Can complete modified homework and written assignments that focus on core vocabulary
  - Simplified assessments: True/False, Multiple Choice (only 2 choices), Matching, Decreased number of questions
  - Extended time for assessments
  - Use of bilingual dictionary

**Dates:**

---
Modifications for English Language Learners

Student Name: ___________  Home Language: ___________

Grade Level: _______  Homeroom/Classroom Teacher: ___________

ESL Teacher: ___________  School: ___________

General background information:
Intermediate students generally have a good ability to communicate in English, usually with an accent. They can follow directions and may ask for help. They begin to respond and participate in class. Typically, students’ social language skills remain much stronger than their academic language skills. Thus, it can be easy to assume that students understand more than they actually do. Intermediate students receive 72 minutes per day of ESL (K-12).

Typical Intermediate students’ behavior:
• Participates in small group activities.
• Demonstrates comprehension in a variety of ways.
• Speech is extended and becomes more comfortable asking questions and seeking help.
• Begins to use language to respond to queries.
• Lack of comprehension during directions and class activities might not be readily apparent.
• May experience difficulties in abstract, cognitively-demanding subjects at school, especially when a high degree of literacy is required.

What teachers can do for Intermediate ESL students:
* Check for comprehension of directions.
* Modify content to focus on key concepts.
* Ask student to re-phrase key ideas in their own words.
* Help student identify important vocabulary.
* Provide an outline of class notes so that student can focus on class discussion.
* Allow students to demonstrate learning in the lower portion of Bloom’s taxonomy: Knowledge & understanding & some application.

About this student:

ESL Level: Intermediate

Modifications for this Student:
- Focus on recognition work (listening, reading), rather than productive work (speaking and writing).
- Use pictures/visuals whenever possible.
- Cue student before asking a question during class discussions.
- Student can contribute to small group activities.
- Oral and written production expanded.
- Help student with background vocabulary needed to understand new concepts.
- Focus on main/core vocabulary only.
- Help student understand contextual terms.
- Use graphic organizers.
- Accept verbal responses in lieu of written work.
- Student can manage some written work, with extended time.
- Modify length of reading passages, with extended time to complete them.
- Minimize homework at this time.
- Assign simplified homework with extended time to complete it.
- Assign modified/shortened homework, with extended time to complete it.
- Can complete modified homework and written assignments that focus on core vocabulary.
- Simplified assessments: True/False, Multiple Choice (only 2 choices), Matching, Decreased number of questions.
- Extended time for assessments.
- Use of bilingual dictionary.

Date: ___________
## Classroom Modifications for ELL Students

### PACING:
- Extend time requirements
- Omit assignments
- Other: 

### ENVIRONMENT:
- Assign preferential seating
- Assign peer buddy
- Other: 

### REINFORCEMENT AND FOLLOW THROUGH:
- Use positive reinforcement
- Use concrete reinforcement
- Check often for understanding/review
- Arrange for peer tutoring
- Plan cooperative learning experiences
- Provide language experience
- Give immediate feedback
- Have student repeat directions
- Make/use vocabulary files
- Teach study skills
- Use study guides to organize materials
- Repeat/review/drill
- Other: 

### ASSIGNMENTS:
- Lower reading level
- Give directions in small, distinct steps
- Allow copying from paper/book
- Use written backup for oral directions
- Lower difficulty level
- Shorten assignment
- Read directions to students
- Give oral clues or prompts
- Record or type assignments
- Adapt worksheets, packets
- Use alternate assignments
- Other: 

### PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATERIAL:
- Use individual/small group instruction
- Use specialized curriculum
- Simplify language
- Tape lectures for playback
- Demonstrate concepts
- Use manipulatives
- Emphasize critical information
- Use graphic organizers
- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Other: 

### MATERIALS:
- Provide taped textbooks
- Highlight textbooks/study guides
- Use supplementary materials
- Give assistance in note taking
- Type handwritten teacher materials
- Use bilingual dictionaries, language learner dictionaries and electronic translators
- Use adapted/modified textbooks
- Allow use of computer/word processor
- Other: 

### TESTING ADAPTATIONS:
- Allow students to answer orally
- Use multiple-choice format
- Read test to student
- Modify format
- Write a different test
- Shorten test length
- Require only selected test items
- Create alternative assessment
- Other: 

### GRADING:
- Modify grading system:
- Modify weights of course components
- Modify course objectives/outcome
- Other:
Accommodations for English Language Learners
General Classroom and Content Areas

MATH

- At beginning to intermediate levels of proficiency, English Language Learners should be shown examples of a completed assignment to model the correct format.
- Assignments and directions should be printed on the board along with cursive representation.
- A bilingual assistant/interpreter, when available, could be used to explain math concepts in the student's primary language.
- Students should have access to counters, number lines, and other types of manipulatives, which enable them to complete assignments at their level of instruction.
- Rewrite story problems in simpler English. Use short sentences, pictures, and illustrations to encourage understanding.
- Show students how to prepare a card file of number words. Write the word on one side and the symbol on the opposite side.

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Allow beginning and advanced beginning students to use drawings to demonstrate knowledge of concepts.
- Show English Language Learners at all proficiency levels a model of a project/assignment prior to their completing the assignment.
- Teach the key concepts while limiting the vocabulary and details in the lesson.
- Test only those key concepts addressed.
- Use many visual aids during the instruction process; i.e., overhead transparencies, maps, graphic organizers, puzzles, computer, etc.
- Tape record the test or give test orally to student.
- Allow ELL student capable of tape-recording lessons to do so. (Provides immediate feedback for student to listen to the lesson at home and work on assignments on his/her own.)

READING

When making accommodations for ELL students in the area of reading, it is important to remember that there is a difference between listening and speaking and reading and writing. Some English Language Learners might be considered advanced in speaking, but functioning at a beginning instructional level when it comes to reading with fluency. Keep this in mind when assigning grades. Try to remember to place the emphasis on the student’s instructional level in Reading.

- ELL students at all proficiency levels should have reading materials provided at their instructional level by the classroom teacher.
- ELL students should be taught vocabulary in context; remember to limit the number of vocabulary words taught in each unit to only the key words. As comprehension increases, increase number of words.
- Tape record information for the ELL student to learn and let him/her listen to it.
Let students act out the story to demonstrate understanding.
Use a variety of strategies and approaches to teach reading. The key component is to make sure that students are being taught vocabulary through meaningful context, not in isolation.
Provide the ELL student the background knowledge necessary in order to understand.
Teach ELL students reading strategies that enable them to predict, connect, question, and visualize a story.

**SCIENCE**

- Homework should include completing graphs, drawing, writing in journal, etc.
- Students should work in groups when possible to solve problems or conduct experiments.
- Provide many hands-on experiences as ELL students learn best by doing and seeing lessons.
- Show ELL students at all proficiency levels a sample of a completed project or assignment when requiring a science project for a grade.
- Have students compile notebooks of their hypotheses, materials, procedures, data, conclusions of experiments, and field experiences.
- Have students prepare collections of science objects, such as sticks and leaves.
- Use “hands-on” experiential activities that do not rely on academic language for understanding.
- Prepare large charts that summarize the steps involved in experiments.

**WRITING**

When making accommodations for English language learners in the area of writing, the same principle holds true. There is a large difference between listening and speaking and reading and writing. Many ELL students could be considered advanced in speaking but at a beginning instructional level in writing.

- ELL students may not know what cursive writing is, therefore, it will have to be taught.
- ELL students could be provided a list of basic sentence patterns or words (with pictures) most frequently used in their classrooms for use when writing independently.
- ELL students could use a journal as a means of practicing writing with teacher feedback.
- Classroom teacher could provide a model of what he/she expects the finishing writing assignment to look like.
- Allow ELL students to write about topics in which they have background knowledge.
- Allow ELL students to work together when possible to brainstorm and to begin the writing process.
- Use vocabulary words and sentence structures at the instructional level of the student. Use words from their own materials. The words must have meaning for the student. Provide context clues when helping the child to learn new material.
- Try to limit the number of spelling words assigned. Increase the number of words as comprehension level increases.
- Usually ELL student’s oral language skills tend to be higher than their reading and writing skills. Adjust assignments based on the instructional level of the student.
Appendix H

Google Slides Document from Session 6

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP
ESL SEI TRAINING

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
Presented by Kim Moss & Derek Sica

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE HISTORICAL EVENT? WHY?
CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS EVENT? WHY?

