

ABSTRACT

Helen Lanning Gaskill Simpson, CREATING A LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SPACE FOR LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS: A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH (Under the direction of Dr. Marjorie Campo Ringler). Department of Educational Leadership, May, 2024.

Researchers in the fields of second language acquisition, linguistics, and adolescent literacy have grappled with how to define long-term English learner status, identify their characteristics, and effectively develop their academic language and literacy skills. Foundational to this study, long-term English learner perceptions provided a qualitative window into their in-school academic reading and language development experiences. This qualitative data informed and augmented the design of a literacy and language co-teaching intervention based on the ExC-ELL literacy framework. The co-taught intervention leveraged the skills of an English language arts teacher and the English language development specialist to strengthen academic reading comprehension and academic language. Quantitative data from the intervention yielded some amelioration in reading comprehension. In contrast, academic language results were varied across the individual students. By focusing on English learners' linguistic assets, this study began to shift the broad-brush deficit perspective of long-term English learners at the school level previously perpetuated by deficient academic outcome data. On a more global level, the study challenged ESSA-mandated policy, appealing for alignment of state-defined annual language growth targets with second language acquisition research. This study adds to the scholarship on long-term English learners heretofore largely situated in metropolitan areas of New York, California, and Texas, as well as an expansive quantitative study of 41 states in the WIDA Consortium. The inquiry cast a tightly focused lens on a rural middle school setting, illuminating long-term English learners' literacy and language practices and illustrating both learner agency and individualized need. A pathway forward to further research may be to build

on both long-term English learners' existing literacy practices and linguistic assets in order to develop agentive readers and language learners.

CREATING A LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SPACE FOR LONG-TERM ENGLISH
LEARNERS: A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH

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DEDICATION

It is with great joy that I dedicate this labor of love—my dissertation—to my mother, Lillian Lanning Gaskill, who blazed a trail before me, valuing both education as well as service. She was the youngest person ever in 1941 to be accepted into graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and she subsequently finished her master's in social work at Boston College. She learned the mercy of helping those less fortunate from her parents; during the Depression her parents opened their home to many wandering the highway, looking for work, and would feed them meals. Feeding meals to complete strangers...Mother watched and learned and lived out their legacy in her life's work of social work. Her work ethic and dedication resulted in much success. She earned the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest civilian award in North Carolina, and she served at the pleasure of both Republican and Democratic governors, quite a feat in the arena of public service.

But the true secret of her success was not in the degrees and the awards that she earned, but that she was a servant leader. She had a staff of over 400 at her last position of directing Disability Determination for the State of North Carolina. She would do anything for her staff, and they knew it. And it was a backwards lesson—a lesson in service—the kind of lesson that Jesus taught through a life of service. My mother understood this, and she lived as a servant leader.

Her commitment to both education and servanthood influenced me immeasurably. My career as English Learner Director reflects this same philosophy of service: service to my teachers who are on the front lines and service to our students who bravely embrace education in a language that is new to them. This dissertation in practice embodies not only my commitment to education, but also my commitment to serving to a marginalized population of students:

English learners, and more specifically, the seven long-term English learners in my study. And so, as a scholarly servant, I dedicate this work to my mother, the ultimate role model.

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I extend much gratefulness to my committee: Dr. Karen Jones, Dr. Kathy Spencer, Dr. Marjorie Campo Ringler—my chair, all of East Carolina University, and Dr. Stacy Daniel of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Their willingness to share their expertise and read my dissertation in its entirety is humbling. I appreciate their commitment of time for my sake.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In recognition of the proliferation of multiple home languages in North Carolina, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2016, 2022), under the auspices of the State Board of Education, developed *Language Diversity Reports* and currently publishes this demographic report each spring. The percentage of students who speak a language at home other than English has increased from 15% in 2016 to 18% in 2022. Moreover, the percentage of students still acquiring English, known as English learners, continues to grow in North Carolina, increasing from 6% of the total student population in 2016 to 9% of the total student population in 2022. In Superb Public Schools (a pseudonym for the district), the growth of the English learner population is even stronger; this segment of the population continues to grow while the overall student population is experiencing a downturn. In 2016, Superb Public Schools English learners represented 7.4% of the student population, growing to 8% in 2017, further increasing to 8.8% in 2018, and 9.9% in 2019. In contrast, the English learner population regressed to 9.3% in 2020 and then recovered to 10.1% in 2022. In terms of the formal U.S. educational environment, teachers have faced the challenge of providing access to academic grade-level content while developing English language proficiency for not only students who are immigrants but also students who are born in the United States and speak a language other than English at home. These students are known in contemporary literature as English learners, English language learners, emergent bilinguals, or multilingual learners.

Students who have been classified as English learners for a prolonged amount of time (at least 5 to 7 or more years—this point is debated in the literature and will be discussed more fully) garnered attention in California in a 1999 demonstration project with California Tomorrow (http://www.californiatomorrow.org/?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=idealist) and acquired

the descriptive label, long-term English learners (Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999). The phenomenon of long-term English learner status has persisted, and estimates of the population falling into this category range across time and place: Olsen (2010) reported that 59% of secondary English learners in 40 California districts were long-term, and 23.6% of secondary English learners in Chicago Public Schools were also long-term. New York City Public Schools (2008, as cited in Menken & Kleyn, 2010) claimed one-third of secondary English learners in New York City Schools as long-term. Sahakyan and Ryan (2018) pointed out that these historical statistics focused on long-term English learners who were concentrated in large urban school systems. In response to these population estimates being heavily informed by concentrations of English learners in highly populous metropolitan areas, Sahakyan and Ryan utilized data from across 15 WIDA Consortium, “a U.S. based collaborative of 41 member states, territories and federal agencies,” (<https://wida.wisc.edu/about/mission-history>) states from all quadrants of the United States. They estimated potential long-term English learners in a longitudinal study by hypothesizing a common exit criterion of a 4.5 overall composite on the ACCESS for ELLs (WIDA, 2022a) language proficiency test across states to account for differences in each state’s exit criterion. (This study will be more fully discussed in the literature review.) Drawing from a sample of 166,770 students with at least 6 years of ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency scores, Sahakyan and Ryan (2018) identified students—beginning with kindergarten to Grade 2 enrollees—who would not have met the 4.5 overall ACCESS composite criterion at the end of 6 years. On the average, 13% of English learners in the study would be classified as long-term English learners due to their not having met the hypothetical exit criterion of a 4.5 overall composite score at the end of 6 years. In the face of varying estimates of the long-term English

learner population, Shin (2020) simply described the proportion of long-term English learners as “nonnegligible” (p. 1).

In addition to the high number of long-term English learners, the academic achievement scores of these students are also of concern. Olsen’s (2012, 2014) research indicated grade point averages that were barely passing as long-term English learners progressed through secondary schools. Menken et al. (2012) confirmed similar poor academic achievement in addition to frequent grade retention. Moreover, stalled language proficiency scores are a hallmark of these students, reflecting their inability to exit English learner status (Olsen, 2014).

Background of Problem of Practice

In Superb Public Schools—the rural western North Carolina district that is the setting for my study—quantitative data indicate a problem of practice. Data show steadily increasing percentages of English learners from 2020 to 2022 who would be considered long-term English learners. Students who had not met the state-defined exit criterion of a 4.8 composite ACCESS for ELLs (WIDA, 2022a) language proficiency score after receiving 6 years or more of English learner program services ranged from 26.4% in 2020, 30.1% in 2021, and finally 32.5% in 2022. The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (2015), and the introduction of annual English learner language progress targets in the North Carolina Consolidated State Plan (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017)—targets that I believe are inappropriately designed for secondary level English learners, as linear growth rates for protracted language learners are not supported in research (Cook et al., 2008; Goldschmidt & Hakuta, 2017; Hakuta et al., 2000; Sahakyan & Cook, 2014)—add urgency to the imperative in addressing the growing population of long-term English learners.

In Superb Middle School [a pseudonym], the percentage of middle school English learners meeting the annual language proficiency targets continues to decline from 22.7% in 2018, to 11.6% in 2019, to 6.9% in 2020, and finally decreasing to 4.5% in 2021. Against this background, in 2018, I was tasked by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction with developing a 3-day professional development on reaching long-term English learners. The topic of meeting the needs of long-term English learners thus became an area of keen interest, and my dissertation in practice provides a formal opportunity to address a persistent problem of practice. The increasing percentages of long-term English learners and declining percentages of middle school students meeting language proficiency growth accountability targets, coupled with my previous research and the professional development I designed, have all contributed to create a sense of urgency to address the needs of the long-term English learners.

My study site of Superb Middle School is the middle school with the largest concentration of English learners in Superb Public Schools at nearly 24% of the total student population. The grade level on which I have decided to focus is Grade 8, as my intervention is designed to not only enable students to meet annual English language development progress targets but also to enable students to attain an ACCESS for ELLs (WIDA, 2022a) exit-level score (4.8 or higher overall composite) before they enroll in high school, thereby shedding the label of long-term English learner.

While the quantitative data from Superb Middle School attest to historic academic deficits, rather than acceding to deficit viewpoints of English learners (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020), my study is grounded in an asset-based perspective. An asset-based perspective is driven by valuing students' diverse linguistic and literacy profiles (Brooks, 2020; García & Kleifgen, 2019; Kley & García, 2019). As I more fully explore in the literature review, translanguaging,

whereby students utilize their entire language repertoires, will be brought to bear in classroom practices embedded in my intervention, thus valuing language and literacy that extend beyond English-only practices. Translanguaging recognizes the diversity of language and literacy practices in Superb Middle School.

Context of Study

The students in Superb Middle School present a range of linguistic profiles including nine home languages other than English. These home languages range from a Romance-based language (Spanish) to indigenous Central American dialects (Aguacateco, Mayan, Mam, and Kanjobal) to Germanic languages (German) to southeast Asian languages (Hmong and Cambodian or Khmer) and Chinese. In Superb Public Schools, Spanish speakers represent an overwhelming majority at 89% of speakers of non-English home languages. Aguacateco, a Central American dialect represents a distant second at 4%, followed by Mayan at 3%, and Hmong at 1%. The languages of students in Superb Middle School largely parallel the languages spoken in Superb Public Schools. Spanish is the most prevalent language other than English at 74%. The second most prevalent language is Hmong at 18%, followed by Mayan at 2% and Aguacateco at 1.4%.

Language diversity provides a window into students who are still learning English. For students who speak Central American dialects at home and have attended school in Central America, English is a third language, as Spanish is the language of schooling in Central America. For most students, English is a second language; students learn content while acquiring English, arguably doubling their cognitive load compared to native English speakers (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). English language learners represent a subset of students who have a home language other than English. Forty-three percent (43%) of Superb Middle School students who

have a home language other than English are still acquiring the language, whereas 57% are considered English proficient by either a. previously achieving exiting scores on the ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency assessment (WIDA, 2022a) or b. by entering school as fully English proficient on the WIDA Screener language assessment (WIDA, 2022c) utilized by North Carolina for initial language status identification purposes.

The English learner subgroup performance sheds further light on the study context of Superb Middle School. Content achievement gaps between all students and English learners have persisted over time, with English language arts (ELA) historically exhibiting the largest differential across subjects—perhaps not surprisingly, as English learners are still acquiring the language. In 2016-17, approximately 53% of all students at Superb Middle School were proficient in ELA, and 53% were proficient in mathematics. By contrast, 13% of English learners were proficient in mathematics, representing a 40% achievement gap, and less than 5% were proficient in ELA, representing an achievement gap of at least 47%. In 2017-18, while academic achievement gaps between all students and English learners appeared to be considerably decreased in comparison to prior years, this anomaly was subsequently attributed to faulty data processing at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) level. In 2018-19, 51% of all students at Superb Middle School were proficient in ELA, and 52% were proficient in mathematics. By comparison, only 9% of English learners at the study site were proficient in ELA, and only 15% were proficient in mathematics, yielding academic achievement gaps of 42% and 37%, respectively. In 2019-20, accountability testing was waived by the federal government due to the impact of COVID-19 on formal learning contexts. The most recent achievement data demonstrate that English learner academic achievement gaps continued in 2020-21; however, the academic achievement gaps are not as large as earlier gaps. Student

proficiency rates were down for the accountability-defined subgroup of all students at Superb Middle School, perhaps reflecting pandemic-impacted education characterized by hybrid educational settings and rotating attendance for direct face-to-face instruction. All students at Superb Middle School were 28% proficient in mathematics and 34% in ELA. English learner proficiencies were <5% in mathematics, and <5% in ELA. Hence, English learner academic achievement gaps were respectively at least 23% in mathematics and at least 29% in ELA. Persistent academic achievement gaps between all students and English learners at Superb Middle School are indicative of unequal academic outcomes.

My study at Superb Middle School aligns with the North Carolina Superintendent Standards goal of “re-imagining the district’s vision, mission, and goals to ensure that every student graduates from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2007, p. 3). This vision implicitly acknowledges the assets of English learners by envisioning student success that is globally situated. Emergent bilinguals represented by English learners and full bilinguals are poised for this global stage far more than monolingual students. Moreover, the belief statements of Superb Public Schools reflect the goal of creating equitable academic opportunities for students with a focus on social justice. The vision and the belief statements speak powerfully in tandem to the need to develop robust learning opportunities for emergent bilinguals or English learners, particularly those at the middle school level. Creative and robust learning opportunities are crucial for the acceleration of English learner academic achievement. My study is poised to impact not only the English language progress accountability targets, as well as lessening the academic achievement gap for English learners, but also to produce

bilingual citizens who are career and college ready, impacting the future economy and community of Superb Public Schools.

Focus of Problem of Practice

The focus of my study is a literacy and language co-teaching intervention with the reading specialist and the English language development specialist, with particular focus on strengthening reading comprehension and targeted English language development support, creating metalinguistic awareness for student language growth. My study is grounded in the creation of a supportive literacy learning environment that recognizes the social nature of reading, attending to classroom pedagogy rather than alleged deficits within students (Brooks, 2015, 2020). The ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) will be utilized in instruction toward the end of strengthening reading comprehension, increasing student-to-student interaction, building vocabulary, and fostering English language development. The grade 8 students will be selected for the co-teaching class based on long-term English learner status (classified as an English learner for 6 years or more) and scoring at the lower end of the reading domain of ACCESS for ELLs (WIDA, 2022a) continuum. As the long-term English learner population continues to grow in Superb Public Schools, the percentage of English learners meeting accountability language progress targets continues to decline, and the academic achievement gap for English learners persists, these factors coalesce into an urgent call for intervention at the local site.

Literature also painted a portrait of academic deficits accrued by long-term English learners. Poor academic outcomes were informed by low grades and frequent retention at the secondary level in New York City Schools and California schools (Menken et al., 2012; Olsen, 2012). Moreover, limited academic literacy in both English and the home language continued to

surface in the literature as a descriptor of long-term English learners (Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Menken et al., 2012; Olsen, 2014). Limited literacy skills were also coupled with the inability to exit annual English language proficiency assessments (Thompson, 2015). Kibler et al. (2018) further underscored long-term English learners' struggle to make progress on the annual language proficiency assessment. Summative outcome data all pointed to the deficit framing of long-term English learners, which is also evidenced at the study site.

However, the literature reflected a shift in the perceptions of long-term English learners from a broad-brush deficit perspective informed by academic outcome data to one of close examination of individual context. Various qualitative case studies have illuminated individual profiles of long-term English learners, revealing complex and nuanced language use (Brooks, 2018; Flores et al., 2015; Menken & Kleyn, 2010). In particular, Brooks (2015, 2018, 2020) investigated the academic reading practices of long-term English learners. Brooks (2015, 2020) called for a more holistic understanding of English learner literacy, highlighting students' individual literacy learning and language development histories. Brooks drew from the perspective of literacy as a social practice, probing long-term English learners' reading practices in various sociocultural settings, such as in the classroom and in formal standardized assessments. Rather than attributing academic reading standardized outcomes to a lack of English language proficiency, Brooks asserted that academic reading standardized outcomes are more a reflection of academic schooling than simply English language proficiency.

My study extends the work of Brooks (2015, 2018, 2020), focusing on long-term English learners and their perceived experience with academic reading as well as English language development abilities and accompanying support. Their experiences and perceptions of academic reading and language development will, in turn, inform the development of a reading and

language co-teaching intervention in partnership with the English language development specialist and the reading specialist at the study site. The reading and language co-teaching intervention also extends the work of Calderón (2007) and Calderón and Slakk (2018), focusing on high-yield literacy strategies of partner reading and summarizing, student-to-student interaction, and vocabulary development. Teacher levels of implementation of the literacy and language co-teaching intervention focusing on strengthening reading comprehension and targeting English language development will be assessed. Finally, formative measures of academic reading comprehension and English language development proficiency of long-term English learners will be assessed both pre-intervention and post-intervention. If the intervention produces desirable outcomes, then the intervention will be replicated in the future. A potential implication beyond the study site would be a direction for co-teaching in district language instruction education plans. English language development specialists would co-teach not just in traditional content areas such as English language arts and mathematics but also in Title I Reading. Additionally, a focus on professional development utilizing the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) could be replicated in additional secondary schools in Superb Public Schools. In districts featuring long-term English learner populations that continue to increase, this study may provide direction for the provision of effective services to meet the literacy and language needs and hence “unstick” plateaued reading domain scores and overall composite language proficiency scores.

The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods study is to examine the characteristics of long-term English learner students together with their perceptions of in-school academic reading and academic language development in order to craft an intervention designed to “unstick” plateaued reading comprehension and English language development. English

learner students' perceptions will provide a qualitative window into their in-school academic reading and academic language development to inform and augment my design and implementation of a literacy and language co-teaching intervention utilizing the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) designed to strengthen academic reading comprehension and English academic language development support. A quantitative phase will follow the exploratory phase and the instructional intervention to address levels of teacher implementation of the literacy and language co-teaching intervention. Subsequent to assessing teacher levels of implementation, in the quantitative phase, I will continue to measure the extent to which the literacy and language co-teaching intervention impacted students' academic reading comprehension and English language development at the study site through pre-intervention and post-intervention formative assessments. My study is situated at a rural western North Carolina middle school where the diverse linguistic practices mirror those of the community.

Problem of Practice Study Questions

As I endeavor to create change through designing and implementing a literacy and language co-teaching intervention, both qualitative and quantitative data are important to my exploratory sequential mixed methods study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The exploratory portion of my study is underpinned by two qualitative questions, whereas the portion of my study subsequent to the intervention is undergirded by two quantitative questions. Drawing on the social nature of reading perspective, (Brooks, 2015, 2020) the following qualitative research questions underpin my exploratory data collection:

1. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their experiences of academic reading?

2. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their academic English language abilities and accompanying language support?

Following my analysis of the qualitative input, I will craft an intervention, utilizing the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), and leveraging students' metalinguistic awareness while building reading comprehension and developing English academic language. I will provide professional development to the reading specialist and the English language development specialist co-teachers regarding the ExC-ELL literacy framework as well as how to build students' metalinguistic awareness. Roles of co-teaching with a focus on reading comprehension and language development will be discussed and supported through observations and feedback.

Levels of implementation of the literacy and language co-teaching intervention will be addressed quantitatively both before and after my professional development. For example, lessons will be analyzed for lesson delivery components that build reading comprehension and academic language development, e.g., lesson delivery components of the ExC-ELL framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) —including partner reading and summarizing, student-to-student interaction, vocabulary development, and scaffolding for English language development.

A quantitative question will address the level of implementation by teachers:

3. What is the level of implementation of the literacy and language co-teaching intervention as measured by observational rating scales focused on lesson delivery components strengthening reading comprehension and academic language development?

Moreover, considering the co-teaching intervention and utilizing pre-intervention and post- intervention formative assessment data, the following quantitative question undergirds my analysis of formative academic outcomes at the study site:

4. To what extent does the literacy and language co-teaching intervention, designed subsequent to the findings of research questions 1 and 2, as implemented by the reading specialist and English language development specialist, improve formative measures of reading comprehension and academic language for long-term English learners at Superb Middle School?

Overview of Inquiry

In response to the research questions posed, I will utilize an exploratory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I will conduct this mixed methods study to understand more fully English learner long-term status and the role of student perceptions of both academic reading and English academic language development. I will subsequently develop a literacy and language co-teaching intervention that is informed by the qualitative phase and then analyze the impacts of the intervention using a quantitative phase. I will begin with participants in the study—Grade 8 long-term English learners at the selected middle school and explore their experiences and views regarding in-school academic reading and English academic language development support. The purpose of Phase I is to a. collect ethnographic information on students’ language use, b. compile baseline information about the participants, and c. understand the following regarding the problem of practice through semi-structured interviews:

- a. What is the role of academic reading in determining long-term English learner status?
- b. What is the role of English language development instructional and program practices in long-term English learner status?

My justification for beginning with students' responses is rooted in my observation that educators tend to identify a problem of practice without asking the students about the problem. Moreover, student views and perspectives will help inform the intervention I subsequently design. Specifically, the participant views regarding academic reading and English language development support will assist me in developing the key elements of the literacy and language co-teaching intervention.

While building on the findings from my initial qualitative research, the subsequent focus of my study in Phase II will remain a literacy and language co-teaching intervention involving the reading specialist and the English language development specialist, with a particular focus on strengthening reading comprehension and targeting English language development support. Components of the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) will be leveraged to build reading comprehension and academic language. The subsequent Phase III of my study will initially entail a quantitative analysis of the level of implementation of the intervention as implemented by teachers. The quantitative phase will then culminate in an analysis of academic reading comprehension and English language development proficiency through pre- and post-intervention formative measures in order to determine the impact of the intervention for the Grade 8 long-term English learners. Should the intervention I design be associated with improved outcomes, I will implement it for the non-intervention group at Superb Middle School and the other middle schools in Superb Public Schools in the future to avoid unfairly depriving these students of the benefits.

I will evaluate the level of implementation of the literacy and language co-teaching intervention by utilizing rating scales to examine lesson plans and observe the delivery of lessons. I will also evaluate the outcome of my intervention by reference to formative data

collection of students' pre- and post-intervention measures of academic reading comprehension and academic English language development proficiency. Additionally, interim data such as growth on STAR™ reading assessments (Renaissance Learning, 2015) across quarters will provide ongoing feedback. The overarching questions I will address in the quantitative phase are twofold: First, what is the level of implementation of the literacy and language co-teaching intervention implemented by the reading specialist and the English language development specialist as measured through rating scales of the observed lesson delivery components? Second, to what extent does the literacy and language co-teaching intervention provided by the reading specialist and the English language development specialist improve formative measures of academic reading comprehension and academic English language proficiency for long-term English learners at Superb Middle School?

In summary, I envisage three phases. Phase I, a qualitative research phase, represents a purposeful student invitation process whereby administrators and specialists serving long-term English learners at the study site determine enrollment in the intervention through a co-taught reading and English language development class. Phase I also involves an exploration of long-term English learner perceptions of academic reading experiences and English language development abilities and support. Phase II represents the quantitative collection of pre-professional development teacher levels of implementation of reading comprehension support and English language development support. Subsequently the professional development regarding the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) supplemented with a focus on metalinguistic awareness and growth will be delivered. The instructional intervention will be further informed by qualitative data collection. Phase III will include an assessment of the level of implementation of the literacy and language development

co-teaching intervention by the reading and English language development specialists to determine the effectiveness of the associated professional development and the perceived level of success with the implementation of the intervention. Phase III also contains the associated quantitative assessment of students' intervention outcomes. Formative measures of academic reading and English language development proficiency will be assessed both pre-intervention and post-intervention. The sequential research phases are illustrated in Figure 1, delineating Phases I-III.

Inquiry Partners

In order to explore long-term English learner perceptions, design a reading and English language development co-teaching intervention, utilizing the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), as well as evaluate the intervention's effectiveness, collaboration with numerous inquiry partners is necessary. The principal at the selected study site is a key player, collaborating on logistics, scheduling, invitation of students, and the intervention design. The principal and I reflected on current levels of co-teaching with the reading specialist and the English language development specialist as well as their current instructional practices in both reading comprehension and English language development. Critical to the study are the co-teaching inquiry partners of both the reading and English language development specialists who bring to bear years of experience in instruction and a willingness to learn and adapt instructional practices through professional development and collaboration. Another key participant is the ExC-ELL trainer who is a member of the NCDPI English Language Development Support Team and a current middle school English language development specialist in another North Carolina district. Partnerships from the district level to the school level and finally the student level will

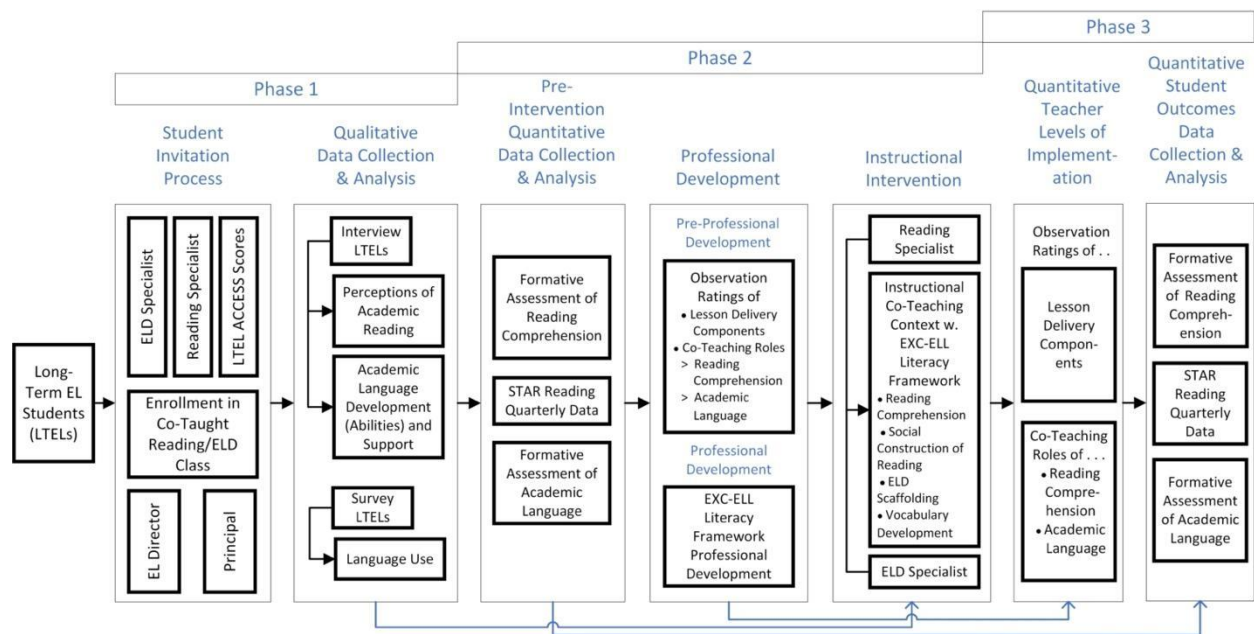


Figure 1. Sequence of research phases.

provide input into the design, implementation, and analysis of the study. A research journal documenting collaboration will be kept.

Theoretical Framework

Undergirding my study is a transformative theoretical approach (Mertens, 2009, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Sweetman et al., 2010, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Mertens (2009, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 69) introduced transformative themes within mixed methods studies “challenging oppressive social structures,” incorporating trust within the studied community, and utilizing study results to effect social change. Sweetman et al. (2010, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018), further developed a set of questions or criteria to assess a transformative lens operationalized within a mixed methods study. The criteria described a. the researcher explicitly documenting the use of a transformative framework, b. the delineation of a problem of practice within a marginalized group, c. the infusion of an advocacy lens throughout the study, d. reflections regarding oppression of the studied group, e. active engagement of the study participants, f. illumination of power imbalances between the studied group and society, g. the accrual of benefits to the studied community, and ultimately, h. the effecting of social change.

Considering the Sweetman et al. (2010, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018) criteria in my study, I have explicitly declared a transformative theoretical approach embedded within my mixed methods study. The problem of practice presented by the protracted nature of long-term English learner status applies to a marginalized group of English learners and is explicitly defined and described through plateaued reading achievement scores and language proficiency scores. Building an advocacy lens for the long-term English learner population is supported through scholarship and elucidated within my study, underscoring oppression via deficit framing

of English learners (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020), and the labeling of the long-term English learners and its stigmatizing effects (Brooks, 2020; Kibler et al., 2018; Thompson, 2015). Moreover, the long-term English learner's voice is crucial in designing an instructional intervention that meets their unique educational needs for building literacy and language and will be incorporated via interviews in the qualitative phase. My intervention will thus be designed to facilitate long-term English learner students' attainment of annual growth benchmarks toward English language proficiency and eventually their exit from English learner status, thereby effecting social change through successful academic outcomes. Specifically, the ExC-ELL literacy framework will be leveraged in a co-teaching intervention facilitated by the English language development specialist and the reading specialist to strengthen reading comprehension and academic language development; the intervention will be augmented by long-term English learners' perceptions toward reading and academic language development. Moreover, a language and literacy learning space within the co-taught class will be expanded through the opportunity to utilize translanguaging in constructing text meaning, fluidly moving between languages and leveraging long-term English learners' multilingual assets. I will juxtapose scholarship regarding the language growth trajectories of English learners across time (Cook et al., 2008; Goldschmidt & Hakuta, 2017; Hakuta et al., 2000; Sahakyan & Cook, 2014) against the actual North Carolina growth-to-target trajectory of language development. The resulting imbalance of power as operationalized through an English-dominant society is further delineated in literature and highlighted in my study. Thus, the goal of my language and literacy intervention is to facilitate social change through creating successful academic outcomes, as well as challenging the accepted portrayal of how successful outcomes involving English language proficiency may be attained as detailed in scholarship and operationalized through monoglossic educational policy

(Brooks, 2018; Fu, 2021). The transformative theoretical framework guiding my study is illustrated in Figure 2 and represents a comprehensive instructional approach that considers long-term English learners' attitudes toward reading and language development, a co-teaching model that must include the English language development specialist and the reading specialist, as well as ExC-ELL literacy pedagogies tailored to middle school language learners.

Definition of Key Terms

Key terms are identified that are salient to the context of my study and to the scholarship in the literature review regarding long-term English learners. These key terms are defined in order to develop a shared understanding and provide a point of reference for the reader.

ACCESS for ELLs — “The collective name for WIDA’s suite of summative English language proficiency assessments. ACCESS is taken annually by English language learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12 in WIDA Consortium member states” (WIDA, 2022a, ACCESS for Els section, para. 1). The assessment measures language proficiency in the four domains of language: (1) listening (2) reading (3) speaking (4) writing.

Co-teaching — Two or more teachers sharing classroom space in addition to sharing responsibility for collaborative lesson planning, instructing, and assessing English learners (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010).

English Language Development — Instruction designed to develop the four domains of English language: (1) listening (2) reading (3) speaking (4) writing (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2017).

English learner — A student who has a home language other than English and is still acquiring English language; the designation of English learner is determined by a state-approved

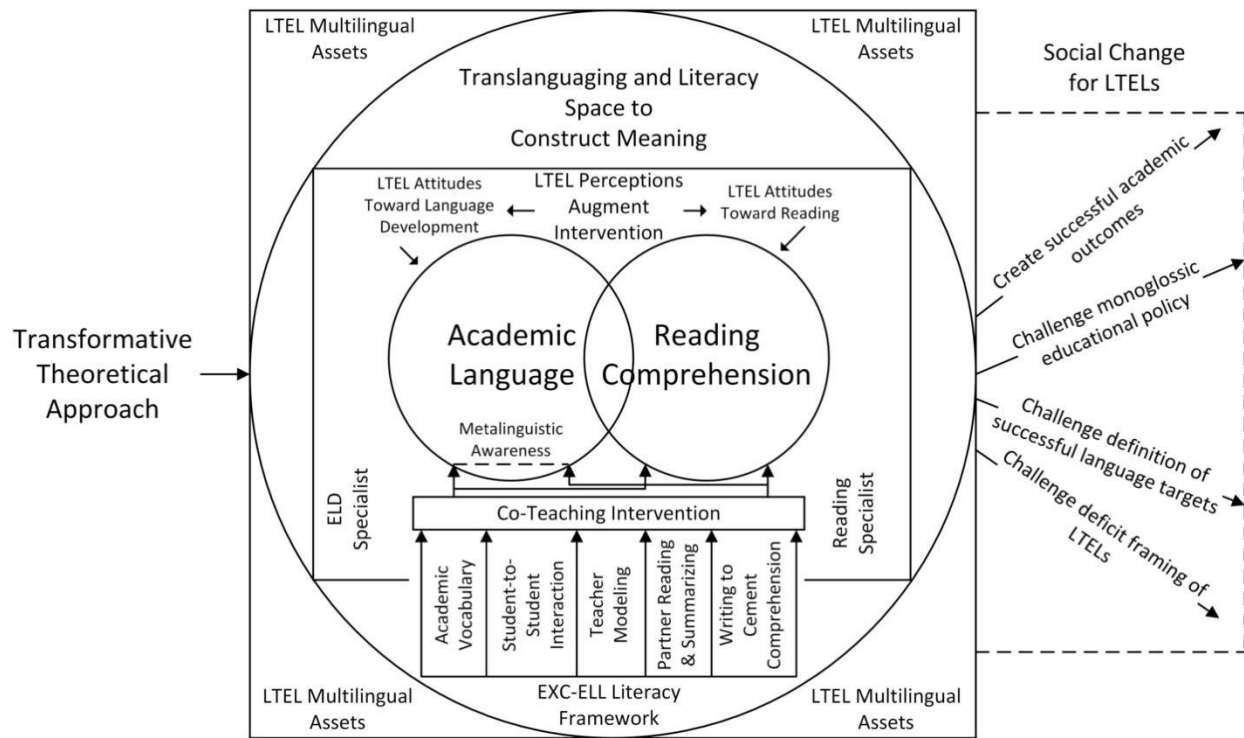


Figure 2. Transformative theoretical approach.

assessment of English language proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2017).

ESEA — Elementary and Secondary Education Act is federal legislation that governed K-12 education and has been reauthorized and updated regularly since its inception. ESEA “was signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who believed that ‘full educational opportunity’ should be ‘our first national goal.’ From its inception, ESEA was a civil rights law” (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

ESSA — Every Student Succeeds Act reauthorizes the ESEA and is legislation designed to provide a quality K-12 education and close achievement gaps (ESSA 20 U.S.C. § 6301).

Long-term English learner — Students who have not attained English language proficiency after five years from initial identification. This definition stems from non-regulatory guidance set forth by the U.S. Department of Education (2016). The length of time to qualify as a long-term English learner is debated in the literature and will be discussed in the literature review (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Monoglossic View — A way of thinking that only values monolingualism, based on the language of the dominant society, and ignores other languages (García & Torres-Guevara, 2010).

One-Way Dual Language Program — An educational program that instructs content and literacy through two languages whereby the majority of the students are “linguistically homogeneous”, e.g., all students may be native English speakers, or all students may be native Spanish speakers (Howard et al., 2018, p. 3).

Overall Composite ACCESS Score — The weighted composite language proficiency score of all four language domains, using the following weighting scheme: (1) 35% reading

domain (2) 35% writing domain (3) 15% listening domain (4) 15% speaking domain (WIDA, 2022a).

Social Nature of Reading — Text comprehension is mediated through social interaction with others and is a “socially situated cultural practice” (Brooks, 2015, 2020, p. 401).

*STAR Reading*TM - “An assessment of reading comprehension and skills for independent readers through grade 12. STAR Reading tracks development in five domains: (1) word knowledge and skills (2) comprehension strategies and constructing meaning (3) analyzing literary text (4) understanding author’s craft (5) analyzing argument and evaluating text” (Renaissance Learning, 2015, p. 2).

Title III Part A, the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act – is a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). The purpose of Title III is to improve the education of English learners so that they may attain English proficiency and meet challenging state academic and content standards (Lhamon & Gupta, 2015).

Translanguaging – the fluid use of all linguistic resources by a multilingual as a single linguistic repertoire rather than separate autonomous language systems (Otheguy et al., 2015, as cited in García & Kleifgen, 2019).

Two-Way Dual Language Program — An educational program that instructs content and literacy through two languages whereby half of the students are native speakers of the society’s dominant language and half of the students are native speakers of the partner language (Howard et al., 2018).

WIDA — A consortium of 41 states, territories, and federal agencies whose purpose is to research and design standards for K-12 English learners (WIDA, 2022b).

WIDA Screener — A language proficiency assessment designed to initially identify students who have a home language other than English and are still learning English, i.e., are not fully English proficient (WIDA, 2022c).

Assumptions

An assumption within the context of my study is that my semi-structured interview questions will elicit reliable responses, and correspondingly, participants will respond honestly. Every attempt will be made to ensure a well-designed interview instrument that will yield reliable responses. Moreover, another assumption embedded in my qualitative inquiry is that coding and subsequent teasing out of themes from interview data will create a window into individual perceptions of their in-school academic reading and academic language development experiences. Assumptions regarding the quantitative inquiry phase entail the reliability of the formative assessments utilized with teachers and students. Consistent application of the rating scales involving observed lesson delivery components is assumed, as there will be multiple observations of lessons. Apart from assumptions revolving around inquiry methods, I, as the researcher, will facilitate the intervention practices in a consistent manner. Finally, it is assumed that the reading specialist and the English language development specialist will collaborate cooperatively to co-plan and co-deliver reading and language instruction to the long-term English learner study group, as well as participate in professional development underpinning the intervention, and consistently apply this learning in their instruction.

Scope and Delimitations

My inquiry will engage a subset of the subgroup of English learners; as previously discussed, the qualitative portion of the study focuses on the characteristics and perceptions of in-school reading and English academic language development for long-term English learners.

For the purposes of this study, the student invitation process will only include students who have been classified as English learners for 6 years or more and who are scoring at the lower end of the continuum of the reading ACCESS for ELLs (WIDA, 2022a) domain subtest. This highly targeted and specific population would exclude other long-term English learners who are performing at higher reading levels as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency test. Within this specific population, students will be randomly selected for the study.