DISCUSSION -- 1 MINUTE ACTIVITY
Strategies: Speaking without Words Activity

Get a partner and tell them about your weekend. But here’s the catch… Don’t use the letter _____.

Switch…

Background Knowledge

- “Existing background knowledge is rendered useless, however, if language or culture makes it impossible to link background knowledge to a task.” (Fabric, p. 4)
- In this new language system, you had the same background knowledge, but it was much harder to link it to language.
Background knowledge is more important to the understanding of reading than IQ.

Mandarin Video from CAL Linguistics?
Can we purchase for use?
BEST PRACTICES TO BUILDING BACKGROUND

- Connect with the students’ personal prior knowledge
- Connect with past learning - remind them about what they have learned
- Focus on key vocabulary - explicitly pre-teach and provide many exposures to it

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE CONSIDERATIONS

- **Leveraging academic competencies**
  - Educators need to relate new material to ELLs’ school experiences from their native countries.

- **Leveraging native language**
  - If they are allowed to develop their native language in concert with English, they will be able to better transfer their prior knowledge.

- **Integrating prior experiences**
  - As ELLs are able to use their skills and interests, their confidence grows.
Serpent Activity

Look in the envelope at the words you’ve been given. Try and make a sentence with these words.

Serpent’s Tooth

How sharper than a Serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child.
Order of Adjectives

Did you ever think about the order we say things in?

If given the following words, what order would you put them into to describe a car?

Old, Italian, sports, beautiful, fast, one, an, square
**Adjectives Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determiner</th>
<th>Quality or #</th>
<th>Quality/Opinion</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Proper Adjective</th>
<th>Purpose or qualifier</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>three</td>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>round</td>
<td>gold</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>sports</td>
<td>Car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>smart</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>young</td>
<td>square</td>
<td>Red and white</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sofa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An</td>
<td>quick</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>oval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>plates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-Linguistic Difficulties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English System</th>
<th>Metric System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,258,125</td>
<td>1.258.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>R5,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\frac{8}{4})</td>
<td>(\frac{32}{4})</td>
</tr>
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<td>0 8</td>
<td>0 8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
NUMERALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Arabic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Arabic</td>
<td>٤</td>
<td>۵</td>
<td>۶</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLICK TO ADD TITLE

https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/activating-prior-knowledge

How does the teacher tap into the background knowledge of her students?
ENGLISH GAME: PLACE THE WORD “ONLY” ANYWHERE IN THE SENTENCE.

She told him that she loved him.
Appendix I

WIDA Rubrics from Session 6
The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades K–12

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors provide examples of what language learners can do at various stages of English language development in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition is one component of the WIDA Standards Framework (shown at right). The framework, as a whole, supports the implementation of the WIDA English Language Development Standards in the instruction and assessment of language learners. We encourage educators to use the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition in conjunction with the other components of the framework, along with the previous edition of the Can Do Descriptors. For more information on the WIDA Standards Framework, visit www.wida.us.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition provides examples of academic language use for four specific communicative purposes. These purposes, referred to as Key Uses, were identified based on reviews of literature and a language analysis of college and career readiness standards:

- **Recount**: To display knowledge or narrate experiences or events. Example tasks for the Key Use of Recount include telling or summarizing stories, producing information reports, and sharing past experiences.

- **Explain**: To clarify the “why” or the “how” of ideas, actions, or phenomena. Example tasks for the Key Use of Explain include describing life cycles, sharing why or how things work, stating causes and effects, and sharing results of experiments.

- **Argue**: To persuade by making claims supported by evidence. Example tasks for the Key Use of Argue include stating preferences or opinions and constructing arguments with evidence.

- **Discuss**: To interact with others to build meaning and share knowledge. Example tasks for the Key Use of Discuss include participating in small or large group activities and projects.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition and the example descriptors are not exhaustive but are meant to help guide the planning and conversation around meaningful participation of language learners in standards-based context curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Organization of the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades K–12

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition is organized by grade-level bands (K, 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, and 9–12) that correspond to those in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. Within each grade-level band, the descriptors are organized by Key Use (Recount, Explain, Argue and Discuss) and within each Key Use, there are example descriptors for WIDA’s six levels of language proficiency (ELP Levels 1–6).

The descriptors in Level 6 represent the language performance of students who have met all the criteria for Level 5. Unlike the descriptors at Levels 1–5 that provide examples of performance at the end of each level, the descriptors at Level 6 are examples of performance within Level 6.

For three of the Key Uses (Recount, Explain, and Argue) you’ll see descriptors for the four language domains (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing). The descriptors for the Key Use Discuss are only shown for oral language. The Key Use Discuss highlights the importance of oral language development for meaningful participation of all language learners, regardless of their level of language proficiency.

Potential Uses for the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audiences</th>
<th>The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition can help...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Educators who work with language learners, including coaches, teachers (e.g., general education, gifted and talented, special education, Title I), language specialists, and support staff. | • Differentiate curriculum, instruction, and assessments designed in English based on language learners’ levels of English language proficiency  
• Collaborate and engage in instructional conversations about the academic success of language learners in English environments  
• Advocate for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency |
| Administrators and school leaders | • Communicate with other educators about students’ English language development  
• Support the WIDA Can Do Philosophy throughout schools and districts  
• Advocate for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency |

Stakeholders are encouraged to use the Can Do Descriptors beyond the audiences and purposes identified above to advocate on behalf of language learners.
### Navigating an Inquiry Group about English Language Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level</th>
<th>Key Use of Recount</th>
<th>Recount by</th>
<th>Recount by</th>
<th>Recount by</th>
<th>Recount by</th>
<th>Recount by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Entering</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Process recounts by</td>
<td>Responding with gestures to songs, chants, or stories modeled by teachers</td>
<td>Retelling main events in short narrative stories to peers using pictures</td>
<td>Retelling familiar stories through a series of picture cards</td>
<td>Relating school-based content and personal experiences with peers and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Emerging</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Process recounts by</td>
<td>Act out songs, chants, stories, and poems with gestures as a whole group</td>
<td>Describing attributes of familiar objects, people, and places</td>
<td>Sharing personal stories or experiences with others (e.g., in multiple languages)</td>
<td>Reenacting events from stories or information with a partner (e.g., class rules or routines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Developing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process recounts by</td>
<td>Following sequential language for oral directions one step at a time (e.g., &quot;Walk to the door. Now come to the circle.&quot;)</td>
<td>Matching extended oral descriptions of content-related topics to illustrations or graphics (e.g., &quot;The bright yellow ball is shining in the sky.&quot;)</td>
<td>Making patterns from real objects or pictures based on detailed oral descriptions from a model (e.g., &quot;Follow me. Put two blue crayons on your table. Then put two red crayons. Now put two more crayons of another color.&quot;)</td>
<td>Identifying detailed information in oral discourse or through multimedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Expanding</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process recounts by</td>
<td>Role playing in response to illustrated stories read aloud</td>
<td>Arranging content-related objects or illustrations according to oral discourse with a partner</td>
<td>Identifying drawings or other visual displays from elaborate descriptions with details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Bridging</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process recounts by</td>
<td>Marching extended oral descriptions of content-related topics to illustrations or graphics (e.g., &quot;The bright yellow ball is shining in the sky.&quot;)</td>
<td>Matching extended oral descriptions of content-related topics to illustrations or graphics (e.g., &quot;The bright yellow ball is shining in the sky.&quot;)</td>
<td>Identifying detailed information in oral discourse or through multimedia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Reaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process recounts by</td>
<td>Marching extended oral descriptions of content-related topics to illustrations or graphics (e.g., &quot;The bright yellow ball is shining in the sky.&quot;)</td>
<td>Matching extended oral descriptions of content-related topics to illustrations or graphics (e.g., &quot;The bright yellow ball is shining in the sky.&quot;)</td>
<td>Identifying detailed information in oral discourse or through multimedia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
### By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1</th>
<th>ELP Level 2</th>
<th>ELP Level 3</th>
<th>ELP Level 4</th>
<th>ELP Level 5</th>
<th>ELP Level 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process recounts by:</td>
<td>Recount by:</td>
<td>Process recounts by:</td>
<td>Recount by:</td>
<td>Process recounts by:</td>
<td>Recount by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Matching icons and symbols to corresponding pictures</td>
<td>* Dictating personal information scribed by adults (e.g., about self and family members)</td>
<td>* Reproducing symbols, numbers, and illustrated words from models in context</td>
<td>* Reproducing familiar words and phrases from environmental print and illustrated text</td>
<td>* Describing everyday experiences using illustrated phrases and short sentences</td>
<td>* Describing stories about self or family (e.g., using one or more languages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Identifying labeled real-life classroom objects (e.g., tables, books, doorknob)</td>
<td>* Reproducing content-related information in oral text through drawings</td>
<td>* Drawing and labeling familiar people, objects, or events from models (e.g., word walls, posters, cards)</td>
<td>* Drawing and describing different parts of stories, personal experiences, or events (e.g., written conversations) with a peer</td>
<td>* Producing stories about self or family (e.g., using one or more languages)</td>
<td>* Describing stories about self or family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Acting out familiar rhymes from text read aloud or chanted in small groups</td>
<td>* Recognizing persons and settings in illustrated text read aloud</td>
<td>* Reading facts about personal experiences shared with classmates (e.g., through illustrated test)</td>
<td>* Describing everyday experiences using illustrated phrases and short sentences</td>
<td>* Speaking information to answer modeled questions about experiences with guidance</td>
<td>* Stating information to answer modeled questions about experiences with guidance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying illustrated activities described orally</td>
<td>Matching real-life objects to illustrations about their use based on oral statements</td>
<td>Identifying language associated with features of objects or parts (e.g., “Show me a word in the title.”)</td>
<td>Drawing individual phases or steps to “how” questions (e.g., “How does a caterpillar change into a butterfly?”)</td>
<td>Identifying illustrations related to cause and effect from oral information</td>
<td>Recognizing language related to scientific or mathematical processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following modeled actions to show likes or dislikes (e.g., using “or” words and phrases, “read” or “write”)</td>
<td>Identifying people and places associated with everyday events described orally (e.g., “It is Monday. You are at school.”)</td>
<td>Pointing out illustrated details that match oral descriptions of cycles or procedures</td>
<td>Reenacting procedural information obtained from videos or other media (e.g., “Show me how to make day and night.”)</td>
<td>Identifying patterns in procedures or natural phenomena in illustrated stories read aloud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY USE OF EXPLAIN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain by</td>
<td>Explain by</td>
<td>Explain by</td>
<td>Explain by</td>
<td>Explain by</td>
<td>Explain by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying familiar objects used in everyday routines and activities with a partner (e.g., in the home language and English)</td>
<td>Describing uses of everyday objects or roles of familiar people (e.g., “Teacher reads.”)</td>
<td>Comparing sizes of familiar phenomena (e.g., “bigger than/ smaller than, longer/ wider”)</td>
<td>Describing classroom routines (e.g., putting away puzzle)</td>
<td>Providing details related to classroom activities and tasks in small groups (e.g., “how we work together”)</td>
<td>Comparing two objects using measurable attributes (e.g., “The book is thinner than the notebook”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsing and acting out key steps in procedures or classroom routines following models (e.g., “Put away toys. Get in line.”)</td>
<td>Stating attributes and classifying objects into illustrated categories to show how they go together (e.g., shapes, colors, sizes)</td>
<td>Stating reasons for classroom routines or procedures with a partner (e.g., “expected behaviors”)</td>
<td>Comparing and contrasting placement of real-life objects and phenomena (e.g., “on the table” vs. “under the table”)</td>
<td>Describing steps in familiar cycles and phenomena (e.g., “getting in a circle to play a game”)</td>
<td>Describing the causes or effects of different phenomena based on observations and experiences (e.g., “pulls, tangles, chokes”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>READING</strong></td>
<td><strong>WRITING</strong></td>
<td><strong>KEY USE OF EXPLAIN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process explanations by</strong></td>
<td><strong>Process explanations by</strong></td>
<td><strong>Process explanations by</strong></td>
<td><strong>Process explanations by</strong></td>
<td><strong>Process explanations by</strong></td>
<td><strong>Process explanations by</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Matching illustrations with modeled language with a partner</td>
<td>• Identifying illustrated words or icons to show why (e.g., in play-based activities)</td>
<td>• Pointing out causes or motives in illustrated stories read aloud</td>
<td>• Demonstrating the relationship between objects, people, or animals from detailed descriptions read aloud using gestures (e.g., &quot;the big tall giraffe and the tiny mouse&quot;)</td>
<td>• Matching familiar descriptive phrases to illustrations or illustrations with a partner (e.g., &quot;bits in morning routines&quot;)</td>
<td>• Drawing sketches or models to show how to solve problems read from illustrated informational text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying steps in procedures from illustrations and icons (e.g., &quot;It goes up. It comes down.&quot;)</td>
<td>• Following illustrated directions with a peer (e.g., in form shapes or patterns)</td>
<td>• Showing relationships depicted in informational text with real-life objects (e.g., &quot;5 is more than 3&quot;)</td>
<td>• Comparing how to do something in different ways from illustrated stories (e.g., making fruit salad)</td>
<td>• Locating descriptive language related to &quot;how&quot; or &quot;why&quot; in illustrated text in small groups</td>
<td>• Describing how to resolve situations faced by characters or in content-related text using graphic organizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPLAIN</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXPLAIN</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXPLAIN</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXPLAIN</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXPLAIN</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXPLAIN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describing familiar routines by drawing pictures and dictating to adults (e.g., in one or more languages)</td>
<td>• Connecting oral language to print (e.g., through language experience)</td>
<td>• Describing familiar events or phenomena using sentence starters and drawings</td>
<td>• Describing how to do something through a sequence of pictures and words</td>
<td>• Describing uses of tools or objects with a peer (e.g., from illustrated phrase walls)</td>
<td>• Stating steps of familiar routines or events by drawing, dictating, and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drawing what comes next (e.g., in stories or experiments)</td>
<td>• Reproducing labeled pictures or photographs to describe processes or procedures (e.g., producing an album)</td>
<td>• Identifying self as an author through pictures and invented words (e.g., by keeping a journal)</td>
<td>• Composing group drafts on different processes based on oral input or experiences modeled by teachers</td>
<td>• Sequencing content-related processes by drawing and describing objects (e.g., from seeds to plants)</td>
<td>• Responding to &quot;how&quot; questions and suggestions from peers, with guidance from adults, to add details to text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no calling.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY USE OF ARGUE</th>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identifying personal</td>
<td>• Discriminating</td>
<td>• Acting our opposites</td>
<td>• Drawing to make</td>
<td>• Agreeing or</td>
<td>• Interpreting which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>choices (e.g., ‘Show</td>
<td>between words and</td>
<td>using gestures (e.g.,</td>
<td>predictions from</td>
<td>disagreeing with</td>
<td>side to take and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>me your favorite…)</td>
<td>phrases related to</td>
<td>‘Through song or</td>
<td>illustrated stories</td>
<td>oral claims using</td>
<td>from dialog or short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from different</td>
<td>personal choices</td>
<td>chants)</td>
<td>read aloud (e.g.,</td>
<td>gestures (e.g.,</td>
<td>conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>examples</td>
<td>(e.g., ‘The park or</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘What happened</td>
<td>‘Tomorrow will be</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the zoo’)</td>
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<td>recently?’)</td>
<td>better than today?)</td>
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<td>• Classifying</td>
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<td></td>
<td>everyday objects by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>descriptive features</td>
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<td>(e.g., red ones, blue</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SPEAKING</strong></td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Stating personal</td>
<td>• Stating personal</td>
<td>• Stating personal</td>
<td>• Expressing likes,</td>
<td>• Offering personal</td>
<td>• Agreeing or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>likes from oral</td>
<td>preferences (e.g.,</td>
<td>preferences or</td>
<td>dislikes, dislikes,</td>
<td>opinions about</td>
<td>disagreeing with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prompts (e.g., sports,</td>
<td>‘I like this.’)</td>
<td>opinions (e.g., ‘Rosa</td>
<td>dislikes with</td>
<td>content-related ideas</td>
<td>reasons for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>food, animals)</td>
<td></td>
<td>is best.’)</td>
<td>reasons (e.g., ‘I like</td>
<td>in small groups</td>
<td>categorizing</td>
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<td>___ because ___’)</td>
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<td>content-related</td>
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<td>information when</td>
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<td>modeled (e.g., ‘These</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>animals go together</td>
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<td>because they have</td>
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<td>spots?’)</td>
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</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY USE OF ARGUE</th>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process arguments by:</td>
<td>• Pointing to labeled pictures or objects of personal preferences</td>
<td>• Classifying labeled pictures of personal choices from stories according to different character traits</td>
<td>• Predicting text steps, actions, or events in informational text and stories read aloud (e.g., by pointing to pictures)</td>
<td>• Interpreting pictures in informational text as true or false in small groups</td>
<td>• Evaluating situations in picture books and matching them to related reasons for choices</td>
<td>• Identifying different points of view from illustrated text with prompting and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue by:</td>
<td>• Matching illustrations to words of personal interest as modeled</td>
<td>• Making choices from illustrated descriptions read aloud and sharing with peers (e.g., based on “or” phrases)</td>
<td>• Indicating agreements or disagreements with authors’ points of view of text read aloud with a partner</td>
<td>• Comparing choices of different characters in illustrated text read aloud (e.g., using T charts)</td>
<td>• Agreeing or disagreeing with actions of characters in illustrated text read aloud</td>
<td>• Identifying similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., pacing or matching words found in both sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue by:</td>
<td>• Arguing likes or dislikes from real-life objects or pictures</td>
<td>• Arguing by illustrating and reproducing words about preferences (e.g., from charts or posters)</td>
<td>• Arguing by agreeing or disagreeing with choices (e.g., producing “yes” or “no”) from models</td>
<td>• Arguing by producing statements about choices using different models as examples (e.g., “I want to ___”)</td>
<td>• Arguing by making requests to indicate preferences (e.g., “Can I have ___?”)</td>
<td>• Arguing by composing opinion pieces using content-related language with prompting and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue by:</td>
<td>• Arguing by drawing or making collages about personal interests or content-related topics in small groups</td>
<td>• Arguing by stating personal choices from models (e.g., labeling photos or drawings of self)</td>
<td>• Arguing by completing text about personal opinions on different topics (e.g., “I like ___.”)</td>
<td>• Arguing by building short sentences from personal preferences using pictures or photos with partners</td>
<td>• Arguing by listing reasons for content-related choices with guidance and support (e.g., “Why do you like number 3?”)</td>
<td>• Arguing by making claims using content-related language about topics or books (e.g., directed to adults)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>ELP Level 3</th>
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<th>ELP Level 5</th>
<th>ELP Level 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>Bridging</td>
<td>Reaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Attending to the speaker to demonstrate understanding  
• Following routines, chants, and songs  
• Participating in exchanges between peers (e.g., thumb buddy, turn and talk)  
• Using language and body movement to include others in conversations  
• Working together collaboratively (e.g., taking turns, listening to others)  
• Proposing ideas to contribute to conversations  
• Asking questions to request clarification  
• Asking questions to extend conversations  
• Demonstrating active listening to show respect to the speaker  
• Sustaining conversations on a topic  
• Building on comments/responses of others  |