One of the two English language development specialists will be included in the study; the other specialist serves newcomer students in small classes and will also serve a group of long-term English learner students who do not initially experience the intervention. So as to avoid spillover effect, there will be no discussion of the intervention between the two English language development specialists. While this may be difficult to avoid, as these teachers naturally collaborate, the intended positive outcomes should be motivation to embargo the design and implementation of the intervention.

Significance of Inquiry

As stated previously, the long-term English learner population continued to grow at Superb Middle School from 2018 to 2021. During that same period, decreasing percentages of students were meeting ESSA-mandated annual language growth targets (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Additionally, steadily increasing percentages of English learners were scoring at the lower end of the continuum of the ACCESS for ELLs reading domain subtest (WIDA, 2022a). Of these students scoring at the lower end of the ACCESS for ELLs continuum in reading, approximately two-thirds of those students were long-term English learners. This percentage has remained stable from 2018-2021. Students' prolonged classification as an English learner

accompanied with stagnating reading scores signaled a persistent problem of practice at Superb Middle School.

In spite of these historic deficit results, my inquiry aims to create successful academic reading and language outcomes. Moreover, reframing long-term English learners as valued multilingual learners with nuanced practices of language use will be highlighted throughout the intervention implementation at Superb Middle School. My intervention also seeks to assist students in shedding the label, long-term English learner by attaining English proficiency through an intervention targeted at strengthening reading comprehension and academic language development. I believe that creating successful academic outcomes, meeting language proficiency annual growth targets and hence shedding the label of long-term English learner will facilitate social change, opening opportunities to learn for multilingual learners. Even if intervention results are not as strong as I predict, advances in social justice are anticipated through developing an asset-based perspective on long-term English learners.

Advancing Equity and Social Justice

An English-dominant society with monoglossic views define English proficient thresholds, i.e., exit criteria through state educational policy (Brooks, 2018). For increasing percentages of English learners, this exit target is elusive. Not only is my study designed to create successful reading and language outcomes at Superb Middle School, but my inquiry also questions accountability-defined growth targets and seeks to bring attention to a more appropriately defined research-based model.

Moreover, framing students from an asset-based perspective rather than a deficit-based perspective will contribute to advancing social justice. Imputing value to a diverse body of languages, by including all languages in Superb Middle School's classroom learning spaces will

create a linguistic equity, challenging the monoglossic views of society. Moreover, translanguaging—the fluid use of all linguistic resources by multilinguals, not bounded by linguistic codes of grammar, syntax, or semiotics—at Superb Middle School will assign value to language and meaning-making practices unique to multilingual learners that are beyond institutionalized school practices (García & Kleifgen, 2019). Inherent in the design of the mixed methods study is the incorporation of English learner voices in augmenting and refining the intervention. Viewing the students as “co-researchers” (Patton, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018) seeks to assign value to long-term English learner perceptions and further contributes to an asset-based perspective.

Advances in Practice

I believe that my study will shine a light on this highly specific group of long-term English learners who have heretofore been studied in specific states, such as New York, California, Texas, and Arizona (Sahakyan & Ryan, 2018), and thus broaden the inquiry. The intervention seeks to create a shared sense of responsibility amongst reading and language development specialists in leveraging components of the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) and creating metalinguistic awareness through validating all language resources to effect improved literacy and language outcomes. Additionally, a focus on all linguistic resources of multilingual students creates a space for the complex process of making meaning through multiple languages in multiple ways, “opening up the study of literacy” (García & Kleifgen, 2019, p. 559). Finally, the asset-based focus on long-term English learners’ varied, complex, and nuanced language practices will be shared school-wide, elevating the multilinguistic assets of these students.

Summary

Researchers in the fields of second language acquisition, linguistics, and adolescent literacy have grappled with how to define long-term English learner status, identify their characteristics, and effectively instruct them while growing their academic language and literacy skills. Superb Middle School, a rural western North Carolina middle school, represents not only the largest percentage of long-term English learners of middle schools in the district but a continually increasing percentage, as well. In light of increasing percentages of long-term English learners, persistent academic achievement gaps, and stagnating language proficiency scores, the data clamor for amelioration.

The focus of my study remains a literacy and language co-teaching intervention with a particular focus on strengthening reading comprehension and targeting academic language development. My study questions are formulated to address long-term English learners' perceptions of in-school academic reading experiences and academic language support. Responses to these questions will qualitatively inform and augment the literacy and language intervention that I will implement during Phase I. I, along with a colleague, will provide professional development in Phase II to the reading and English language development co-teachers based on components of the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) and the social nature of reading perspective (Brooks, 2015, 2020). In Phase III, I will conduct a quantitative study question that will address levels of implementation of the language and literacy co-teaching intervention using observational rating scales. In a final quantitative question in Phase III, I will address long-term English learners' academic outcomes subsequent to my intervention, comparing pre- and post-intervention formative measures of reading comprehension and academic language development. Infused throughout my mixed

methods exploratory sequential study is a transformative approach (Mertens, 2009, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Sweetman et al., 2010, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The transformative approach prioritizes social change through the facilitation of successful academic outcomes, questioning the oppression of English learners through an English-dominant society that defines language proficiency, and reframing deficit thinking regarding English learners' academic trajectories.

Inquiry partners at the district and school level, both professionals and students, are critical to the implementation of my study. Support from the superintendent and the assistant superintendent will be key to my conducting of research at Superb Middle School. As the researcher, I, in turn, will support not only the inquiry partners, but also the readers in furnishing definitions that have specific meaning within the context of long-term English learners, related policy, and aspects of language instruction educational programs.

Assumptions are a necessary part of my inquiry. As discussed previously, I will assume that long-term English learners will respond truthfully in semi-structured interviews. Additionally, I will assume that the teasing out of codes and themes will clarify long-term English learners' perceptions of in-school academic reading experiences and academic language development support experiences. Finally, consistent application of the professional development within the reading and English language development co-taught class is assumed along with collaboration between the reading specialist and the English language development specialist to share the responsibility of instruction.

The scope encompasses Superb Middle School's Grade 8 long-term English learners, scoring at the lower end of the ACCESS reading continuum. Of this highly specific population, 16 students (a typical enrollment cap for a reading class) will be randomly selected to participate

in the language and literacy co-taught intervention. Additionally, one of the two English language development specialists will participate in the study. The selection of one English language development specialist will necessitate an embargoed design to avoid creating a spill-over effect into the other English language development classes.

Significance of the inquiry is multi-faceted. If successful academic outcomes are achieved by long-term English learners, students may meet annual English language development growth targets, and they may exit English learner classification altogether, shedding a deficit-based label. As discussed previously, my study seeks to bring an asset-based perspective regarding long-term English learners to the teachers at Superb Middle School, in an effort to create positive social change. My study will bring attention to the inappropriateness of the design of annual language growth targets, as the North Carolina growth-to-target model does not reflect English learner growth patterns as documented in literature (Cook et al., 2008; Goldschmidt & Hakuta, 2017; Hakuta et al., 2000; Sahakyan & Cook, 2014). Finally, I will challenge standards of English proficiency set by a monoglossic English society for multilingual learners through a lens of social justice.

The context of Superb Middle School represents a rural microcosm of long-term English learners whose characteristics, educational literacy, and language needs may reflect the district or simply its own local context. On a broader scale, inquiry of long-term English learners across time and place is examined in my literature review, bringing to light the work of researchers in metropolitan areas of California, New York, and Texas, as well as across the WIDA consortium from all four quadrants of the United States. Themes of strengthening reading comprehension, improving oracy, adding practices of translanguageing, and developing academic language are woven throughout the literature and will be examined.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Deficient academic outcome data signaled a problem of practice in the context of Superb Middle School's long-term English learners' literacy and academic language standardized metrics. In light of these academic outcomes, the purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) is to examine the characteristics of long-term English learner students together with their perceptions of in-school academic reading and academic language development in order to craft an intervention designed to "unstick" plateaued reading comprehension and English language development. My inquiry draws from the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) with a focus on strengthening reading comprehension, increasing student-to-student interaction, developing vocabulary, and building academic language. My inquiry further draws from the social perspective of reading (Brooks, 2015, 2020) where making meaning with text is mediated by social interaction in specific sociocultural settings and will be informed by long-term English learner perspectives. Moreover, an asset-based perspective permeates my study, focusing on multilingual assets and nuanced language practices. Specifically, aspects of translanguageing are incorporated, fostering fluid use of linguistic resources to make meaning in learning spaces (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Kleyn & García, 2019). A transformative approach (Mertens, 2009, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Sweetman et al., 2010, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018) guides my literature review, moving from a historical deficit perspective of long-term English learners to one of a contemporary asset-based lens. Additionally, monoglossic educational policy and the definition of successful annual language targets are challenged as a part of the transformative framework by examining research that counters such policy. The advancement of social change for long-term English learners will be accomplished through

creating successful academic achievement outcomes coupled with challenging deficit perspectives and monoglossic educational policy.

Long-Term English Learners: A Definition

Historical Definition

Researchers in the fields of second language acquisition, linguistics, and adolescent literacy grapple with the definition of a long-term English learner (Brooks, 2018; Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Kibler & Valdes, 2016). Research questions in numerous studies have been designed to identify, characterize, and discover commonalities among long-term English learners (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Olsen, 2010). Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) in conjunction with California Tomorrow (shorturl.at/aFHT7) and partners, categorized learners of English as a second language in either middle or high schools according to distinct educational needs, prompted by varying linguistic and literacy profiles and educational backgrounds. The typologies that they developed spanned a variety of English learner profiles: recent arrival immigrant students, accelerated college-bound English learner students, under-schooled English learners with interrupted formal education, and long-term English learners. The typology of a long-term English learner was portrayed by Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) as having been enrolled in “United States schools 7+ years...are orally fluent in English...but reading and writing below grade level, and have some literacy in the primary language, or not” (p. 214). This first published definition has endured across the recent past and across researchers, referencing years of matriculation and social oral linguistic skills coupled with limited literacy skills (Menken & Kleyn, 2010).

Evolving Definition

Various researchers have added to the body of defining features of a long-term English

learner while still maintaining a focus on oracy and literacy, as delineated by Olsen and Jaramillo (1999). Menken and Kleyn (2010) defined long-term English learners simply as “students who have attended schools in the USA for seven or more years and still require language support services” (p. 399), citing years of enrollment and educational needs. Menken et al. (2012) expanded the definition to include oral bilingualism for social purposes while maintaining the notion of “limited academic literacy in English and their native languages” (p. 121). Thompson (2015) extended the definition of long-term English learners from years of enrollment to include the construct of language proficiency testing and the inability of long-term English learners to meet the accompanying exit criteria thresholds. Kibler et al. (2018) also referred to the combination of language proficiency scores and the inability to meet exit criteria but also introduced the notion of lack of growth on standardized language proficiency assessments.

However, contemporary literature does not support this tightly defined view of long-term English learners. Brooks (2018) challenged these earlier definitions of long-term English learners that reflected a “singular linguistic and literate profile” (p. 223) and similar unsuccessful academic outcomes. Brooks further challenged the notion that long-term English learners are still acquiring English and referenced the lack of consistent exit criteria across districts and states as well as bureaucratic errors in classifying English learners. The challenge in contemporary research in relation to tightly defined oracy, literacy, and academic profiles of long-term English learners reflects a growing consensus of the multidimensionality of these English learners’ oracy and literacy profiles, as well as their specific educational needs. Although the definition of a long-term English learner evolved somewhat in the recent past and is challenged in contemporary literature, the constructs of oracy and literacy remain a central focus.

Codification

The evolving definition of long-term English learners in research was driven by the lack of a clear-cut federal policy definition (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020). In the absence of a federal legislated definition, the state of California in September 2012 codified long-term English learners as follows:

“Long-term English learner” means an English learner who is enrolled in any of grades 6 to 12, inclusive, has been enrolled in schools in the United States for more than six years, has remained at the same English language proficiency level for two or more consecutive years as determined by the English language development test identified or developed pursuant to Section 60810, or any successor test, and scores far below basic or below basic on the English language arts standards-based achievement test administered pursuant to Section 60640, or any successor test. (California Education Code § 313.1, 2012)

Additionally, the California Assembly Bill 2193 was amended by Senate Bill 750 in 2015 to add verbiage regarding potential regression of language proficiency scores, specification of English language arts scores as applicable to English learners in grades 6-9, as well as conferring power to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to set score thresholds on both a possible English language proficiency successor assessment and a potential state English language arts standardized successor assessment:

Revises the definition of “long-term English learner” to mean an English learner in grades 6-12 who has been enrolled in U.S. schools for 6 years or more, has remained at the same English language proficiency level for 2 or more consecutive prior years, or has regressed to a lower English language proficiency level, as determined by a specified

English language development test, or a score determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction on any successor test, and, for a pupil in grades 6-9, scored far below basic or below basic on the specified English language arts standards-based achievement test, or a score determined by the Superintendent on any successor test. Encourages the Superintendent to revisit the score determined for any successor test after 3 years of assessment data on the successor test. (California Education Code § 313.1, 2015)

The interpretation of this statute rests upon measurable data that reflect years of enrollment in U.S. schools, the stagnation of language proficiency metrics across time, and English language arts standardized non-proficient scores. California's codification reflects recent literature that references sustained enrollment, as well as stagnating oracy and literacy profiles surrounding long-term English learners.

The specificity of California's mandated long-term English learner definition contrasts with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law December, 2015 (ESSA, 2015). Non-regulatory guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education (2016) regarding English learners and Title III under ESEA as amended by ESSA advised that "The ESSA does not define the term, 'long-term English learner'" (p. 38) and further suggested that the "reporting requirement under ESEA (2015) Section 3121(a)(6) may be instructive in determining which Els served under Title III are long-term Els" (p. 38). Local education agencies (LEAs) receiving Title III subgrantee funds are required to biannually report the number and percentage of English learners who have not reached English language proficiency within five years of initial classification as an English learner and enrollment in the LEA (ESEA Section 3121(a)(6)). The guidance concludes that state education agencies (SEAs) and LEAs may impute long-term

English learner status to students who have not attained English language proficiency after five years from initial identification. Thus, while federal legislation does not explicitly define a long-term English learner, the non-regulatory guidance is clear in its delineation of the term.

Recent Historical Perspectives

Characteristics of Long-Term English Learners

The absence of formalized federal educational policy, with the exception of the issuance of non-regulatory guidance (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), has driven researchers to focus on characteristics to identify long-term English learners and understand their educational needs (Kibler et al., 2018). Features of long-term English learners coalesce across three categories: behavior and attitudes, academic performance, and distinct language issues (Olsen, 2014).

Olsen (2014) described these distinct language issues that cross both oral and literacy skills. Language domains are useful in teasing apart these specific linguistic issues of long-term English learners. Typically, these students have limited academic oral skills, as reflected in registering *emerging* to *developing* speaking and listening proficiency scores, whereas proficiency scores on social English skills are much stronger. This limited academic oral skill profile is paired with limited literacy, as demonstrated by low reading and writing domain proficiencies. Writing is a particular sticking point, as long-term English learners often approach writing as “written-down oral language” (Olsen, 2014, p. 5), struggling with academic vocabulary, academic genres, and author’s voice (Olsen, 2014). When English skills are juxtaposed with home language skills, native language literacy skills of long-term English learners are close to non-existent, as these students have had little or no educational opportunity to develop “strong academic literacy skills in either their native language or English” (Menken &

Kleyn, 2010, p. 405). Disaggregating language proficiency into its constituent domains illuminates the specific linguistic needs of long-term English learners.

Additionally, academic outcomes are poor for long-term English learners. Olsen (2012) described the long-term plummeting academic trajectories of English learners as they move through secondary education, exhibiting grade point averages of less than a 2.0. Olsen (2014) further portrayed long-term English learners as “amassing academic deficits” (p. 6). Qualitative research conducted by Menken et al. (2012) investigated the characteristics of long-term English learners in New York City high schools using academic records to supplement their qualitative research. These records revealed a D+ average for long-term English learners. Poor academic performance is often accompanied by grade retention; Menken et al. (2012) found that numerous students in their study were retained. The accumulation of academic gaps, coupled with grade retention, created a ripe climate for dropping out of high school (Olsen, 2014). Gaby personified repeated grade retention that many long-term English learners experience.

Um, I wanna [*sic*] tell you that I don't belong in 10th grade as you can see 'cause [*sic*] I just hit 18 [years old]. I'm supposed to be in twelfth and I had got left back in seventh and eighth, so like sometimes I feel embarrassed to be in a class you know that I don't supposed [*sic*] to be in. (Gaby, 10th Grade LTELL, School 1, interview transcript, Menken & Kleyn, 2010)

As students move through secondary schools, the demands of academic language increase exponentially with the increased rigor of the curriculum. For students who are still acquiring academic language, these rigorous demands create an increased cognitive load, exacerbating the academic gaps and leading to poor outcomes. Finally, long-term English learner frustration and ongoing failure have been shown to manifest in disengagement, passivity, and even silence

(Olsen, 2014). These students were portrayed by Olsen (2012) as unassuming and “skilled at remaining under the radar, and not being called on” (p. 6). Moreover, these long-term English learners fell between the cracks because “they do not call attention to the challenges they face” (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020, p. 3). Attitudes range from frustration to detachment, to loss of confidence and, ultimately, to an internalized sense of failure (Menken et al., 2012). Flores et al. (2015) further confirmed this sense of failure in interviews with their case study long-term English learners in New York City secondary schools; the students “overwhelmingly. . . discussed the difficulties they experienced with academic work, such that a sense of deflation and disengagement prevailed” (p. 127). These negative attitudes translate to low personal expectations, creating an endless cycle of failure.

Contributing Factors to Long-Term English Learner Status

Contributing factors identified by Menken et al. (2012) included students receiving varying program models of language support across their elementary schooling, a cyclical transnational education whereby students move back and forth between their home country and the United States, a narrowed curriculum with limited access to academic subjects, and a lack of fidelity in the implementation of research-based language support programs. Menken and Kleyn (2010) argued that “the educational programming that they (English learners) receive has a longstanding and significant impact” (p. 400) on their language acquisition, as well as their academic outcomes.

Varying Language Support Program Models

Noteworthy success in fostering the mastery of English by students for whom English is not their home language has been reported during two decades of research by Collier and Thomas (2017) and Thomas and Collier (2012). According to the *Guiding Principles of Dual*

Language Education (Howard et al., 2018), the goals of bilingual education are threefold: bilingualism and biliteracy, high levels of academic achievement, and socio-cultural competence (the ability to move seamlessly between two languages and cultures). Thomas and Collier suggested that academic content areas should be taught in the two program languages, with a specific language allocation across the content. Moreover, the dual languages are taught through the academic content areas, producing strong academic achievement and 39ffecng the academic achievement gap for English learners vis-à-vis all students within five to six years of dual language education (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2012). The mechanism for bilingualism and biliteracy is facilitated by the process of language transfer whereby skills in the native language transfer readily to English (Cummins, 2009, as cited in Collier & Thomas, 2017).

Other language support program models fail to deliver these strong educational outcomes. English learners enrolled in either English-only language support programs or transitional bilingual programs where the goal is to transition to English-only instruction face a loss of their native language skills across time. The subtractive nature of English-only and transitional bilingual programs is well-documented, as English learners' native languages are replaced by English (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Menken et al., 2012; Zentella, 1997). The exclusion of native languages from the curriculum reflects the notion that native languages are seen as a barrier to learning. Thus, English learners in English-only support programs often do not have the opportunity to fully develop as bilingual and biliterate individuals (Menken, 2008).

Long-term English learners may also experience a variety of language support programs in elementary years due to family mobility or program availability across schools in the United

States. Students may experience English-only programming, such as direct instruction in English language development situated within content areas, English language development support by a language specialist who pushes into the regular education classroom to support students' access to content, or no language support program at all. Moreover, students may experience bilingual programming where content is taught through two languages with the goal of biliteracy; they may experience transitional bilingual programming where the goal is proficiency in English, or students may shift between bilingual programming and English-only support programming. This lack of continuity in language development programming creates conditions in which becoming a long-term English learner is more likely, as language, literacy, and academic gaps accrue (Olsen, 2014).

Cyclical Transnational Education

Cyclical transnational schooling, whereby English learners may move back and forth between U.S. schools and schools in their home country, allows learning gaps to accumulate, as national curricula standards are not aligned (Olsen, 2014). Menken and Kleyn (2009) found that long-term English learners in New York City Schools fell into one of two categories: either students who moved within the United States or students who experienced mobility transnationally.

Menken's and Kleyn's (2010) interviews with long-term English learners revealed one such student, José Miguel, who experienced transnational moves:

Because of his frequent moves, José Miguel has faced considerable inconsistency in the programming he has received. He began in a bilingual program in New York City but received English-only instruction in Virginia. His English acquisition was then interrupted when he moved to Mexico. Since returning from Mexico, José Miguel has

only received English as a second language instruction in middle and high school, without native language support...As a result of his education experiences, José Miguel believes that his literacy skills are more developed in English than in Spanish. He can read Spanish, he noted, “but not perfectly.” His grades average 75%. (Menken & Kleyn, 2010, paras. 6-7)

Jose personified the “cessation of English language development upon return to his home country, and the cessation of home language development upon return to the United States” (Olsen, 2014, p. 12). The inconsistency in academic language development, curricula standards, and educational programming all contribute to linguistic and academic gaps for long-term English learners experiencing transnational moves.

Restricted Curriculum and Access to Content Learning

Olsen (2014) cited a restricted curriculum as a factor in hindering the acquisition of English language proficiency for long-term English learners. In response to high-stakes accountability in reading and math, other subjects such as science, social studies, and the arts have often been neglected. The restricted curriculum results in fewer opportunities for English learners to acquire the academic language associated with these neglected content areas. Additionally, as long-term English learners progress through school, they are continually acquiring academic English, which limits their access to the content. Their partial comprehension creates a narrowed access to the content. Another factor in limited access is the addition of scheduled time for language support services in the case of English-only support programs, which creates further reductions in time spent learning key content areas such as mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts, further exacerbating students’ partial access to the curriculum.

Lack of Fidelity of Language Support Program

According to Menken and Kleyn (2010), long-term English learners matriculate in secondary school without the necessary foundation in academic literacy because, in the regular classroom, teachers are ill-equipped to teach these literacy skills—specifically at the secondary level where language demands increase significantly, and a focus on content rather than literacy dominates the educational landscape. However, literacy must be explicitly taught to English language learners at the secondary level, even though, most often, it is only taught at the elementary level (Callahan, 2006). In the absence of a deep understanding of the literacy, language scaffolds, or coherency needed by English learners, teachers have not implemented research-based language program interventions with fidelity (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020; Olsen, 2014). Moreover, a lack of focused professional development for teachers of English learners has been associated with inadequate instruction. Olsen (2010) referenced a “shortage of teachers prepared with the knowledge and skill to effectively teach long-term English learners” (p. 3).

A combination of all contributing factors outlined above has led to English learner students being “stuck” at low levels of English proficiency, registering *emerging* to *developing* in both oral and literacy domains. Their plateaued English skills result in content knowledge gaps, creating poor academic outcomes. Olsen (2014) described this state of “being stuck” as the key to defining long-term English learner status, “not the number years it takes for them to become English proficient” (p. 4).

Deficit Perspectives

I suggest that long-term English learners have been viewed collectively from a deficit perspective. For example, in the first decade of this century, Benesch (2008) referred to the “discourse of linguistic partiality” (p. 301) in describing Generation 1.5 students who were born

outside of the United States and received most of their education within the United States. Benesch posited that these students are considered to have shared characteristics articulated around the discourse of linguistic partiality. In other words, the multilingual nature of these students is “evaluated according to idealized native norms. . . Nonstandard varieties of both spoken and written English are seen as evidence of a lack of proficiency in both L1 and L2” (Benesch, 2008, p. 297). As English is the dominant language of U.S. society, the expectation is for Generation 1.5 students to acquire standard English. From this perspective, English learners have been viewed as deficient in academic language and literacy and described as “proficient in no spoken language and . . . not literate in any language” (Benesch, 2008, p. 301). The label of Generation 1.5, with its deficit framing, has also been used interchangeably with the label of long-term English learners, according to Olsen (2010).

Flores et al. (2015) described this framing of long-term English learners’ partial linguistic status as driven by the concept of proficiency in academic discourse. They argued that a bilingual individual must master academic discourse in both English and their home language to be considered fully proficient. Moreover, Flores et al. pointed out that the “current categorization of these students as LTELLs (long-term English language learners) positions them as ‘languageless,’ despite the fact that they would be considered proficient in either of their languages were they simply monolinguals” (Rosa, 2010, as cited in Flores et al., 2015, p. 117) since monolingual English speakers’ language proficiency is assumed rather than measured with standardized language proficiency tests.

Even more recently, the dominant narrative surrounding long-term English learners has been driven by stagnating language proficiency scores and non-proficient standardized content outcomes. In other words, high-stakes accountability testing perpetuates the earlier deficit

perspective surrounding long-term English learners (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020). Menken (2013) argued that persistently low language proficiency scores served to “strip students of native speaker status, even those who are U.S. born” (p. 462). Singhal (2004, as cited in Menken, 2013) portrayed these students as becoming

‘dual nonnative speakers’ because they are not fully proficient in either their L1 or L2-English. Finally, while they may see themselves as native-English speakers because of their social and verbal skills, they are often less skilled in the academic skills necessary for college-level courses. (p. 461)

Additional deficit terms used to describe long-term English learners include “non-nons, clinically disfluent . . . and semilingual” (Menken, 2013, p. 462). Menken (2013) argued that the positioning of long-term English learners in a subtractive language environment is essentially a result of monoglossic views held by a monolingual society. In other words, there is no value imputed to languages other than that of the dominant monolingual society—English.

Disparaging descriptors have ranged from partial linguistic status, as described by the term semilingual, to none at all, as evidenced by the term non-nons (non-home language speakers and non-English speakers). As part of my study, I will propose counternarratives to the deficit mindset that has framed long-term adolescent learners in literature (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020; Menken, 2013) and practice.

Flores et al. (2015) pointed out the connection that has been made between English language proficiency and mastery of academic language and questioned the reasoning behind the equating of the two constructs. They argued that many monolingual native English speakers would not be regarded as having mastered academic language. Yet, monolingual English speakers are not required to take English proficiency tests; only students who have a home

language other than English must be assessed. For this population of students for whom English is not the language used at home, mastery of academic language is required for English proficiency. This double standard frames the deficit discourse surrounding long-term English learners.

To make matters worse, English learners' home languages are often viewed in isolation; English is measured separate and apart from their home language. Home language proficiency is typically not measured unless the student is enrolled in a dual language program that features the student's home language. When both languages are considered additively, then the linguistic repertoire of the English learner is likely much larger than that of a monolingual student (Flores et al., 2015), a linguistic asset that is not measured, as measurement of language proficiency occurs through a monolingual lens, hence contributing to the deficit perspective.

Disruptor Perspectives

Heterogeneity of Long-Term English Learners

In contrast to previous perspectives, Brooks (2018) challenged the notion of a “singular linguistic and literate profile” (p. 223) for long-term English learners, arguing that they reflect diverse multidimensional linguistic and literacy profiles. The qualitative research of Menken and Kleyne (2010) revealed diverse linguistic preferences for language use among this population of students. In individual interviews, approximately 21% of students disclosed a preference for speaking English, nearly 17% preferred their native language, while the majority of students indicated preference for equal shifts between English and their native language as the context required. Moreover, Brooks (2018) examined literacy practices of long-term English learners while thinking-aloud. Brooks observed diverse uses of comprehension strategies through summarizing text, self-questioning, self-monitoring of comprehension, and bringing to bear

background knowledge in comprehending text. Diverse literacy practices are further observed by Flores et al. (2015) in a study of New York City long-term English learners; while students indicated a preference for in-school literacy practices in English, their social media literacies were fluid, mixing the two languages when interacting with other bilinguals. Researchers continue to provide evidence of heterogeneous and complex language profiles, painting a portrait of fluid and diverse language and literacy practices of these students (Brooks, 2018; Flores et al., 2015; Menken & Kleyn, 2010).

Although extant literature does reference a diversity of academic profiles of long-term English learners, much of the literature focuses on poor academic outcomes (Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Menken & Kleyn, 2009; Olsen, 2010). Brooks (2018) characterized these findings as narrow in scope, focused specifically on non-proficient academic language and literacy. While researchers acknowledge the academic difficulties faced by many, contemporary focus continues to move toward the academic contexts of these students, with the realization that their outcomes are diverse. Research coalesces across case studies where small numbers of long-term English learners were interviewed in depth to provide rich data on individuals' contexts and their academic outcomes (Brooks, 2016; Flores et al., 2015; Kim & García, 2014).

Kim and García (2014) employed a naturalistic inquiry approach to construct knowledge from the perceptions of their case study participants. To supplement the interviews, Kim and García collected data on high-stakes accountability assessments and discovered a portrait of failure to meet state normative standards on the part of their case study participants. In contrast to the summative data, participants reported a self-perception of positive educational accomplishments, despite challenging school experiences, such as having to learn the language of instruction (English) while they were learning content. In juxtaposing their data against long-

term English learners' self-perceptions, they postulated that these results brought to light the need to challenge deficit views that were too easily formulated by considering only summative data "to create a counter-story that may challenge educators to engage in dialogue with their own students and families, and work together to close the gap between their hopes and educational reality" (Kim & García, 2014, p. 311).

Singular academic trajectories of long-term English learners are also challenged in contemporary literature. Brooks (2018) claimed that academic trajectories of long-term English learners are diverse and therefore do not necessarily neatly fall into the categories proposed by Menken et al. (2012) and further developed by Olsen (2014). Brooks countered the tightly defined academic trajectories of long-term English learners, citing research studies that belie these narrow academic history classifications. For example, Kibler et al. (2018) studied Grade 6 long-term English learners who had English as a Second Language programming continuously since kindergarten, belying the notion of causality of long-term English learner status via inconsistent English language development programming. Brooks further cited Kim and García's (2014) study, which also indicated stable English language development programming for their case study of long-term English learners. Thus, various studies indicate a diversity of academic histories, not necessarily conforming to the strict causal categorizations proposed by Menken et al. (2012) and broadened by Olsen (2014).

While many studies utilized qualitative methods, Shin (2020) further added to the scholarship on prolonged English learner status by conducting a longitudinal study in a large urban California school district of these students from kindergarten to the beginning of Grade 6. Shin utilized quantitative methods, analyzing students who had been classified as English learners for six years, comparing these students to English learners who were reclassified as

fluent English proficient within the 6-year timeframe, and to students with a home language other than English who arrived in kindergarten as fully English proficient. Regression variables included demographic characteristics, academic language proficiency measurements, academic content proficiency data, course enrollments, and grades, to name a few. Shin concluded that although long-term English learners consistently underperformed reclassified (exited) or initially fluent students on content assessments and grades, these students exhibited heterogeneous characteristics. He underscored that many long-term English learners qualified as proficient on the English language arts content assessment, despite being unable to meet the language proficiency reclassification exit criteria. He also pointed to a variety of initial language proficiencies. While English learners with lower initial proficiencies were more likely to exhibit prolonged English learner status, this was not always the case: “44% of the Initial Level 1 was reclassified on time (before Grade 6), [and] 28% of the Initial Level 3 was not” (Shin, 2020, p. 20). Shin determined that although long-term English learners performed below reclassified and initially proficient students, they are a multidimensional population, varying across many academic outcomes, including initial language proficiencies and pace of language acquisition.

Asset-Based Perspective

Extant literature counters the collective deficit view of long-term English learners. Flores et al. (2015) further provided an asset-based counternarrative by exploring the self-perceptions of 28 New York City secondary students labeled long-term English learners. They described these students not as deficient in English but as negotiating a “vast and flexible linguistic repertoire” (Flores et al., 2015, p. 122), shifting between English and their native language as the sociocultural contexts naturally elicited. For example, students saw themselves as socially bilingual but stronger in academic English literacy than their native languages in school settings.

When the participants were questioned by the interviewer whether they felt like they were English language learners, they overwhelmingly asserted that they already knew English as their first or main language. One student, Yamile, pointed out that “they think we don’t know much English, but we do. Just ‘cuz [*sic*] we know another language” (Flores et al., 2015, p. 129). Yamile’s assertion brings to bear the gap between students’ perceptions and the educational system’s categorical labeling of these students based on monolingual idealized norms. When further queried as to how they would like to be described, Guillermo replied, “Guillermo,” perhaps an indication of a desire to be perceived as an individual. Flores et al. called for fluid bilingual assessments to replace static monoglossic assessments that marginalize these emergent bilingual adolescents and hence recognize their diverse and fluid linguistic and literacy skills. As an educational system, I believe we fail to respect the accomplishment of acquiring a second language while learning content as part of an asset-based learning profile of long-term English learners.

An earlier researcher, Wei (2011), along with a growing body of contemporary researchers (Brooks, 2020; García & Kleifgen, 2019; Kleyn & García, 2019), have further recognized multilingual learners’ linguistic assets through a holistic view of languages. For instance, Wei (2011) rejected the stigma associated with the use of their home language by minority ethnic British Chinese students. Wei viewed these students through a multilingual lens, accounting for their entire language repertoire and the complexities of the norms for using their languages in specific sociocultural contexts. He discovered creative and critical language practices, with students employing multilingual and multimodal practices to construct meaning in schools that offer risk-free environments for such language practices.

García et al. (2017) also developed the notion of utilizing one’s full linguistic repertoire

through the practice of translanguaging, moving in and out of language spaces as needed, and leveraging fluid linguistic resources to make meaning in school and beyond. Kleyn and García (2019) observed that translanguaging “stems from the speaker up and not from the language down” (p. 73), thus valuing the individual’s practice rather than the concept of language as a system of rules imposed by schools. Additionally, García and Kleifgen (2019) claimed that by teachers’ leveraging an individual’s entire linguistic repertoire in the classroom, students not only “thrive academically, . . . but are transformed as having valuable language and literacy practices. . . that extend beyond mandated curricula and standardized exams” (p. 559).

Students’ linguistic repertoires that embody unique, fluid, and evolving language profiles were personified in five secondary long-term English learners in Brooks’s (2020) case study of long-term English learners. Brooks argued that their code-switching between languages was not a reflection of limited language but reflected sociocultural context, nuanced meanings, and sophisticated language practices not utilized by monolinguals. Brooks cited these sophisticated practices, as these students leveraged both languages for various sociocultural purposes in their daily lives. For example, Jamilet spoke primarily English but had well-developed receptive abilities in Spanish; while English was her first language, the adults with whom she interacted spoke Spanish. Eliza, on the other hand, was raised as a bilingual, but as she entered school, she used her Spanish less frequently and struggled with complex interactions in Spanish, often calling upon her older sister as a *de facto* interpreter. Representing yet another fluid linguistic profile, Lizbeth’s first language was Spanish, and upon entry to school, she began to learn English; her language abilities evolved, and her home became a bilingual space with siblings, as well as with her friends. Valeria’s first language, like Lizbeth, was Spanish, and yet English became her preferred language as she progressed through school; she fluidly manipulated both

languages in bilingual spaces. Finally, Destiny's first language, like Valeria and Lizbeth, was Spanish, yet her English use eclipsed her Spanish as she progressed through school, interacting with siblings and friends primarily in English while interacting with adults at home primarily in Spanish. The contemporary research regarding translanguaging clearly positions these adolescent bilinguals in an asset-based context; the potential benefits specifically to long-term English learners beg to be explored further.

Rejection of Long-Term English Learner Label

In the context of contemporary scholarship regarding prolonged English learner status, many researchers reject the label itself due to the negative impacts associated with bearing that label and the diminishment of academic opportunities (Brooks, 2020; Kibler et al., 2018; Thompson, 2015). In the Kibler et al. (2018) case study of middle school English learners, they argued that the long-term English learner label "obscures more than it elucidates" (p. 741) in terms of students' academic and language strengths and weaknesses. They elaborated that while labels may facilitate educational programming, labeling may also lead to ignoring individual student academic needs. They further asserted that labels are not neutral, in alignment with Kibler and Valdes (2016), and questioned the value of the labels. Kibler et al. additionally claimed that labels were detrimental because they impose normative timeframes for language development. They pointed to Hasko's (2013) research that described language development as "complex and non-linear" (as cited by Kibler et al., 2018, p. 763) and hence difficult to measure normatively. Kibler et al. argued that labels further obfuscated that language, as it is assessed and taught, is truly a contested construct. Ultimately, they appealed for the critical examination of "discourses generated by legislation and scholarship around the so-called [long-term English learner] 'LTEL' label" (Kibler et al., 2018, p. 763).

Brooks (2020) asserted that the label, long-term English learner, is not an accurate description of language and literacy abilities but is manufactured through educational policy. Brooks further pointed out that educational policies that define reclassification criteria not only control who is labeled as long-term but also vary across states and even within states. She underscored that not only are standardized language proficiency measurements included in reclassification criteria, but some states also include standardized mathematic scores, widening the scope and definition of an English learner. Brooks argued that the label is thus a reflection of sets of assumptions about language proficiency that varies across normative thresholds defined through state or local policy.

Thompson (2015) cited the negative impact of stigma as students entered middle school and attended English language development classes in a case study of three middle school English language learners. Eliana expressed relief to Thompson (2015) in having been removed from the English language development and “easier stuff” track and into “just normal” (p. 28) classes. In contrast, Luis reflected on his experience of being “stuck” in English language development classes in middle school and “feeling dumb” (Thompson, 2015, p. 31). Thompson concluded that the cost of being stigmatized as a prolonged English learner and bearing the label of a long-term English learner must at least be balanced by receiving benefits from access to specialized educational services. The three case study participants in Thompson’s study all received specialized English language development classes, but only one of the three students was tracked into less rigorous classes. This one student felt “dumb” and was deprived of the opportunity to be exposed to more rigorous course content.

Educational Practices for Long-Term English Learners

Educational practices designed for long-term English learners cut across regular

education settings as well as English language development classes. Foundationally, access to rigorous content will be examined in terms of the regular education setting. Moreover, literacy practices across the content areas coupled with academic language development in the context of both settings will be examined in literature. Selected effective and transformational literacy and language pedagogies delineated in scholarship will guide my subsequent intervention.