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no calling.

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**Acknowledgements**

The development of the Can Do Descriptors represents the work of many educators in the field. WIDA would like to extend its appreciation to everyone who contributed through their expertise to this work, including the staff at the Center for Applied Linguistics for their ongoing partnership and support.

Please visit www.wida.us to view a full list of educators who participated on the development workshop, national experts who shared their expertise in the development process, and those who participated in the review of the Can Do descriptors.

*Version 1.5 WU16*
The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades K–12

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors provide examples of what language learners can do at various stages of English language development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition is one component of the WIDA Standards Framework (shown at right). The framework, as a whole, supports the implementation of the WIDA English Language Development Standards in the instruction and assessment of language learners. We encourage educators to use the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition in conjunction with other components of the framework, along with the previous edition of the Can Do Descriptors. For more information on the WIDA Standards Framework, visit www.wida.us.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition provides examples of academic language use for four specific communicative purposes. These purposes, referred to as Key Uses, were identified based on reviews of literature and a language analysis of college and career readiness standards:

- **Recount**: To display knowledge or narrate experiences or events. Example tasks for the Key Use of Recount include telling or summarizing stories, producing information reports, and sharing past experiences.

- **Explain**: To clarify the “why” or the “how” of ideas, actions, or phenomena. Example tasks for the Key Use of Explain include describing life cycles, sharing why or how things work, stating causes and effects, and sharing results of experiments.

- **Argue**: To persuade by making claims supported by evidence. Example tasks for the Key Use of Argue include stating preferences or opinions and constructing arguments with evidence.

- **Discuss**: To interact with others to build meaning and share knowledge. Example tasks for the Key Use of Discuss include participating in small or large group activities and projects.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition and the example descriptors are not exhaustive but are meant to help guide the planning and conversation around meaningful participation of language learners in standards-based content curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Organization of the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades K–12

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition is organized by grade-level bands (K, 1–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12) that correspond to those in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. Within each grade-level band, the descriptors are organized by Key Use (Recount, Explain, Argue, and Discuss) and within each Key Use, there are example descriptors for WIDA’s six levels of language proficiency (ELP Levels 1–6).

The descriptors in Level 6 represent the language performance of students who have met all the criteria for Level 5. Unlike the descriptors at Levels 1–5 that provide examples of performance at the end of the level, the descriptors at Level 6 are examples of performance within Level 6.

For three of the Key Uses (Recount, Explain, and Argue) you’ll see descriptors for the four language domains (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing). The descriptors for the Key Use Discuss are only shown for oral language. The Key Use Discuss highlights the importance of oral language development for meaningful participation of all language learners, regardless of their level of language proficiency.

Potential Uses for the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audiences</th>
<th>The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition can help…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Educators who work with language learners, including coaches, teachers (e.g., general education, gifted and talented, special education, Title I), language specialists, and support staff. | - Differentiate curriculum, instruction, and assessments designed in English based on language learners’ levels of English language proficiency  
- Collaborate and engage in instructional conversations about the academic success of language learners in English environments  
- Advocate for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency |
| Administrators and school leaders | - Communicate with other educators about students’ English language development  
- Support the WIDA Can Do Philosophy throughout schools and districts  
- Advocate for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency |

Stakeholders are encouraged to use the Can Do Descriptors beyond the audiences and purposes identified above to advocate on behalf of language learners.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1</th>
<th>ELP Level 2</th>
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<th>ELP Level 4</th>
<th>ELP Level 5</th>
<th>ELP Level 6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>Process recounts by:</td>
<td>Process recounts by:</td>
<td>Process recounts by:</td>
<td>Process recounts by:</td>
<td>Process recounts by:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mimicking gestures or movement associated with oral commands</td>
<td>• Acting out oral statements using manipulatives or real-life objects</td>
<td>• Sequencing pictures of stories read aloud (e.g., beginning, middle, end)</td>
<td>• Identifying characters, plots, and settings from oral stories</td>
<td>• Constructing models based on instructions from extended oral discourse with a partner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Matching key words or expressions in songs, chants, and poems to illustrations</td>
<td>• Pointing to objects, characters or places from oral descriptions</td>
<td>• Following modeled oral instructions related to content</td>
<td>• Finding details in illustrated narrative or informational text read aloud</td>
<td>• Following multi-step oral directions during content-related activities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td>Recount by:</td>
<td>Recount by:</td>
<td>Recount by:</td>
<td>Recount by:</td>
<td>Recount by:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Repeating words, phrases and remembered chunks of language related to different topics</td>
<td>• Stating content-related facts in context (e.g., playing telephone)</td>
<td>• Retelling simple stories from picture cues</td>
<td>• Restating information with some details</td>
<td>• Presenting information on content-related topics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Answering yes or no questions about stories or experiences</td>
<td>• Describing characters or places in picture books</td>
<td>• Participating in dialog with peers on familiar topics</td>
<td>• Summarizing a series of familiar events or routines</td>
<td>• Sharing details about personal experiences with peers and adults</td>
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<td><strong>Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.</strong></td>
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</table>

*NAVIGATING AN INQUIRY GROUP ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1</th>
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<th>ELP Level 6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Use of Recount</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELP Level 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELP Level 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELP Level 3</strong></td>
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</table>

**Reading**
- Process recounts by:
  - Using pictures and illustrations to identify themes or storylines
  - Matching vocabulary to illustrated stories
  - Pointing to icons, letters, or illustrated words that represent ideas
  - Identifying repetitive words and phrases in texts
  - Identifying the main topic of texts
  - Ordering illustrations based on sequence of events from texts read aloud
  - Distinguishing among characters, settings, and events in narratives
  - Reconstructing texts read orally using drawings or re-enacting text with performances
  - Identifying who is telling the story at various points in text
  - Matching original text to paraphrased versions

**Writing**
- Recount by:
  - Forming words using a variety of strategies
  - Answering Wh-oral questions or using icons to plan stories
  - Providing information in graphic organizers
  - Presenting content-related information labeling visuals or graphics
  - Describing feelings or reactions to personal events or situations
  - Recalling information from events or experiences
  - Producing a series of related sentences from transition word starters (e.g., first, next, last)
  - Describing observations firsthand or from media
  - Composing stories or narratives using sequential language
  - Editing personal narratives based on criteria for success
  - Producing narratives with at least two sequential events
  - Producing narrative sequences from timelines and labeled drawings

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### Key Use of Explain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Entering</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Expanding</th>
<th>Bridging</th>
<th>Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELP Level 1</td>
<td>Process explanations by • Identifying real-life objects based on descriptive oral phrases or short sentences • Pointing to objects or people reflective of content-related vocabulary (e.g., family members)</td>
<td>Process explanations by • Classifying real-life objects according to their function based on oral directions • Interpreting oral descriptions and matching them to illustrations</td>
<td>Process explanations by • Following peer statements to create projects • Identifying illustrated cycles or processes described orally</td>
<td>Process explanations by • Following illustrated content-related procedures shared orally • Organizing real-life objects based on oral comparisons</td>
<td>Process explanations by • Identifying causes and effects of various phenomena presented orally • Using strategies and procedures shared by peers</td>
<td>Process explanations by • Identifying causal factors from oral descriptions of processes or procedures • Representing ideas from oral discussions or multimedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELP Level 2</td>
<td>Explain by • Answering questions with words or phrases (e.g., “Go washroom.”) • Describing pictures or classroom objects</td>
<td>Explain by • Demonstrating how to do something using gestures or real-life objects (e.g., “tie a bow”) • Describing what people do from action pictures (e.g., “Jobs of community workers”)</td>
<td>Explain by • Scoring associations between two objects, people, or events (e.g., “I see my sister and she is my sister.”) • Telling why something happened</td>
<td>Explain by • Connecting ideas by building on guided conversations with peers • Describing in detail the function of objects or roles of people</td>
<td>Explain by • Scoring conditions for cause and effect (e.g., “If it rains, I play inside.”) • Elaborating on details of content-related procedures</td>
<td>Explain by • Asking and answering content-related “how” and “why” questions • Expressing connected ideas with supporting details</td>
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</table>

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By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

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<tr>
<td><strong>READING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
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<td>Process explanations by</td>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying icons from illustrated texts or media with a partner</td>
<td>• Matching descriptive labels or headings to illustrated text</td>
<td>• Sorting illustrated content words and phrases into categories</td>
<td>• Matching labeled illustrations to “how” or “why” questions</td>
<td>• Identifying what authors say in oral stories</td>
<td>• Identifying words and phrases related to cause and effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sorting objects according to their use based on labeled illustrations</td>
<td>• Identifying labeled illustrations signaled by Wh- questions</td>
<td>• Identifying steps or stages of content-related processes or events from informational or explanatory texts</td>
<td>• Identifying reasons for actions in stories, songs, and poems</td>
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</table>

| **WRITING**            |                      |                        |                       |                      |                      |
| Explain by             |                      |                        |                       |                      |                      |
| • Designing, drawing and labeling content-specific models | • Labelling and illustrating observations over time (e.g., growing plants) | • Classifying illustrated words and phrases into groups (e.g., “Animals that fly. Animals that run.”) | • Describing models related to content-related phenomena in pictures or real-life | • Describing causes and effects of actions and strategies | • Predicting how stories, events, or situations might end |
| • Identifying topics through photographs, illustrated word walls, or software | • Describing, places, or objects from illustrated examples | • Comparing real-life objects, numbers, or animals using models | • Expressing feelings and a reason related to situations or events | • Sequencing steps in solving problems using short sentences, illustrations, and symbols |

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### NAVIGATING AN INQUIRY GROUP ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking by form of pronunciation</td>
<td>Talking by form of pronunciation</td>
<td>Talking by form of pronunciation</td>
<td>Talking by form of pronunciation</td>
<td>Talking by form of pronunciation</td>
<td>Talking by form of pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying words or phrases that express opinions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering questions about likes and preferences</td>
<td>Evaluating options to make personal choices from oral simple sentences</td>
<td>Classifying objects according to descriptive oral statements</td>
<td>Organizing information from oral comparisons of people or objects</td>
<td>Identifying claims and reasons for choices from oral stories</td>
<td>Identifying reasons for choosing statements or events based on observations or experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaling agreement or disagreement with short oral statements using gestures</td>
<td>Following conditional directions (e.g., &quot;Raise two hands if you like ice cream.&quot;)</td>
<td>Identifying reasons for choices from oral stories</td>
<td>Distinguishing opinions from reasons in oral discourse</td>
<td>Identifying reasons for choosing statements or events based on observations or experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### KEY USE OF ARGUE

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<tr>
<th>Argue by</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressing preferences in naming and pointing to objects</td>
<td>Responding to short statements or questions about choices (e.g., &quot;I am sure.&quot;, &quot;I am not sure.&quot;)</td>
<td>Describing characters or objects using pictures or actions</td>
<td>Justifying the use of objects for particular purposes</td>
<td>Comparing and contrasting content-related ideas (e.g., &quot;Winter is hot in Hawaii. Winter is cold in Alaska.&quot;&quot;)</td>
<td>Defending solutions to simple problems or elaborating reasons to justify content-related ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating language to express agreement or disagreement</td>
<td>Stating likes and dislikes to participate in conversations with peers</td>
<td>Stating choices of materials or supplies and reasons for their selection</td>
<td>Supporting content-related ideas with examples</td>
<td>Providing evidence for specific claims</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### NAVIGATING AN INQUIRY GROUP ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Key Uses of Argue

**Writing**
- Indicating agreement with opinions of others using labeled drawings
- Drawing icons or symbols to represent preferences

**Reading**
- Producing simple sentences from models about likes, wants, and needs (e.g., "I like... I don't like..."
- Supplying facts about topics

#### Process Arguments by

- Categorizing labeled pictures or photographs
- Identifying opinions from illustrated statements (e.g., likes and dislikes)
- Identifying language of wants and needs in illustrated short stories read aloud

- Identifying information related to events from graphs (e.g., birthday chart, weather calendar)
- Identifying language of wants and needs in illustrated short stories read aloud

- Identifying persuasive words in written phrases or statements in context (e.g., "have to," "must")
- Determining the author's point of view from illustrated texts

- Distinguishing characters' opinions or preferences from illustrated text read aloud
- Identifying evidence or reasons in peers' written texts

- Distinguishing characters' opinions or preferences from illustrated text read aloud
- Identifying evidence or reasons in peers' written texts

- Predicting meaning of words based on class from sentence-level context
- Identifying similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures)

- Providing simple edits to peers' writing
- Elaborating content-related claims with examples

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1</th>
<th>ELP Level 2</th>
<th>ELP Level 3</th>
<th>ELP Level 4</th>
<th>ELP Level 5</th>
<th>ELP Level 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>Bridging</td>
<td>Reaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tracking the speakers to demonstrate understanding</td>
<td>• Following along familiar routines of small and large groups</td>
<td>• Asking clarifying questions</td>
<td>• Using intonation appropriate for the purposes of communication</td>
<td>• Asking and answering questions to maintain conversations</td>
<td>• Sustaining conversations by responding to comments made in multiple exchanges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing pictures, created work, or visuals to contribute to conversations</td>
<td>• Recognizing different types of intonation used by speakers</td>
<td>• Inviting others to participate</td>
<td>• Elaborating on someone else's comments to participate in conversations</td>
<td>• Asking and answering questions about key details in social and academic contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*

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**Acknowledgements**

The development of the Can Do Descriptors represents the work of many educators in the field. WIDA would like to extend its appreciation to everyone who contributed through their expertise to this work, including the staff at the Center for Applied Linguistics for their ongoing partnership and support.