Access to Rigorous Content

In a longitudinal study of long-term English learners, Umansky (2016) examined the dominant features of middle school long-term English learners' access to content: leveled tracking, whereby students are overrepresented in lower-level classes, and exclusionary tracking, whereby students are excluded from various academic content classes. Leveled tracking typically involves honors, on-grade level, and remedial classes, with English learners disproportionately enrolled in the lower track. The theory behind leveled tracking is that teachers are better positioned to deliver differentiated instruction targeted at students who have similar academic histories. Exclusionary tracking for English learners had not been analyzed in tracking literature prior to the Umansky 2016 research, but English learner course enrollments and policy have been studied descriptively at the school level (Callahan, 2005; Estrada, 2014). For example, Estrada (2014) found exclusionary policies across four middle schools, precluding English learner matriculation in some core academic courses. Umansky (2016) asserted that this type of policy and resulting course placements is a "distinct form of tracking...called exclusionary tracking" (p. 1,796).

Umansky (2016) further proposed that middle school English learners have inferior access to classes via either leveled and/or exclusionary tracking due to four factors: "(1) prior academic achievement, (2) institutional constraints, (3) English proficiency, and (4) [English

learner] EL classification” (p. 1,796). Consistent English learner academic underachievement has been demonstrated in historical research, as English learner status has been connected to lower academic achievement (Hopkins et al., 2013). Additionally, standardized assessments are typically delivered in English and therefore are negatively biased for students who are still developing English (Abedi & Lord, 2001). Other factors include the propensity for English learners to attend under-resourced schools—an institutional constraint associated with lower socioeconomic levels and immigrant status (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009, as cited in Umansky, 2016).

Umansky (2016) asserted that English proficiency levels also affect English learner placement in lower-track courses, “with administrators and teachers confound[ing] English proficiency with academic ability” (p. 1,798). English learner classification also creates limited access to content due to required English language development courses often precluding enrollment in a full course load. Umansky’s findings provided some support for four hypothesized factors that were statistically investigated for English learner inferior course access. Umansky found that prior academic achievement coupled with the resource level of schools attended mostly explain the preponderance of English learner placement in lower-track courses. Moreover, Umansky (2016) concluded that “access to content deal[s] overwhelmingly with access to higher-track classes rather than access to core academic instruction” (p. 1,823). Umansky’s findings further indicated that English proficiency level and English learner classification are related more to exclusionary tracking than leveled tracking. For example, Umansky determined that a lowest proficient (level one) English learner would be thirty-six percentage points less likely to carry a full academic course load than a level five student with the same prior academic achievement and enrolled in the same schools.

Umansky (2016) confirmed that English learners were underrepresented in higher-track courses at the middle school level, and this underrepresentation was particularly pronounced for students with lower English proficiency levels and lower overall academic achievement. To make matters worse, placement in remedial or lower tracks compounded the effects of less rigor, less opportunity for meaningful content-based oral interaction, and less positive relationships with teachers (see also Harklau, 1994). Additionally, the meaningful academic oral interaction undergirded by “supportive student-teacher relationships have both been posited as key ingredients for English learner [EL] success in school” (Umansky, 2016, p. 1,820).

Umansky (2016) further confirmed exclusionary tracking, with many English learners lacking a full academic course load in middle school, despite the studied district’s policy of English learner enrollment in full academic loads. Thus, practice did not always follow policy within the district; many English learners were enrolled in English language development only rather than English language arts and English language development. Umansky also found some English learner students had not been enrolled in math and/or science. Federal requirements for English learners define a full core academic course load as including reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (Lhamon & Gupta, 2015). Umansky underscored the challenge for schools of providing both English language development as well as access to challenging academic content required by federal guidelines. While the mandate for the provision of English language development is clearly delineated in Title III Part A, the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, the access to academic content is less clear. The January 1, 2015, Dear Colleague letter, jointly published by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education to provide districts additional guidance in administering Title III, directs local education agencies to provide

instructional redress if students incur deficits in content area instruction while attending English language development classes (Lhamon & Gupta, 2015). Federal guidance provides for English learners to “attain parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable length of time after they enter the school system” (*Castaneda v. Pickard*, 1981, p. §1703(f)). The reasonable length of time stipulation is not defined, and thus “English learners’ [Els’] right to English language support may be more fully realized than their right to equitable access to content” (Umansky, 2016, p. 1,821).

Effective Instructional Practices

Effective pedagogical practices along with program practices targeting long-term English learners were examined by Luna (2020), who argued that literacy engagement across the content areas is crucial for long-term English learners, as academic language is situated in discipline-specific texts rather than language embedded in oral social contexts. Not only did Luna emphasize access to printed texts, but also interaction with the texts via academic oral conversations, which is critical for long-term English learners to make meaning of texts. Moreover, because academic texts are written in a decontextualized manner, teachers of long-term English learners need to build background knowledge and front-load key vocabulary, critical for understanding the most important points of the text. Luna also advocated the provision of linguistic cognates for technical content vocabulary (e.g., metaphor and metáfora, ribosomes and ribosomas, polynomial and polinomio, to name a few) in supporting vocabulary acquisition and hence improved understanding of text. Finally, Luna argued that reading strategies to increase comprehension must be leveraged, as reading instruction should be integrated into content instruction.

ExC-ELL Literacy Framework

Like Luna (2020), language acquisition researchers, linguists, and adolescent literacy scholars have contributed to the body of literature on various frameworks and pedagogical strategies to foster English learners' reading comprehension as well as to build academic language. Calderón (2007) originally developed and has continued to refine with co-researchers (Calderón & Slakk, 2018) the Expediting Comprehension for English Language Learners (ExC-ELL) literacy framework to support and accelerate the process of reading comprehension and English language development for secondary English learners. Calderón and Slakk (2018) created a 12-step lesson framework to guide teachers in implementation of the lesson components designed to support literacy and language development:

1. Pre-teaching of vocabulary
2. Teacher think-aloud
3. Student peer reading
4. Peer summaries of reading
5. Depth of word studies/grammar
6. Class debriefs/discussions
7. Cooperative learning strategies
8. Formulating questions and numbered heads
9. Round table reviews
10. Pre-writing and drafting
11. Revising/editing
12. Reading final product. (Calderón & Slakk, 2018, p. 17)

Calderón advocated front-loading vocabulary as well as selecting no more than five key words critical to the meaning of the text. She created a seven-step instructional approach (Calderón , 2007) and has revised it with co-researchers over the years to include a. students chorally repeating the word three times, b. the teacher reading aloud the sentence in the text that contains the key word, c. the teacher sharing the dictionary definition, d. the teacher sharing a student-friendly definition, e. the teacher pointing out grammatical aspects of the word such as word roots and affixes, cognates, or related noun and verb forms, f. the students engaging in a brief interactive activity using the word that is embedded in a sentence starter, and finally, g. the teacher sharing how students will be accountable for using the word; for example, in oral or written summaries of what students have read (Calderón & Slakk, 2018).

Teacher think-aloud is designed to make explicit cognitive processes and strategies that good readers use automatically (Flowers & Hayes, 1980, as cited in Calderón & Slakk, 2018; Olshavsky 1976-1977, as cited in Calderón & Slakk, 2018). The ExC-ELL framework includes teacher think-aloud to build reading comprehension through making visible specific reading strategies. Comprehension strategies such as making predictions, visualizing the textual events or descriptions, connecting to prior knowledge, clarifying a difficult passage, monitoring one's own understanding, questioning the text, and making inferences are well-known reading strategies leveraged by the ExC-ELL framework.

Additionally, Calderón (2007) developed a process to expedite reading comprehension by chunking text and assigning partner reading whereby partners take turns reading a sentence aloud and then pausing to orally summarize the chunk of text. Calderón underscored the importance of strategically partnering English learners with more proficient readers—preferably someone with

the same native language. During partner reading, the teacher circulates to formatively assess and assist with comprehension.

Moreover, debriefing as a post-reading strategy is recommended to consolidate knowledge (Calderón & Slakk, 2018). The ExC-ELL teacher leads the whole group discussion with open-ended questions so that students may discuss difficult passages, themes, or question the author. The teacher wraps up the discussion with student summarizations of what was learned. Alternatively, teachers may debrief by circulating amongst partners or small groups and probing student comprehension. These whole-group or small-group instructional conversations focus on higher-level thinking questions or deeper word study of the pre-taught key vocabulary and other words that may need to be scaffolded for some students.

An additional post-reading strategy included in the ExC-ELL framework is higher-order question formulation. Calderón and Slakk drew from the reading comprehension and vocabulary development research of Beck and McKeown (1991, as cited by Calderón & Slakk, 2018), whereby students question the authors of expository texts regarding the purpose of including specific information and explanations. Calderón and Slakk further advocated including language development strategies in question generation, such as question starter stems and charts with key verbs. Students subsequently engage in instructional conversations in cooperative groups and write answers to their questions, followed by a whole class discussion.

Woven throughout the ExC-ELL framework are cooperative learning strategies specifically targeted at developing reading comprehension (Calderón & Slakk, 2018). Calderón and Slakk drew from Padrón's research on reciprocal teaching strategies with English learners (Padrón, 1992, as cited in Calderón & Slakk, 2018). The ExC-ELL framework incorporates Padrón's recommended teacher modeling of four possible comprehension monitoring strategies,

including a. summarizing b. self-questioning c. clarifying, and d. predicting. Calderón and Slakk suggest teachers read aloud only the first paragraph of the text while modeling one of these reading comprehension strategies, followed by partner reading and summarizing subsequent paragraphs. Students apply the teacher-modeled reading comprehension strategy as they partner-read and engage in conversations with peers to build an understanding of the text. Other cooperative learning strategies embedded in the framework are numbered heads and roundtable reviews. These cooperative learning strategies provide repeated opportunities for student reflection and partner or small group academic conversations and are pivotal in cementing understanding of text.

Following post-reading strategies, writing about the text that was read is critical to consolidate vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, and content learning (Calderón & Slakk, 2018). Calderón and Slakk advocate a cooperative approach to writing about the text through the strategy of Write-Around. This strategy entails each student within a small group of four writing a sentence in response to the same text-based prompt, then passing their paper to their neighbor to write an additional sentence that connects to what their neighbor has previously written. This process continues to all four students. The number of repeated rounds are based on the language proficiency of the students. Once papers have circulated through all members of the small group for as many iterations as needed, students are then instructed in strategies to edit writing. Ratiocination is an editing process whereby students highlight, box, or underline various features of their writing, such as initial words in each sentence, repeated words, or the length of adjacent sentences in order to produce a variety of simple and complex sentences. Students may identify verbs and appropriate verb tenses or other grammatical features. Another writing strategy within the ExC-ELL framework is Cut-n-Grow. Students identify a sentence in their

writing that they wish to improve, elaborate, or add text-based evidence. Students then cut their paper in two after the selected sentence and tape colored paper with added text evidence or elaboration after their selected sentence. Students may then participate in another write-around to develop powerful conclusions, following a similar process of editing through ratiocination and/or Cut-n-Grow.

Calderón originally developed the ExC-ELL framework through funding by the Carnegie Corporation in 2003 over the course of 5 years, experimenting with various instructional components (Calderón & Slakk, 2018). The resulting model was not only an instructional framework aimed at developing literacy in English learners but also included a professional development model for secondary teachers of English learners applying the framework. This research and development project focused on both the design and testing of:

- a. a professional development model with strategic teacher support systems;
- b. components testing of research-based pedagogical and popular instructional strategies used to teach vocabulary, discourse, reading, and writing to English learners;
- c. a lesson template for integrating vocabulary, discourse, reading comprehension, and writing skills into core content instruction;
- d. a coaching process and an observation protocol to determine to what extent the components are present in lesson delivery, with a rating/summary portion to tally the results and impact on student achievement (M. E. Calderón, personal communication, September 22, 2022, pp. 1-2).

Calderón et al. (personal communication, September 22, 2022) conducted empirical research through a quasi-experimental design, pilot testing the professional development framework and its associated instructional components across disparate geographic areas of the

United States, from Washington Heights schools in New York City to Kapa'a schools in Kauai, Hawaii. Triangulating data from each pilot, plus an additional 2-year study in New York City, the researchers measured transference from professional development to instructional practice and subsequently the effects on academic achievement. Calderón et al. compared 500 students, both experimental and control, on pre- and post-assessments using the Gates MacGuinitie vocabulary and reading comprehension tests; the experimental students demonstrated significant improvements in vocabulary and reading comprehension, with significant effect sizes of 0.4 to 0.7. School report cards revealed that three-fourths of the experimental secondary schools exceeded their comparison schools and subsequently reached a rating of "A" for 3 years following the pilots.

Additionally, the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol is a tool that Calderón et al. (personal communication, September 22, 2022) developed for measuring "the fidelity and quality of instruction" (p. 2) aligning to the ExC-ELL framework. The observation protocol proved .91 reliable in the pilots and subsequent 2-year study. Calderón et al. cited the ongoing feedback to teachers through the instrument as a means to sustain and refine the ExC-ELL literacy framework.

The ExC-ELL framework of pedagogical components provides a systematic approach by leveraging vocabulary development and application of reading strategies coupled with cooperative learning to accelerate reading comprehension as well as content mastery. Moreover, writing is leveraged to consolidate text-based learning. Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2010) advocated the use of the ExC-ELL literacy framework specifically to avert the creation of long-term English learners through leveraging oral interaction and increasing reading comprehension and writing skills, resulting in the development of academic English.

Co-Teaching Model

Another effective instructional practice, which must be supported by program practice, is a co-teaching model, as advocated by Dove and Honigsfeld (2010, 2018) and Honigsfeld and Dove (2010, 2019). This collaborative practice originated between special education and content area teachers whereby teachers share responsibility for the planning, instruction, and assessment of students within a shared classroom space (Villa et al., 2008, as cited by Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Across time, the special education model was expanded and altered to content teachers paired with English language development specialists.

Referencing the specific influence of Vaughn and her colleagues (1997, as cited in Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010), they developed seven models of coteaching (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010, 2018) designed for the instruction of English learners. The first three models are directed to whole group instruction shared by both teachers. The first model has one teacher as the lead, during which the other teacher teaches minilessons to individual students or small groups. The two teachers rotate responsibility for taking the lead. English learners benefit from personalized instruction adjusted to the context of their need. The English language development specialist or the content teacher keeps an anecdotal log, documenting growth and needs. The second co-teaching model includes both teachers sharing the lead and teaching whole-group. English learners benefit from enriched examples, further explanations and scaffolding of language. The third model has one teacher taking the lead to instruct the whole group, while the other teacher circulates and formatively assesses students through observations, checklists, and anecdotal notes. English learners benefit from prompt feedback with identified skills that may necessitate re-teaching. The succeeding set of three models entails instruction directed to two groups, with each teacher taking responsibility for a group. The fourth co-teaching model involves parallel

teaching, where the two teachers are teaching the same content, with each teacher differentiating for the specific needs of their student group. English learners benefit from small group instruction and a greater opportunity for student-to-student interaction. The fifth model involves two groups of students, with one group for each teacher; one preteaches, front-loading the lesson while the other teacher instructs alternative information to another group that needs particular skill work. English learners benefit from front-loading vocabulary and academic language as well as building background. The sixth model is similar to the fifth, but rather than preteaching, this teacher reteaches a concept or skill, while the other teacher delivers alternative information as needs dictate. English learners benefit from differentiation: reteaching if needed, or they may benefit from enrichment regarding the previously taught topic. The seventh model of co-teaching involves both teachers rotating amongst multiple small groups for targeted instruction. For example, teachers set up and direct learning stations, circulating among them. English learners benefit from specific skills-based practice and individual attention. Throughout the seven models of co-teaching, English learners benefit from English academic language models from their fully proficient peers.

Program practices must support collaborative co-teaching models in order for the instruction to be effective. Collaboration, as described by Cook and Friend (1995) references shared decision-making directed toward a common objective by two equal participants. Risko and Bromley (2001, as cited in Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010) further developed the notion of teacher collaboration that produces shifts from deficit perspectives to asset-based perspectives on student strengths. Risko and Bromley also point to the leveraging of multiple solutions to “dilemmas about literacy and learning” (Risko & Bromley, 2001, as cited in Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010, p. 5) when teachers collaborate to problem-solve learning needs. Unfortunately,

collaborative planning is often a missing piece according to Dove and Honigsfeld (2010). Frequently, English language development specialists do not have dedicated planning with content-area teachers unless they are exclusively assigned to a specific content area or grade level. At the middle school level, planning time is generally the same for all special area instructors, and it does not intersect with grade level or content departmental planning times. Purposeful scheduling is imperative to provide collaborative planning times for the English language development specialist and their content-area colleagues. In spite of the lack of common planning time between English language development specialists and content-area teachers, shared documents, emails, and text messaging often substitute for face-to-face collaboration.

While teacher leadership can play an important role in advancing co-teaching, administrator support is key to the sustained implementation of the collaborative model of teaching (Davidson, 2006, as cited in Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010; Spraker, 2003, as cited in Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010). School administrators must include collaborative practices as a part of school culture; otherwise, the administrator must provide professional development to foster teacher collaboration (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019). Moreover, not only does sustained administrator support undergird the logistics of scheduling both co-teaching and co-planning, but it also underpins a shared belief that values the contributions and expertise of the English language development specialist. This shared belief from the top down is critical to avoid marginalization of the language development specialist, which is not uncommon in co-teaching partnerships, according to Ahmed Hersi et al. (2016). Shared decision-making in collaboration, as referenced by Cook and Friend (1995), assumes that there are two equal parties. I believe that

two equal parties engaged in productive co-teaching, co-planning, and collaboration.

Administrative valuation of the English language development specialist is crucial for cultivating

Effective Program Practices

In addition to pedagogical practices, Luna (2020) proposed an administrative system of support designed for long-term English learners, revolving around a “vision of shared priorities and expectations regarding the education of. . . LTELs [long-term English learners]” (p. 7). Luna advocated for a shared focus on academic goals, pointing to the research of Saunders et al. (2013, as cited in Luna, 2020) that connected academic goal setting with increased student supports for secondary teachers, including a. professional development regarding differentiated instruction for long-term English learners, b. focused instructional supervision, c. a cycle of formative assessment to inform instruction, and d. the articulation of an integrated framework of English language development through content-based instruction. Finally, Luna underscored the importance of connecting long-term English learners to extra-curricular activities, referring to the work of Gándara (2017, as cited in Luna, 2020), which associated the sense of belonging in school to motivation to achieve. In her previous work as a school district superintendent, Luna developed the motto, “Students who participate, Graduate [*sic*]” (Luna, 2020, p. 8).

Clark-Gareca et al. (2020) also pointed to a more holistic approach to the education of long-term English learners. Their “intervention of the whole” (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020, p. 9) is achieved through the Internationals Network, a non-profit organization that serves public schools dedicated to immigrant English learners. While Internationals Network designs schools to serve newcomer immigrant arrivals, Clark-Gareca et al. (2020) believe that the design of these schools can also serve as a model for preventing the creation of long-term English learners. School infrastructure is designed to increase collaboration among teachers by leveraging common

planning times. All teachers are responsible for developing language, planning project-based learning, integrating units of study with multiple points of entry, and including a variety of texts accessible to various reading levels. Academic tracking does not exist; ability levels are mixed, and students are placed in small learning communities. Heterogeneous language proficiency levels are also mixed; students work in the common language of English, as well as freely using their full repertoire of languages while engaging with complex content. The leveraging of native language aids in the development of the additional language, and thus the “magic of heterogeneity and integration of home language supports is that everyone belongs. . . there are no invisible students. . . in the back row of the classroom” (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020, p. 10).

A more comprehensive educational framework for long-term English learners has been designed as a part of the larger City University of New York-New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB) where students’ bilingualism is leveraged as a resource in their education, and school-wide multilingual practices impute value to all language practices (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013). The CUNY-NYSIEB Framework for the Education of Long-Term English Learners includes programmatic structures that a. address these English learners’ unique needs as distinct from newcomer immigrants, b. provide curricular structures with relevant cultural connections and embedded linguistic supports, c. implement classroom structures involving integrated and yet explicit language development, d. incorporate pedagogical strategies that focus on leveraging students’ entire linguistic repertoires, and e. institute assessment strategies that are modified to appropriately measure content and language learning.

The CUNY-NYSIEB Framework for the Education of Long-Term English Learners creates a supportive programmatic infrastructure to foster the development of academic language

and literacy (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013). These structures are designed around a language and literacy block, including a. English language development, b. English language arts, and c. home or native language arts. Teachers of these three courses collaborate to plan closely aligned units of study; the same overarching language and literacy skills provide a continuum for all three courses. Home language arts differs from world language instruction in that it is designed for students already possessing well-developed oral skills and foundational reading skills. Ideally, students would have experienced dual language programming at the elementary level to build native language literacy. Other core courses in the Framework also infuse literacy across the content areas, utilizing, where practicable, co-teaching and inclusion with the English language development specialist and content teacher. Long-term English learners are monitored, and their progress is reviewed monthly by an interdisciplinary team. Lastly, parent engagement is supported and sustained through the creation of multilingual family support centers and the leveraging of parents' linguistic assets to create a multilingual ecology at the school.

Closely paralleling programmatic structures, curricular structures of the CUNY-NYSIEB Framework provide a focus on rigorous academic language and literacy development (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013). Long-term English learners are offered instruction in alignment with grade-level curricula, with linguistic supports embedded. Rigor is observed and sustained through “critical thinking, multiple perspectives, dialogues, and translanguaging” (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013, p. 9). Long-term English learners' cultures are woven into the curricula to the extent possible so that students may see their reflection on the pages of text as proposed by Rudine Sims Bishop, and the “scenes and sentences strike us [them] as so true, they are anchors mooring us [them] to the text” (1990, as cited in Ackerman, 2017, para. 6), thus imputing value to their heritage, culture, languages, and experiences. Moreover, the Framework advocates project-based

learning controlled by student choice, much like the Internationals Network schools. Relevant multicultural literature and student choice both create avenues of engagement for long-term English learners. Finally, literacy across the content areas is also an important focus, building English learners' capacity to comprehend discipline-specific dense texts.

Classroom structures of the CUNY-NYSIEB Framework further contribute to the creation of a language-rich environment focused on linguistic goals and growth (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013). Teachers regularly conference with students regarding academic and language goal setting, creating student agency. A focus on oral language development is a critical component of the classroom structure for building a "bridge to written language" (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013, p. 11) in the Framework. Debates, Socratic discussions, presentations, and theater roles are all suggested avenues for growing academic oral language. Additionally, students are explicitly taught study skills to create engagement and agency in their own learning.

At the pedagogical level, the Framework advocates building on students' multilingual assets (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013). Incorporation of students' entire linguistic repertoire, as students fluidly move across languages, to create meaning from texts is crucial. Texts in a multiplicity of languages, oral interaction in diverse idioms including English, and the leveraging of cognates (e.g., polynomial and polinomio; metaphor and metáfor; ribosomes and ribosomas, to name a few) all scaffold the instruction. Additionally, grammar minilessons grounded in the current text being studied promote English language development while avoiding isolated grammar practice. Finally, an emphasis on building reading comprehension through activating English learners' prior knowledge, front-loading vocabulary critical to the meaning of the text,

and leveraging shared reading punctuated by teachers thinking aloud are all recommended pedagogical practices permeating the CUNY-NYSIEB long-term English learner classroom.

Transformative Educational Practices for Long-Term English Learners

Literacy Education

In extant research, Menken and colleagues (Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Menken et al., 2012) conducted two case studies regarding literacy experiences of long-term English learners. The focus of their case studies largely involved the impact of language proficiency on literacy, such as vocabulary knowledge, oral language, and general linguistic knowledge. Brooks (2020) argued that many more factors influence reading comprehension other than language proficiency, including content background knowledge, quality of reading instruction, and identity as a reader, to name a few. Earlier, Brooks (2015), in reflecting on the extant research regarding students' experiences with academic reading and literacy instruction, pointed to an interview with a single middle school student in Menken and Kleyn's 2010 study. Francisco described his middle school literacy engagement with English texts which were supported by oral Spanish summaries provided by the teacher. Brooks (2015) argued that this interview illuminated one classroom literacy practice and called for further research in the area of literacy education for long-term English learners.

Language Proficiency and Literacy

Just as Flores et al. (2015) questioned the equating of language proficiency and mastery of academic language, Brooks (2020) contested the equating of language proficiency and literacy. She cited an exemplar student, Alexis, who remained classified as a long-term English learner due to his low reading proficiency scores. Brooks (2020) refuted this "one-dimensional understanding of literacy" (p. 13), arguing that while literacy and language are interconnected,

they are separate processes. Brooks (2020) contended that the measurement of reading proficiency has much more to do with academic achievement than language proficiency, as performance on standardized reading assessments strongly reflects a student's experience with formal education.

A Humanizing Literacy Pedagogy

Additionally, Brooks (2015) pointed to a lacuna in the extant research regarding the actual reading practices of long-term English learners on standardized assessments, as well as the enactment of reading practices in their classrooms. Subsequently, Brooks (2020) argued that we must know more than literacy and language proficiency scores but also the context and history of Alexis's schooling—including many other factors beyond language—that influence the complex process of creating meaning from academic texts, such as identity as a reader, content-area knowledge, and quality of the educational setting, to name a few.

In addition to knowing the student as learner, Brooks (2020) further emphasized the social nature of literacy, as literacy is learned through social interactions with others. This perspective of literacy as a social practice undergirded much of Brooks's research and may be understood on multiple levels. In addition to literacy being acquired through social interaction at the individual level, literacy may also be defined differently according to various sociocultural contexts. For example, successful literacy practices in the classroom may mean listening to teacher read aloud and elaboration on slides while taking notes, whereas successful literacy on standardized tests entails independent reading and meaning making. On a more global scale, the dominant society defines appropriate literacy practices, particularly through the lens of standard English, reflecting power dynamics of society (Brooks, 2015, 2020). Through the perspective of the social nature of literacy, Brooks (2020) sought to humanize literacy pedagogy through deep

understanding of the learner and their needs, rejecting the notion that “best practices” reading instruction matches a reader with the appropriate method. Rather, Brooks (2020) underscored Bartolomé’s (1994) claim (as represented by long-term English learners in my dissertation in practice) that

the actual strengths of methods depend, first and foremost, on the degree to which they embrace a humanizing pedagogy that values the students’ background knowledge, culture, and life experiences and creates learning contexts where power is shared by students and teachers. Teaching methods are a means to an end—humanizing education to promote academic success for students historically under-served by the schools. (p. 190)

Interaction with Texts

Focusing on long-term English learner students and their literacy needs, Brooks’s (2015, 2016, 2020) case study of five adolescent Latinas previously described in my literature review through their linguistic profiles, further included their interaction with in-school texts. Brooks followed these students for a year in their biology and English language arts classes, building an intimate knowledge of their language practices and interaction with texts. Brooks observed that the vast majority of texts that students interacted with were teacher-assembled notes that students were expected to copy into their notebooks—written in an abbreviated format, punctuated by bullet points, and populated with phrases. Because of teachers’ knowledge of their students as learners within the context of class content, these teacher-created texts connected to their students’ background knowledge. Books such as novels, poems, and short stories—generally categorized as narrative literary works—comprised the balance of English language arts texts along with a content area district-designated textbook; lab manuals, worksheets, and scientific

articles composed the balance of biology texts. Interaction characterized by extended discourse was less frequent, as the majority of interaction occurred through teacher-assembled texts. Brooks concluded that the linguistic demands of these texts were dramatically different from the extended text selections found on standardized, high-stakes English literacy exams which measure not only academic achievement but also English language proficiency. Moreover, the texts utilized outside of teacher-assembled texts reflected a narrow scope. Brooks argued that the five case study students would have trouble leveraging the strategy of text structure to comprehend unfamiliar texts as they had not been exposed to a diversity of text structures.

In response to the observed text interactions of the five focal students, Brooks (2020) recommended the pedagogical practice of building text sets for varied purposes. Lupo et al. (2018) developed a Quad Text Set Framework that involved a challenging text preceded by three texts that provided background knowledge and fostered intrinsic motivation to access the most challenging text. The three supporting texts potentially included visual texts or video texts, informational texts, and accessible texts rooted in popular culture. Thus, English learners' reading was scaffolded through the careful selection of multimodal and accessible texts, as well as reinforced by repeated readings of the most challenging text.

Another text set framework, linked text sets, developed by Elish-Piper et al. (2014) similarly facilitated access by engaging student literacies beyond school, such as social media, pop music, and YouTube videos. The engagement phase was then built upon by an exploration phase of texts that were connected to students' lives. Finally, the expansion phase provided students the opportunity to increase learning by linking patterns of themes across multiple texts (Elish-Piper et al., 2014). The text set was linked through an overarching essential question that was relevant to students' lives as well as the instructional standards. Brooks (2020) concluded

that text sets connecting to students' lives are crucial in creating an opportunity to learn for long-term English learners.

Academic Reading Practices

Brooks (2015, 2016, 2020) observed and further described the reading practices enacted in classrooms of these five focal long-term English learners, situated in biology and English language arts. Brooks inferred three overarching rules regarding academic reading within the school: (1) reading is a social interaction; (2) reading involves comprehension, and (3) reading implies that the teacher furnishes the “official interpretation” (Brooks, 2020, p. 54). Oral reading in groups supported by the teacher providing an official interpretation was the most frequent reading practice that Brooks observed. Additionally, teacher read aloud of the text was a frequent literacy practice, punctuated by teacher-provided explanations or summaries. For example, in English language arts class, students routinely participated in a modified round-robin reading where the teacher was the most frequent reader, as well as meaning-maker, as they periodically summarized the oral reading, coaxing students to add to the summary by posing strategic questions. The “text” became not only the printed version but also the oral discourse of the teacher summarizing and interpreting the reading selection. Students' responses to reading involved three options in order to construct meaning:

1. They could listen to the oral recitation and interpretation.
2. They could look at the text and listen to the oral recitation and interpretation.
3. They could engage in one of the two previously described options and recite the text aloud when called upon (this option was only available to selected students). (Brooks, 2020, p. 66)

In biology class, according to Brooks (2015, 2016, 2020), the predominant practice of reading entailed listening to teacher read aloud of teacher-created slides, coupled with listening to the teacher's oral interpretation, added details, and paraphrasing. Selected students responded to leading questions, as the teacher confirmed and revealed bullet points on the slides. Students' responses to reading also involved attending to the teacher's interpretation while copying notes from the slides. The use of Cornell two-column notes was a feature of the literacy practices in biology class; the teacher prompted students with guiding questions in order to generate the organizing questions or topics that would fill in the left-hand column after students added notes from the slides to the right-hand side.

While these literacy practices in classes created accessible texts which were both written and oral, Brooks (2015, 2016, 2020) found that students lacked any opportunity to construct meaning independently. The underlying assumption seemed to be that students were unable to access grade-level texts and required extensive scaffolding in order to comprehend text. Moreover, the reliance on listening comprehension underscored the teacher's confidence in the long-term English learners' oral abilities rather than their skills to comprehend extended written discourse. Brooks recommended not only a shift to more independent reading but also to shared conversation about the relevance of independent reading and building on current out-of-school literacy practices in which long-term English learners already engage. For example, a log of weekend literacies compiled by adolescents revealed their engagement with non-traditional texts, such as utility bills, subtitled telenovelas, social media, and other digital texts. Moreover, Frankel and Brooks (2020) characterized students' digital literacies as providing "a productive space for literacy instruction" (p. 713) if assignments are open enough to encompass these skills. Digital literacies, Frankel and Brooks suggested, provide a springboard to in-school independent reading

as well as pointing to the relevance of independent reading in the lives of students both currently and in potential future professions.

In order to shift toward a more humanizing literacy pedagogy, Brooks (2020) focused on the individual reading practices of the five focal students rather than focusing on them as long-term English learners who are struggling readers lacking proficiency in English. Student interviews conducted by Brooks regarding the participants' perspectives on successful readers provided insight into the connection between the participants' thoughts about reading and their reading practices. In general, students' understandings about reading are potent in that they may be leveraged to synthesize individual reading goals with instructional goals and standards, as demonstrated by Hall (2016, as cited in Brooks, 2020). Focusing on students' abilities and schema provides a powerful springboard "to further the creation of learning environments that recognize brilliance" (Brooks, 2020, p. 72).

Brooks (2020) also utilized a student read and think-aloud to illuminate the reading practices leveraged by the five focal students. Brooks found that the students actually utilized four categories of reading practices: summarizing and identifying key information, connecting to one's schema, making inferences beyond the text, and recognizing when comprehension breaks down. Students leveraged these four categories of reading practices or strategies—which had been explicitly taught in their English language arts classroom. However, Brooks pointed out the disconnect between the explicit reading strategy instruction and the opportunity to apply these four strategies to unfamiliar content in day-to-day classroom practice. While students were required to make notes in English language arts regarding the use of several of the seven habits of effective readers (i.e., make meaning, question the text, visualize, determine importance of information, activate schema, synthesize learning, and draw inferences), students had previously

been exposed to a different practice (teacher read aloud, teacher think aloud, strategic questioning posed by the teacher, and the construction of meaning in whole or small group, confirmed by the “official interpretation” provided by the teacher). Thus, the opportunity for the participants to construct meaning independently with unfamiliar text was rare, which led to difficulties in applying the seven habits of effective readers. Brooks pointed out that the struggle to apply the reading comprehension practices was not exclusive to English learners but was a result of a whole class approach. Thus, focusing solely on English learner status interfered with addressing reading comprehension limitations created by whole class literacy practice.

Educators must look to the multifaceted nature of students’ linguistic and literacy abilities. According to Brooks (2020), long-term English learners educated in U.S. schools—in so far as they are represented by the five focal students—may have indeed acquired many literacy skills within the local context, such as attending to reading aloud by the teacher or peers and taking notes based on teacher-developed slides, but not skills that are beneficial in the long term. Extrapolating from Brooks’s findings, it would be appropriate for educators to reflect on the divergence of reading practices valued in their classrooms versus those valued on standardized reading assessments, as well as those valued in future professions. For example, reading practices that are valued and thus assessed on the reading domain of the high school California English Language Development Test (CELDT) include applying vocabulary knowledge of polysemous and root words, leveraging contextual clues to determine word meaning, determining main idea and details, predicting and inferencing, understanding author’s purpose, and distinguishing between fact and opinion. (California Department of Education, 2010, as cited in Brooks, 2015). Brooks (2015) underscored that a major determinant of success on such standardized reading assessments is the ability to independently apply these

aforementioned academic reading skills. Moreover, literacy skills valued in future professions are identified by states as part of the career and college-ready initiatives and include higher thresholds of proficiency on both reading and math summative assessments. The Business Roundtable (2017) described employability skills that include literacy skills, such as the ability to read technical manuals and communicate effectively. The conclusion I reach with respect to Brooks's (2018, 2020) research is that while there is no magic bullet reading practice, leveraging literacy practices to create student agency and the ability to read and learn in an ever-evolving world is critical to long-term English learners becoming agentive readers and learners.

Literacy Development Through the Lens of Leadership

As part of WestEd's Quality Teaching for English Learners initiative, amplification of both the curriculum and leadership are essential to transforming literacy development (Walqui & Bunch, 2020). Amplification of curriculum involves exploration of rich and complex texts that are scaffolded appropriately for English learners rather than selecting simplified text with watered-down content. Increased rigor and critical thinking, along with high expectations for students are also enacted in educational contexts. These shifts must be supported by educational leaders as schools amplify curricula as well as expectations.

The shift in pedagogy proposed by Walqui and Bunch (2020) from a traditional approach of simplification of content for English learners to amplification was undertaken by the leadership of a high school in Austin, Texas. The administrative team sought to enact amplification of the literacy curriculum by teaching a class designed to replace a traditional remedial writing class. Students invited to participate were long-term English learners who were also labeled as struggling readers. The assistant principal designed a psychology elective course and extended personal invitations to these students to enroll. Designing her first lesson around

the thought-provoking subject of brain injury, students engaged in rigorous conversations, utilized multiple lenses of exploration and employed critical thinking in the course of their language development, all scaffolded through robust texts (Walqui & Bunch, 2020). The assistant principal concluded that students' interaction with rigorous content and interaction with their peers, supported by intentional scaffolding, created an opportunity for increased academic achievement, notwithstanding their passing of the standardized writing test. The initiative of the leadership team to invest their efforts to develop a high-quality literacy curriculum, deliver the literacy instruction, and share lessons learned with teacher colleagues amplified the role of leadership from carrying out administrative duties and overseeing accountability-driven practices to providing transformative leadership and fostering transformative apprenticeship among both the teachers in the school and their long-term English learner students.

Translanguaging Literacies Framework

Translanguaging, which refers to an individual speaker's ability to move seamlessly between languages, extends the concept of literacy beyond specific languages that are encoded in written texts. García and Kleifgen (2019) asserted that allowing translanguaging among multilingual students, including long-term English learners, brought to bear their entire linguistic repertoire in literacy practices. The speech of multilingual students, Kleyn and García (2019) suggested, should not be seen as the sum of two or more separate languages but rather as a combination of language and literacy practices that stem from a unitary language repertoire that is not compartmentalized across named languages. At the minimum, translanguaging serves as a scaffold to allow multilingual students to access written texts and deepen their comprehension. For example, translanguaging may be used in oral discussions during pre-reading activities, read-

aloud, and post-read-aloud activities even if the text is encoded in one language, and the language of instruction is determined by the state and/or school officials (García et al., 2017).

In a translanguaging learning context, as Espinosa et al. (2016) proposed, students with the same language resources could be grouped to leverage their similar semiotic resources, including speech, writing, gestures, and visuals, in order to create meaning. They suggested that annotating texts via sticky notes, using any language or combination thereof, is another translanguaging strategy that strengthens comprehension of texts. Along the same lines, utilizing written texts and/or videos in various languages with similar content also extends multilingual students' understanding of texts encoded in the language of instruction, and this strategy can be leveraged by secondary students in locating these literacy resources. Finally, mentor texts created by bilingual authors who write using translanguaging provide an authentic space for multilingual students to deepen their understanding of the text.