Please visit www.wida.us to view a full list of educators who participated on the development workshop, national experts who shared their expertise in the development process, and those who participated in the review of the Can Do descriptors.

Version 1.1 02/16
The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades K–12

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors provide examples of what language learners can do at various stages of English language development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition is one component of the WIDA Standards Framework (shown at right). The framework, as a whole, supports the implementation of the WIDA English Language Development Standards in the instruction and assessment of language learners. We encourage educators to use the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition in conjunction with the other components of the framework, along with the previous edition of the Can Do Descriptors. For more information on the WIDA Standards Framework, visit www.wida.us.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition provides examples of academic language use for four specific communicative purposes. These purposes, referred to as Key Uses, were identified based on reviews of literature and a language analysis of college and career readiness standards:

- **Recount**: To display knowledge or narrate experiences or events. Example tasks for the Key Use of Recount include telling or summarizing stories, producing information reports, and sharing past experiences.

- **Explain**: To clarify the “why” or the “how” of ideas, actions, or phenomena. Example tasks for the Key Use of Explain include describing life cycles, sharing why or how things work, stating causes and effects, and sharing results of experiments.

- **Argue**: To persuade by making claims supported by evidence. Example tasks for the Key Use of Argue include stating preferences or opinions and constructing arguments with evidence.

- **Discuss**: To interact with others to build meaning and share knowledge. Example tasks for the Key Use of Discuss include participating in small or large group activities and projects.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition and the example descriptors are not exhaustive but are meant to help guide the planning and conversation around meaningful participation of language learners in standards-based content curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Organization of the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades K–12

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition is organized by grade-level bands (K, 1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12) that correspond to those in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. Within each grade-level band, the descriptors are organized by Key Use (Recount, Explain, Argue, and Discuss) and within each Key Use, there are example descriptors for WIDA’s six levels of language proficiency (ELF Levels 1–6).

The descriptors in Level 6 represent the language performance of students who have met all the criteria for Level 5. Unlike the descriptors at Levels 1–5 that provide examples of performance at the end of the level, the descriptors at Level 6 are examples of performance within Level 6.

For three of the Key Uses (Recount, Explain, and Argue) you’ll see descriptors for the four language domains (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing). The descriptors for the Key Use Discuss are only shown for oral language. The Key Use Discuss highlights the importance of oral language development for meaningful participation of all language learners, regardless of their level of language proficiency.

Potential Uses for the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audiences</th>
<th>The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition can help....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educators who work with language learners,</td>
<td>• Differentiate curriculum, instruction, and assessments designed in English based on language learners’ levels of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including coaches, teachers (e.g., general</td>
<td>language proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>education, gifted and talented, special</td>
<td>• Collaborate and engage in instructional conversations about the academic success of language learners in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education, Title I), language specialists,</td>
<td>• Advocate for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and support staff</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Administrators and school leaders             | • Communicate with other educators about students’ English language development                                          |
|                                              | • Support the WIDA Can Do Philosophy throughout schools and districts                                                  |
|                                              | • Advocate for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency            |

Stakeholders are encouraged to use the Can Do Descriptors beyond the audiences and purposes identified above to advocate on behalf of language learners.
By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Process recounts by</th>
<th>Recount by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELP Level 1 Entering</td>
<td><em>Showing what happens next based on familiar oral stories (e.g., by joining or drawing)</em></td>
<td><em>Responding to questions related to stories or experiences (e.g., “Who came to the door?”)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELP Level 2 Emerging</td>
<td><em>Identifying the “who,” “where” and “when” of illustrated statements</em></td>
<td><em>Reproducing facts or statements in context</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELP Level 3 Developing</td>
<td><em>Identifying main materials or resources from oral descriptions</em></td>
<td><em>Participating in multi-media presentations based on research</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELP Level 4 Expanding</td>
<td><em>Identifying linking words or phrases related to passage of time in speech (e.g., “on Monday” “the next day”)</em></td>
<td><em>Retelling simple stories from picture cues</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELP Level 5 Bridging</td>
<td><em>Illustrating events in response to audio recordings of stories or poems</em></td>
<td><em>Stating information from personal or school-related experiences</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELP Level 6 Reaching</td>
<td><em>Re-enacting content-related situations or events from oral descriptions</em></td>
<td><em>Sequencing events in stories with temporal transitions (e.g., “After the rain set...”)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Identifying content-related ideas from oral discourse using multi-media (e.g., resembling steps of a process)</em></td>
<td><em>Describing situations and events from school and the community</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Identifying details of content-related topics from oral discourse</em></td>
<td><em>Describing main ideas of content-related information</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Making designs or models following oral directions and specifications (e.g., maps, origami)</em></td>
<td><em>Adding and answering questions about information from speakers</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Determining the main ideas and supporting details of texts read aloud or information presented orally</em></td>
<td><em>Providing descriptive details of content-related information or activities</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Identifying key ideas or details from texts read aloud or information presented usually</em></td>
<td><em>Naming the steps for producing multi-media presentations with some detail</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
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<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Use of Recount</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process recounts by</td>
<td>Recount by</td>
<td>Recount by</td>
<td>Recount by</td>
<td>Recount by</td>
<td>Recount by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying key words and phrases in illustrated text</td>
<td>• Labeling images that illustrate the steps for different processes (e.g., writing workshop)</td>
<td>• Recounting past experiences</td>
<td>• Describing the sequence of content-related ideas</td>
<td>• Signaling order of events using temporal words and phrases</td>
<td><strong>Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Signaling language associated with content-related information (e.g., during previous view and review)</td>
<td>• Listing ideas using graphic organizers</td>
<td>• Expressing ideas in various genres (e.g., poetry, interactive journals)</td>
<td>• Providing details and examples about narratives</td>
<td>• Relating real or imagined experiences or events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illustrating experiences of characters in illustrated statements</td>
<td>• Recounting time-related language in context (e.g., in biographies)</td>
<td>• Identifying temporal-related words that signal order of events (e.g., &quot;In the beginning...&quot;)</td>
<td>• Describing a series of events or procedures</td>
<td>• Describing the sequence of content-related ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Illustrating related statements or paragraphs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...
### Key Use of Explain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Explaining Process</th>
<th>Explaining Content-Rich Structure</th>
<th>Explaining of Relevance or Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Process explanations by:  
- Pointing to visual characteristics of models or real-life objects from oral directions
- Pairing objects, pictures, or equations as directed by a partner  
| Explain by:  
- Describing the outcomes of experiments or stories with guidance and visual support
- naming or answering why-questions related to classroom routines (e.g., "What do we do now?") | Explain by:  
- Naming steps in processes or procedures
- Describing familiar phenomena in words or phrases | Explain by:  
- Stating details of processes or procedures
- Describing consequences of behaviors or events | Explain by:  
- Connecting ideas in content-related presentations
- Elaborating on the cause of various phenomena (e.g., reasoning, patterns) |
| 2     | Process explanations by:  
- Matching oral descriptions to photos, pictures, or icons
- Following simple sequences presented orally to create patterns or sequences  
| Explain by:  
- Describing the outcomes of experiments or stories with guidance and visual support
- naming or answering why-questions related to classroom routines (e.g., "What do we do now?") | Explain by:  
- Naming steps in processes or procedures
- Describing familiar phenomena in words or phrases | Explain by:  
- Stating details of processes or procedures
- Describing consequences of behaviors or events | Explain by:  
- Connecting ideas in content-related presentations
- Elaborating on the cause of various phenomena (e.g., reasoning, patterns) |
| 3     | Process explanations by:  
- Carrying out steps described orally to solve problems
- Completing graphic organizers or representations from oral comparisons  
| Explain by:  
- Describing the outcomes of experiments or stories with guidance and visual support
- naming or answering why-questions related to classroom routines (e.g., "What do we do now?") | Explain by:  
- Naming steps in processes or procedures
- Describing familiar phenomena in words or phrases | Explain by:  
- Stating details of processes or procedures
- Describing consequences of behaviors or events | Explain by:  
- Connecting ideas in content-related presentations
- Elaborating on the cause of various phenomena (e.g., reasoning, patterns) |
| 4     | Process explanations by:  
- Identifying connections in speech or text read aloud
- Identifying content-related ideas and details in oral discourse  
| Explain by:  
- Describing the outcomes of experiments or stories with guidance and visual support
- naming or answering why-questions related to classroom routines (e.g., "What do we do now?") | Explain by:  
- Naming steps in processes or procedures
- Describing familiar phenomena in words or phrases | Explain by:  
- Stating details of processes or procedures
- Describing consequences of behaviors or events | Explain by:  
- Connecting ideas in content-related presentations
- Elaborating on the cause of various phenomena (e.g., reasoning, patterns) |
| 5     | Process explanations by:  
- Distinguishing shades of meaning among closely related words in oral discourse (e.g., 'jumping', 'leaping', 'leaping')
- Comparing strategies from extended oral discourse  
| Explain by:  
- Describing the outcomes of experiments or stories with guidance and visual support
- naming or answering why-questions related to classroom routines (e.g., "What do we do now?") | Explain by:  
- Naming steps in processes or procedures
- Describing familiar phenomena in words or phrases | Explain by:  
- Stating details of processes or procedures
- Describing consequences of behaviors or events | Explain by:  
- Connecting ideas in content-related presentations
- Elaborating on the cause of various phenomena (e.g., reasoning, patterns) |
| 6     | Process explanations by:  
- Distinguishing shades of meaning among closely related words in oral discourse (e.g., 'jumping', 'leaping', 'leaping')
- Comparing strategies from extended oral discourse  
| Explain by:  
- Describing the outcomes of experiments or stories with guidance and visual support
- naming or answering why-questions related to classroom routines (e.g., "What do we do now?") | Explain by:  
- Naming steps in processes or procedures
- Describing familiar phenomena in words or phrases | Explain by:  
- Stating details of processes or procedures
- Describing consequences of behaviors or events | Explain by:  
- Connecting ideas in content-related presentations
- Elaborating on the cause of various phenomena (e.g., reasoning, patterns) |

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
### Key Use of Explain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
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<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process explanations by</td>
<td>Identifying words and phrases in titles and highlighted texts</td>
<td>Interpreting images, illustrations, and graphics</td>
<td>Sequencing sentences descriptive of processes or procedures in informational texts</td>
<td>Illustrating causal/effect relationships in content area texts</td>
<td>Identifying relevant information from texts on the same content area topic (e.g., in open sets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matching pictures with graphic information from illustrated texts</td>
<td>Identifying elements of exposition texts (e.g., graphs, captions) in illustrated texts</td>
<td>Locating details in content area texts or media</td>
<td>Classifying main ideas and details in informational or explanatory texts</td>
<td>Identifying the main purpose of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain by</td>
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<tr>
<td>List and illustrating ideas</td>
<td>Describing elements of processes or procedures</td>
<td>Listing how something happens using illustrations and sequential language (e.g., erosion of volcanoes)</td>
<td>Comparing causes of different phenomena</td>
<td>Stating ideas about content-related topics</td>
<td>Describing details of processes, procedures, and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stating facts associated with images or illustrations</td>
<td>Stating how something happens using illustrations and sequential language (e.g., erosion of volcanoes)</td>
<td>Stating ideas about content-related topics</td>
<td>Describing strategies to solve problems</td>
<td>Describing details of processes, procedures, and events</td>
<td>Producing &quot;how to&quot; manuals based on personal experiences or scientific experiments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
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<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
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<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LISTENING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Process arguments by</td>
<td>• Indicating personal</td>
<td>• Distinguishing</td>
<td>• Identifying</td>
<td>• Identifying</td>
<td>• Identifying</td>
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<td>points of view in</td>
<td>opinions from facts</td>
<td>similarities and</td>
<td>opinions from</td>
<td>evidence to support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>response to oral</td>
<td>from peers' oral</td>
<td>differences from</td>
<td>different sides</td>
<td>claims/ opinions from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>phrases or short</td>
<td>presentations</td>
<td>oral context-</td>
<td>identifying</td>
<td>multimedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sentences (e.g.,</td>
<td></td>
<td>related materials or</td>
<td>opposing sides of</td>
<td>following agree-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thumbs up/thumbs</td>
<td></td>
<td>equipment</td>
<td>arguments in</td>
<td>commonly rules for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>down; agree/disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dialogues</td>
<td>discussions around</td>
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<td>cards)</td>
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<td>differing opinions</td>
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<td>• Identifying</td>
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<td>from short oral</td>
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<td>statements</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SPEAKING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>• Stating a claim</td>
<td>• Telling what comes</td>
<td>• Describing</td>
<td>• Defend claims or</td>
<td>• Expressing and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or position from</td>
<td>next and showing why</td>
<td>organizing</td>
<td>opinions on</td>
<td>supporting different</td>
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<td></td>
<td>models or examples</td>
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<td>categories for</td>
<td>content-related</td>
<td>ideas with examples</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sharing facts as</td>
<td></td>
<td>content-related</td>
<td>information (e.g.,</td>
<td>providing evidence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>evidence using</td>
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<td>information (e.g.,</td>
<td>fish/kiwis, forest/</td>
<td>to defend own ideas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sentence starters or</td>
<td></td>
<td>fish/kiwis, forest/</td>
<td>deserts)</td>
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<td>sentence frames</td>
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<td>deserts)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>• Asking and</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
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<td>answering questions</td>
<td>• Defend claims or</td>
<td>• Connecting</td>
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<td>in collaborative</td>
<td>opinions on</td>
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<td>groups</td>
<td>content-related</td>
<td>to the remarks of</td>
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<td>issues or problems</td>
<td>others to build a</td>
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<td>Argue by</td>
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<td>case for ideas or</td>
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<td>opinions</td>
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<td>Argue by</td>
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<td>• Summarizing ideas</td>
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<td>or opinions from</td>
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<td>two sides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
## Key Uses of Argue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1</th>
<th>ELP Level 2</th>
<th>ELP Level 3</th>
<th>ELP Level 4</th>
<th>ELP Level 5</th>
<th>ELP Level 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying facts in illustrated informational text read orally</td>
<td>• Distinguishing fact from fiction (e.g., using sentence strips or highlighting texts)</td>
<td>• Identifying different ideas or opinions in written texts</td>
<td>• Identifying general academic and content-related words and phrases in text relevant to the genre/key use (e.g., &quot;once upon a time&quot; indicates a fairy tale)</td>
<td>• Identifying data from written sources to support positions</td>
<td>• Identifying authors’ point of view in texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying language related to ideas, needs, and wants in labeled illustrations</td>
<td>• Identifying claims or opinions in illustrated texts</td>
<td>• Identifying reasoning to strengthen arguments</td>
<td>• Matching opinions to reasons in informational texts and literature</td>
<td>• Evaluating characters, settings, and events from a variety of media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
<td>Argue by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Indicating decisions or preferences through labeled pictures, words, or phrases</td>
<td>• Participating in shared opinion writing experiences</td>
<td>• Connecting preferences, choices, or opinions to reasons</td>
<td>• Communicating different content-related ideas or opinions</td>
<td>• Supporting main ideas or opinions with evidence from texts</td>
<td>• Producing persuasive pieces supported by multiple reasons or details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providing evidence of natural phenomena or opinions through labeled drawings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Describing pros and cons related to social issues or familiar topics</td>
<td>• Providing evidence to support or refute peers’ ideas</td>
<td>• Stating reasoning for content-related choices</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.*
By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
<td>Discuss by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expressing own</td>
<td>• Asking yes or no</td>
<td>• Negotiating</td>
<td>• Expressing own</td>
<td>• Initiating and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideas through drawings, gestures, words and phrases</td>
<td>questions to request clarification</td>
<td>agreement in small groups</td>
<td>ideas and supporting ideas of others</td>
<td>maintaining conversations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expressing</td>
<td>• Recognizing how</td>
<td>• Expressing own</td>
<td>• Proposing new</td>
<td>• Challenging ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreement/disagreement</td>
<td>different intonation</td>
<td>ideas consistent with the topic discussed</td>
<td>solutions to resolve conflict in small groups</td>
<td>respectfully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conversally (e.g., shrugs, eyed brows or down)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Listening to, building, and extending ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except for Level 6, for which there is no ceiling.