Kleyn and García (2019) cited a case study conducted through the City University of New York New York State Initiative for Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB) at the middle school level where an English language arts teacher and an English as a new language teacher leveraged a mentor text relating an autobiographical immigrant story of a young refugee. Mentor texts, as defined by the National Writing Project, “are pieces of literature that you—both teacher and student—can return to and reread for many different purposes. They are texts to be studied and imitated” (Dorfman, 2013). The exemplar text relates the immigration experience of a Vietnamese girl after the fall of Saigon. While none of the students in the case study were Vietnamese, they spoke a diversity of languages, none of which the teachers spoke. As an introductory activity, students reflected on the notion of why the mentor text incorporated many Vietnamese words in the autobiographical account. Students were also asked how they would

infer the meaning of the Vietnamese vocabulary. Teachers and students used Google Translate as a tool to provide linguistic support for the questions in various languages. Students were then grouped according to their native languages to discuss the questions in any language that they preferred, including English or multiple languages. The activity was followed by a reading of the author's translanguage poem regarding New Year in Vietnam. Using this as a mentor text, students then composed poems regarding their own culture's New Year celebrations, leveraging translanguage as a literary device. All of these strategies accessed students' entire repertoire of languages and validated their linguistic identities while strengthening their literacy comprehension.

To return to the work of García and Kleifgen (2019), not only does translanguage deepen students' comprehension of texts, but it also creates space for the development of diverse student-generated texts. Utilizing translanguage in planning, drafting, and writing stages of the writing process is a powerful tool for multilingual students to write with both independence and agency (García & Kleifgen, 2019). For example, in a case study conducted by de los Rios and Seltzer (2017), secondary multilingual learners attended a reading of a poem titled "My Spanish" performed by the author, Melissa Lozada-Oliva. Students then completed close-reads of the poem and wrote their own poems, reflecting their language-related identities, and culminating the poetry unit. A Latina student's poem reflected her "confianza" [confidence] in her own writing voice, mirroring the multilingual nature of her semiotic resources:

My English is good enough, yet...

Mi ingles a veces se cambia,

It's okay, you'll get the idea, no es

Muy complicado. Understand? No...OK.

Doesn't matter! (de los Rios & Seltzer, 2017, p. 67)

By opening the writing space to include translanguageing, student writers are empowered to leverage their entire linguistic repertoire during the writing process without regard to the language of the final product (García & Kleifgen, 2019).

The development of student “confianza” [confidence] may be a result of a translanguageing pedagogy enacted in literacy practices in the classroom. For example, Vogel et al. (2019) implemented a translanguageing pedagogy through the initiative, Participating in Literacies and Computer Science. They leveraged translanguageing to develop computer literacy in Scratch (<https://scratch.mit.edu/about>) — “a coding language with a simple visual interface that allows young people to create digital stories, games, and animations” (Vogel et al., 2019, para. 1). They created a unit around telenovelas, a Spanish soap opera genre. Middle school students role-played a selected scene from a telenovela and parsed the scene they selected, including the oral discourse, physical response, and sounds. Using any language, movement, or visuals, students reflected on how Scratch coding utilized these same elements to create an equivalent digital animated scene. A culminating project entailed students’ creating an original telenovela scene using Scratch coding language. Vogel et al. (2019) reflected on the transformational power of translanguageing in transforming script writing, as well as the affordance of computer programming, in strengthening “confianza” among multilingual learners.

Translanguageing may also foster metalinguistic awareness through translation and cross-linguistic comparison. These practices may, in turn, develop a deeper engagement with texts. For example, Jiménez et al. (2015a) conducted a case study in which middle school bilingual students translated text, not through isolated exercises but through deep discussion, defending

word choice, syntax, and discourse structure. Student outcomes included a deeper understanding of the text and nuanced meaning created through language choice and structure, as well as a critical metalinguistic awareness of their complete linguistic repertoire.

Otheguy et al. (2015, 2018, as cited in García & Kleifgen, 2019) proposed that a translanguaging literacy pedagogy breaks constraints of language boundaries, allowing bilingual students to bring to bear a unitary semiotic repertoire— “that in no way reflects dual/separate linguistic systems” (p. 557) and is situated within a broader meaning-making context, including words, gestures, visuals, and sounds thereby reflecting the fluid use of all linguistic resources. Moreover, García and Kleifgen (2019) conjectured that barriers between content areas are eroded as English language arts and Spanish language arts are melded. By valuing kinesthetics and movement, translanguaging can extend to include the body as an instrument of meaning-making, as demonstrated by Vogel et al. (2019) in their research project, *Participating in Literacies and Computer Science*, discussed above. In this extended sense, curricula are no longer linear but fluid, and instructional reading levels are no longer salient, as multilingual learners fluidly move across texts at various entry points. García and Kleifgen (2019) called for scholars to move beyond defining “literacy in a dominant language done in the ways of schools. Instead, literacy scholars would give equal voice to all literacy performances, releasing students’ imagination, creativity, and criticality to learn deeply” (García and Kleifgen, 2019, p. 567) thus transforming literacy pedagogy for multilingual learners in K-12 settings.

Dual Language Programming

In my examination of the research into contributing factors for prolonged English learner status, varying program models figured prominently. Dual language programming seemed to me to be the most effective model, closing the achievement gap between English learners and native

English speakers within 5 to 6 years of dual language schooling, typically by the end of elementary school or early middle school (Thomas & Collier, 2012). In considering the various proposed time frames for students to be classified as long-term English learners, Menken and Kleyn (2010) and Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) proposed more than 7 years of enrollment. California legislators codified long-term English learner status as more than 6 years of matriculation in U.S. schools (Cal.Ed. Code §313.1, 2012). Non-regulatory guidance published by the U.S. Department of Education (2016) accorded long-term English learner status to those English learners who have not attained proficiency after 5 years from their initial year of enrollment. Based on the proposed range of years, the long-term English learner label would apply (assuming non-exiting language proficiency scores) to students in either upper elementary or early middle school. In this context, dual language programming could be seen as a preventative program to avoid students being classified as long-term English learners because entry into dual language programs is typically kindergarten and no later than Grade 1—unless a student is able to demonstrate proficiency on a standardized test of the program target language that includes all four language domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Howard et al., 2018).

Aiming to validate the power of bilingual schooling, Collier and Thomas (2017) conducted 32 years of research grounded in longitudinal studies. Collier and Thomas followed the academic achievement of English learners throughout their educational career for a minimum of 3 to 5 years to a maximum of the entire K-12 span. They found that the most powerful predictor of academic achievement was continuous development of the students' home or native language through instruction in the content areas accomplished by two-way or one-way bilingual programming. These results highlighted the interdependence of native language development

and cognitive development, as previously demonstrated by Cummins (1991, as cited in Collier & Thomas, 2017). Cummins (2000, as cited in Collier & Thomas, 2017) underscored the importance of continual development in both a child's native language and second language during schooling in order to reap positive educational and cognitive outcomes. Conversely, Collier and Thomas (2017) pointed out that English learners enrolled in English-only educational programs often fail to attain this proficiency threshold in their native language. I believe that the difficulty in reaching proficiency thresholds in a student's native language and/or second language is interrelated with potential long-term English learner status.

In analyzing longitudinal data sets across time, Collier (1995, as cited in Collier & Thomas, 2017) developed, and Thomas and Collier (1997, as cited in Collier & Thomas, 2017) subsequently expanded what they called the Prism Model to explain the interrelationship between the four crucial developmental processes of sociocultural practices, linguistic development, academic development, and cognitive development. They argued that all four Prism components must be completely developed in both the program target language and English; neglecting even one process in the Prism model, they asserted, could result in deficient growth. For example, if sociocultural processes are neglected, then the lack of validation of a student's culture, experiences, and community would negatively impact other areas of the Prism, such as language development, cognitive development, or academic achievement. With full development of all four processes through quality dual language education, they asserted, English learners would be empowered to reach parity in academic achievement with native English speakers.

Collier and Thomas's (2017) consistent research question in their studies across 36 school districts in 16 U.S. states was:

How long does it take for school-age English learners, just beginning acquisition of the English language, to achieve grade level (age-appropriate achievement across the school curriculum) in their second language and stay at grade-level (or above) throughout the remainder of their schooling? (p. 207)

The consistent answer to their research question was that it required an average of 6 years for students beginning to learn English in kindergarten, provided they were enrolled in a high-quality dual language program throughout their elementary schooling. Without dual-language education, English learners take at least 7 to 10 years to reach parity with native English speakers on content area summative assessments. They postulated that the additional time taken to close the gap was because students whose native language was English were a “moving target” (Collier & Thomas, 2017, p. 208) as these students typically averaged ten months of growth per academic year, assuming that English learners, on the other hand, began well below native speaker performance on summative academic assessments and so had to attain accelerated growth to reach parity with native speakers. Collier and Thomas (2017) posited that many English learners who did not experience a quality dual-language elementary education never reached grade-level parity with native English speakers and were “often referred to by school personnel as ‘long-term English learners’” (p. 207). Thus, the transformative power of a dual language education must be harnessed early on in a student’s academic trajectory to close the academic achievement gap and prevent them from becoming long-term English learners.

The Power of Oracy

Title III of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, requires the concomitant goals of developing English language proficiency in all four domains of language—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and academic grade-level achievement (20 U.S.C. §§6825I(1)). Fisher and

Frey (2018) alluded to the tension these two goals elicit as schools struggle to create programs that provide access to grade-level curriculum while providing English language development support that is least segregative. As set forth in *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981), “segregation resulting from a language remediation program would be minimized to the greatest extent possible and that the programs would have as a goal the integration . . . into the English language classroom as soon as possible” (*Castañeda v. Pickard*, 648 F.2d 989 (1981) at 998 n.4).

In light of the tension between these goals, Fisher and Frey (2018) pointed out that middle schools serve as a “crossroads for shaping a student’s academic trajectory” (p. 29) since exiting language proficiency scores, earned as late as Grade 8, are a strong predictor of academic achievement measured by standardized content assessments, as well as matriculation in Advanced Placement courses (Flores et al., 2009). Fisher and Frey added the caveat that reclassification to fluent English proficient is not always a panacea and pointed to a study of Indiana’s accelerated reclassification system that is described as prematurely removing English language development support, particularly for Spanish speakers with low socioeconomic status (Burke et al., 2016, as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2018). Moreover, at one end of the spectrum, English immersion in all core classes is detrimental to English learners who need linguistic support. It is difficult to find the appropriate balance between providing only English language development stand-alone classes versus providing supports across all core courses, with the latter entailing extensive professional development so that classroom teachers are knowledgeable of linguistic scaffolding (Jiménez et al., 2015b).

To find an appropriate balance in serving middle school English learners so that they are linguistically supported and yet have full access to the core curriculum, practitioners at a middle school in Texas partnered with Fisher and Frey (2018) to assess and subsequently improve their

practices in English language arts, reading, and English language development. As Fisher and Frey reported, the school was comprised of 23% English language learners who lagged behind other English learners across the state. Only 22% of them achieved expected annual growth on the English language proficiency assessment, whereas the state average was approximately 50%. Stalled English language development growth, typical of long-term English learners, coupled with a lackluster performance on the state English language arts assessment prompted the school reading specialist to reach out to Fisher and Frey for assistance with developing a plan to enhance English learner academic progress.

In this instance, after analyzing student achievement data, teachers chose to focus on oral language development, positing that oral skills impact literacy skills. Under Fisher and Frey's (2018) guidance, instruments were used to measure English learners' oral skills. One of these was the Student Oral Language Observation matrix (SOLOM, <https://www.cal.org/twi/EvalToolkit/appendix/solom.pdf>) a formative rating instrument which assesses comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Teachers also utilized an oral presentation skills analytic rubric from the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (Martinez, 1998, as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2018), which they modified to provide a more detailed analysis. Fourfold initial interventions included a. development of a bank of language frames to leverage in academic conversations, b. an increased focus on grammar, c. increased instructional minutes (50%) spent on peer-to-peer oral interactions, and d. an emphasis on public speaking which included all students. Fisher and Frey utilized the two rubrics to compare final ratings to pre-assessment ratings. Statistics indicated no significant effect of the intervention. Teachers then adjusted their interventions and required digital recordings of student speeches, followed by self-assessment and peer assessments and the re-recording of speeches

based on feedback (including teacher feedback). Teachers conducted mini lessons on constructive feedback supported by a simplified checklist based on the public speaking rubric. After another iteration of rubric ratings and effect size calculations, teachers further decided to modify the public speaking practices to link speech writing to essay writing by outlining, drafting, writing, and editing an introduction, a supporting body, and a conclusion for speeches. Authentic audiences were incorporated into the process by casting the class members as audience members, or by allowing students to record their speech in front of their families, or at open mic times in the school library. The teachers' final adjustment included an independent reading time, which was incorporated into a rotation of stations that also included a. grammar mini lessons (contextualized based on error patterns within student speech writing), b. independent speech writing, c. recording speeches, d. peer feedback on speeches, and e. conferencing with the teacher.

Not only did the educational environment move from mostly whole-group instruction to small-group rotations, but the effect size of the pre- to post-measurements on the two rubrics also increased considerably. Outcomes on the state reading and writing assessment increased by 16 points, language proficiency levels increased from 22% to 53% at the state average, and Lexile reading levels increased across a year by 88 points for English learners (Fisher & Frey, 2018), as compared to the national average middle school growth rate of 64 points (Williamson, 2006, as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2018). Not studied, but inferred, was the power of a. collective teacher efficacy enacted through holding reflective and collaborative meetings, b. leveraging data to adjust interventions as needed, c. teachers holding each other accountable, and d. providing honest feedback on what worked and what did not. Fisher and Frey (2018) surmised that collective teacher efficacy was likely just as powerful as the English learner strategic

improvement plan over the course of nearly a year and a half of the middle school English department seeking to enable English learners to meet challenging core academic standards and attain English fluent proficient status through the power of oracy.

Accountability Policy

Exit/Reclassification Criteria Policy

To build knowledge of long-term English learners, the WIDA Consortium quantitatively examined the impact of not only exit reclassification policy but also initial proficiency levels and student mobility (Sahakyan & Ryan, 2018). The WIDA researchers distilled these three compelling factors contributing to long-term English learner status from a review of the literature. Brooks (2018) argued that long-term English learner status could not be understood without an examination of the local policies and exit criteria that directly impact these students. Previously, Haas et al. (2014, as cited in Sahakyan & Ryan, 2018) contended that initial proficiency levels were influential in predicting long-term English learner status—the lower a student’s initial proficiency level, the higher the probability of their becoming a long-term English learner. Even earlier, Menken and Kleyn (2009) claimed that student mobility was a strong factor in prolonged status. Sahakyan and Ryan (2018) utilized descriptive statistics to explore these previously proposed contributing factors in analyzing potential long-term English learner status.

The research was conducted using WIDA’s longitudinal data acquired from the use of the ACCESS for ELLs (<https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>) suite of English proficiency assessments across 15 of the more than 40 states in the WIDA Consortium. Sahakyan and Ryan (2018) analyzed a cohort of English learners initially enrolled in U.S. schools as of 2009-10 beginning in kindergarten to Grade 2 who had not exited after 6 years. Because the 15 states all

varied in their exit/reclassification criteria, Sahakyan and Ryan selected the lowest composite exit/reclassification criteria to apply across all states to minimize state-to-state variability in outcomes.

In examining the impact of initial proficiency, Sahakyan and Ryan (2018) calculated the average kindergarten-Grade 2 initial composite proficiency for each cohort of students in the 15 states. They then calculated the percentage of potential long-term English learners for each state, based on the hypothetical 4.5 composite proficiency level exit criteria on the ACCESS for ELLs (<https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>) data (i.e., students who had not yet attained a composite proficiency of 4.5 by the end of six years). They found that the percentages of potential long-term students across states varied from a minimum of 2% to a maximum of 24%. They concluded that initial proficiency levels do not necessarily affect potential long-term status, as the Spearman correlation coefficient between initial proficiency level and potential long-term status was not statistically significant. For example, in several states that had the same average initial proficiency level (2.7) also had widely varying potential long-term percentages (8%-16%).

As for exit criteria, Sahakyan and Ryan (2018) then posed the question whether varying exit /reclassification criteria impacted potential prolonged status, with the caveat that setting a common exiting score might not account for all variability in exit criteria, particularly in states with multiple criteria, including summative content assessments and teacher judgement. They compared the potential long-term status students across the states based again on the hypothetical score of 4.5 on the ACCESS for ELLs (<https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>) data. They grouped the states by low-range, mid-range, and high-range actual exit criteria and found that, within the groups, potential long-term percentages varied widely. In the states with low-range exit criteria, potential long-term percentages varied from 2% to 18%, and in states with mid-range criteria, the

percentages varied from 7% to 17%. The state with the highest exit/reclassification criteria exhibited the highest percentage—24% of potential prolonged status students. They concluded that these patterns potentially demonstrated that the varying exit criteria impacted the percentage of potential long-term students, although if the highest exit criteria and the lowest exit criteria of states were removed from the analysis, the impact became less clear.

In analyzing the effect of student mobility on long-term status, as originally theorized by Menken and Kleyn (2009), Sahakyan and Ryan (2018) considered potential long-term English learner students who were continuously enrolled compared to students described as dropped students who were enrolled initially in 2009-10 but moved out of state or the country before the end of the 6-year study period and did not reach a 4.5 composite score. They found that the state with the highest drop rate (44%) had the lowest percentage of potential long-term status students (2%). Conversely, the state with the highest percentage of potential long-term students (24%) had a drop rate of 17%, below the average drop rate for all states (22%). This finding made the point that proportions of potential long-term English learners could be misleading unless student drop rates were considered. In other words, a high frequency of dropped students (representing student mobility) may have some effect on the potential percentage of long-term English learners.

Sahakyan and Ryan's (2018) analysis mostly confirmed extant research addressing three factors contributing to long-term status—initial proficiency, exit policy, and student mobility. However, whereas Haas (2014, as cited in Sahakyan & Ryan, 2018) demonstrated the effect of lower initial proficiencies in increasing the probability of students becoming long-term English learners, it is instructive to consider that Haas's study was conducted within a state rather than across states. Sahakyan and Ryan's (2018) data from across 15 WIDA Consortium states found a

lack of correspondence between lower initial proficiency rates and higher potential long-term status proportions. Thus, their results tended to confirm Brooks' 2018 observation that not only is exit policy a determinant of long-term status but that the relationship between the two variables varies across states. Finally, student mobility—theorized by Menken and Kleyn (2009) as an impactful variable on long-term status—was confirmed by Sahakyan and Ryan's findings as an important variable to examine in considering potential long-term English learner status. Sahakyan and Ryan suggested that other factors for future study might include local contexts such as program quality, community support, and school context. To their knowledge, their study was unique in considering potential long-term status across multiple states as opposed to the previous single-state studies conducted on long-term English learners in Arizona, California, New York, and Texas. Sahakyan and Ryan recommended caution in interpreting their findings and characterized them as descriptive and investigative. Nevertheless, their findings provide a window into the landscape of long-term English learners across 15 states within the WIDA Consortium.

English Learner Annual Progress Targets

As exit criteria have some impact on a student's potential long-term status as an English learner, another accountability policy to consider is the ESSA-mandated annual growth targets for reaching English language proficiency (20 U.S.C. §6825I(1)). With the passage of ESSA, English language development progress has been included as an indicator of academic achievement, recognizing the growing population of English learners and hence their impact on measures of achievement at the school level. Under ESSA, the accountability model delineating the English language progress indicator can account for individual student characteristics, such as initial level of proficiency and the number of years of enrollment in English language

development programming (Goldschmidt & Hakuta, 2017). Additionally, the conceptualization of an English language development trajectory over time is another variable to consider when developing an English learner accountability model under ESSA. Research demonstrates a non-linear trajectory with faster growth taking place early on and slower growth over time (Cook et al., 2008; Goldschmidt & Hakuta, 2017; Hakuta et al., 2000; Sahakyan & Cook, 2014).

Counterintuitively, lower (initial proficiency) corresponds to faster (acquisition), and higher (initial proficiency) corresponds to slower (acquisition), not only at the individual student level but also at the district level (Sahakyan & Cook, 2014). For any student who has not yet met the state-defined exit criteria, the expectation is that they will make progress toward proficiency (the exit criteria). As a case in point, the Accountability Department of NCDPI has set the exit criteria at an overall composite of 4.8 on the annual WIDA ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency test. In order to reach the exit criteria, the Accountability Department of NCDPI also determined an acceptable number of years for a student to exit English learner status, based on the student's initial ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency score in Table 1. Under North Carolina's accountability model, the amount of time a student has to exit English learner status is a function of their initial English language proficiency (ELP), ranging from a maximum of 5 years to a minimum of 1 year beyond the initial year. In seminal research, Hakuta et al. (2000) demonstrated that it took approximately 3 to 5 years to develop oral proficiency and 4 to 7 years to fully develop academic language proficiency. Reaching full academic language proficiency within 4 to 7 years has also been supported in subsequent research by Cook et al. (2008) and Thompson (2017). The North Carolina ELP accountability model is slightly more demanding than research indicates, setting 5 years beyond the initial year for a total of 6 years as the

Table 1

Number of Years Expected to Achieve the Program Exit Criteria

Initial score WIDA ACCESS	Number of years expected to exit
1.0-1.9	5
2.0-2.9	4
3.0-3.9	3
4.0-4.7	2
4.8 or higher	1

Note. From North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2017, p. 31).

maximum time to reach language proficiency because ESSA requires states to design ELP goals that are ambitious (ESEA § 1111I(4)(A)(ii)).

The NCDPI Accountability Department provides a modified value table that delineates all possible initial ACCESS for ELLs composite scores that a student could score from level 1.0 to level 4.8. Each cell in the value table indicates the minimum ACCESS for ELLs score required annually to meet the standard target of progress. The following formula delineates each required minimum ACCESS score to qualify as achieving the standard of progress toward proficiency:

Progress = $IS + \{(4.8-IS)/Y\} * N$ where:

IS = a student's initial overall composite score on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 TM assessment,

Y = number of years expected to achieve the exit criteria composite score of 4.8 on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 TM assessment,

and

N = number of years a student is in the English Learners Program (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017)

Thus, the formula for each standard of progress is a function of the state-defined exit criteria, a student's initial proficiency, the maximum number of years that the state defines to reach the exit criteria, and the number of years a student is enrolled in the English learner program. Growth needed is equalized across time in the program in order to set the progress standard for each cell in the value table. Rounding to the tenth place is adopted since proficiency level scores are reported by WIDA as integers plus a decimal to the tenth place. The value table reflects the student's growth-to-standard or target. The formula was developed as a function of initial

proficiency, acceptable years to proficiency based on initial scores, and a growth rate that reflected the same slope or change in proficiency across time required to meet the standard exit target. The advantage of the model is its transparency (Lyons et al., 2017) in that a simple algebraic linear function yields the threshold standard of progress for each cell, and each student will have an individual threshold.

Goldschmidt and Hakuta (2017) asserted that one of the drawbacks of this modified value table based on a growth-to-exit or target model is that districts potentially focus on “bubble kids (students close to meeting specific thresholds)” (p. 22). Moreover, they highlighted that the growth-to-target model results in a binary “meets” or “does not meet” rating for each student—students are not given credit for partial growth that is below the targeted threshold.

Another issue with growth-to-target models is that they reflect a linear growth rate in language proficiency across time whereas, as Sahakyan and Cook’s (2014) research showed that growth for those acquiring English language proficiency is non-linear, with faster rates of growth early in a student’s time in the English language development program and then slowing across time. For students in higher grades who have been enrolled in language programs longer, achieving the target proficiency threshold based on a growth-to-target model reflecting a linear growth progression is quite challenging, as the model does not reflect empirical evidence that language growth rates are non-linear and slow across time. Lyons et al. (2017), in an analysis of models for measuring ELP progress, underscored that the model used “will only be as strong as the theoretical framework dictating the growth trajectories” (p. 13). This is the crux of the issue that long-term English learners face: achieving growth targets derived from a linear model when, in actuality, student growth rates slow across time in the program.

Summary

Recent historical perspectives have highlighted characteristics of long-term English learners and factors that contribute to prolonged English learner status. Deficit perspectives of long-term English learners have prevailed in recent historical literature, motivated by stagnating English language proficiency scores and their inability to attain proficiency on standardized content summative assessments. In contrast to the historical perspective, contemporary literature features perspectives that disrupt tightly defined profiles of long-term English learners. Case studies have yielded nuanced and diverse literacy and language profiles of long-term English learners, revealing multiple dimensions of literacy and language practices.

Concomitant with nuanced and diverse perspectives of long-term English learners, an asset-based perspective has emerged in literature, particularly in the area of translanguaging, whereby students fluidly utilize their entire linguistic repertoire to make meaning in diverse ways. Complementing contemporary perspectives is the rejection of the long-term English learner label in literature. Contemporary researchers have focused on the impact of stigmatization on individual students, and, worse yet, their tracking into less rigorous classes or exclusionary tracking, both of which further compound the impact of stigmatization.

Effective instructional and program practices in the context of long-term English learner instruction are also surveyed in literature. Contemporary pedagogical practices that are empirically validated and have yielded positive results include the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) and co-teaching models involving the English language development specialist and the content-area or regular education teacher (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010, 2018; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Effective program practices are also examined in the literature that support the development of academic language and the

strengthening of literacy through an asset-based approach, leveraging translanguaging, cultural assets, and experiential assets of long-term English learners. Transformative practices in literacy education of long-term English learners are also highlighted in more recent scholarship. Themes of individual linguistic, cultural, and experiential assets contribute to a more humanizing literacy pedagogy together with a nuanced focus on individual reading practices rather than matching a reader to method. Dual language programming is also highlighted in transformative literature as a powerful means for closing the achievement gap between English learners and all students (Collier & Thomas, 2017). Lastly, a focus on accountability policy related to language proficiency growth and its effects on long-term English learner status is warranted. Models of annual language proficiency growth as required by ESSA (2016) are open to question, particularly in light of North Carolina's English learner accountability model (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017). The mismatch between the non-linear growth rates of language proficiency documented in literature and North Carolina's linear growth-to-target progress value model is problematic.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF INQUIRY

In the rural western North Carolina district that is the context of my study, quantitative data implicate a problem of practice. Steadily increasing percentages of English learners from 2020 to 2022 would be considered long-term status. Students who had not met the state-defined exit criterion of a 4.8 composite ACCESS for ELLs (WIDA, 2022a) language proficiency score after receiving 6 years or more of English learner program services ranged from 26.4% in 2020, to 30.1% in 2021, and finally 32.5% in 2022. More specifically, language proficiency scores in the domain of reading continue to languish at the lower end of the continuum. Furthermore, with the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) and the introduction of annual English learner language progress targets (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017), the accountability targets continue to elude long-term English learners.

The goal of my mixed methods exploratory sequential study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) at a rural western North Carolina middle school is to address the traits of long-term English learner students and their academic reading experiences, perceived academic language development abilities, and their perceived English language support experiences in order to craft an intervention designed to “unstick” plateaued reading comprehension and stalled English language proficiency. In the initial qualitative phase of my study, English learner students’ perceptions will guide my design and refinement of a co-teaching instructional intervention intended to strengthen a. academic reading comprehension and b. English academic language support.

Following the qualitative phase, Phase II begins with a formative assessment of pre-intervention measures of academic reading comprehension and academic English language development proficiency. Additionally, prior to the professional development, I will assess the

co-teachers' instruction using rating scales applied to lesson plans and observations of lessons that demonstrate reading comprehension instruction, student-to-student interaction, vocabulary development, and English language development scaffolding. Subsequently, I will provide professional development to the reading specialist and English language development specialist co-teachers. The professional learning will entail elements of the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), targeting reading comprehension, the social nature of reading perspective, and vocabulary development. An additional focus on increasing metalinguistic awareness of the students will also be addressed in the professional learning sessions. Subsequent to the professional development, I will complete Phase II with implementation of the intervention.

A quantitative phase will follow, as I will then assess levels of implementation by the co-teachers. Levels of implementation will be measured using rating scales applied to observations of lessons. Also, I will formatively assess the impacts of the instructional intervention on long-term English learners' academic reading comprehension and English language development.

Problem of Practice Guiding Questions

I have crafted my study questions to align with a mixed methods approach. My study is guided by four questions, beginning with two exploratory questions which draw on the social nature of reading perspective (Brooks, 2015, 2020). My initial qualitative research questions are:

1. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their experiences of academic reading?
2. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their academic English language abilities and in-school English language development support?

Following my analysis of the qualitative data, I will craft an intervention utilizing the

ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), leveraging students' metalinguistic awareness, building reading comprehension, and developing English academic language. I will provide professional development to the reading specialist and the English language development specialist co-teachers regarding the ExC-ELL literacy framework as well as how to build students' metalinguistic awareness. Roles of co-teaching with a focus on reading comprehension and language development will be discussed and supported through observations and feedback.

Levels of implementation of the co-teaching intervention will be addressed quantitatively both before and after my professional development, analyzing lesson delivery components through observational ratings. For example, lessons will be analyzed for the lesson delivery component of reading comprehension strategies (e.g., partner reading and summarizing, student-to-student interaction, and pre-teaching vocabulary). Lessons will also be analyzed for linguistic scaffolding for English language development, such as sentence frames, word banks, models, and accountable student-to-student interaction. A quantitative question will address the level of implementation by teachers:

3. What is the level of implementation of the co-teaching intervention as measured by observational rating scales focused on lesson delivery components fostering reading comprehension and academic language development?

Moreover, considering the co-teaching intervention and utilizing pre-intervention and post-intervention formative assessment data, the following quantitative question undergirds my analysis of formative academic outcomes at Superb Middle School:

4. To what extent does the co-teaching intervention (designed subsequent to the findings of research questions 1 and 2) as implemented by the reading specialist and English

language development specialist improve formative measures of reading comprehension and academic language for long-term English learners at Superb Middle School?

In light of the problem of practice—long-term English learners’ languishing reading comprehension and stagnating academic language proficiency, a mixed methods exploratory sequential study will address the characteristics of long-term English learners and result in an intervention crafted to improve their academic reading and language outcomes. Qualitative questions lead the study, designed to consider the perceptions of long-term English learners regarding in-school reading instruction, as well as academic language development and accompanying support. The qualitative questions aim to provide a window into the problem of practice and inform the intervention. Quantitative questions develop inquiry into levels of the co-teachers’ implementation of the intervention and the impact of the intervention on student outcomes.

Inquiry Design and Rationale

Adolescent long-term English learners with shared characteristics of protracted English learner classification, languishing reading comprehension, stalled academic language proficiency, and deficient academic outcomes all point to a problem of practice at Superb Middle School. These data signal a problem of practice that begs the question: How do we more effectively instruct this group of students, meet their educational needs in the areas of reading comprehension and academic language development to “unstick” students, and thus enable them to shed the English learner label?

My inquiry design is based upon a mixed methods approach, drawing on the strengths of and minimizing the limitations of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell &

Creswell, 2018). My exploratory sequential study leads with a qualitative approach, embedded or nested within an intervention design. The qualitative phase incorporates the perspectives of the student study participants to assist in developing the intervention addressing plateaued academic reading and stalled academic language proficiency. This approach is rooted in my belief that educators often fail to ask students about a problem of practice; incorporating English learners' voices in the design of the intervention may develop a more nuanced and contextually appropriate intervention for the study participants. Additionally, compiling baseline information on language use, metalinguistic awareness, and perceptions of in-school reading and academic language support experiences will further inform and contextualize the intervention. The qualitative strand is therefore designed to answer the research questions aimed at long-term English learner perceptions of their in-school academic reading and academic language development and accompanying support experiences. At a procedural level, Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that the mixed methods approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of research questions by amplifying the intervention through perspectives of the study participants, which my qualitative study questions are designed to do: 1. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their experiences of academic reading? 2. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their academic English language abilities and in-school English language development support?

Following the qualitative phase, pre-intervention quantitative data collection and analysis will assess students' current academic reading comprehension and academic language, using formative measures. I will then conduct pre-professional development observational ratings of lesson delivery components of the reading specialist and English language development specialist. Once I provide professional development to the co-teachers regarding the ExC-ELL

literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), increasing the metalinguistic awareness of students, and co-teaching roles are discussed and reflected upon, the intervention will subsequently be implemented.

Initiating the quantitative phase, evaluation of the levels of intervention implementation by the co-teachers and subsequent student academic results will be conducted through the quantitative measures of observational ratings of teachers and formative assessments of students, with both measures adding to a more complete understanding of outcomes. These outcomes are delineated in the quantitative study questions: (3) What is the level of implementation of the co-teaching intervention as measured by observational rating scales focused on lesson delivery components fostering reading comprehension and academic language? (4) To what extent does the co-teaching intervention, designed subsequent to the findings of research questions 1 and 2, as implemented by the reading specialist and English language development specialist, improve formative measures of reading comprehension and academic language for long-term English learners at Superb Middle School?

Context of the Study

Superb Middle School is the most diverse middle school in a rural western North Carolina district containing five middle schools. Superb Middle School's English learner population has continued to increase annually over time, from 11.6% in 2016 to 24% in 2022. These percentages far exceed English learner populations at the other middle schools which range from approximately 2% to 4%. Superb Middle School is indeed a mecca for English learners.

School report grades shed further light on Superb Middle School and its English learner subgroup. Superb Middle School has consistently received a school report card grade of C from

2014 until 2019. (Accountability testing was waived by the federal government in 2020 due to the pandemic. School report card grades were not calculated for 2021 due to pandemic-driven education.) Academic growth at the school level has consistently met or exceeded expected growth, comparable to or surpassing growth at the state level. English learner subgroup report card performance lagged behind the performance of all students, with grades of D from 2018-2019, the only two years that subgroup school report card data is available.

Although subgroup academic growth for English learners either met or exceeded state average growth rates, it was not sufficient to close the achievement gap between English learners and all students, which loomed large. From 2016 to 2019, English language arts achievement gaps ranged from a maximum of at least 52% to 42%. In 2021, the achievement gap in ELA decreased to at least 29%; however, proficiency was down for the subgroup of all students, creating a ceiling of 34% for calculating the gap. Moreover, mathematics achievement gaps have also persisted at Superb Middle School. From 2016 to 2019, mathematics gaps ranged from a minimum of 37% to a maximum of 43%. In 2021, the gap persisted at a lower level of 23%, but again, the decrease in the gap was due to a lower proficiency level for the subgroup of all students at 28%, creating a potential ceiling of 28%.

Language proficiency data further illuminates the context of Superb Middle School's English learner population. Percentages of Superb Middle School's English learners scoring at the lower end of the continuum on the ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency reading subtest have continued to increase from 2018 to 2021, currently hovering at 83-84%. Across the same 5-year span, two-thirds of the students at Superb Middle School scoring at these lower levels were consistently represented by long-term English learners—students classified as English learners for 6 or more years. Moreover, percentages of English learners meeting annual language

proficiency growth accountability targets have continued to decline since the introduction of the targets in 2017-2018. The accountability-designed language proficiency metrics paint a dismal picture of elusive targets and stagnating scores at the study site.

While standardized testing metrics all paint a portrait of deficient English learner outcomes at Superb Middle School, easily overlooked statistics of language diversity paint a rich portrait of linguistic assets. The students in Superb Middle School present a range of linguistic profiles, including nine home languages other than English. These home languages include Spanish, indigenous Central American dialects of Aguacateco also known as Awacateco, Mayan, Mam, and Kanjobal, German, Hmong, Cambodian or Khmer, and Chinese. Spanish speakers represent the overwhelming majority at 89% of speakers of non-English home languages, followed by percentages of less than 5% represented by Aguacateco, Mayan, and Hmong. These languages are a microcosm of the diverse community that calls this western rural North Carolina district home.

Drawing on the social nature of reading perspective (Brooks, 2015, 2020), the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), and building students' metalinguistic awareness with an emphasis on language goals and growth, an instructional intervention will be crafted. The intervention will also incorporate the perspectives identified in the qualitative phase of long-term English learners.

Inquiry Partners

Inquiry partners include many professionals in Superb Public Schools who will collaborate to bring this study to fruition. A critical stakeholder is the principal of Superb Middle School, who is committed to English learners and how to serve this population most effectively. The principal is creative, energetic, and positive, supporting this journey to strengthen co-

teachers' implementation of reading comprehension and academic language development, as well as to impact English learner outcomes. A shared Google folder will be kept for documentation of anecdotal notes regarding fidelity of implementation. Moreover, I will hold weekly meetings with the principal to solicit input and feedback on implementation and progress toward study goals. The reading specialist and English language development co-teachers are integral to the implementation, dedicating hours to professional development, reflection, and fidelity of implementation of the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018). The co-teachers will pay careful attention to components of the framework, including reading comprehension strategies, student-to-student interaction, and vocabulary development. I will meet with the co-teachers weekly during their co-planning time to reflect on implementation of ExC-ELL components, support of a translanguaging classroom space, and building metalinguistic awareness. A shared Google folder will be maintained with notes from our meetings. The literacy framework will thus be accompanied by a shared responsibility for academic language development and the creation of metalinguistic awareness with a focus on growth of academic language. Additionally, the Title III Lead Teacher will assist in the support of teachers, as she is very experienced in the ExC-ELL literacy framework both in the classroom experience and modeling the framework to English language development specialists. The Title III Lead Teacher will add notes to the shared Google administrators' folder, documenting observations, coaching notes, and progress toward fidelity of implementation. Documentation of the co-teachers' contributions and student assessment data will be kept in a shared Google ExC-ELL teacher folder that includes anecdotal notes and reflections. Teachers will be able to access assessment data for each student across the study in order to see student progress. This Google ExC-ELL teacher folder will be revisited to acknowledge teacher contributions.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to implementation, my educational research will be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board in order to safeguard the rights and welfare of participants involved in my study and to obtain prior approval. Refer to Appendix A for the prior approval letter. As this educational research study involves students who are under the age of legal consent, documented informed consent will be provided by parents. Parents will be advised that consent is an on-going process and that students can be withdrawn at any time and without any penalty. In addition, Grade 8 students' age—13-14 years old and maturity—were considered in order to determine if the students were capable of providing assent, even if parents provided consent. Refer to Appendix B and C for the informed consent and assent documentation, respectively.

As my research with human subjects will be carried out, not only did students experience an educational intervention, but they also experienced interaction with the researcher through interviews prior to the intervention. Moreover, as this research involved human subjects in an educational intervention designed subsequent to interviews with the students, care will be taken to protect privacy of the participants and keep data collection confidential. Encryption and limited access will be maintained and unique identifiers cross-mapped to standard student identification numbers will be kept in separate data bases. Additionally, private information involving school records utilized in the study will be collected with the individual's knowledge. For example, language proficiency scores, quarterly STAR reading assessments, and pre-intervention and post-intervention formative measurements will be gathered with the participants' knowledge; these data will be kept through the aforementioned methods to maintain confidentiality.

Disclosure that I, as the researcher, already had access to private information of all

English learners due to the nature of my position in the district was made in an effort for full transparency. Moreover, if the research study demonstrates the studied educational intervention to be of benefit, this intervention will be replicated with other long-term English learners not only at the study site but also at the four other middle schools to the practicable extent possible. As a result of the my district-level position, replication of the intervention is more easily accomplished, and benefits could accrue to other long-term English learners in the district.

Ethical considerations of my position of leadership within the district will be reflected upon as I carry out the inquiry. Respect for students' and co-teachers' time and appreciation for their input will be explicitly discussed, and results will be shared with participants. The imbalance of power will be considered with regard to inquiry partners of not only students but also the co-teachers. Collaboration and reflection with each category of participant will be designed so as to produce a reciprocal relationship to the greatest extent possible, creating a sense of participants functioning as "co-researchers" (Patton, 2002, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Inquiry Procedures

My research study consists of Phases I-III. The qualitative phase leads, providing input into the design of the intervention and is an exploratory sequential design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative Phase II consists of formative data collection regarding pre-intervention student reading comprehension and academic language development. Additionally, Phase II contains pre-professional development observational ratings of co-teachers' lesson delivery components. The professional development delivery to the reading and English language development specialists occurs in Phase II, as well. Students receive the co-teaching reading and academic language intervention in Phase II, completing this phase.

The quantitative Phase III consists of analysis regarding co-teachers' level of implementation of the professional development featuring the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), with an emphasis on reading comprehension, student-to-student interaction, vocabulary development along with components of metalinguistic awareness. Finally, post-intervention quantitative student outcomes will be measured through formative assessments of reading comprehension and academic language; this data collection and analysis complete Phase III.

Phase I

Phase I represents the student invitation process as well as the qualitative phase of my study with the aim of revealing perceptions of long-term English learners regarding their in-school academic reading experiences as well as their in-school academic language development and the accompanying support received. The goal of Phase I is to inform the design of the co-teaching intervention underpinned by the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) to “unstick” plateaued reading comprehension and similarly stalled academic language proficiency. It is my belief that the incorporation of the voices of English learners who are experiencing this lack of progress will create a window into the problem of practice as well as potential solutions.

Description of Participants and Recruitment Strategies

Participants fall into one of two categories: students or educators. I invited student participants via a joint process involving the middle school principal, the English language development specialist, the reading specialist, and me as the researcher and English Learner Director. Invited student participants will be members of a tightly defined demographic: English learners classified for 6 years or more who are scoring in the lower end of the continuum of

ACCESS reading subtest (from *entering* level 1 up to *developing* level 3) and who are enrolled in Grade 8. From this defined population of students, 16 long-term English learners will then be randomly selected to be enrolled in the co-taught reading and English language development class. Sixteen students represent a typical enrollment cap in reading classes designed for struggling readers. Students enrolled in the co-taught class will receive invitations for interviews requiring parental consent. All students agreed to participate in the exploratory qualitative phase.

Educators constitute the second category of participants in my research study. The principal of Superb Middle School is a key player, assisting in paving the way with the co-teachers and generating an atmosphere of positivity and optimism. The reading specialist and the English language development specialist co-teachers are even more critical to the study; Superb Middle School has two reading specialists and two English language development specialists. One of the reading teachers is a recently retired part-time reading specialist who previously served Superb Middle School for over a decade. The other reading teacher is full-time but is new to Superb Middle School as a reading specialist, as well as new to the content area of reading but with a strong background in elementary education and literacy. After reflection and discussion with the principal, we extended an invitation to the part-time reading teacher, as we believed her years of reading instruction experience were valuable to the students and to the study. As for the English language development specialists, one of the two teachers typically instructs the long-term English learners, and the other teacher who is bilingual, focuses on newcomer students. One teacher is an experienced teacher but is relatively new to the area of English language development, having spent 15 years as a resource teacher in the Exceptional Children's program. This teacher focuses on the long-term English learners, providing mostly co-teaching services in various content areas. The other teacher is also an experienced teacher, with a background in

middle school mathematics and teaching in an American school in Mexico; she brings 4 years of experience in English language development instruction. She focuses on the newcomer students and provides co-teaching in mathematics. The selection of the English language development specialist was somewhat challenging, as each had various strengths, but the principal and I finally extended an invitation to the specialist who typically serves long-term English learners, as we felt that we should leverage her experience with this student population. An additional key participant is a trainer who will deliver the ExC-ELL literacy framework; she serves with me on the NCDPI English Language Development Support Team and is a trainer for ExC-ELL.

Instrumentation

In the qualitative phase, long-term English learners will be surveyed regarding their language use. This sociolinguistic survey in Appendix D was developed by Brooks (2017) to assess bilingual students' language experiences and is used with permission (see Appendix E). Brooks's survey, *My Bilingual Life*, consists of six questions and a space following the six questions for students to respond narratively with a written description of their language use. The survey was designed to elicit a more nuanced portrait of students' language experiences across multiple languages. Question 1 focused on the multilingual learner's "how and when" of the acquisition of their languages. Question 2 probed languages spoken in the home setting. Question 3 probed the languages that adults speak in the home. Question 4 investigated the student's linguistic interaction with various adults in the home. Questions 5 and 6 examined the student's language use with peers within the home and outside of the home. These questions supplement information typically found in school records regarding language use (e.g., Home Language Survey in Appendix F).

Brooks (2017) drew on the research of Romaine (1995, as cited in Brooks, 2017) in

describing varied “linguistic configurations of bilingual homes” (p. 386). Brooks’s survey is further undergirded by Zentella’s (1997) research in reflecting various linguistic norms in diverse families, as motivated by speaker identity, interpersonal relationships, and varied linguistic abilities. Brooks argued that literacy educators need complex and multi-faceted linguistic experiential information that can inform literacy instruction for bilingual students, connecting instruction to students’ literacy practices. It is my belief that the sociolinguistic data will shed light on the instructional intervention I design to meet the unique language and literacy needs of long-term English learners at Superb Middle School.

Further qualitative information in Phase I will be collected through semi-structured interviews regarding students’ perceptions of academic language, the accompanying in-school support of academic language development, and student perceptions of in-school academic reading. Drawing from Brooks’s work (2015, 2016, 2018, 2020) that investigated in-school academic reading practices of long-term English learners, a semi-structured interview was designed to learn about Superb Middle School’s long-term English learners’ experiences with academic reading and English language development support. Further inquiry was based on students’ perceptions of what makes a good reader and if they considered themselves a good reader. The interview set consists of 6 questions with possible follow-up questions and is found in Appendix G. The qualitative data gathered in Phase I is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their experiences of academic reading?
2. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their academic English language abilities and in-school English language development support?

It is my belief that the qualitative data collected will provide a window to both the problem of practice of plateaued reading comprehension and stalled academic language development and potential intervention solutions to augment the ExC-ELL literacy framework. Necessary permission to gain access to sociolinguistic data contained within the survey will be sought from parental consent and student assent, as reflected in the documentation in Appendix B and C, respectively. Home language survey information and student demographics are all accessible to me as part of my position as the English Learner Director.

The timeline for the participant recruitment process, linguistic surveys, and semi-structured interviews regarding in-school academic reading experiences and in-school academic language support, along with subsequent analyses, will occur in fall 2022 and is delineated in a Gantt Chart in Appendix H. The student invitation process for my study will be initiated on September 1, 2022. Informed consent documentation will be sent to parents and resent as needed between September 8, 2022 and September 22, 2022. I may request the assistance of the Spanish parent educator to make calls home to parents, as well. Once the student invitation process concludes, I will initiate a sociolinguistic survey of long-term English learner language use on September 22, 2022, which will conclude on September 30, 2022. I will commence a cycle of reflection, coding, and analysis of the linguistic survey on October 12, 2022, which will conclude on October 19, 2022. I will commence semi-structured interviews designed to elicit in-school academic reading and academic language support experiences of long-term English learners on September 22, 2022 and conclude them on October 14, 2022. I will import responses to the semi-structured interviews into Nvivo 12 commencing on October 5, 2022. I will explore my field notes and the participants' responses beginning on November 1, 2022, reflect, code, and analyze the interviews and deduce themes concluding on November 22, 2022.

I will keep detailed field notes to augment both the survey and the interview responses. I will record my qualitative observations of the behavior of long-term English learners during the survey and interview to better understand their interview responses. I will use recordings of interviews to enable me to review responses multiple times and reflect on what the participants said.

Data Analysis

In addition to recording the interviews as well as taking notes, I will then utilize the process of winnowing the data (Guest et al., 2012, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018) in order to focus on what I consider to be salient data. Subsequent to winnowing, I will aggregate the data into five to seven themes, as recommended by Creswell, (2013, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I will utilize Nvivo software to assist with coding, gleaming themes, and interconnecting themes, using a constant comparison method with the addition of each case and within cases (Glasser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Summary of Phase I

Phase I initiates the purposeful student invitation process as well as the exploratory process of my study. The exploratory sequential phase involves the collection of qualitative data that reflects the input of the long-term English learners at Superb Middle School in order to augment the ExC-ELL literacy framework intervention. Perceptions of academic reading and English language development support experiences coupled with sociolinguistic data provide a rich window into the development of the co-teaching literacy and academic language intervention. The qualitative input precedes not only the instructional intervention but also the professional development regarding the ExC-ELL literacy framework that is embedded within the intervention.

Phase II

Phase II will begin in the fall of 2022 with a quantitative inquiry into long-term English learners' pre-intervention reading comprehension and academic language development, utilizing a brief formative assessment. The assessment entails two short grade-level passages with three reading comprehension questions associated with each passage and is found in Appendix I. A paragraph addressing a brief writing prompt will complete the formative assessment of academic language; the paragraph will be scored utilizing the WIDA Writing Rubric (WIDA, 2020), reflecting six levels of English language proficiency across the three criteria of discourse, sentence, and word level complexity and specificity. The writing prompt and accompanying rubric are situated in Appendix J and Appendix K, respectively. The formative assessments will establish a baseline of academic literacy and language for long-term English learners at Superb Middle School.

Pre-professional development observation of the co-teachers' lesson delivery components will be conducted prior to providing the ExC-ELL framework training. Baseline data will be collected regarding the co-teachers' lesson delivery components that supported reading comprehension and academic language development. An ExC-ELL observation protocol developed by Calderón (2015) will be used as a guide to create a generalized observational protocol with rating scales, and my generalized protocol is found in Appendix L. The ExC-ELL observation protocol, also known as the Walk-Through of Instructional Strategies with ExC-ELL (EOP WISEcard™) (2015), is found in Appendix M.

Inquiry Approach/Intervention

Professional development will be subsequently provided in late fall 2022 to the reading specialist and English language development co-teachers. The professional development will

focus on the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), including teacher modeling of reading strategies, partner reading and summarizing, student-to-student interaction, the vocabulary development process, and scaffolding for English language development. The professional development will be delivered by an ExC-ELL trainer and supplemented by me in my role as the English Learner Director. I will incorporate a focus on building students' metalinguistic awareness with an emphasis on language goals and growth. Moreover, qualitative themes regarding English learner perceptions of academic reading and academic language experiences will be shared in a reflective time with inquiry partners, and collaborative discussion will ensue as to how we might leverage those perceptions into the intervention.

The instructional co-teaching intervention will be devised with the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) underpinning the design. The Framework includes the following components— vocabulary development through the seven steps process, teacher think-aloud of a selected reading strategy, student-to-student interaction leveraging oral discourse, and writing to cement and assess learning. The instructional intervention will also be informed by student perceptions of academic reading and academic language development and students' language use that was gleaned in Phase I. This will drive the decision to leverage/not to leverage translanguaging— the fluid use of languages within the classroom setting. Creating student metalinguistic awareness also supports the framework through language goal setting and academic language scaffolding that is infused throughout the intervention. Long-term English learners will be recruited through the student invitation process in fall 2022 and will be enrolled in the second semester co-taught reading class. The instructional intervention will be implemented at the beginning of second semester in January 2023 for a duration of

approximately four months. Inquiry partners— the principal, the reading specialist, the English language development specialist, and I (the researcher and English Learner Director) will meet each month and reflect on student growth utilizing STAR quarterly data that measures reading comprehension, co-teaching roles, and our perceptions of the ExC-ELL literacy implementation. I will keep notes in a research journal.

Summary of Phase II

Phase II includes pre-professional development observational ratings of lesson delivery regarding components of strengthening reading comprehension and support of academic language. This will provide a baseline for the reading specialist's and the English language development specialist's lesson delivery components that support reading comprehension and academic language prior to the professional development. Phase II also contains formative baseline measures of long-term English learners' reading comprehension and academic language development. Once the quantitative pre-professional development measures are collected, the professional development regarding the ExC-ELL literacy framework will be conducted. Additionally, the results of Phase I will be shared with the co-teachers and principal, and salient aspects that augmented the intervention; for example, translanguaging within student-to-student interaction will be incorporated only if students chose to do so. (I will add other emergent aspects after the qualitative data is collected and analyzed.) Phase II culminates in implementation of the co-teaching instructional intervention addressing the problem of practice of plateaued reading comprehension and stalled academic language development. Phase II informs Phase III by providing baseline pre-professional development observational ratings of the two co-teachers. Phase II additionally informs Phase III by furnishing baseline pre-

intervention formative data of long-term English learners' reading comprehension and academic language development.

Phase III

Phase III is designed to answer research questions regarding not only teacher levels of implementation of the instructional intervention but also formative student outcomes measuring reading comprehension and academic language development. Data collection and analysis aim to answer the following quantitative research question addressing the level of implementation by teachers:

3. What is the level of implementation of the co-teaching intervention as measured by observational rating scales focused on lesson delivery components fostering reading comprehension and academic language development?

Moreover, considering the co-teaching intervention and utilizing pre-intervention and post-intervention formative assessment data, Phase III further purposes to answer the following quantitative question undergirding my analysis of formative academic outcomes at the study site:

4. To what extent does the co-teaching intervention, designed subsequent to the findings of research questions 1 and 2, as implemented by the reading specialist and English language development specialist improve formative measures of reading comprehension and academic language for long-term English learners at Superb Middle School?

Analysis of Approach

Phase III involves the analysis of the observational ratings of post-professional development lesson delivery components supporting reading comprehension and academic language development and referenced in the ExC-ELL observation protocol instrument. Co-

teachers' observational ratings will be collected monthly across the 4-month instructional intervention during Phase II. Observational ratings will be combined into a summative rating in Phase III for each co-teacher. The summative ratings will then be compared vis-à-vis the pre-professional development observational ratings in order to determine teacher levels of implementation of the augmented ExC-ELL literacy framework supporting reading comprehension and academic language development. Independent variables include lesson delivery components: a. reading comprehension strategy instruction, b. explicit vocabulary instruction strategies, c. student-to-student interaction, and d. linguistic scaffolding strategies. The independent variables will be rated using a scale as follows: (1) *Emerging* (2) *Developing* (3) *Effective* (4) *Highly Effective*. The observational ratings are partly based on the Walk-Through of Instructional Strategies with ExC-ELL (EOP WISEcard™), which is an observation protocol for observing ExC-ELL-driven lessons (Calderón, 2015). Lesson delivery components are generalized from a portion of the ExC-ELL observation protocol into four categories that represent the independent variables. Thus, a pre-professional development baseline of the lesson delivery components can be measured and then compared against post-professional development levels of the same lesson delivery components. Dependent variables include student outcomes: a. reading comprehension and b. academic language proficiency.

Phase III further includes the quantitative analysis of student outcomes. A formative assessment post-intervention will measure students' reading comprehension and academic language development and are found in Appendix N and Appendix O respectively. The formative assessment post-intervention is the identical assessment used to measure pre-intervention levels of reading comprehension and academic language development (excepting filler questions that were not scored). The change in scores will be calculated for each student

from pre-intervention to post-intervention. For reading comprehension, raw scores indicating the number of questions correctly answered will be used. For academic language development measures, the WIDA Writing Rubric (WIDA, 2020) found in Appendix K will be applied, and changes in proficiency levels (Level 1-Level 6) will be computed using the pre-intervention and post-intervention writing samples.

Summary of Phase III

Phase III focuses on collecting quantitative post-measures for both student and educator participants and then comparing to pre-intervention formative measures for students and pre-professional development observational ratings for educators. This phase represents a culminating analysis of levels of implementation of the intervention by educators and the subsequent efficacy of the intervention for students.

Inquiry Design Rigor

In order to build trustworthiness (Creswell & Miller, 2000, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018) of the qualitative phase of my study, I will foster this credibility through validity strategies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) that adds to the rigor of the qualitative data interpretation. I will triangulate data by utilizing a constant comparison method with regard to interconnecting themes across numerous study participant perceptions. Member checking will also be utilized to determine the accuracy of the qualitative results by returning to the student participants to see if my identified themes ring true with their experiences. I will marshal credibility by documenting long-term English learners' in-school reading and academic language experiences in such a way that these experiences will be readily recognizable by the study participants. I will use peer debriefing by discussing qualitative findings with the Title III Lead English Learner Teacher as well as the principal and co-teachers at Superb Middle School. Finally, I will pen a "rich, thick

description” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200) to paint a vivid and detailed portrait of long-term English learner experiences with in-school academic reading and in-school academic language development.

In the quantitative phase of my inquiry, I will utilize a pre-experimental design whereby a pretest measure is followed by a professional development, which will then be subsequently followed by a posttest measure. Pre-professional development levels of instruction surrounding reading comprehension and academic language support will be subsequently compared to the same lesson delivery components post-professional development. I also will utilize a pre-experimental design to measure student response to the instructional intervention. Pre-intervention levels of reading comprehension and academic language development will be compared to post-intervention levels of the same variables.

Various internal threats to the validity of my study will be considered with the aim of minimizing these threats (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) so that I may be able to draw appropriate inferences regarding long-term English learners. Threats to participants, the intervention, and the procedures will be considered. Threats to participants include maturation, regression to the mean, and selection. In order to avoid the threat of maturation, long-term English learners will be selected who are in the same grade level— Grade 8 and the same age. Care will be taken to not include English learners who are older, i.e., had been retained. Regression to the mean is another threat to internal validity that I will consider by reviewing potential long-term English learners’ ACCESS reading domain scores and avoiding the inclusion of students who have extremely low scores. Inside the tightly defined population of long-term English learners scoring at the lower end of the ACCESS language proficiency continuum, I will randomly select students from this population for the intervention. Additionally, in order to avoid the threat of resentment regarding

the intervention, I will apply the intervention to other groups of long-term English learners subsequent to the conclusion of my study. In terms of threats to procedures, both testing and instrumentation were considered. In deliberating on instrumentation, I will use the same instrument for the pretest and posttest assessments. Finally, to minimize testing threat, I will add filler questions to the posttest for measuring impacts of the intervention on student outcomes of reading comprehension and academic language development.

Various external threats to my inquiry will be considered. I will restrict claims about groups to which the results are not generalizable. For example, the results would be applicable to long-term English learners perhaps only at the setting of Superb Middle School. Interaction of history and treatment threats may be minimized by future replication of the study to see if results are similar to the original results obtained at an earlier point in time.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

I consider my study to be bounded contextually by the setting of Superb Middle School, with the population studied to be defined as long-term English learners who have been in U.S. schools for 6+ years and scoring at the lower end of the ACCESS reading continuum. This tightly defined population may preclude generalizability to the larger population of long-term English learners. As for delimitations regarding the intervention, the treatment is an emergent design that included input from the student study participants, the ExC-ELL literacy framework, and academic language development scaffolding. While the ExC-ELL literacy framework is empirically validated (Calderón, 2015; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), I will use lesson delivery components of the framework but not all components. For example, I will not use the writing components of the framework, as it is designed for a more formal writing process. I will focus on reading comprehension and academic language development. Moreover, I will not analyze the

co-teaching aspects, which in all probability will affect outcomes, but in order to make the study more manageable, it was decided not to analyze this component.

Limitations are inherent in the inquiry techniques that I will use. The pre-intervention and post-intervention formative measures of long-term English learners' reading comprehension are simply raw scores with the number of correct responses. This type of formative measure is simple and yet designed so that teachers may readily and quickly pivot and adjust instruction. As the measure is formative, there is no empirical validation of the measure. The pre-intervention and post-intervention measures of academic language are based on scoring utilizing the WIDA Writing Rubric (WIDA, 2020) found in Appendix K. As I am a WIDA certified trainer and have annually trained on WIDA assessments since 2008, I have much experience with rating writing. In order to mitigate limitations in applying the scoring rubric, I also will have our Title III Lead English Learner teacher review my scoring in order to have a level of inter-rater reliability.

Moreover, limitations are also inherent in the pre-professional development and post-professional development observational ratings of the co-teachers' instruction. These ratings entail my professional judgment. I will have our Title III Lead Teacher review my notes and script of the lesson and independently rate the instructional components in order to establish a level of inter-rater reliability. Other limitations will be discussed as they arise.

Assumptions inherent in my study include both qualitative and quantitative phases. Qualitatively, I assume that I will receive reliable responses in semi-structured interviews, and participants will respond truthfully. Moreover, another assumption embedded in my qualitative inquiry is that coding and subsequent teasing out of themes from interview data will create an accurate window into individual perceptions of their in-school academic reading and academic language development experiences. In the quantitative phase, I assume that the formative

assessments of long-term English learners will yield reliable results of reading comprehension and academic language development. Moreover, consistency in applying the observational rating scales of teacher participants is assumed, as there will be multiple observations of the English language development specialist and the reading specialist. Finally, collaboration, cooperation, and co-planning between the specialists is assumed, as the teachers apply their professional development learning within the literacy and language intervention of long-term English learners.

Role of the Scholarly Practitioner

I have been an English Learner Director for many years and have observed the evolution of a preponderance of long-term English learners in my district, particularly since 2017. I mark this year because it was the year that WIDA rescaled the scoring of the annual ACCESS language proficiency test, making it much more difficult to achieve exiting level scores. I witnessed a large increase in the number of English learners, in particular at the secondary level. Since 2017, secondary students who are long-term have demonstrated very low reading scores. As mentioned previously, I was tapped by NCDPI as a member of the English Language Development Support Team to design a professional development aimed at effectively serving long-term English learners. I eagerly took this assignment, and yet, our district still faces the plateaued language proficiency scores. It is my hope that this inquiry will shed light on an avenue to allow these students “to fly”.

My roles will include interviewing long-term English learners, observing the reading specialist and English language development specialist, data collection, and analysis. Moreover, I will supplement the professional development and will meet regularly with the educators at Superb Middle School to reflect on instruction designed to impact reading comprehension and

academic language development. I will collaborate with the Title III Lead Teacher who provides excellent critical feedback, particularly in the areas of observational ratings of the co-teachers and writing sample scoring, utilizing the WIDA Writing Rubric (WIDA, 2020) found in Appendix K.

My relationship to the reading specialist is simply professional, although my position is at a district supervisory level, it is not supervisory with respect to the reading specialist. The relationship to the English language development specialist is more complicated; I hire the English language development teachers, but my supervisory capacity is one of overlay, i.e., the principal at the middle school is the direct supervisor. I will pay close attention to managing my own biases, particularly with respect to the English language development teacher, as I have a vested interest in her performance. The principal of Superb Middle School is a long-time colleague and friend, and I have great respect for her intellect and leadership abilities. While I considered her input extremely valuable, I will be careful to reflect objectively in order to manage my own bias toward her strong intellect and leadership.

Lastly, I would like to examine my commitment to English learners as a marginalized group. I have served as an advocate for many years, as I often explain to Spanish-speaking parents: “Tus niños son mis niños.” [Your children are my children.] My advocacy role for English learners will be of benefit in establishing trust among parents and thus allowing their students to participate in my inquiry.

Summary

My exploratory sequential mixed methods study will examine the characteristics of long-term English learner students together with their perceptions of in-school academic reading and academic language development in order to craft an intervention designed to “unstick” plateaued

reading comprehension and English language development. My mixed methods inquiry will begin with an exploratory qualitative phase that endeavors to incorporate the voices of long-term English learners in the crafting of the intervention. This phase is designed to obtain a portrait of long-term English learners' perceptions of in-school academic reading and academic language development. This highly contextualized phase reflects and extends the work of Brooks (2015, 2016, 2018) that fosters a nuanced understanding of long-term English learners' literacy practices, adding individual portraits and perceptions of academic language use. The professional development and the framework of the intervention will be based on the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), supplemented by academic language development strategies, as well as student input. In a subsequent quantitative phase, teacher levels of implementation of the professional development centering around lesson delivery components of supporting and developing reading comprehension and academic language will be measured via pre-professional development and post-professional development observational rating scales. Continuing the quantitative phase, efficacy of the intervention will be subsequently measured for long-term English learners through formative assessments of pre-intervention and post-intervention reading comprehension and academic language proficiencies. The study will provide an opportunity to widen the lens on long-term English learners at Superb Middle School, considering the perceptions of the students and their ethnographic data in order to create a sustained level of inquiry surrounding a literacy and language intervention to be delivered by their reading specialist and English language development specialist.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Adolescent long-term English learners with shared characteristics of protracted English learner classification, plateaued reading comprehension, and stalled academic language proficiency scores all signaled a problem of practice at Superb Middle School. Steadily increasing percentages of students considered long-term English learners—those who have been classified as such for six or more years—continue to accrue at Superb Middle School, as well as across the district. ACCESS language proficiency scores at the lower end of the continuum in the domain of reading remain the norm (from *entering* level 1 up to *developing* level 3) for these long-term multilingual learners. Moreover, these students have consistently failed to meet the annual language growth targets, set by North Carolina’s Consolidated ESSA plan (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017) since the introduction of these annual targets in 2017-2018.

In light of these deficient academic outcomes, the purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was to first examine the characteristics of long-term English learner students and their perceptions of in-school academic reading practices and academic language development in order to craft an intervention. Consequently, I designed a co-teaching intervention to be delivered collaboratively by the English language arts/reading teacher and the English language development teacher and crafted to improve plateaued reading comprehension and English language development. My intervention drew from the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) with a focus on strengthening reading comprehension, increasing student-to-student interaction, developing vocabulary, and building academic language. My intervention also drew upon the social perspective of reading (Brooks, 2015, 2020) which holds that making meaning with text is mediated by social

interaction in specific sociocultural settings. The intervention would therefore be informed by the long-term English learner's perspectives of their in-school experiences with reading and academic language development. Two qualitative research questions were central to my study:

1. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their experiences of academic reading?
2. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their academic English language abilities and in-school English language development support?

The questions revolve around long-term English learner perceptions to provide a window into the problem of practice of plateaued reading comprehension and stalled language proficiency scores.

Following the qualitative phase of my study (which focused on eliciting students' and stakeholders' perspectives), I collected pre-intervention quantitative data regarding multilingual learner reading comprehension and academic language via formative measures. Additionally, I gathered pre-professional development observational data with respect to the two co-teachers' instructional support of reading comprehension and academic language. These observations were intended to enable me to answer the quantitative study questions:

3. What is the level of implementation of the co-teaching intervention as measured by observational rating scales focused on lesson delivery components fostering reading comprehension and academic language development?
4. To what extent does the co-teaching intervention, designed subsequent to the findings of research questions 1 and 2, as implemented by the reading specialist and English language development specialist, improve formative measures of reading

comprehension and academic language for long-term English learners at Superb Middle School?

Data, both qualitative and quantitative, were collected across my study in order to illuminate not only the problem of practice, but also the teacher levels of implementation of the intervention and finally, the effectiveness of the intervention.

Data Collection

My study included three phases within the research plan. During Phase I, a qualitative research phase, I conducted a purposeful student invitation process to determine enrollment in the co-taught intervention. Within Phase I, I also collected data to explore long-term English learner perceptions of academic reading experiences and English language development abilities and support. Phase II represented the quantitative collection of data. I measured pre-professional development teacher levels of reading comprehension support and English language development support. Phase II also included the delivery of professional development regarding the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018) supplemented with a focus on metalinguistic awareness and growth. During Phase III, I assessed the level of implementation of the literacy and language development co-teaching intervention by the English language arts/reading teacher and English language development specialist to determine the effectiveness of the associated professional development. I also conducted the associated quantitative assessment of students' intervention outcomes with regard to reading comprehension and academic language development. The sequential research phases are illustrated again for clarity in Figure 3, delineating Phases I-III.

Phase I Data

I began Phase I by inviting student and teacher participants. My original plans were to

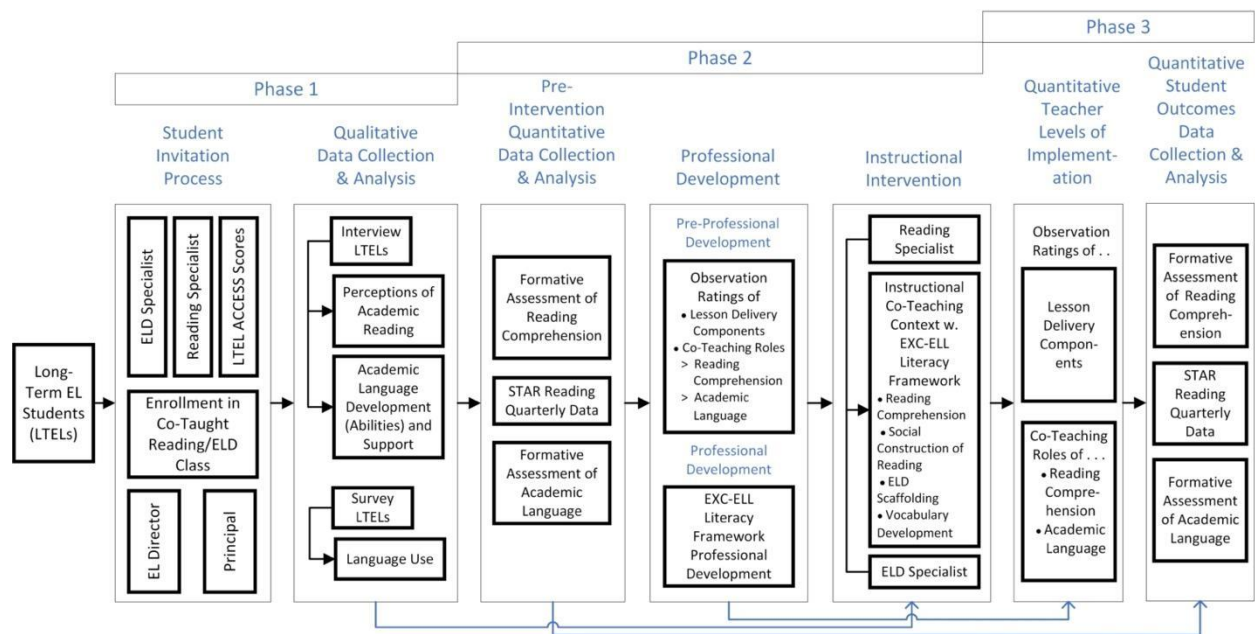


Figure 3. Sequence of research phases (repeated for clarity).

implement the invitation process during fall 2022. However, my proposal defense was pushed to the end of October 2022 in order to convene a full committee. Therefore, the invitation process was initiated early in January 2023 subsequent to Institutional Review Board approval, which is outlined in Appendix A. My original plans, as detailed in Chapter 3, included my identification rationale for teacher participants. My invitation was originally intended to secure the participation of a reading specialist and a specific English language development specialist. Unexpectedly, the English language development specialist resigned from their position at Superb Middle School to work closer to home and was replaced by a beginning teacher who was pursuing a residency license. Therefore, the principal and I agreed that the other English language development specialist at Superb Middle School who was a veteran teacher and typically worked with newcomer students would be a preferable alternative study participant. Unfortunately, this alternative English language development specialist's schedule was such that they could not co-teach with the reading specialist but could co-teach with the Grade 6 English language arts/reading teacher. Consequently, I issued an invitation to the Grade 6 language arts/reading teacher to participate in the co-teaching intervention. I reviewed the class roster and found seven long-term English learners, all of whom had reading scores at the lower end of the continuum (from *entering* level 1 up to *developing* level 3). As this was a small pool of participants, I issued invitations to all of these students through a collaborative effort involving the principal and the bilingual parent educator. Since my study involved students who were under the age of legal consent, I ensured that informed consent was provided by parents as shown in Appendix B. In addition, I considered the Grade 6 students' ages—11-12 years-old—to determine if the students were eligible to provide assent, even if parents provided consent. The letter of assent is found in Appendix C.

Sociolinguistic Interviews

The long-term multilingual learner students were curious and some were very eager, particularly with regard to the individual sociolinguistic interviews during the exploratory qualitative phase. The sociolinguistic interview questions are delineated in Appendix D. The interview is used with permission in Appendix E from Dr. Maneka Brooks, the researcher who designed the sociolinguistic interview.

Responses from the sociolinguistic interviews are detailed in Table 2. Data collection from the sociolinguistic interviews yielded a preponderance of Spanish as the first language learned for these long-term English learners; six out of seven students claimed Spanish as their native tongue. One student called the Guatemalan dialect, Aguacateco, as her first language. Another student claimed Spanish as well as a dialect but was unable to provide a label for the dialect. When asked regarding how and when students learned their languages, two of the seven cited the effortless learning of their native languages from infancy. Six of the seven cited early schooling as the vehicle for learning English, ranging from Prekindergarten to Kindergarten and to first and second grades.

All homes were at least bilingual, if not trilingual or quadrilingual. Again, Spanish dominated in all of the homes as a unifying language, as Spanish is the language of education in Central America. Dialects were nearly as diverse as the number of families, with various dialects ranging from Acateco, Mam, and Aguacateco, also known as Awacateco. All but two students claimed English as a language spoken at home, however when questioned regarding language use with young people, all students identified English.

Adult languages in the home reflected geographic diversity of the areas of Central America from which their parents and grandparents hailed. Spanish was again the unifying

Table 2

Sociolinguistic Data Collection

Student pseudonym	Native language	Language learning	Home languages	Adult home languages	Home languages with adults	Home languages with youth	Languages outside of the home	Language description
Ben	Spanish	English: at school PreK- Grade 2, Spanish: first language	Mostly Spanish, Mam, English	Spanish, Mam	Spanish, some English	English	English at school, Spanish with newcomer	“I can say, ‘How are you doing?’ in Mam. I learn by listening and repeating.”
Pilar	Spanish	English: at School Kinder– Grade 1, Spanish: learned as a baby	Mostly Spanish, English	Spanish	Spanish	English	Mostly English; Spanish with friends at school	“I read a little Spanish; I interpret for parents at meetings or with the landlord, or at soccer games.”

Table 2 (continued)

Student pseudonym	Native language	Language learning	Home languages	Adult home languages	Home languages with adults	Home languages with youth	Languages outside of the home	Language description
Arisbeth	Agua- cateco	English: at school Grade 1-2, Spanish: don't know	Mostly Aguacateco, some Spanish	Mostly Aguacateco Spanish	Spanish	Spanish with siblings	English at school	"I speak three languages; I like all of them."
May	Spanish, dialect	English: 3 Years Old, Spanish: 3 Years Old	English, Spanish, Dialect	Mom: English and Spanish, Dad: Dialect, Spanish, and a little English	Mom and Dad: English, Grandma: Spanish, Abuela: Dialect and Spanish	English with siblings, some Spanish with older brother	English	"I use English the most. I don't have to interpret."

Table 2 (continued)

Student pseudonym	Native language	Language learning	Home languages	Adult home languages	Home languages with adults	Home languages with youth	Languages outside of the home	Language description
Emilia	Spanish	English: at School PreK, Spanish: at birth	Mostly Spanish, Mom: Acateco, Dad: Awacateco	Spanish, Mom: Acateco, Dad: Awacateco	Spanish	Mostly English	Spanish with friends and shopping, mostly English at school, some Spanish at school	“I interpret for Mom and for Dad when he's coaching soccer. You can use different types of words in whatever language you know.”

Table 2 (continued)

Student pseudonym	Native language	Language learning	Home languages	Adult home languages	Home languages with adults	Home languages with youth	Languages outside of the home	Language description
Melinda	Spanish	English: at School PreK - Grade 1	Acateco, Spanish, English	Mostly Acateco, Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish, English with friends at school	“Sometimes I prefer English. Whenever I forget a word in English, I say it in Spanish. I use my other language to fill in missing words.”
Alina	Spanish	English: at School PreK, Spanish: One year old	Mostly Spanish, English with siblings	Mostly Spanish, Mom: doesn't know English, Dad: little English	Spanish	Mostly English	Mostly English at school	“I have forgotten a lot of Spanish. We forgot Spanish as we learned English”

language across parents in the home. One student's parents both spoke only Spanish, as these parents came from Mexico. All other adult languages in the various homes included dialects from their specific native geographic regions of Central America. All long-term multilingual learners used Spanish with the adults in their homes, although two of the seven students described highly compartmentalized language use, including specific languages or dialects spoken with paternal and maternal grandparents.