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**Acknowledgements**

The development of the Can Do Descriptors represents the work of many educators in the field. WIDA would like to extend its appreciation to everyone who contributed through their expertise to this work, including the staff at the Center for Applied Linguistics for their ongoing partnership and support.

Please visit www.wida.us to view a full list of educators who participated on the development workshop, national experts who shared their expertise in the development process, and those who participated in the review of the Can Do descriptors.

*Version 1.1 8/7/16*
Appendix J

March 6, 2019 e-mail from Kate

Good Morning ladies,

Happy Wednesday!

I was thinking about the video and thought it would be good (since our time is short) for you to view the video before our next meeting.

It's worth the time, (trust me) and then we can discuss during the meeting.

Here is an excerpt from the video that talks about things we have discussed:

https://youtu.be/D6HUv2eFdLg

Here is the longer version...

https://youtu.be/I6Y0HAjLKYI

I have seen this video so many times in many workshops but I can always watch it again since it's so moving.

It truly brings home everything we have discussed through our sessions.

If the links don't work, feel free to let me know.

Thanks,

Kate

ESL District Specialist

Madison Elementary School
Appendix K

Google Slides Document from Session 8

ELL Inquiry Group Takeaways

3/19/19

Background Knowledge

- ELL students’ language is a piece of their identity.
- Language is power.
- We have to provide access to learning for every student.
- ELL students need time to process-
  - They are smart.
  - They are thinking.
  - They cannot communicate these thoughts as quickly or clearly as native English speakers—YET.
Language Input & Language Output

INPUT

SPOKEN

listening

OUTPUT

spaking

WRITTEN

reading

writing

Krashen, 1983

Conversational Language v. Academic Language

Academic language. Cummins (1979) defined academic language as the individual's cognitive, academic language proficiency of a second language. Academic language proficiency has much higher cognitive demands because it includes mastery of instructional and technical vocabulary across content areas (Cummins, 2000). Academic language proficiency can take an additional five to seven years beyond the two years of conversational language development (Cummins, 2000).

Conversational language. Cummins (1979) defined conversational language as the individual's interpersonal communication skills of a second language. Conversational language proficiency has low cognitive demands because it only includes mastery of social vocabulary (Cummins, 1998; Cummins, 2000). Conversational language is usually acquired after two years of being immersed in a second language (Cummins, 2000).
WIDA Levels of Language Proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6 - Reaching | • Specialized or technical language reflective of the content area at grade level.
  • A variety of sentence length and complexity in oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level.
  • Oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers. |
| 5 - Bridging | • Specialized or technical language of the content area.
  • A variety of sentence lengths and complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, reports, or research papers.
  • Oral or written language approaching competency in the English language proficiency level, with extended oral or written discourse. |
| 4 - Expanding | • Specific and sound technical language of the content area.
  • A variety of sentence lengths and complexity in oral or written discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs.
  • Oral or written language with minimal grammatical, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse. |
| 3 - Developing | • General and some specific specific of the content area.
  • Partial understanding of oral or written sentence or paragraphs.
  • Oral or written language with some grammatical, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse. |
| 2 - Beginning | • General language related to the content area.
  • Phrases or short sentences.
  • Oral or written language with minimal grammatical, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse. |
| 1 - Emerging | • Pointed or graphic representation of the language of the content area.
  • Words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with oral or written connected discourse. |

WIDA Rubrics

Use the rubrics to target student conferring and strategy learning goals.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition provides examples of academic language use for four specific communicative purposes. These purposes, referred to as Key Uses, were identified based on reviews of literature and a language analysis of college and career readiness standards:

**Recount:** To display knowledge or narrate experiences or events. Example tasks for the Key Use of Recount include telling or summarizing stories, producing information reports, and sharing past experiences.

**Explain:** To clarify the “why” or the “how” of ideas, actions, or phenomena. Example tasks for the Key Use of Explain include describing life cycles, sharing why or how things work, stating causes and effects, and sharing results of experiments.

**Argue:** To persuade by making claims supported by evidence. Example tasks for the Key Use of Argue include stating preferences or opinions and constructing arguments with evidence.

**Discuss:** To interact with others to build meaning and share knowledge. Example tasks for the Key Use of Discuss include participating in small or large group activities and projects.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition and the example descriptors are not exhaustive but are meant to help guide the planning and conversation around meaningful participation of language learners in standards-based classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
Instructional Practices

Introduce Academic Vocabulary before lessons
Visual Aides
Wait Time
Language Input and Output Opportunities
Introduce concepts in Native Language-Contrastive Analysis
Code-switching
Allow students to speak with their L1 throughout the day.
Buddy them up with a student who speaks the same language.

SLIFEs

If you are concerned about the student’s cognitive ability, ask them to perform educational tasks in their native language.

SLIFEs-Students with Limited Interrupted Formal Education
The Home Connection

Tips for the classroom teacher and assisting Families!

• Look for ways that ELL parents can help even if they have limited English skills. Encourage parents to check homework. Have the ask kids what they learned each day.

• Find ways to communicate with ELL families. Sometimes, this involves a translator.

• Respect Parent Intentions and Encourage Native Language use at home!

• Remember sometimes, the parents education was nothing similar to what we do here so explaining what school is like is helpful.

Linguistically Responsive Teaching

1. *Sociolinguistic consciousness* supports teachers’ understanding of the connection between language, culture, and identity while considering the sociopolitical dimensions of language.

2. The *value for linguistic diversity* challenges teachers’ to reflect upon their own beliefs and attitudes towards ELLs, and language learning in general, forcing teachers to consider how their own dispositions affect their instruction.

3. The *inclination to advocate for ELL students* guides teachers to develop a sense of empathy towards ELLs, and empowers teachers to advocate for them.

4. *Learning about ELL students’ language backgrounds, experiences, and proficiencies* emphasizes the importance of teacher knowledge of their students, but reveals an often overlooked piece of student identity, language.
Linguistically Responsive Teaching

5. *Identifying the language demands of classroom tasks* directs teachers to consider their instruction by constantly analyzing the language they use.

6. *Applying key principles of second language learning* helps teachers understand language acquisition, highlighting the difference between conversational language proficiency and academic language proficiency.

7. Finally, *scaffolding instruction to promote ELL students’ learning* guides teachers to implement developmentally appropriate language scaffolds. Although this framework can be used to prepare teachers who work with ELLs in any capacity, for this investigation we used it specifically as a lens for preparing in-service mainstream teachers of ELLs.
Appendix L

ELL Inquiry Group Reflection Form

Please complete this form by Friday March 22nd.

* Required

1. Describe the ELL Inquiry Group experience. *

2. What did you learn from the ELL inquiry group? *

3. How did you develop professionally? *

4. How did you learn while participating in the ELL inquiry group? *
5. Additional comments.