Students' language use with regard to young people in the home reflected a predominance of English. Two of the seven students used strictly Spanish with siblings. Two long-term multilingual learners described a highly compartmentalized usage of English with younger siblings and Spanish or English with older siblings. When asked to describe their own language use, a highly sophisticated portrait of language use emerged, contextualized by the sociocultural setting. In school settings, English emerged as the dominant language, however students cited Spanish when engaging in social conversations with friends at school. Some students described their language use as they negotiate meaning for strategic purposes, interpreting for parents with landlords, at soccer games, and at appointments. Other long-term multilingual learners described assisting siblings with homework in English. One student described her dominant English literacy versus her minimal Spanish literacy. Other students only described their oral use of language, citing multilingualism. Two of the seven students were attempting to learn a new language; one student described his efforts to learn Mam, the dialect of his parents. Another student described her initiative to learn Japanese from Anime and a language learning website. Students' portrayals of their own language use reflected a well-developed metalinguistic awareness and will be explored further in the data analysis.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Following the sociolinguistic survey, I initiated semi-structured interviews designed to elicit in-school academic reading and academic language support experiences of long-term English learners. The semi-structured interview questions are delineated in Appendix G. The first interview question explored long-term multilingual learners' perceptions of the diversity of literacy practices in English language arts/reading class, such as teacher read aloud, whole group reading, small group reading, partner reading, or independent reading, to name a few. Students' descriptions of in-class literacy practices indicated a gradual release of responsibility model, led by teacher read aloud, the most supportive practice, followed by whole group choral reading, small group or partner reading, and the least supported, independent reading. The preponderance of responses described partner reading, closely followed by independent reading. The second question probed deconstruction of text meaning in classroom settings through practices such as whole class discussion, small group discussion, teacher explanations, and note-taking. Data revealed that students looked to the English language arts/reading teacher and the English language development specialist as possessing the official interpretation when making meaning with texts. Long-term multilingual learners' construction of text meaning largely manifested as dependent on the teacher's interpretation rather than as agentive appliers of meaning-making strategies. The third inquiry explored teacher modeling of reading strategies that support comprehension, such as visualizing during reading, self-questioning regarding one's own comprehension, and the use of sticky notes, as possible strategies. Students recited these strategies after I had posed these as potential strategies, as well as repeated readings, re-reading selected chunks of text, listening closely (to others reading aloud), underlining or highlighting the most important information, considering the main or central idea of the passage, and

considering the problem and solution of the text. Other strategies described by students included leveraging text features such as captions and subheadings. RACES, which is a test-taking strategy designed to assist students to arrive at the best possible multiple choice answer, is another comprehension strategy that students leveraged when taking reading tests. The fourth interview question involved long-term English learners' perceptions of what makes a good reader. Students were clearly able to articulate and leverage various reading comprehension strategies that they had been taught. When describing good readers, long-term multilingual learners lucidly pointed to the varied strategies they cited in the previous question that teachers model and agentive readers use to make meaning with texts. The fifth and sixth questions revolved around long-term multilingual learners' own English language development and the associated support that they received from the English language development teacher. Students were tentative in their responses regarding if their English had improved. Two students cited the beginning of upper elementary grades when they perceived their English was improving. Others responded with uncertainty. Students, however, described the importance of determination, studying, paying attention, learning new words, and practicing pronunciation to become better speakers, readers, and writers of English. Perceptions of support from the English language development teacher manifested not in the area of language development, but in reading comprehension with regard to answering questions at the end of a text. The English language development specialist's role of co-teaching in the English language arts class coalesced more into supporting literacy comprehension than supporting language development, reflected by the data collected. The qualitative data collected in the exploratory Phase I will be further addressed in the data analysis section, as I, the researcher, along with feedback from my collaborative

inquiry partners, incorporated these findings into the ensuing co-taught academic reading inquiry comprehension and academic language intervention.

Phase II Data

Phase II began with quantitative collection of pre-professional development teacher levels of implementation of reading comprehension support and English language development support. I collected baseline data early in second semester of 2023 regarding the co-teachers' lesson delivery components that supported reading comprehension and academic language development. I utilized an ExC-ELL observation protocol developed by Calderón (2015) as a guide to create a generalized observational protocol with rating scales ranging from emerging, developing, effective, and highly effective, and it is delineated in Appendix L. Areas of reading comprehension instruction, explicit vocabulary instruction, student-to-student interaction, and linguistic scaffolding strategies were observed and rated for both co-teachers.

Pre-Professional Development Teacher Formative Assessment Data

The English language arts/reading teacher was highly effective with reading comprehension instruction. I observed spiral reviews balanced with the creation of student agency by withholding answers to comprehension questions and having students step through the application of comprehension strategies to arrive at answers. I further noted a strategic use of teacher read aloud to support comprehension. A variety of supports were utilized in reading instruction such as visuals embedded in slides and graphic organizers to deconstruct various types of texts. The English language arts/reading teacher built background knowledge by connecting to students' prior knowledge. Finally, the teacher built comprehension through a wide variety of probing questions.

The English language arts/reading teacher was effective with vocabulary instruction. I

noted teaching vocabulary on the run as the opportunity arose within text. I further observed front loading of vocabulary through direct instruction. The teacher was highly effective with regard to student-to-student interaction in developing comprehension through oral activities. I observed structured opportunities for oral interaction with accountability included: for example, students were expected to provide a two to three sentence response to the oral prompt. Finally, the teacher was highly effective with regard to utilizing a wide variety of linguistic scaffolding strategies. I witnessed the use of sentence frames, word banks, Google slides with visuals, anchor charts delineating various reading comprehension strategies that were co-constructed with students, and multilingual learners partnering with a more proficient peer.

My data revealed that the English language development specialist was highly effective in supporting reading comprehension; for example, I observed consistent and strategic use of teacher read-aloud and a wide variety of supports to build comprehension, such as visuals, Total Physical Response gestures, and sentence frames. The teacher modeled and taught the strategy of summarizing in guided practice to build comprehension, supplying sentence frames to support students' productive language. I also observed the English language development specialist accessing students' current funds of knowledge in order to build background and strengthen making meaning with text. Moreover, I witnessed the English language development specialist building comprehension through a wide variety of probing questions.

My data further revealed that the English language development specialist was highly effective in explicit vocabulary instruction. I observed explicit instruction of Tier 3 content vocabulary words as well as explicit instruction of Tier 2 vocabulary words that are high utility words, crosscutting many content areas. Additionally, connections were made to cognates, leveraging students' knowledge of their first language. Oral production opportunities were

evidenced through students chorally reading and responding to probing questions. The teacher was effective in providing structured and accountable oracy opportunities through summarizing during small group guided instruction. The English language development specialist formatively assessed students as they scribed the summary sentence into their notebooks. The teacher was highly effective in delivering a variety of linguistic scaffolds evidenced during my observations of the class. Scaffolds included summarizing sentence frames, using word banks, utilizing Flipgrid to record oral responses, and partnering with a more proficient peer for support during independent group rotations.

Pre-Intervention English Learner Formative Assessment Data

Phase II also included a quantitative inquiry into long-term English learners' pre-intervention reading comprehension and academic language development. I administered a formative pre-assessment consisting of a CommonLit grade level brief informational text to be read by the students, accompanied by four text-dependent comprehension questions and a short answer comprehension question. The questions were Common Core standards-based, with informational text standards such as determining the central idea, ascertaining the author's point of view, and citing text evidence to support what the text conveys either explicitly or inferentially. Additional standards addressed how a chunk of text contributed to the development of ideas and how an individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and developed within the text. The pre-assessment informational passage and associated reading comprehension questions are found in Appendix I. I administered this pre-assessment in early January 2023 and prior to implementing the intervention. Results were varied for the long-term multilingual learners. Students achieved a median score of 60 on a 100 point scale on the reading comprehension pre-test. Three scores in the mid to upper seventies were tightly clustered at the higher end of the

continuum. Scores at the lower end of the continuum were more disparate, ranging from a 55, to a 45, and finally, a 20. Results are detailed in Table 3 along with a rank ordering of the scores.

A writing prompt completed the pre-intervention assessment of long-term English learners at Superb Middle School. I administered this formative assessment in early second semester to obtain a baseline measure of students' academic language development. Long-term English learners at Superb Middle School responded to an argumentative prompt regarding cell phone policy. Students argued for or against the current policy and were asked to provide a description of the current policy, their support or disagreement with the policy and at least three reasons accompanying their stance.

I scored the students' essays utilizing the WIDA Writing Rubric (WIDA, 2020), reflecting six levels of English language writing proficiency across the three criteria of discourse, sentence, and word level complexity and specificity. The writing prompt and accompanying rubric are included in Appendix J and Appendix K, respectively. I further ensured reliability of my ratings by having the Lead English Language Development Teacher also rate the writing pre-assessments. We then discussed the long-term English learners' writing samples and came to consensus on students' scores, leveraging the WIDA Writing Rubric criteria. Student writing pre-assessment scores ranged from *emerging* Level 2 to *expanding* Level 4, with the preponderance of scores (57%) at *developing* Level 3. Level 3 may be best described as intermediate low to intermediate writing skills with a developing organization of discourse and a developing sense of perspective, register, and genre. Level 3 is further characterized at the sentence level by a developing variety of sentence patterns and grammatical structures. At the word level, a Level 3 is best described by the written production of common cognates, content words that generally meet the purpose of the written text, and some specific content vocabulary.

Table 3

Reading Comprehension Pre-Assessment

Student pseudonym	Reading pretest	Rank order pretest
Ben	78	1
Pilar	78	1
Arisbeth	75	2
Emilia	60	3
Alina	45	5
Melinda	55	4
May	20	6

Results are found in Table 4 with accompanying brief descriptors of the score levels.

STAR™ Reading Data in Phase II

Additionally, during Phase II I collected STAR™ reading data in order to gain a more complete portrait of long-term English learners' reading comprehension achievement and growth. Specifically, I examined STAR™ reading growth data for the pre-intervention time frame of the 2022-2023 school year (from first quarter to the end of second quarter). I tracked student growth percentiles; this metric compares a student's growth to like peers in the same grade level who have performed similarly on the STAR™ reading assessments. Student growth percentiles range from one to 99; a student growth percentile of 50 is interpreted as expected grade-level growth. Two of the seven long-term multilingual learners met growth expectations for this pre-intervention timeframe. Reading growth, as measured by the student growth percentiles, revealed that five students were low growth and two were high growth. The average grade level equivalent reading level at the end of second quarter was 4.2, reflecting an average increase of 0.3 from the beginning of first quarter. Reading achievement was low for all of the seven long-term English learners; average percentile rank at the end of second quarter was 13. The seven long-term English learners' average percentile rank reflects that their reading skills, on the average, exceeded only 13% of other students in the same grade level nationwide. These student outcomes are summarized in Table 5. The English language arts reading teacher and I discussed their fourth grade equivalent reading levels coupled with mostly low growth and the need for strengthening reading comprehension for the long-term English learners.

Co-Teaching Intervention in Phase II

Phase II culminated in the implementation of the co-teaching instructional intervention addressing the problem of practice of plateaued reading comprehension and stalled academic

Table 4

Writing Pre-Assessment

Student pseudonym	Writing pretest	Score level descriptors
Ben	3	Developing: intermediate low to intermediate
Pilar	3	Developing: intermediate low to intermediate
Arisbeth	4	Expanding: intermediate to intermediate high
Emilia	3	Developing: intermediate low to intermediate
Alina	2	Emerging: novice high
Melinda	3	Developing: intermediate low to intermediate
May	2	Emerging: novice high

Table 5

STAR™ Reading Pre-Intervention Data

Student pseudonym	Reading growth and proficiency	Growth percentile	Grade equivalent	Percentile rank
May	Low growth; low proficiency	20	4.4	16
Emilia	Low growth; low proficiency	9	3.4	5
Pilar	High growth; low proficiency	99	5.4	30
Melinda	Low growth; low proficiency	36	3.1	3
Arisbeth	Low growth; low proficiency	21	4.6	18
Ben	Low growth; low proficiency	25	4.3	14
Alina	High growth; low proficiency	83	4.5	17
Average			4.2	13

language development. I designed the intervention to begin with professional development focused on the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018), including teacher modeling of reading strategies, partner reading and summarizing, student-to-student interaction, the vocabulary development process, and scaffolding for English language development. The professional development was delivered by an ExC-ELL trainer on January 18, 2023, and was supplemented by me in my role as the English Learner Director. The ExC-ELL trainer and I followed up the professional development with instructional coaching visits from late January to late February that interspersed the intervention. I continued the observational and coaching visits through March 2023. The co-teachers implemented the ExC-ELL strategies across the third nine weeks from January 18, 2023 to March 27, 2023, consisting of 47 days; while I had planned to implement the intervention for four months, end of grade testing preparation took priority for the last nine weeks.

As the co-teachers implemented the intervention, we discussed students' metalinguistic awareness as well as their varied language use. Both teachers agreed that students' use of multiple languages in their classroom spaces occurred naturally and supported making meaning with texts. The co-teachers reported a fluid use of full language repertoires, including translanguageing, as a continual and spontaneous process that they felt needed no prompting. We further reflected on the need for building reading comprehension and for students becoming agentive readers through applying reading comprehension strategies. In implementing the intervention, the English language arts/reading teacher focused on the ExC-ELL literacy component of building reading comprehension through partner reading and summarizing while the English language development specialist focused on the ExC-ELL vocabulary development approach in their co-teaching roles. Oracy through student-to-student interaction and linguistic

scaffolding were delivered by both co-teachers during instruction. As previously stated, both co-teachers were rated on the generalized components of the ExC-ELL literacy framework, including reading comprehension support, student oral interaction, vocabulary development, and linguistic scaffolding prior to the professional development.

Phase III Data

At the conclusion of the co-teaching intervention in Phase II that leveraged the ExC-ELL literacy framework and included partner reading and summarizing and vocabulary development, supplemented by translanguaging, oracy, and linguistic scaffolding, I assessed the co-teachers on their actual levels of implementation of the reading comprehension and academic language development intervention. This quantitative assessment of teacher levels of implementation marked the beginning of Phase III.

ExC-ELL Observation Protocol in Phase III

Using the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol as found in Appendix M, I rated the English language arts/reading teacher for the section of reading comprehension, as this was their role in the co-teaching intervention. Ratings on the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol range from *emerging* level 1, to *developing* level 2, to *effective* level 3, and *highly effective* level 4.

I scored the English language arts/reading teacher on nine of the thirteen components of reading comprehension instruction, as these were all present in the lessons. Components included pre-reading strategies such as providing materials to support student access to rigorous text (partners and partner-reading bookmarks with summarizing sentence frames), building content and vocabulary background, front loading text type and structure along with objectives for the lesson, and modeling sentence starters for peer summaries and discussions. I rated the English language arts/reading teacher as effective to highly effective on these pre-reading components of

the ExC-ELL observation protocol. During-reading components included teacher modeling through a think aloud of a comprehension strategy matched to text structure (In this case, it was summarizing), having students apply and practice the reading strategy, and having students partner read and summarize while using the key vocabulary in their summaries. I scored the teacher as highly effective for the modeling of reading strategies as well as for student application and practice of the strategy. I evaluated the English language arts teacher as effective for modeling sentence starters for peer summaries, as the teacher simply reminded students to use the sentence starters on the bookmark. I also rated the teacher as effective for partner reading and summarizing because the teacher sometimes had partners write their summaries rather than orally summarizing. Another during-reading component included differentiating for small group instruction, which the teacher accomplished through circulating and assisting partners as needed. The teacher was highly effective in guiding a small group to the first and last sentences of a paragraph to help them with summarizing without doing it for them. Post-reading strategies included class debriefs (which were not present) as well as formalized assessment of reading comprehension to track reading progress (In this case, the assessment is STAR™ reading.) I evaluated the English language arts/reading teacher as highly effective in formally and consistently tracking reading progress. Table 6 displays the reading comprehension components found in the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol along with the English language arts teacher's ratings. A complete ExC-ELL Observation Protocol for the English language arts teacher with ratings and notes for specific components of reading comprehension is found in Appendix N.

Similarly, I rated the English language development specialist using the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol; however, I only evaluated the specialist for the vocabulary and oracy

Table 6`

English Language Arts Teacher ExC-ELL Observation Protocol

Protocols	Emerging	Developing	Effective	Highly effective
Support access to rigorous text			Effective	
Building content, vocabulary background			Effective	
Front loading text type, structure, objectives				Highly effective
Modeling think- aloud of comprehension strategy				Highly effective
Students apply and practice reading strategy				Highly effective
Partner reading, summarizing with key vocabulary			Effective	
Modeling discussion sentence starters			Effective	
Differentiated small group instruction				Highly effective
Formal reading progress assessment				Highly effective

section, as well as linguistic scaffolding, as this was their role in the co-teaching intervention. The components of vocabulary and oracy entailed the seven steps of teaching vocabulary developed by Dr. Margarita Calderón (2007, 2018) for the ExC-ELL literacy framework. The seven steps included having students repeat the vocabulary word three times, the teacher stating the word in a sentence embedded in the text, the teacher providing a dictionary or glossary definition, the teacher providing a student-friendly definition, the teacher pointing out grammatical features such as word roots or affixes, cognates, or polysemy, the teacher engaging students in using the vocabulary word in sentences with their partner and utilizing the sentence starter provided by the teacher. Finally, the teacher informs students as to how they will use the vocabulary word in upcoming tasks, such as in an exit ticket. I rated the English language development specialist as highly effective to effective *except* for the last accountability step, which was omitted. Table 7 displays the vocabulary and oracy components found in the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol along with the English language development specialist's ratings. Details and accompanying notes of the vocabulary and oracy ratings recorded on the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol are expanded in Appendix O.

STAR™ Reading Data in Phase III

During Phase III, I collected STAR™ reading data which provided another window into student reading performance and growth. I collected data for the post-intervention timeframe from winter of 2023 to spring of 2023. Five of the seven long-term multilingual learners met growth expectations (scored 50 or greater on their student growth percentile) for the post-intervention timeframe. Reading growth, as measured by student growth percentiles, revealed that the five students were high growth and two others were low growth. It should be noted that this window was longer than the pre-intervention window, and the longer the window for

Table 7

English Language Development Specialist Ratings on the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol

Protocols	Emerging	Developing	Effective	Highly effective
Students repeat vocabulary word 3 times				Highly effective
Teacher reads the word in context			Effective	
Teacher provides a dictionary definition				Highly effective
Teacher provides a student-friendly definition				Highly effective
Teacher points out grammatical features of the word				Highly effective
Teacher engages students to use the word in a sentence, providing a sentence starter			Effective	
Teacher describes how students will be accountable for the word	Emerging			

calculating student growth percentile, the greater the likelihood of a higher growth score. The average grade level equivalent reading level in spring 2023 was 4.7, reflecting an increase of 0.5 from winter 2023. Reading achievement was low for all of the seven long-term English learners; average percentile rank in spring 2023 was 17. The seven long-term English learners' average percentile rank reflects that their reading skills, on the average, exceeded only 17% of other students in the same grade level nationwide.

Post-Intervention Reading and Language Assessments

Concluding the quantitative inquiry, I administered a post-intervention assessment, formatively measuring long-term English learners' reading comprehension. Students read a brief informational grade level text selection from CommonLit accompanied by four text-dependent comprehension questions and a short answer comprehension question. The passage and accompanying questions are found in Appendix P. Questions were based on the same Common Core reading informational text standards as the pre-intervention reading assessment. Long-term English learners' results were widely varied. Scores are on a 100 point scale and associated rank ordering of the student scores are outlined in Table 8.

An additional post-intervention assessment measuring academic language development was completed by long-term English learners at Superb Middle School. The students responded to an argumentative writing prompt regarding a new student online monitoring software, Go Guardian. Students described the current software and then argued for or against the monitoring software, providing three reasons for their stance. Long-term multilingual learners were asked to propose a different means of protecting students online if they disagreed with the current monitoring software. Finally, multilingual learners were expected to summarize their arguments. The post-intervention assessment writing prompt is included in Appendix Q. I scored the

Table 8

Reading Comprehension Post-Assessment

Student pseudonym	Reading posttest	Rank ordering posttest
Ben	55	4
Pilar	78	2
Arisbeth	90	1
Emilia	10	6
Alina	50	5
Melinda	10	6
May	60	3

students' arguments utilizing the WIDA Writing Rubric (WIDA, 2020) that describes six levels of English language writing proficiency across the three criteria of discourse, sentence, and word level complexity and specificity. The WIDA Writing Rubric is found in Appendix K. The Lead English Language Development Teacher also scored the writing post-assessments in order to ensure reliability of my scoring. We then compared our scores and came to consensus on the long-term multilingual learners' scores, utilizing the WIDA Writing Rubric criteria. Student writing post-assessment scores ranged from *emerging* level two to *expanding* level four. The majority of scores clustered at the *emerging* level two, lower than the preponderance of *developing* level three scores on the pre-intervention academic language assessment. Scores on the writing posttest along with descriptors of score levels are delineated in Table 9.

Data Analysis

Phase I Data Analysis

Phase I data collection and analysis informed my subsequent phases of research. I began with a sociolinguistic survey in order to understand long-term multilingual learners' language development. The linguistic survey provided input into the design of my intervention that considered students' plurilingualism.

Sociolinguistic Survey Data Analysis

Five out of seven long-term multilingual learners, or 71.4%, claimed Spanish only as their native language, whereas one student claimed a Central American dialect, Aguacateco, their first language. Another student claimed two languages as their native languages: Spanish and Aguacateco.

I queried students as to how and when they learned their languages. Most students recognized the effortless acquisition of a native language from birth; six out of seven students, or

Table 9

Writing Post-Assessment

Student pseudonym	Writing posttest	Score level descriptors
Ben	3	Developing: intermediate low to intermediate
Pilar	3	Developing: intermediate low to intermediate
Arisbeth	2	Emerging: novice high
Emilia	4	Expanding: intermediate to intermediate high
Alina	2	Emerging: novice high
Melinda	2	Emerging: novice high
May	4	Expanding: intermediate to intermediate high

85.7%, concluded that they learned their first language as infants and/or toddlers. One of these students further cited that language acquisition occurred via interaction with their parents. Another student claimed that they did not know how or when they learned their native language.

As to additional languages, 85.7% of the long-term English learners testified that they learned English in the school setting. These students are considered sequential bilinguals. Baker and Wright (2021) describe sequential bilinguals as children who have acquired a primary language since birth and add another language typically through schooling. Only one long-term multilingual learner cited early childhood learning of English as well as Spanish by the age of three. This student would be considered a simultaneous bilingual, learning both languages through natural language acquisition processes supported by early years of receptive linguistic input. This long-term multilingual learner shared that her mother is a fluent English and Spanish speaker from Florida, while her father speaks Aguacateco, Spanish, and a little English and hails from Guatemala. This student also reported Aguacateco as well as Spanish as their native languages, but did not report English as such. This student did not report the timing of learning the dialect.

Languages of the home varied from two to four languages. Of the seven long-term multilingual learners, two students, or 28.6%, did not identify English as a language of the home. Conversely, five of the seven students, or 71.4%, identified English as a language spoken at home. Three of the seven students, or 42.9%, identified their homes as bilingual—either Spanish and English or Aguacateco and Spanish. Additionally, three other students described their homes as trilingual: Spanish, English, and a Central American dialect. Finally, one student identified as having four languages spoken at home— Spanish, Awacateco, Acateco, and English— composing a quadrilingual home. The plurality of home languages is a hallmark of this sample of

long-term English learners at Superb Middle School. The multiplicity of languages reflects the geographic diversity from which parents and grandparents hailed, ranging from the United States, specific Guatemalan regions, or Mexico. As discussed previously, Spanish is the unifying language across family members, as Spanish is the language of education of Central America.

Students described highly compartmentalized language use, depending on the diversity of languages present in the home. One student described in detail diverse language use with the extended family: maternal grandmother (Spanish) and paternal grandmother (Spanish and dialect). With parents, this same multilingual learner used English. Three of the seven long-term multilingual learners cited interpreting for parents. One student portrayed their job as an intermediary, straddling the worlds of Spanish and English speakers: “[I] interpret at appointments, with the landlord, and at soccer games”. Students further described highly specific language use with siblings, with their language choices driven by the common languages of the children as well as the sociocultural setting, such as helping with homework. With regard to siblings, four of the seven, or 57.5%, long-term multilingual learners utilized English as the primary language to communicate. Of these students, one student cited the subtractive nature of English schooling: “We forgot Spanish as we learned English”. Conversely, two students, 28.6%, used mostly Spanish, while one additional student cited both English and Spanish use with siblings, fluidly moving in and out of languages as the communicative needs varied with the sociocultural setting.

This fluid use of entire language repertoires is further evidenced in students’ descriptions of their own language use. One student described their language use, citing the ability to move in and out of language spaces: “You can use different types of words in whatever language you

know”. Another student pointed to the fluidity of their own language use: “Whenever I forget a word in English, I say it in Spanish. I use my other language to fill in missing words”. Students unknowingly described the process of translanguaging whereby multilingual learners fluidly leverage their entire linguistic repertoire for communicative purposes. These salient student responses underscored the importance of incorporating translanguaging within the cotaught classroom space in order to construct meaning with text.

Language use outside of the home was limited to either Spanish or English. All students described using mostly English at school. One student described the unifying use of English as the dominant language at school despite cultural differences: “[I use] mostly English at school with friends, even though we all have different cultures.” This heavy use of English would stand to reason as English is the language of instruction in North Carolina public schools and is mandated by law (General Statutes of North Carolina § 115C-81.45). Only two of the seven students testified using Spanish with friends at school. However, an additional student cited their use of Spanish at school as limited to the specific purpose of interpreting for newcomers.

In order to better understand this diverse use of languages in the homes as well as outside of the homes of these long-term multilingual learners, I examined the frequency of the languages that students cited during the sociolinguistic interviews. Seven languages were named during the interviews, although one language had no label other than dialect, as the student was unable to provide a name for the dialect. The frequencies for the languages cited are found in Table 10. The data reveals that Spanish is the most prevalent language cited as students’ native language, language used at home, adult language at home, and the language that students used with adults in the home. However, in analyzing languages that the student used with young people in the home, English eclipsed the use of Spanish. Moreover, student language use outside of the home

Table 10

Language Frequencies

Language	Student native languages	Home languages	Adult home languages	Home languages with adults	Home languages with youth	Languages outside of the home
Spanish	6	7	7	7	3	4
Aguacateco	1	1	1			
Dialect	1	1	1	1		
Mam		1	1			
Acateco		2	2			
Awacateco		1	1			
English		5	2	2	5	7

also reflected a predominance of English over Spanish. Long-term multilingual learners' use of languages across various sociocultural settings reflected a sophisticated linguistic repertoire, utilizing diverse languages as the communicative needs arose, as well as fluidly moving in and out of language spaces, translanguaging in order to construct meaning. The sociolinguistic surveys pointed to the importance of allowing multiple languages in classroom spaces as well as the practice of translanguaging in order to comprehend text.

Semi-Structured Interviews Data Analysis

I conducted semi-structured interviews designed to elicit long-term English learners' perceptions of their in-school academic reading and academic language support experiences. I subsequently transcribed the interview responses into NVivo™ software to analyze these qualitative responses. As I winnowed the data, eight overarching themes developed as protracted multilingual learners shared their perceptions and experiences of reading and English language development support within the English language arts classroom. Six themes pertained to reading: agentive readers, striving readers, answering questions about reading, gradual release of reading responsibility, reading comprehension, and reading comprehension assistance. Two additional themes with regard to English language development emerged as follows: agentive language learners and language repertoire.

English learners described what good readers are, and a portrait emerged of agentive readers. Students described a myriad of strategies that good readers use to enhance and repair reading comprehension: rereading portions of the text, visualizing what is occurring in the text, self-questioning as to comprehension, repeated readings of the entire text, close and careful reading, determining the central idea or determining the problem and solution of the text, leveraging text evidence for understanding, considering word meaning, and using text features

such as captions and headings to preview text in order to enhance comprehension. Superb Middle School students clearly articulated a diverse set of reading comprehension strategies that strong readers apply, thus I coded the theme of agentive readers.

A diverse set of interview questions produced a consistent portrait of student perceptions of academic reading. In contemplating students' responses across the various interview prompts, the theme of answering questions regarding the reading text surfaced. The NVivo™ node frequency matrix reflected 17 responses across the seven long-term English learners that referenced answering questions.

When describing the process of reading in English language arts class, four of the seven students underscored the need to answer questions about the reading. One student specifically referenced the importance of answering questions at the end of each passage. The need to answer questions surfaced across additional interview prompts. For example, a good reader was described as one who could immediately answer the questions associated with a passage. Another student described a good reader as one who could find the best answers. Additionally, when questioned about the role of the English language development teacher in their co-taught English language arts class, students saw the role of the English language development teacher to direct students to clues or text evidence in order to answer comprehension questions. I consistently observed the enactment of this role during my observations of the co-taught class.

As to the application of reading strategies in class, one student referenced the RACES strategy that they learned in the English language arts classroom. According to the student, this strategy entailed reading the questions first, crossing out obviously wrong answers, and selecting the best answer. The multilingual learner could not recall what the A or the E referred to in the mnemonic, RACES. While their recollection of the strategy is not correct (R is restate the

question, A is answer the question, C is cite the evidence, E is explain your answer with the evidence by paraphrasing or directly quoting, and S is summarize your answer), the student was focused on the overarching need to answer questions about texts read in class.

Across the varied interview questions, students did not reference the process or purpose of reading for enjoyment or reading to learn. Reading in order to answer questions dominated the long-term English learners' understanding of the process and enactment of in-class reading. Students also viewed the purpose of applying reading strategies so that they could answer questions. Moreover, they perceived the role of the English language development specialist to support students in determining answers to questions. The sociocultural setting of their English language arts classroom encompassed perhaps a mechanical response to reading: answering questions.

In querying the students regarding the process of reading in English language arts class, I posed leading questions that reflected a gradual release of reading responsibility. After asking students to describe how they read in English language arts class, I inquired as to whether or not the teacher began with read aloud, if students chorally read whole group, whether students read in small groups, if students read with a partner, or whether students read independently. As long-term multilingual learners described how reading transpired in class, their responses reflected a gradual release of reading responsibility, ranging from the most supported—teacher read aloud—to the least supported—independent reading. Frequency node matrices within Nvivo™ software supported my understanding of in-class reading practices as described by students and are found in Table 11. Teacher read aloud was cited seven times by five students. Choral reading was the reading practice least referenced: one student pointed to choral reading as an in-class practice.

Table 11

NVivo™ Node Frequency Matrix: Gradual Release of Reading Responsibility

Student pseudonym	Teacher read aloud	Choral reading	Partner reading	Independent reading
Alina	1	0	1	0
May	0	0	2	1
Arisbeth	1	0	1	1
Ben	0	0	1	1
Emilia	2	0	1	2
Melody	1	1	3	1
Pilar	2	0	0	1

Partner reading as an in-class literacy practice was cited nine times across six of the seven long-term multilingual learner interviews. Finally, independent reading was cited seven times by six of the seven students. Thus, a portrait of in-class reading emerged: teacher read aloud, infrequent choral reading, partner reading—the most frequent practice—and independent reading. While partner reading was the most frequently cited literacy practice, it was closely followed by independent reading and teacher read aloud.

Reading comprehension emerged as a leading theme in student interviews. Student references to reading comprehension totaled 40, the penultimate number of references of all themes. In analyzing student references, the responses were dichotomous. Students described either poor reading comprehension or strong reading comprehension. Students alluded to their own struggles with comprehending in-class texts. One student cited across five responses their own difficulty with understanding what they had read. Another student cited their confusion with reading passages: “Sometimes it can get pretty confusing.” However, students also pointed to their perseverance in comprehending text. The student who cited great difficulty with comprehension followed their five references to struggling with four responses that indicated subsequent understanding of the passage. For example, this student reported, “After a little bit we’re on that passage, then I get it.”

Students described strong readers as comprehending the text. One long-term multilingual learner described strong readers as not only understanding the text through close and careful reading, but also being able to explain it: “He [a good reader] reads really carefully and like, explains it.” Of the seven long-term multilingual learners, two of the students referenced that they usually understood what they read in-class. While their perceptions are that they possess robust reading comprehension, their reading standardized test data does not support their

perceptions. The differential in their perceptions of reading abilities and their standardized test data is an important gap to close in order for students to take responsibility for improving their reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension assistance dominated the landscape of themes surfacing in the interviews. Student references to comprehension assistance totaled 49, the largest number of references for any theme. As students saw the concept of answering questions an important part of reading comprehension, students were even more focused on assistance to comprehend text. I coded reading comprehension assistance in a hierarchy as the parent node. Child nodes further elaborated the types of reading comprehension assistance, beginning with asking for help. Four of the seven students referenced asking for help, while one student declared, “I’m scared to ask. I just don’t.” The node frequency matrix for the theme of reading comprehension assistance along with the child nodes of asking for comprehension help, help from more knowledgeable others—teachers or peers, small group deconstruction of text, teacher explanations of text, and whole group deconstruction of text are found in Table 12.

Assistance in understanding text was embodied through more knowledgeable others. Support via either teachers or peers was referenced 27 times across six of the seven students. Five of the seven students specifically referenced receiving help from the English language development specialist, referencing this assistance 12 times. The specialist’s role is seen largely through the lens of reading comprehension assistance. References to support from the English language arts teacher was slightly less prevalent. Support from reading partners also surfaced: two students referenced help from partners in understanding text.

Small group deconstruction of text meaning was referenced by two students, one in regard to determining the central idea of the text, and the other student referred to worksheets or

Table 12

NVivo™ Node Frequency Matrix: Reading Comprehension Assistance Parent and Child Nodes

Student pseudonym	Reading comprehension assistance	Asking for comprehension help	Help from teachers or peers	Small group deconstruction of text meaning	Teacher explanation of text	Whole group deconstruction of text meaning
Alina	9	3	3	0	3	0
May	1	0	1	0	0	0
Arisbeth	2	0	0	0	2	0
Ben	5	1	4	0	0	0
Emilia	15	6	7	1	1	0
Melody	10	1	7	0	1	1
Pilar	7	0	5	1	1	0

questions: “When there’s a paper that comes with the book, she, she puts us, like, in a group.”

Small group work was definitely less prevalent in student interview responses. Whole group deconstruction of text meaning was only cited once. Eight references were made to the teacher’s explanation as part of the students’ process of understanding what they read. Both the English language development specialist and English language arts teacher were credited with explaining text to students. The co-teachers were seen by the long-term multilingual learners as possessing the official interpretation of the text and were thus dependent upon their explanations to comprehend text.

In considering the frequency node matrix of student references that I generated in NVivo, a third most predominant theme emerged: striving readers. In contrast to eight references regarding agentive readers, striving readers garnered 38 references. Students described varied forms of teacher assistance for comprehending text, most supported approaches to reading, such as teacher read aloud, choral reading, and partner reading, as well as poor reading comprehension characteristics. These responses depicted students who need copious supportive reading approaches as opposed to independent reading. Students also detailed one-on-one and small group assistance provided by both co-teachers in order to answer comprehension questions and understand text.

Through the semi-structured interviews, long-term English learners provided a portrait of reading practices in the English language arts classroom supported by their perceptions of these academic reading experiences. Students not only described striving readers and the copious support that they receive, but also agentive readers who independently apply reading strategies, read independently and answer questions about the text. Figure 4 contains a diagram of students’

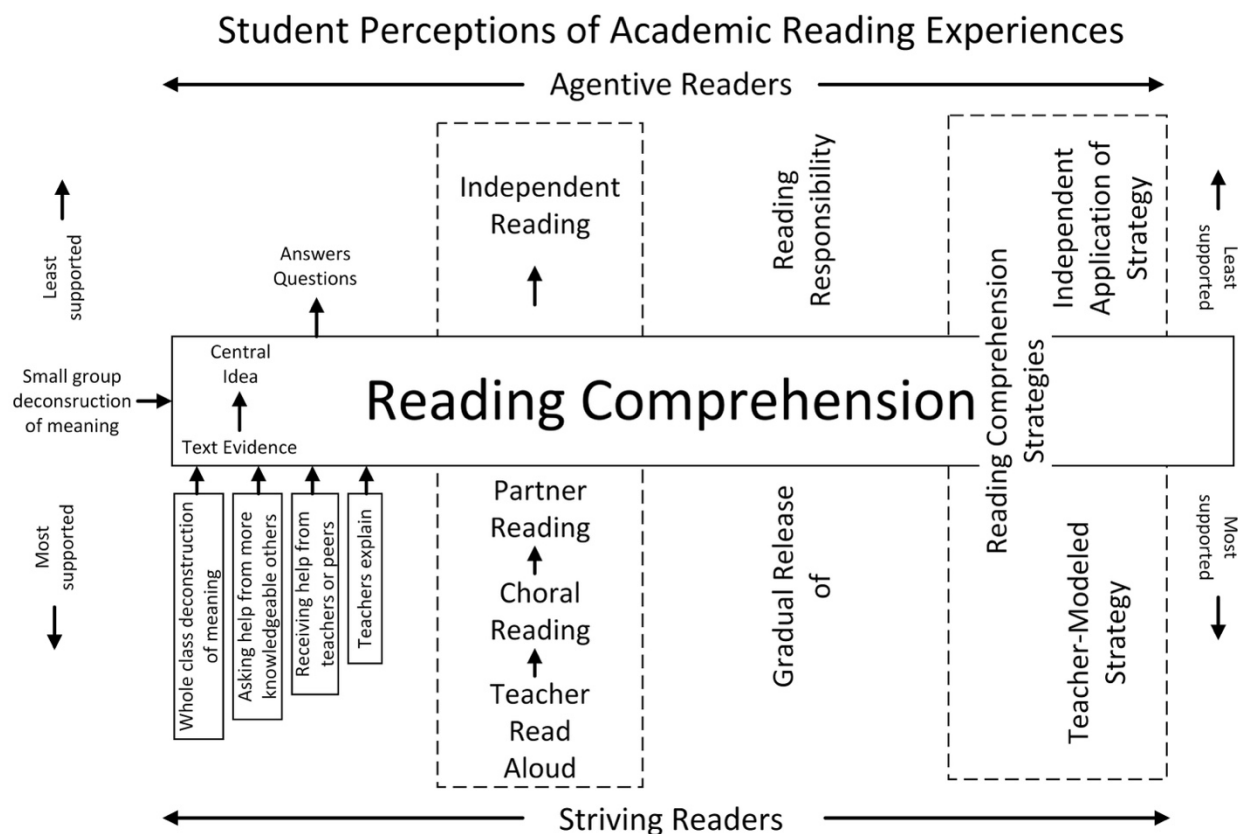


Figure 4. Long-term English learners' perceptions of academic reading experiences.

concept of academic reading in the co-taught class, providing a lens into their perceptions of reading comprehension, in-class supports for striving readers, and agentive readers.

As to English language development, the protracted multilingual learners opined on what makes a good English speaker or writer. Students also considered if their own English was improving. Through their responses to these two prompts, a portrait of agentive language learners developed. One student referenced traits such as determination as an important factor in improving their English. Another student pointed to the importance of metacognitive skills: “They study and pay attention [to improve their English].” Two of the seven long-term English learners cited learning new words as an important factor in improving their own language and becoming a good English speaker or writer. Finally, students referenced the importance of practicing the domains of language. For example, students cited speaking more, writing a lot, and reading every day. Students clearly articulated skills necessary to become an agentive language learner, demonstrating a need to take responsibility for their own language growth.

While students articulated the specific skills to become an agentive language learner, their perceptions of their own English language abilities were less clear. Four out of seven students were tentative in their responses when queried if their English was improving. Ben responded with a questioning tone: “[My English is improving because] I learn new words?” Melinda echoed this uncertainty: “[I improve my English by] read (sic) every day?” Two students responded with some doubt, “I think it [English] is [improving].” One student declared what they should do in order to improve their English: “[I should] speak a little more English [to improve].” Two of the seven students were definitive in their perception of their English abilities. One student asserted that knowing Spanish made them a good English speaker and writer. Another student declared that they were getting better in the domains of speaking and

reading. Unfortunately, their perceptions of their English abilities do not coincide with their ACCESS language proficiency scores. Both students have an overall composite score in developing *level 3* range, reflecting intermediate low to intermediate English skills.

The second theme regarding English language development was language repertoire. Students saw their language repertoire as dichotomous: either Spanish or English. Long-term multilingual learners made 19 references to English as opposed to three references to Spanish. One student admitted, “I try to avoid using Spanish.” This disassociation with their native language testifies to the subtractive nature of English-only instruction. I suspect the use of English as the official language of schooling sends a hidden message that Spanish (or any language other than English) is not valued in the sociocultural setting of school. It is therefore important to allow the use of all languages, including translanguaging to construct meaning in classroom spaces.

Data Analysis: Teacher Implementation Pre- to Post-Professional Development

During Phase II, I observed the co-teachers to collect data regarding their pre-professional development implementation levels of reading comprehension instruction, student-to-student interaction (oracy), vocabulary development, and linguistic scaffolding strategies. These categories represent generalized instructional components of literacy that align to the ExC-ELL literacy framework. Phase III represented the data collection of the same post-professional development components of instruction. The post-professional observation tool, the ExC-ELL observation protocol, included the specific instructional components of the ExC-ELL literacy framework. I therefore grouped the individual components of the ExC-ELL observation protocol into the generalized categories of reading comprehension instruction, student-to-student interaction, vocabulary development, and linguistic scaffolding strategies in order to compare

pre- and post-professional development levels of implementation of the ExC-ELL intervention. I then converted the ratings from descriptive to numeric: emerging to level 1; developing to level 2, effective to level 3, and highly effective to level 4. This conversion allowed me to average the descriptor ratings of the specific ExC-ELL observation protocol components within each generalized category of instruction.

These results are delineated in Table 13 for the English language arts teacher. This teacher is an accomplished veteran and therefore scored highly on the generalized categories of instructional support. I then rated the English language arts/reading teacher on nine of the thirteen components of the ExC-ELL literacy instruction, as these were all present in the lessons. The specific components within the category of reading comprehension included: supporting access to rigorous content, front-loading text type and structure, modeling think aloud of a reading comprehension strategy, having students apply and practice the reading strategy, differentiated small group reading instruction, and formal assessment of reading comprehension. The teacher's averaged comprehension score based on the ExC-ELL components was slightly under highly effective, representing a 4.25% decrease. The explicit vocabulary instruction was unchanged pre- to post-professional development, remaining effective. The student-to-student oracy rating decreased by 25% from highly effective to effective; the teacher sometimes would pivot to written summary sentences rather than oral summaries as required in the ExC-ELL framework. Finally, linguistic scaffolding decreased by 25%, as the teacher sometimes simply pointed to the sentence starters, simply reminding students to use these, rather than modeling them. The highly prescriptive nature of the ExC-ELL framework presented challenges for both co-teachers. I believe the decrease in scores represents the teacher's lack of experience with the literacy framework, whereas the strategies and instructional practices measured pre-professional

Table 13

*Pre- and Post-Professional Development Levels of ExC-ELL Implementation: English Language**Arts Teacher*

Instruction component	Pre-professional development ratings	Post-professional development ratings	Change in ratings	% change
Reading comprehension instruction	Highly effective: 4	Effective to highly effective: 3.83	-0.17	-4.25
Explicit vocabulary instruction	Effective: 3	Effective: 3	0	0
Student-to-student interaction	Highly effective: 4	Effective: 3	-1	-25
Linguistic scaffolding strategies	Highly effective: 4	Effective: 3	-1	-25

development were routinely leveraged and well-practiced by the English language arts teacher.

The English language development specialist is also an accomplished veteran and earned high ratings on the generalized categories of literacy instruction in Phase II prior to the professional development. During Phase III, I rated the English language development specialist on the specific ExC-ELL components of the vocabulary and oracy instruction, as well as linguistic scaffolding, composed of the following seven components:

1. The teacher has students chorally repeat the word three times.
2. The teacher reads aloud the word in context for the students.
3. The teacher shares a dictionary definition of the word.
4. The teacher provides a student-friendly definition of the word.
5. The teacher points out grammatical features of the word, such as polysemy, cognates, affixes, or tense.
6. The teacher engages all of the students to use the word orally in a sentence at least five times with their partner. The teacher also provides a sentence starter for the oral ping pong between the partners.
7. The teacher describes how the students will be held accountable to use the word, for example, in an exit ticket.

As mentioned previously, the role of the English language development co-teacher was to provide the vocabulary development instruction, while the English language arts teacher provided the reading instruction. Since the English language development specialist did not provide reading instruction, I did not rate the teacher post-professional development in reading comprehension instruction. The specialist was only rated in vocabulary, oracy, and linguistic scaffolding.

In order to compare the generalized vocabulary development instruction with the ExC-ELL seven components of vocabulary instruction, I averaged six of the seven ratings that were directly related to explicit vocabulary instruction to obtain a post-professional development vocabulary instruction rating. The teacher earned just above effective, with a 3.33. This rating reflected a 16.75% decrease from pre-professional development. The student-to-student interaction (oracy) component reflected a score of effective; this was unchanged from the pre-professional development rating for oracy. Finally, the English language development specialist earned a highly effective rating in linguistic scaffolding, providing sentence starters for partner oral engagement with the vocabulary word as well as using visuals in vocabulary slides, which augmented the ExC-ELL vocabulary steps. There was no change in ratings for linguistic support from pre- to post-professional development. The results for the English language development specialist are outlined in Table 14.

The specialist wrestled with the prescriptive nature of the seven steps and preferred a more flexible approach to teaching vocabulary so that vocabulary could be connected to students' lives. The English language development specialist was already accomplished at connecting vocabulary to students' prior experiences and knowledge. As the specialist is bilingual, this teacher was also able to connect to linguistic repertoires by pointing out cognates on a routine basis. We discussed how more practice was needed with the ExC-ELL vocabulary framework in order to execute it to high levels of fidelity.

Data Analysis: Student Reading Comprehension Pre- to Post-Intervention

Multilingual learners were formatively assessed post-intervention on a CommonLit informational reading passage with text-dependent comprehension questions and a short answer written response using the same informational text common core reading standards as the pre-

Table 14

*Pre- and Post-Professional Development Levels of ExC-ELL Implementation: English Language**Development Teacher*

Instruction	Pre-professional development	Post-professional development	Change in ratings	% change
Reading comprehension instruction	Highly effective: 4	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured
Explicit vocabulary instruction	Highly effective: 4	Slightly above effective: 3.33	-0.67	-16.75
Student-to-student interaction	Effective: 3	Effective: 3	0	0
Linguistic scaffolding strategies	Highly effective: 4	Highly effective: 4	0	0

intervention reading formative assessment. Assessing on the same standards allowed for comparison between the pre- and post-intervention formative reading assessments. Students' formative pre- and post-intervention reading comprehension scores are delineated in Table 15. In analyzing change on the reading formative assessment, results varied widely across the student pool. May's scores improved significantly from pretest to posttest (40 points or 200%). Arisbeth's posttest represented a moderate improvement (15 points or 20%), whereas Alina's score improved incrementally (5 points or 11%). Pilar's scores reflected no change. However, Emilia's and Melody's scores decreased considerably from pretest to posttest (-50 points or 83% and -45 points or 82%, respectively). Ben's scores reflect a moderate decrease from pretest to posttest (-23 points or 29%).

Figure 5 maps the pretest scores against the posttest scores in order to gain insight into the results. I utilized the software, JMP, which plotted the pretest and posttest scores and generated a smoothing best fit line across the data points in order to demonstrate the relationships between the variables. In analyzing the data, the multilingual learners who scored well on the reading comprehension pretest, also scored well on the posttest. The rank ordering of reading comprehension pretest and posttests scores also corroborated these findings. Other results are difficult to interpret. The formative assessment passages only had four text dependent comprehension questions and one short answer response. It may be that the assessment was too brief to garner an accurate assessment of students' reading comprehension.

Data Analysis: STAR™ Reading Pre-to Post Intervention

While reading comprehension pretest and posttest results were difficult to interpret, STAR™ reading results pre- to post-intervention offer some clarity. The pre-intervention window revealed that two of the seven long-term English learners experienced high growth, whereas the

Table 15

Reading Comprehension Pre- and Post- Assessments

Student pseudonym	Reading pretest	Reading posttest	Reading change post-pre	Reading % change
Ben	78	55	-23	-29
Pilar	78	78	0	0
Arisbeth	75	90	15	20
Emilia	60	10	-50	-83
Alina	45	50	5	11
Melinda	55	10	-45	-82
May	20	60	40	200

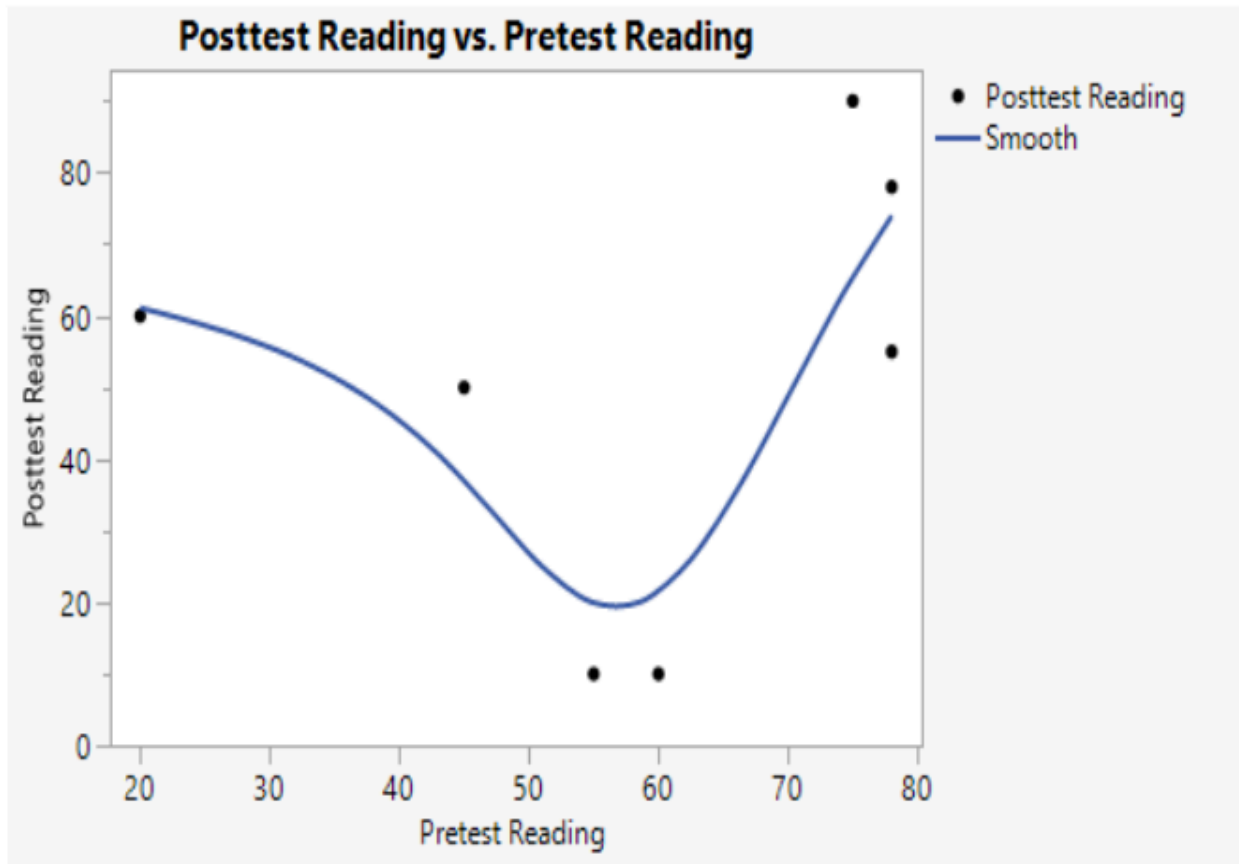


Figure 5. Comparison of reading pretest and posttest scores.

post-intervention window demonstrated that five of the seven students experienced high growth. The average grade level equivalent reading level in spring 2023 increased from 4.2 to 4.7, reflecting an increase of 0.5 from winter 2022-2023, which marked the end of the pre-intervention period. Average percentile rank for the student group increased from a pre-intervention percentile rank of 13 to a post-intervention percentile rank of 17, demonstrating a 4 point gain. While all long-term English learners consistently scored low proficiency both pre-intervention and post-intervention, there was enough growth to result in small increases in the students' percentile rank and grade equivalent reading level. The English language arts teacher and I agreed that the intervention should likely be sustained in order to effect a greater impact on reading comprehension and growth measures.

Data Analysis: Student Writing Pre- to Post-Intervention

The WIDA writing rubric ranges from a level one to a level six. Scores five and above are considered proficient, however, protracted multilingual learners' scores mostly clustered in the lower range of the continuum on both the pretest and posttest. Student academic writing on the posttest demonstrated a preponderance of level two, representing a decrease from the prevalence of level three on the pretest. Scores at level two are considered emerging with attempted organization of discourse, repetitive sentence patterns, and general content vocabulary. Table 16 delineates the change in pre-to posttest along with the percentage change. Because of the restricted range of scores (level two to level four), the finer grain of changes in test performance is masked, however, we can draw conclusions in terms of directional changes in scores. Three students demonstrated no change in scores: Ben and Pilar remained at level three, while Alina remained at level two. Two students' scores decreased: Arisbeth decreased from a four to a two, and Melody decreased from a three to a two. On the other hand, two other

Table 16

Academic Writing Pre- and Post-Assessments

Student pseudonym	Writing pretest	Writing posttest	Writing change post-pre	Writing % change
Ben	3	3	0	0
Pilar	3	3	0	0
Arisbeth	4	2	-2	-50
Emilia	3	4	1	33
Alina	2	2	0	0
Melinda	3	2	-1	-33
May	2	4	2	100

students' scores increased: May's scores increased by 100%, progressing from a level two to level four, and Emilia's scores increased 33%, from a level two to a level three. I again utilized JMP software to generate a smooth line of best fit to determine the relationship between the pre- and posttest writing scores. The line of best fit indicates the downward tendency in pretest vis-à-vis posttest scores, as reflected in Figure 6.

While quantitative results measured the impact of the intervention, qualitative informed the design of the intervention. My exploratory mixed methods study first began with qualitative data collection designed to solicit long-term English learner perceptions of their academic reading in-school experiences and their English language development and accompanying support in order to help craft the intervention to improve reading comprehension and academic language development. It should be noted that I was not able to incorporate all insights gleaned from the qualitative results into the intervention due to various constraints such as timeframe of the study and Superb Middle School's status as a school of improvement (a "D" school) which impacted school priorities. These constraints will be further elaborated in Chapter 5.

Demographics

The seven long-term English learners at Superb Middle School reflected a largely homogenous demographic population. The majority were born in the United States, whereas two of the seven multilingual learners were born in Guatemala. All students identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino. Five out of seven students, or 71%, identified their race as American Indian or Alaskan Native. Two of the seven claimed their race as White. All students were enrolled in sixth grade, with the majority at 11 years of age, while two students were 12 years of age. Moreover, the majority of the sample were female at 71%, whereas males composed 29%. Educational background prior to kindergarten was also largely homogenous. Five out of the

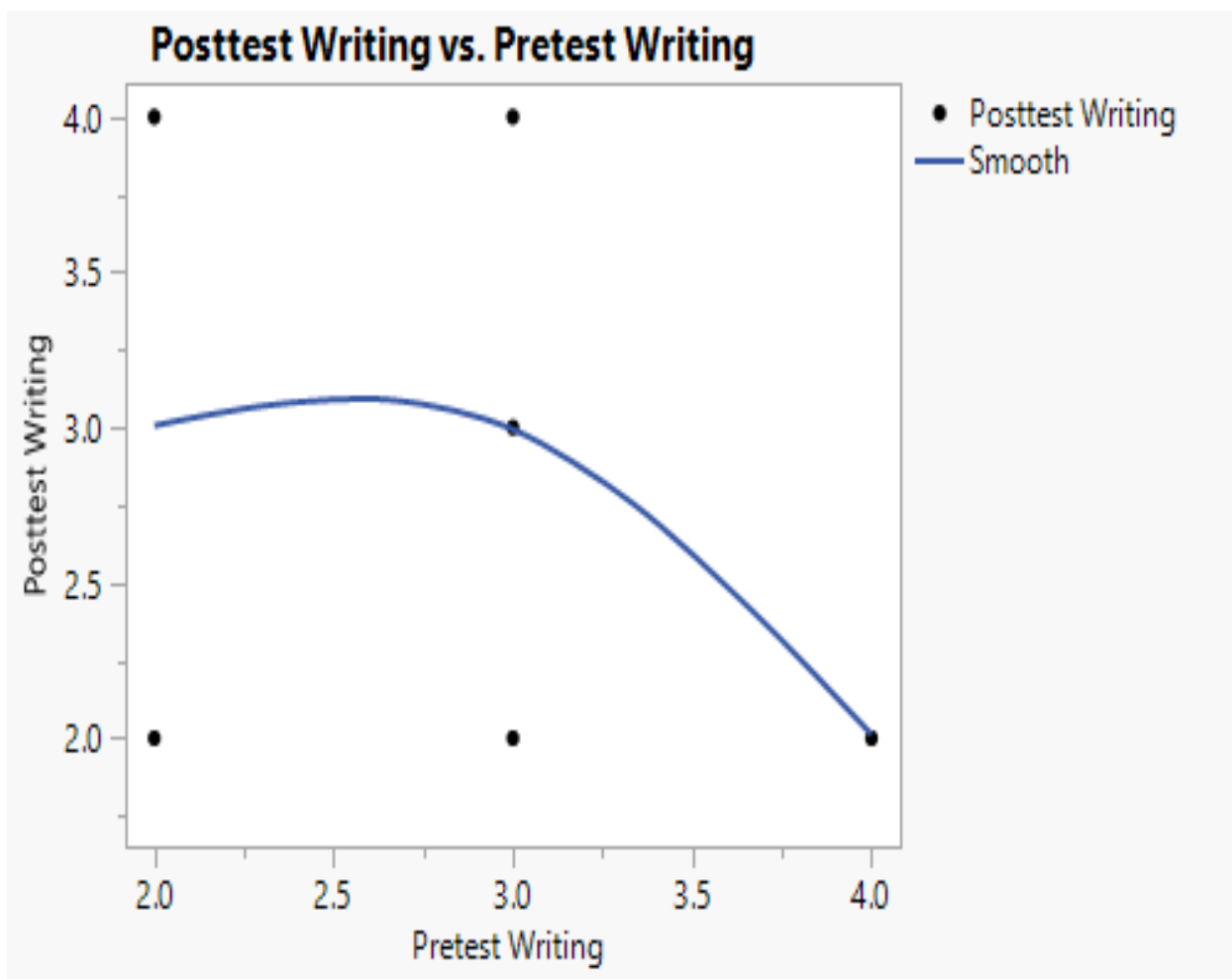


Figure 6. Comparison of writing pretest and posttest scores.

seven protracted multilingual learners attended prekindergarten. On the other hand, their entering kindergarten language proficiency scores were heterogeneous. One student scored low on the oral Kindergarten WAPT screener test, while three students scored at the mid-level of oral skills, and three other students earned high ratings on the Kindergarten WAPT screener test of oral skills. Because of the heterogeneity of entering English oral proficiencies, I conclude that these entering scores may have had little impact on the multilingual learner's currently stalled English proficiency scores. Demographics for the sample of long-term English learners are delineated in Table 17.

Results

Qualitative data informed my first two research questions. The questions revolve around long-term English learner perceptions to provide a window into the problem of practice of plateaued reading comprehension and stalled language proficiency scores.

1. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their experiences of academic reading?
2. How do long-term English learners at Superb Middle School perceive their academic English language abilities and in-school English language development support?

In order to address my first research question, I collected and analyzed protracted multilingual learners' perceptions of academic reading in-school experiences through semi-structured interviews. The qualitative results manifested themes of agentive readers, striving readers, answering questions about reading, gradual release of reading responsibility, reading comprehension, and reading comprehension assistance.

Students not only described striving readers and the copious support that they receive, but also, agentive readers who independently apply reading strategies, read independently, and

Table 17

Multilingual Learner Sample Demographics

Student pseudonym	Ethnicity	Race	Age	Gender	Country of birth	Grade	PreK	WAPT screener
Ben	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian or Alaskan Native	12	M	United States	6	Yes	Mid
Pilar	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian or Alaskan Native	11	M	Guatemala	6	None	Low
Arisbeth	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian or Alaskan Native	12	F	Guatemala	6	Yes	High
Emilia	Hispanic or Latino	White	11	F	United States	6	Yes	Mid
Alina	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian or Alaskan Native	11	F	United States	6	Yes	Mid
Melinda	Hispanic or Latino	White	11	F	United States	6	Yes	High
May	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian or Alaskan Native	11	F	United States	6	None	High

answer questions about the text. While students clearly understood how agentive readers function, overarching themes from qualitative interviews revealed students' in-school experiences as striving readers, receiving ample support from teachers in order to answer comprehension questions and understand the text.

The practice of reading in the language arts class reflected a gradual release of responsibility model. A preponderance of student responses described highly supported reading practices with teacher modeling of reading strategies and teacher read aloud of text. Partner reading was cited with even more frequency, followed by independent reading. Students painted a portrait of supportive reading practices enacted in their language arts classroom.

While students were focused on reading comprehension, they were even more concerned with reading comprehension assistance, as this theme dominated the landscape of student's in-school experiences with academic reading. Their experiences with comprehension assistance manifested through asking for support from more knowledgeable others, receiving help from teachers or peers, listening to teacher explanations, deconstructing text meaning in small groups, and least prevalent, deconstructing text meaning in whole group. One student described comprehension assistance from the English language arts teacher: "She usually explains it more; like she explains it more and then usually I get to understand." Another protracted multilingual learner described the English language development teacher's assistance: "She will start helping us by, step-by-step, by taking us where we need to be." Students clearly viewed their co-teachers as possessing the official interpretation of text and were therefore dependent upon their support and explanations to comprehend text.

Reading in order to answer questions governed the long-term English learners' understanding of the process and enactment of in-class reading. Students also viewed the purpose

of applying reading strategies so that they could answer questions. Moreover, they perceived the role of the English language development specialist to support students in determining answers to questions. The sociocultural setting of their English language arts classroom encompassed perhaps a mechanical response to reading: answering questions. Within my intervention, the ExC-ELL literacy framework attempted to shift the focus from answering questions at the end of a passage to orally summarizing chunks of text while utilizing key vocabulary.

My second research question centered around protracted multilingual learners' perceptions of their English language abilities and language development support. Students painted a portrait of agentive language learner characteristics during the semi-structured interviews. Multilingual learners cited being determined, exercising metacognitive skills such as studying and paying attention, learning new vocabulary, and practicing the domains of language to become a proficient English student.

While long-term English learners articulated myriads of skills possessed by agentive language learners, their application of these skills was less clear. Four students out of seven students, or 57%, expressed uncertainty or doubt as to whether their English was improving. Two out of the seven multilingual learners claimed improvement in their English. In comparing these student responses vis-à-vis their most recent ACCESS language proficiency scores, a gap exists in their perceptions of their English abilities and their standardized test data.

In order to address the gap, I pointed out the necessity of maintaining language portfolios so that both teachers and long-term English learners could track their language development progress. In the fall of 2022, I had launched the initiative of portfolios organized by the WIDA key language uses in Superb Public Schools. Key language uses are overarching language genre families representing the most prominent in-school academic language uses of narrate, inform,

explain, and argue. The English language development teacher did not fully implement the initiative at Superb Middle School; I believe this was a missing component to creating metalinguistically aware students so that they may take responsibility for their own language progress.

When questioned about the role of the English language development teacher in their co-taught English language arts class, students saw the role of the English language development teacher to direct students to clues or text evidence in order to answer comprehension questions. I consistently observed the enactment of this role during my observations of the co-taught class. Students did not reference the role of the English language development teacher as assisting with growing and supporting their English. I believe this omission was tied to the lack of full implementation of language portfolios. Students were thus unaware of their own language progression.

Another theme that I derived from the semi-structured interviews was language repertoire. Students overwhelmingly viewed their language use as dichotomous: either English or Spanish. As mentioned previously, English dominated the frequency of responses regarding in-school use of languages. I discussed with inquiry partners the need to allow the use of native languages in order to construct meaning when multilingual learners were working with partners. I also emphasized the importance of translanguaging, where multilingual learners move fluidly across languages, leveraging their entire repertoire. This multilingual practice values and invites all languages to the classroom space in order to construct meaning with text. The English language arts teacher assured me that the multilingual community of sixth graders freely employed diverse languages as they interacted with partners or small groups. Across multiple class observations, I witnessed the enactment of plurilingualism as well as translanguaging while

students wrestled with text meaning. Moreover, sociolinguistic surveys also provided a window into language profiles of multilingual learners. The sociolinguistic surveys pointed to the importance of allowing multiple languages in classroom spaces as well as the practice of translanguaging in order to comprehend text. This practice was sustained during my intervention and is a continuing practice at Superb Middle School.

Following the exploratory qualitative phase of my study, I collected pre-intervention quantitative data regarding multilingual learner reading comprehension and academic language. Additionally, I gathered pre-professional development observational data with respect to the two co-teachers' instructional support of reading comprehension and academic language. Once I conducted the intervention, I then measured students' post-intervention reading comprehension and academic language development. Likewise, I collected and analyzed post-professional development quantitative data reflecting teacher levels of implementation of the intervention, which included the ExC-ELL literacy framework augmented with translanguaging practices. This data enabled me to address the quantitative study questions:

3. What is the level of implementation of the co-teaching intervention as measured by observational rating scales focused on lesson delivery components fostering reading comprehension and academic language development?
4. To what extent does the co-teaching intervention, designed subsequent to the findings of research questions 1 and 2, as implemented by the reading specialist and English language development specialist, improve formative measures of reading comprehension and academic language for long-term English learners at Superb Middle School?

Teacher levels of implementation of the intervention seemed to be somewhat negatively impacted, given the limited timeframe of my intervention, the highly prescriptive nature of the ExC-ELL literacy framework, and the fact that teachers were already skilled at diverse reading comprehension strategies and language development support. Both teachers were accomplished veterans and earned high ratings prior to professional development for supporting reading comprehension and language development. Due to the highly prescriptive nature of the ExC-ELL framework, teacher levels of implementation reflected somewhat of a decrease in ratings, as they were continuing to practice the highly prescriptive ExC-ELL components to fidelity. In spite of the small decreases pre- to post-intervention, both teachers earned mostly effective to highly effective ratings in their implementation of the components of the ExC-ELL literacy framework.

Quantitative student data indicated the effectiveness of the intervention on reading comprehension and academic language development. As noted previously, reading comprehension formative assessment pre-intervention and post-intervention results varied widely across the pool of students. This wide variation prompted me to examine results on a case-by-case basis: three multilingual learners' scores decreased, while three improved, and one experienced no change. While it was difficult to interpret these results in terms of patterns, STAR™ reading results from the pre-intervention window to the post-intervention window illuminated change in reading comprehension. STAR™ windows include the most recent data point from the prior school year, serving to stabilize measurement of changes in reading comprehension across the specified window. While all long-term English learners consistently scored low proficiency both pre-intervention and post-intervention, there was enough growth to

result in small increases in the students' percentile rank compared to grade level peers nationwide (from 13 to 17) and grade equivalent reading level (from 4.2 to 4.7).

Formative results for changes in academic language development from pretest to posttest were measured utilizing the WIDA writing rubric as applied to student argumentative writing samples. Long-term English learners' writing scores mostly clustered in the lower range of the continuum on both the pretest and posttest. Utilizing JMP software, writing scores from pretest to posttest indicated a downward tendency.

Summary

Qualitative data provided insight into my first research question regarding student perceptions of in-school academic reading experiences. While students readily articulated characteristics of an agentive reader, descriptions of their own experiences aligned with that of a striving reader, with reading practices supported by teacher read aloud, teacher modeling of strategies, and partner reading. Copious support was also evidenced through reading comprehension assistance in deconstructing text meaning. Frequencies of responses reflected protracted multilingual learners' greatest preoccupation was with comprehension assistance via teacher explanations, partner support, and teacher support with answering text-dependent questions. My study shifted the focus from answering comprehension questions to partner reading and summarizing along with practicing the reading strategy modeled by the teacher.

Semi-structured interviews addressing my second research question provided a lens into students' perceptions of their English language abilities and accompanying in-school support for language development. Long-term English learners' perceptions of their language proficiency was clouded with uncertainty. The majority of students questioned if their English was improving. Of the minority who claimed improvement, their annual ACCESS language

proficiency data did not corroborate their perception. Additionally, protracted multilingual learners perceived the role of the English language development teacher as assisting with reading comprehension, and in particular, directing students to clues and text evidence in order for students to answer comprehension questions. Long-term English learners did not perceive the English language development teacher as supporting their language development. These perceptions indicated a need for developing metalinguistic awareness with English learners through language portfolios and is a continued focus at Superb Middle School.

Quantitative data provided insight into my third research question regarding teachers' levels of implementation of the ExC-ELL literacy framework. Due to the highly prescriptive nature of the ExC-ELL literacy framework and veteran teachers already being skilled in supporting reading comprehension and language development, data indicated a small decrease in pre- to post-intervention levels of reading comprehension support and language development support. However, teachers were mostly effective to highly effective in executing the components of the literacy framework.

Lastly, quantitative data shed light on my fourth research question regarding the effectiveness of the intervention in terms of student outcomes. Pretest and posttest formative assessments resulted in widely varying measures of reading comprehension. However, STAR™ reading data offered some clarity: while all students were low proficiency, five demonstrated high growth in the post-intervention window. On the average, long-term English learners demonstrated a percentile rank increase from 13th percentile to 17th percentile, compared to grade level peers nationwide. Additionally, grade level reading equivalencies increased on the average from 4.2 to 4.7. STAR™ reading results provide some evidence that the intervention positively impacted long-term English learners' reading comprehension. Finally, quantitative data

illuminated the effectiveness of the intervention on students' academic language development. Scores clustered at the lower end of the proficiency continuum for both pretest and posttest, however the preponderance of scores represented a level two for the posttest versus a level three on the pretest. Thus, my intervention did not impact the participants' written academic language development positively, as data reflected a downward tendency from pretest to posttest.

Although qualitative data provided a window into long-term English learners' perceptions of both academic in-class reading experiences and academic language abilities and support, quantitative data were not as clear. Potentially confounding factors that were not feasible for me to measure within the study may have affected student outcomes. I will discuss these factors as a part of my interpretation of study findings.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Long-term English learners have garnered much attention across the last several years in the field of second language acquisition and adolescent literacy. Characteristics of these students include plateaued reading outcomes, an inability to exit English learner classification, along with an inability to meet ESSA-mandated annual language proficiency targets. Superb Middle School's long-term English learners manifest these same characteristics. Data confirm stalled language proficiency outcomes and plateaued reading comprehension.

In order to address this problem of practice, I implemented a study with protracted multilingual learners, examining their perceptions of in-class academic reading and their academic language abilities and accompanied teacher support. Student perceptions provided input into the design of the study. I believe that with many problems of practice, educators fail to ask the students about the problem. Students can provide a valuable window into the nuances of the problem and potentially point to solutions.

Summary of the Findings

I first collected and analyzed qualitative data via sociolinguistic surveys (Brooks, 2017) in order to explore student language profiles. Building on Brooks's work, I also considered how these profiles could be leveraged for growing reading comprehension and language development. Additionally, semi-structured interviews offered a lens into students' perceptions of reading practices in the language arts classroom (Brooks, 2020). Extending Brooks's research, the interviews also illuminated English learners' views of their own language proficiency skills as well as the in-class linguistic support that they received.

Features of Student Linguistic Practices

The sociolinguistic surveys, designed by Brooks (2017) and used with permission,

revealed the plurilingual milieu in which students lived. Homes ranged from bilingual to trilingual to quadrilingual. Students navigated worlds of Spanish, Central American dialects, and English. They functioned as interpreters for their parents and for newcomer students at school. While languages that students leveraged included Central American dialects not found in Brooks's research (2017, 2020), the linguistic practices remained the same: students often moved between Spanish (and/or dialects) with their parents and English with their siblings or friends in highly compartmentalized ways.

Another feature of students' complex and sophisticated language use was their translanguaging practices as they fluidly utilized their entire linguistic repertoire to communicate, moving in and out of various languages even within sentences to construct meaning (García et al., 2017). An important component of my intervention took into consideration the language profiles of these long-term English learners, creating a classroom language space that not only allowed, but also encouraged the fluid use of diverse languages (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Kleyn & García, 2019). Valuing protracted multilingual learners' linguistic assets served to shift the deficit narrative surrounding long-term English learners at Superb Middle School, confirming research by García and Kleifgen (2019), as well as by Kleyn and García (2019).

Student Perceptions of In-Class Academic Reading Practices

Semi-structured interviews provided yet another lens into multilingual learners' perceptions with regard to academic reading practices in the co-taught language arts classroom. Students were able to articulate a panoply of reading comprehension strategies when describing a strong reader. In contrast, their experiences with academic reading weaved a tapestry of striving readers who depended on the co-teachers' interpretation of texts. My finding corroborated

Brooks (2017, 2020) that long-term English learners were dependent upon teacher explanations of text. Reading practices at Superb Middle School reflected an extensively supported reading practice: teacher read aloud, occasional choral reading, and partner reading. Independent reading was also cited as a consistent practice. However, I did not observe independent reading practiced in the context of the language arts classroom except as a reward for finishing question sets. Nor did I witness students independently applying reading strategies. Rather, I witnessed partners struggling to summarize chunks of text, as this was the strategy that we practiced as part of the ExC-ELL literacy intervention. The co-teachers circulated, assisting students with meaning of words and referring students back to the text to repair comprehension and strengthen summaries.

The texts that students consistently read in class were brief informational passages from CommonLit or ReadWorks. A predominant theme regarding reading comprehension that students described was answering questions at the end of the text. An even more overarching theme was comprehension assistance. My observations aligned with student perceptions. After partner reading and summarizing, co-teachers again circulated, assisting students, pointing to text evidence for the comprehension questions at the end of the passage. Student semi-structured interviews further confirmed what I observed: Teachers possessed the official interpretation, and they directed students to this same understanding. While classroom literacy practices differed somewhat in that Brooks (2020) observed mainly teacher read aloud followed by oral reading in student groups, the whole class literacy approach was highly scaffolded, as it was in my study at Superb Middle School. Brooks found that the highly scaffolded literacy practices were undergirded by the teacher's role as the official interpreter of text. My finding at Superb Middle School corroborated Brooks's conclusions that in-class reading involved the teacher providing the official interpretation.

Student Perceptions of Their English Language Development

Semi-structured interviews also revealed protracted multilingual learner perceptions of their English language abilities and the in-class linguistic support they received. I was struck by the uncertainty that students voiced regarding improvement of their English language proficiency. Of the two students who indicated improvement in English skills, their ACCESS standardized scores indicated otherwise. My results corroborated Kim and García (2014) in that a gap exists between long term English learners' perceptions of their academic achievement and the realities of standardized test data. In addition, students viewed the English language development specialist's role as that of assisting with answering text-dependent comprehension questions rather than supporting language development. This additional finding may be a result of the specialist pushing into the content classroom as opposed to teaching an elective class designed specifically for English language development, or it may simply be a result of an emphasis on answering text-dependent questions at the end of a passage. These results spoke to the need for maintaining language portfolios and conferencing with students regarding their language development.

The development of academic English proficiency is a quantum leap compared to social language fluency. These students were viewed as fluent interpreters by their families, and yet their academic English proficiency results were in direct contrast, confirming the research of Kim and García (2014). I believe academic English proficiency can best be developed through conferencing with students using language portfolios to track growth.

Literacy and Language Intervention Findings

Armed with the information from the language surveys and interviews, I implemented an intervention utilizing the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk,

2018) augmented with translanguaging classroom practices. Components of the framework entailed a seven-step vocabulary front-loading of approximately five key vocabulary words critical to the meaning of the text. This part of instruction was executed by the English language development co-teacher. The English language arts co-teacher introduced a reading strategy, modeled it, and guided students with partner reading chunks of text followed by partner oral summaries. The oral summaries were supported with sentence frames and vocabulary word banks that the English language arts teacher pointed to and reminded students to use the scaffolds if needed. Although both co-teachers were challenged with the highly prescriptive nature of the literacy framework, their levels of implementation ranged from effective to highly effective.

As to impacts of the intervention on students' reading comprehension, I measured student outcomes with pre- and post-intervention formative assessments composed of brief informational passages with comprehension questions from CommonLit based on the same informational text standards. Results were inconsistent; some students improved, some did not, and others remained unchanged. STAR™ reading comprehension measures indicated a more definitive portrait of students' reading comprehension across time. While post-intervention results indicated low proficiency for all students, there was enough growth across students from the pre-intervention window to the post-intervention window, resulting in an average increase of 0.5 grade level equivalencies. Moreover, students' percentile rank increased from the 13th percentile to the 17th percentile vis-à-vis the same grade level students nationwide who took the same grade level STAR™ tests. My results were not as strong as Calderón et al. pre- and post-assessments on an experimental English learner group versus a control group using the Gates MacGuinitie reading comprehension tests with effect sizes of 0.4 to 0.7 (M. E. Calderón, personal communication,

September 22, 2022). It should be noted, however, that my study was not an exact replica of the ExC-ELL literacy framework.

I measured impacts on language development via pre-intervention and post-intervention formative assessments composed of argumentative writing prompts. I scored students' academic language using the WIDA writing rubric. Student outcomes indicated a downward tendency from pre- to post-intervention. The writing results were not as I would have wished, and I noted a seeming lack of effort on the writing posttest. When I assembled students to take the posttest, they chatted and joked prior to writing, whereas leading up to the pretest, the students were much quieter and seemed to engage conscientiously with the writing prompt.

The challenges that I faced in implementing this study were no different than challenges I face in my position as English Learner Director. As my role is largely collaborative with principals, I routinely face competing priorities in schools. Principals often see English language development as interfering with general education, particularly in tested areas. Obtaining buy-in for the study was not so much of an issue but sustaining buy-in was challenging. Other school priorities took center stage. For example, school-wide behavior issues became an overwhelming focus for the principal and detracted from the focus on instruction. Additionally, end-of-grade testing loomed large, and test preparation became paramount during the last quarter—so much so that continuing my study beyond the third 9 weeks was not an option. Superb Middle School was and still is a school of improvement, also known as a low performing school, with a 2022 school grade of a D and growth expectations not met.

Interpretation of the Findings

A Flexible Language Space

Contemporary case studies (Brooks, 2015, 2016, 2020) have yielded nuanced and diverse

literacy and language profiles of long-term English learners, revealing multiple dimensions of literacy and language practices. These studies have sought to disrupt tightly defined profiles of long-term English learners situated in deficit narratives proposed by Menken et al. (2012) and further developed by Olsen (2014). My study built on this contemporary scholarship (Brooks, 2020; Flores et al., 2015; García & Kleifgen, 2019; Kleyn & García, 2019), focusing on linguistic assets of the protracted multilingual learners in the exploratory phase. The sociolinguistic surveys I conducted provided an in-depth portrait of students' diverse and complex linguistic profiles, revealing plurilingualism and fluid use of full linguistic repertoires. Allowing and encouraging this fluid use of languages as part of my intervention sustained an open language space in the classroom, incorporating all languages in making meaning of texts. This flexible and linguistically accommodating space as described by García et al., 2017, was enacted during my study, not only as a scaffold for comprehension, but also as a haven for linguistic assets.

A Heavily Scaffolded Literacy Space

The social perspective of reading (Brooks, 2015, 2020) which holds that making meaning with text is mediated by social interaction in specific sociocultural settings was foundational to the design of my study. My intervention was therefore informed by the long-term English learner's perspectives of their in-school experiences with reading and academic language development. Students' portrayals of their own experiences reflected those of a striving reader, featuring supportive reading practices such as teacher read aloud, teacher modeling of strategies, and partner reading. Reading comprehension assistance in deconstructing text meaning predominated long-term English learner perceptions of in-class reading practices. My intervention attempted to shift the focus from answering text-dependent comprehension

questions to partner reading and summarizing in an effort to build agentive readers. Formative pre- and post-assessments of reading comprehension indicated disparate results. However, STAR™ reading results indicated some improvement in grade level equivalencies and percentile rankings. I, along with my inquiry partners, surmise that the intervention should have likely been sustained longer in order to effect a definitive positive impact on reading comprehension.

Like Brooks (2015, 2016, 2020), I conclude that in-class reading practices diverge from reading practices valued on standardized assessments. At Superb Middle School, answering text-dependent questions was a highly valued class literacy practice that was extensively scaffolded by the co-teachers. In contrast, standardized reading assessments at Superb Middle School value independent reading of a wide range of literature and independently answering text-dependent questions. My study confirmed this discrepancy between reading skills valued on standardized tests versus reading skills valued in classroom practice. Whole class literacy practices need to be examined at Superb Middle School in order to develop agentive readers who are able to navigate literacy demands in an ever-changing world.

A Co-Taught ExC-ELL Literacy Framework

My study further built on contemporary instructional and program practices in the context of long-term English learner instruction. As a major component of my instructional intervention, I leveraged a previously empirically validated pedagogical practice: the ExC-ELL literacy framework (Calderón, 2007; Calderón & Slakk, 2018). I intertwined this literacy framework with a co-teaching model involving the English language development specialist and the English language arts teacher (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010, 2018; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). The co-teaching model enabled me to leverage the reading expertise of the English language arts co-teacher and the language expertise of the English language development co-teacher in

corporately implementing the literacy framework. Although both co-teachers were challenged by the highly prescriptive nature of the ExC-ELL framework, they were largely effective to highly effective in implementing the intervention.

A Humanizing Approach to Literacy and Language

While both the ExC-ELL literacy framework and co-teaching are research-based practices designed to meet the needs of English learners, the importance of the individual literacy and language needs of the heterogeneous population of protracted multilingual learners remain. I concur with Brooks's research that what is needed for long-term English learners is not a magic bullet approach of matching reader to a best instructional practice, but is a holistic approach. Brooks drew on Bartolomé (1994), advocating a humanizing approach to literacy, valuing multilingual learners' cultural, linguistic, and experiential assets. This approach brings the student to the center, informing literacy and language practices enacted in the classroom.

In addition to improving reading comprehension, my goal was to strengthen long-term English learners' language development through student-to-student oracy, vocabulary development, and writing to cement reading comprehension as part of the ExC-ELL framework. However, my formative writing pretest and posttest largely demonstrated a downward relationship from pretest to posttest. Thus, the intervention did not positively impact protracted multilingual learners' academic language development. While my study results generally indicated a lack of improvement in language development, it became apparent through the semi-structured interviews that students needed support to become metalinguistically aware. Long-term English learners need routine opportunities to conference with the English language development specialist regarding their language portfolios, documenting language trajectories. Conferencing with individual students to consider their individual language needs brings to bear

a humanizing approach to educating long-term English learners, valuing their linguistic assets and addressing nuanced individualized needs. This is a continued area of focus at Superb Middle School.

Limitations of the Study

Within the quantitative phases of my study, I faced limitations with regard to utilizing formative assessments as a pretest and posttest of reading comprehension. As the assessments are formative, there is no empirical validation of the measures. In spite of inconsistent results on the reading comprehension formative assessments, I was able to analyze more reliable data based on STAR™ reading pre-intervention window and post-intervention window results. These more stable data helped to mitigate the limitations of the formative assessments of reading comprehension.

Additional formative assessments in the quantitative phases of my study entailed pre-intervention and post-intervention argumentative writing prompts. I scored the essays using the WIDA Writing Rubric (WIDA, 2020) found in Appendix K. As this scoring is subjective, I had my Title III Lead Teacher independently score the writing samples. We conferred, using anchor writing samples from WIDA, and came to a consensus as to scoring. This process helped ensure inter-rater reliability of the writing scores.

Moreover, limitations were also inherent in the pre-professional development and post-professional development observational ratings of the co-teachers' instruction. These ratings entailed my professional judgment, utilizing an instructional rubric that I developed in order to rate reading comprehension instruction and linguistic support. The Title III Lead Teacher reviewed my scripts of the observed lessons, pre-professional development, and independently rated the co-teachers on reading comprehension instruction and linguistic scaffolding. The Lead

Teacher also rated the co-teachers' instructional components of the ExC-ELL literacy framework, post-professional development, using the ExC-ELL Observation Protocol instrument. We compared ratings and came to a consensus on ratings, both pre- and post-professional development.

Reliability of data within my qualitative phases of my study must also be considered. I assumed that I would receive reliable responses in semi-structured interviews, and participants would respond truthfully. I was concerned that one participant was not forthright, as their academic outcome data did not match their descriptive responses regarding their reading and language skills. That said, I believe that the student's perceptions were genuine, and a gap existed between their perspective and the reality of the academic outcome data. This would be a point of future study. Moreover, in the qualitative exploratory portion of my study, consideration must also be given to whether my coding and subsequent teasing out of themes from semi-structured interviews created an accurate and reliable window into individual perceptions of their in-school academic reading and academic language development experiences.

Finally, my results reflect a highly localized context. The subset of the English learner population in my study involved Grade 6 English learners who were classified 6 years or more and were scoring at the lower end of the continuum of ACCESS reading proficiencies. While I may be able to generalize outcomes to other long-term English learners with similar ACCESS reading scores at Superb Middle School, generalizing beyond this highly specific subset of long-term English learners with these characteristics is potentially problematic.

Implications of the Findings for Practice

Multilingual learners bring a full and fluid repertoire of language resources to the classroom (Flores et al., 2015). Recognizing this asset and allowing interaction in whatever

language students prefer to create meaning is vital in leveraging linguistic resources of multilingual learners. This fluidity of languages facilitated construction of text meaning during my intervention. While the open language space was not specifically measured in terms of impact on reading comprehension and language development, the asset-based environment was recognized by students during sociolinguistic interviews as a factor in their ability to construct meaning. This practice of an open language space is an important component of an asset-based learning environment for long-term English learners.

During the qualitative phase of my study, semi-structured interviews, as well as my observations, shed light on in-class academic reading practices. Current literacy practices need to be examined in light of building independent reading practices rather than heavy scaffolding when students construct text meaning. A shift from reliance on listening comprehension through teacher read aloud, choral reading, and partner reading should be made to more independent reading practices to build reading proficiency.

While formative pretests and posttests of reading comprehension yielded disparate results across long-term English learners, the more stable STAR™ reading results indicated some improvements in grade level equivalencies and percentile ranks. Additionally, teacher levels of implementation of the literacy intervention were largely effective to highly effective. If I had the opportunity to extend the study for more than one nine weeks quarter, I believe that not only would practitioner levels of implementation improve, but so would reading comprehension results.

Implications for practice in the area of language development based on quantitative results are less clear. However, qualitative results indicated that the role of the English language development specialist needs differentiation from the English language arts practitioner. Students

saw the role of the language specialist as one of providing comprehension assistance, particularly with text dependent question sets. The English language development specialist's role should also be one of supporting and growing academic language proficiency. I believe that agentive academic language learners are developed through tracking language progress and setting language goals. An emphasis on developing metalinguistic awareness through conferencing with the English language development specialist is critical to developing agentive academic language learners and should be a focus at Superb Middle School.

Implications of the Findings for Equity and Social Justice

I prioritized social change in my study through a threefold transformative approach. Throughout my intervention, I attempted to bring about improved academic outcomes in the areas of reading comprehension and language proficiency within the localized context of my study. I cast a wider lens at the school level and worked to establish an asset-based perspective on long-term English learners. More globally, I questioned state-mandated English proficiency targets.

First, my goal was to ameliorate academic results for the participating long-term English learners at Superb Middle School. While formative assessments from pretest to posttest of reading comprehension were inconsistent, and formative measures of academic language from pretests to posttests largely indicated a downward tendency, STAR™ results were indicative of somewhat improved reading results. Thus, within the microcosm of Superb Middle School, my study began to shift the narrative to one of some academic success for long-term English learners.

Second, I attempted to reframe deficit thinking regarding English learners' emergent bilingualism to one of an asset-based perspective. Leveraging all linguistic resources in order to

construct meaning in classroom spaces was a focus within my study. Superb Middle School continues to move toward the valuing of all linguistic resources both as a vehicle to making meaning with texts and as a part of an asset-based philosophy. Moreover, this school-wide valuing of Spanish as a heritage language will come to fruition next year, as I am introducing a dual language continuation program at Superb Middle School and including native Spanish speaker English learners in elective language classes. Students will receive high school world language credits; this assignment of high school credits imputes value to heritage language assets.

Third, I pointed to the oppression of English learners by an English-dominant society that defines academic language proficiency through a monoglossic lens. Reaching exit level status (4.8 ACCESS overall composite) or achieving annual language proficiency progress continues to be difficult to achieve; less than one quarter of all English learners reached these annual goals across the last two years (2022-2023) in Superb Public Schools as well as in the state of North Carolina. Superb Middle School is no exception. As a corollary, I challenged the assumption that English-only students automatically possess academic language proficiency by virtue of simply being monolingual. Academic language proficiency should be developed and perhaps measured for all learners, not simply English learners.

Recommendations for Practice

Cultivating Independent Reading and English Language Proficiency

Long-term English learner perceptions of academic reading created a window into their literacy experiences at Superb Middle School. The overarching theme of comprehension assistance dominated multilingual learners' perceptions; specifically, co-teachers provided individualized and small group assistance in supporting comprehension and answering text

dependent questions. Additionally, my observations of whole class literacy practices reflected heavy scaffolding of below grade level and grade level texts entailing teacher read aloud, occasional choral reading, and partner reading. An emphasis on listening comprehension emerged through these practices. In contrast, developing reading practices that cultivate independent adolescent readers should be first built on partner reading, as 50% of the time is spent with each partner reading aloud with peer support if needed. Opportunities must then be provided for independent reading and individual application of reading strategies, following the gradual release of reading responsibility model. As standardized reading assessments value independent reading across a variety of texts, we cannot expect long-term English learners who struggle with reading comprehension to be successful on these tests without building the aforementioned literacy skills.

In further considering recommendations for practice, academic language development needs to be built through expanding student metalinguistic awareness. As previously discussed, long-term English learners need regular opportunities to conference with their English language development teacher in order to create awareness of their own English proficiency. Language portfolios are needed to track progress and set language goals. Moreover, multilingual learners need an understanding of academic language proficiency versus social language proficiency. Long-term English learners serve as interpreters for their parents in various sociocultural settings, from mediating with the landlord to assisting parents with coaching sports. Students are elevated to fluent status with regard to these interactions and therefore need to understand the differential between social language proficiency and academic language proficiency. Academic language proficiency is needed in order to navigate post-secondary education and careers,

including employability skills such as reading technical manuals and communicating effectively (Business Roundtable, 2017).

Transforming Language Proficiency Policy

On a policy level, I would recommend that North Carolina's ESSA-mandated annual language proficiency targets be redesigned. As previously discussed, non-linear growth rates of language proficiency that are described in literature do not align with North Carolina's linear growth-to-target progress value model. Transformed assessments would not only value the multilingual assets of long-term English learners, but also appropriately measure English language progression. In order to consider other states' policies regarding language growth, I surveyed state Consolidated Plans for a selection of WIDA consortium states—Georgia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin—since North Carolina is also a WIDA state and utilizes the WIDA suite of assessments for measuring language proficiency. All of the sampling of WIDA states except for North Carolina employed models of language growth that accounted for non-linear patterns of growth by adjusting the growth expectation based on prior year's growth (Georgia Department of Public Instruction, 2017; Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, 2017; Virginia Department of Public Instruction, 2017; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2017). Wisconsin created differentiated time-to-proficiency based on initial ACCESS scores and grade of entry into the Wisconsin Public Schools (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2017). Wisconsin calculated the median scale score language growth of all English learners and grouped these by kindergarten, grades 1-5, and grades 6-12, as these groups exhibited similar growth rates. Using this data, they determined that years to exiting proficiency ranged from 1 year to 8 years; students entering in higher grade levels require longer time to exit. While North Carolina utilizes initial proficiency levels to set expected years to exit, North

Carolina does not account for grade of entry. Moreover, rather than setting annual growth targets using proficiency levels as North Carolina does, Wisconsin utilized scale scores which are more sensitive to measuring change across time. Finally, Wisconsin did not assume largely linear growth across time, but subtracted growth from previous years to reset the targets annually. This process captures non-linear growth. I would propose that North Carolina create the same model; average percentile growth statistics are already housed in the WIDA Data Dashboard. While the entire consortium's data is available at an aggregated level, state level data is considered secure but is accessible to NCDPI employees who possess those data permissions.

Recommendations for Future Study

An aspect of future study could be to measure impacts on language development through maintaining long-term multilingual learner language portfolios and routine conferencing with the English language development specialist. Setting language goals along with tracking academic language progress is important for multilingual learners to become metalinguistically aware. I envision conferencing twice a quarter with the specialist. At the initial fall conference, language goals could be set based on a student's language domains that are poised for growth, i.e., utilizing the principle that lower domains grow faster. Subsequent conferences with the specialist would involve reviewing student language artifacts and focusing on areas of linguistic gains as well as potentialities for future language growth. This practice embodies a humanizing pedagogy, focusing on student linguistic assets along with individual language needs.

My recommendations for further research in the area of whole class literacy practices are threefold. First, shifts from heavy scaffolding of text and a focus on listening comprehension to following the gradual release of reading responsibility aimed at more independent reading practices across a wide range of texts is an additional area of study that is warranted. Aligning

classroom reading practices to those valued on standardized assessments is important for long-term English learners to experience successful academic outcomes. Second, multilingual learner interpretation of text meaning should also be explored as opposed to simply accepting official teacher interpretations of text meaning. Valuing student interpretations of text would also entail a humanizing approach, focusing on student experiential and cultural assets that they leverage in making meaning with text. Third, conferencing with students regarding their STAR™ reading monthly assessments may be another avenue to strengthen literacy by long-term English learners taking responsibility for improving their own reading comprehension. These changes in whole class literacy practices would be worthy of investigation for impacting long-term English learner literacy outcomes.

Conclusions

Although I have used the term long-term English learner or protracted multilingual learner, neither of these labels adequately describe the seven students in my study. Through semi-structured interviews, sociolinguistic surveys, and classroom observations, I acquired a deeper understanding of these students' actual reading practices, their knowledge of reading strategies, their nuanced and sophisticated use of multiple languages, and their metalinguistic skills that they marshal in their day-to-day classroom experiences. These aforementioned literacy and language practices illustrate both agency and need, painting a comprehensive portrait of long-term multilingual learners. Although I did not design a case study, I gained intimate knowledge of the assets and literacy and language practices of these students. Building on these assets and practices creates a pathway forward to creating agentive readers and language learners. The path forward may be through continuing the ExC-ELL literacy framework coupled with an open translanguaging classroom space. An additional pathway may be through

humanizing pedagogies such as making students an active participant in their own learning via conferencing and goal setting. Whatever the pathways, we must seek to impute value to these students. In the words of one of my study participants, “I never knew it [being bilingual] was value, very valuable to have two languages.”

Scholarly Practitioner Reflections on Leadership

In order to reflect on my journey via the Educational Leadership doctoral program, I returned to my statement of purpose, written with the goal of admission to the program. Enhancing the scholarly component of my work undergirded my desire to pursue this terminal degree. As a K-12 district level educator and a consultant for NCDPI, I have developed several areas of academic interest that I have pursued across the years. One of these is long-term English learners. Growing these students through engagement, goal setting, and intensive instruction via relevant and meaningful tasks is a passion of mine. The dissertation in practice provided a formal opportunity to delve deeply into this problem of practice that characterizes long-term English learners and consider potentialities through a thoughtfully designed intervention. Moreover, casting a wider lens beyond my own district and state, I was able to consider the breadth and depth of extant research regarding protracted multilingual learners. This review of the literature engaged me beyond all I could think or imagine, and it continues to push the bounds of my knowledge of theoretical pedagogies. Much of the research confirms my K-12 experience and validates my continued efforts with this marginalized segment of the student population.

Advocating for English learners is a part of my continued journey as an educational leader. As previously stated, my problem of practice is intertwined with monoglossic policy that defines the exit criteria of English learner status. An English-dominant society defines English proficiency thresholds and is further defined by state departments of public instruction through

educational policy. I have voiced my concern at the state level over the design of North Carolina's growth-to-target model which is not entirely reflective of second language acquisition research. The dissertation in practice has furnished a formal opportunity to challenge inappropriate growth targets for adolescent long-term English learners and has prepared me to lead in the area of advocating for policy change, undergirded by a deeper knowledge of the research regarding language development trajectories across time.

Moreover, meeting the needs of language learners involves collaboration as a fundamental part of my work. I consider English language development as well as my work with dual language programming to be one of overlay. At the district level leading both programs requires collaborative leadership, not only with other departmental leaders, but also principals. The dissertation in practice provided a rich opportunity to deeply engage with a middle school principal and teachers that I would not have had otherwise. Even more profoundly prized is my collaboration with the student participants: seven long-term English learners. I viewed these adolescents as "co-researchers" and gained an intimate knowledge of their linguistic and experiential assets coupled with their literacy and language practices. I believe working directly with students is critical to solving problems of practice that are inextricably tied to the students. This type of research in the field has illuminated an opportunity that I had not previously considered. I am eager to continue research with students as collaborators and to continue my journey as an educational leader—never attaining—but always reaching.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·
rede.ecu.edu/umcibr/

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Helen Simpson](#)
CC: [Marjorie Ringler](#)
Date: 1/3/2023
Re: [UMCIRB 22-002235](#)
Creating a Language and Literacy Space for Long-Term English Learners

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) occurred on 1/3/2023. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 5, 6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

As the Principal Investigator you are explicitly responsible for the conduct of all aspects of this study and must adhere to all reporting requirements for the study. Your responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring changes to the approved research (including the UMCIRB approved consent document) are initiated only after UMCIRB review and approval except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All changes (e.g. a change in procedure, number of participants, personnel, study locations, new recruitment materials, study instruments, etc.) must be prospectively reviewed and approved by the UMCIRB before they are implemented;
2. Where informed consent has not been waived by the UMCIRB, ensuring that only valid versions of the UMCIRB approved, date-stamped informed consent document(s) are used for obtaining informed consent (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the ePIRATE study workspace);
3. Promptly reporting to the UMCIRB all unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others;
4. Submission of a final report application to the UMCIRB prior to the expected end date provided in the IRB application in order to document human research activity has ended and to provide a timepoint in which to base document retention; and
5. Submission of an amendment to extend the expected end date if the study is not expected to be completed by that date. The amendment should be submitted 30 days prior to the UMCIRB approved expected end date or as soon as the Investigator is aware that the study will not be completed by that date.

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Assent Form Simpson 12-12-22 .docx	Consent Forms
ExC-ELL Observation Protocol	Standardized/Non-Standardized Instruments/Measures
Informed Consent for Teacher Participants	Consent Forms
Literacy and Language Semi-Structured Interview (Appendix f).docx	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Parental-Permission-Consent-Form-12-12-22 Revised Simpson.docx	Consent Forms
Persuasive Writing Prompt Posttest	Standardized/Non-Standardized Instruments/Measures
Persuasive Writing Prompt Pretest	Standardized/Non-Standardized Instruments/Measures
Reading Comprehension Posttest Designed by Common Lit	Standardized/Non-Standardized Instruments/Measures
Reading Comprehension Pretest Designed by Common Lit	Standardized/Non-Standardized Instruments/Measures
Simpson Dissertation Proposal	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Sociolinguistic Bilingual Survey (APPENDIX C).docx	Surveys and Questionnaires
Spanish Copy of Parental-Permission-Consent-Form-12-12-22 REvised Simpson.docx	Translated Consent Document
Teacher Implementation Levels of Reading Comprehension Strategies & Academic Language Supports (Pre-PD)	Standardized/Non-Standardized Instruments/Measures

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

East Carolina University



Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: Creating a Language and Literacy Space for Long-Term English Learners: A Transformative Approach

Principal Investigator: Helen (Lannie) Simpson

Institution, Department or Division: Educational Leadership Department at East Carolina University and Burke County Public Schools

Address: 509 West Concord St. Morganton, NC 28655

Telephone #: 828-448-4245

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) and Burke County Public Schools study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?

The purpose of this research is to find out how middle school students who speak two languages use their languages to communicate and to help middle school bilingual students become strong English readers and writers. You are being invited to take part in this research because we need a middle school English language arts teacher and an English language development teacher who work with long-term English learners. (Long-term English learners are students who have been served in English language programs for at least six years.) We will provide professional development on reading comprehension strategies and academic language development strategies tailored to middle school English learners. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, we hope to learn effective teaching strategies for building strong English reading and writing skills for bilingual students.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about ____ 12 ____ people to do so.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?

There are no known reasons why you should not take part in this research.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?

You can choose not to participate.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?

The research will be conducted at Walter Johnson Middle School in English language arts class. Professional development regarding the ExC-ELL literacy framework, including strategies to build reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and writing to cement comprehension will be provided. The strategies will then be applied in regular instruction in English language arts (ELA) class and will include the ELA teacher and the English language development teacher as co-teachers. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is attending the professional development session for

a day in December, 2022 or early January, 2023; also included is the teaching study which will begin January 18, 2023 in English language arts class and end March 27, 2023 (third nine-weeks).

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to do the following:

- You will be informally observed and have a formative assessment of your current reading comprehension strategies and academic language support strategies that you use in instruction.
- You will attend professional development for a day in December, 2022, or possibly early January, 2023. A substitute will be provided.
- You will apply the strategies you learn in professional development, including Expediting Comprehension for English Learners (ExC-ELL) strategies of building reading comprehension, partner reading and summarizing, vocabulary development, and writing to cement comprehension for the third nine weeks. (You will be supported through coaching and periodic reflective conversations.)
- You will be observed to determine levels of implementation of the strategies. None of the observations will be used in formally evaluating your teaching.
- A log will be kept of anecdotal notes regarding strategies, instruction, and academic language supports.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?

We don't know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We don't know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you, but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study

Will it cost me to take part in this research?

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?

ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?

The informal observations will be kept on my password-protected laptop that only I can access. A log of anecdotal notes will also be kept on my laptop. I will use pseudonyms for the ELA teacher and the English language development teacher to protect your identity. Information will be kept for five years and then it will be permanently deleted.

What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop, and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at 828-448-4245 Monday-Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may contact the Director for Human Research Protections, at 252-744-2914.

Is there anything else I should know?

Your information or biospecimens collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future studies.

The following research results will be provided to you. Results of the formative assessment of reading comprehension and academic language both pre- and post-intervention will be provided to you on the long-term English learners who participated in the study with pseudonyms to protect their identity. Statistical results comparing pre- and post-intervention results will also be provided. You will also be provided information on your pre-professional development levels of implementation of general reading comprehension and academic language support that you provide during instruction. You will also be provided information on your levels of post-professional development levels of implementation of ExCELL literacy components that include reading comprehension strategies, partner reading and summarizing, vocabulary development, and writing to cement comprehension of text. These results will be shared with you at the conclusion of the study once the analysis is completed, which may be the beginning of the following school year, 2023-24. Sharing of results will be done after school.

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

Participant's Name (PRINT)

Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF ASSENT



Assent Form Things You Should Know Before You Agree to Take Part in this Research

IRB Study # _____

Title of Study: Creating a Language and Literacy Space for Long-Term English Learners: A Transformative Approach

Person in charge of study: Helen (Lannie) Simpson
Where they work: Burke County Public Schools

Study contact phone number: 828-448-4245
Study contact E-mail Address: hsimpson@burke.k12.nc.us

People at ECU study ways to make people's lives better. These studies are called research. This research is trying to find out teaching approaches that benefit students who speak more than one language.

Your parent(s) needs to give permission for you to be in this research. You do not have to be in this research if you don't want to, even if your parent(s) has already given permission.

You may stop being in the study at any time. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you.

Why are you doing this research study?

The reason for doing this research is to find out how middle school students who speak two languages use their languages to communicate and to help middle school bilingual students become strong English readers and writers.

Why am I being asked to be in this research study?

We are asking you to take part in this research because you speak two languages, and it is important to use your language skills to make your English reading and writing stronger.

How many people will take part in this study?

If you decide to be in this research, you will be one of about 12 people taking part in it.

What will happen during this study?

- We will survey you about how and when you use your English and your other language(s).

- We will interview you about your in-class reading and in-class language experiences at Walter Johnson Middle School. The interview will be audio-recorded on my laptop to help me think about your answers. My laptop is password-protected and only accessible by me.
- At the beginning of the study, we will do a short assessment of your English reading comprehension and your English writing skills.
- We will provide training on reading and writing teaching strategies for your reading teacher and English language development teacher.
- We will visit your classroom to observe your teachers teaching you.
- At the end of the study, we will do a short assessment of your English reading comprehension and your English writing skills to determine if there are improvements in your English reading and writing.

This study will take place at Walter Johnson Middle School during regularly scheduled school hours and the teaching study will last 9 weeks. The teaching study will begin January 18, 2023 and end March 27, 2023 (third 9-weeks). The survey and interview will begin in December, 2022 and take 30 minutes for each student.

Who will be told the things we learn about you in this study?

Your reading teacher, your English language development teacher, and your principal will learn about your English reading comprehension and your English language writing skills. Also, they will learn about all of your languages and how you use them in communicating with others. I will write a report without student names and without the school name about the results of the study for East Carolina University Department of Educational Leadership.

What are the good things that might happen?

Sometimes good things happen to people who take part in research. These are called “benefits.” There *is a chance* you will benefit from being in this research. The benefits to you of being in this study may be that you will become self-aware of your language usage; you may become a stronger English reader and writer through your teachers’ instruction. Also, there is a chance that you will understand the positives of speaking two languages or more.

What are the bad things that might happen?

Sometimes things we may not like happen to people in research studies. These things may even make them feel bad. These are called “risks.” There are no known risks of this study. Things may also happen that the researchers do not know about right now. You should report any problems to your parents and to the researcher.

What if you or your parents don’t want you to be in this study?

If you or your parents don’t want you to be in this study, you do not have to participate.

Will you get any money or gifts for being in this research study?

You will not receive any money or gifts for being in this research study.

Who should you ask if you have any questions?

If you have questions about the research, you should ask the people listed on the first page of this form. If you have other questions about your rights while you are in this research study you may call the Institutional Review Board at 252-744-2914.

If you decide to take part in this research, you should sign your name below. It means that you agree to take part in this research study.

Sign your name here if you want to be in the study

Date

Print your name here if you want to be in the study

Signature of Person Obtaining Assent

Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Assent

APPENDIX D: SOCIOLINGUISTIC BILINGUAL SURVEY

Question 1: When and how did you learn your languages?

Question 2: Which languages are spoken in your home?

Question 3: Which languages do the adults speak in your home?

Question 4: Which languages do you use with adults in your home?

Question 5: Which languages do you use with the young people in your home?

Question 6: Outside of your home, which people do you speak with the most? What languages do you use with them?

Bilingual Survey Paragraph: Describe your use of languages.

APPENDIX E: PERMISSION TO USE DR. BROOKS'S SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY

Request 3 messages	
Helen Simpson <hsimpson@burke.k12.nc.us> Thu, Jul 14, 2022 at 8:39 AM To: maneka@txstate.edu	
Hi Dr. Brooks, I am currently working on my dissertation in practice at East Carolina University regarding long-term English learners, examining their multi-faceted learner profiles and focusing on building reading comprehension while developing an asset-based perspective at the middle school where I will be implementing my intervention. I am wondering if I may utilize your 6 question survey plus the open-ended response regarding bilingual students' linguistic experiences contained in the article, <i>How and When Did You Learn Your Languages? Bilingual Students' Linguistic Experiences and Literacy Instruction</i> in the Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy? I have read all of your research that I can find on long-term ELs and literacy. I particularly enjoyed your book, <i>Transforming Literacy Education for Long-Term English Learners: Recognizing Brilliance in the Undervalued</i>. Your work figures prominently in my chapter two! Thank you for your work with our kiddos~ One of my colleagues informed me that I could not change LTELs academic outcomes, and I responded that I had to try. I firmly believe that while..."we must face finite disappointment, but we never lose infinite hope." Martin Luther King, Jr. These kiddos are indeed amazing~ Helen (Lannie) Simpson, Ed.S. English Learner (EL) Director Burke County Public Schools 828.448.4245 Olive Hill Resource Center	
Brooks, Maneka D <maneka@txstate.edu> Thu, Jul 14, 2022 at 11:29 AM To: Helen Simpson <hsimpson@burke.k12.nc.us>	
Hi Ms. Simpson, Of course you can use it! It would be my pleasure. I am sorry that your colleague believes something like this. However, I am glad that your students have someone like you to advocate for them. You are an important figure for change and I am happy that my work can play a small role in that. Please keep in touch, Maneka -- Maneka Deanna Brooks, PhD (Pronounce) Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Educator Preparation, College of Education Associate Professor of Reading Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Texas State University	

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY

Updated November 2016

The EL Tool Kit contains examples of, adaptations of, and links to resources created and maintained by other public and private organizations.

This information is provided for the reader's convenience and is included here to offer examples of the many resources that educators, parents, advocates, administrators, and other interested parties may find helpful and use at their discretion. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of links to items does not reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or materials provided.

SAMPLE #2

Primary/Home Language Survey for All New Kindergarten and Incoming Students

Instructions for schools in completing the survey:

1. Interview the parents or guardians of ALL new kindergarten and incoming students in grades k–12 and record all information requested.
2. Provide interpretation services whenever necessary.
3. Check to see that all questions on the form are answered.

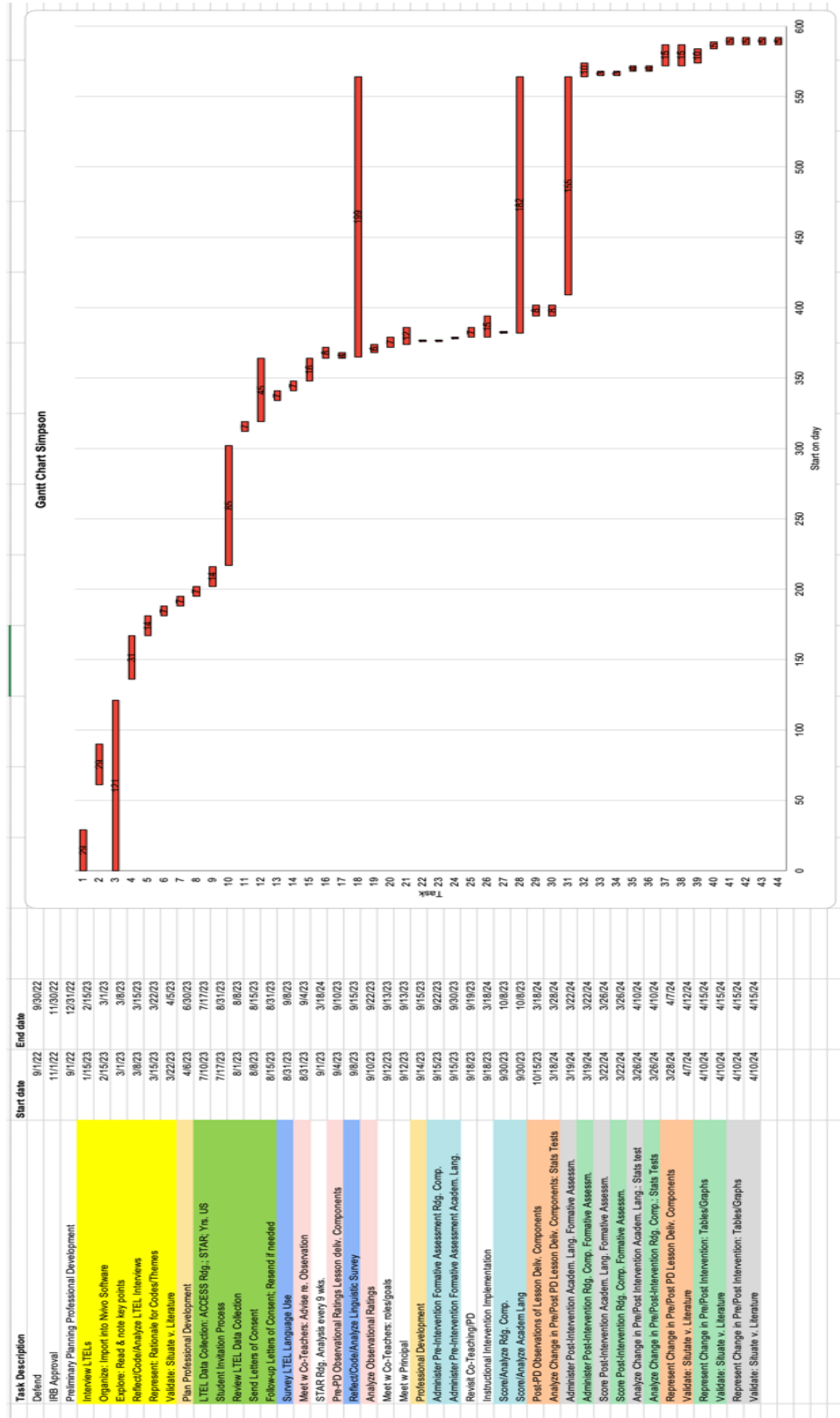
Student Information (The parents or guardians should complete this section.)	
First Name: _____	Date of Birth: _____
Last Name: _____	(Month/Day/Year)
Questions for Parents or Guardians	Response
What language(s) is (are) spoken in your home?	
Which language did your child learn first?	
Which language does your child use most frequently at home?	
Which language do you most frequently speak to your child?	
In what language would you prefer to get information from the school?	

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____ You can access Tools and Resources for Providing ELs with a Language Assistance Program at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.htm>

APPENDIX G: LITERACY AND LANGUAGE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. Describe how you read in your reading class? Follow-up if needed: Does the teacher begin with reading aloud? Do you read individually, or do you read aloud? Do you read together as a whole class, in small groups, or individually?
2. What is the process for understanding what you have read? Do you talk about the meaning of what you have read in small groups or is it done whole class? Does the teacher explain? How do you make sure you understand...i.e., take notes, etc.?
3. Does the teacher model or demonstrate a reading strategy that you are to apply in your reading? For example, visualizing as you read...i.e., creating a movie in your head...what do you see? Or for example, asking questions as you read...what does this word mean? Use a sticky note for when you don't understand. Do I know what is the main idea?
4. What makes a good reader? Describe a good reader.
5. Do you think your English language is improving? What do you need to do to improve your English? What makes a good English speaker/reader/writer?
6. How does your English language development specialist (ESL teacher) help you with your English language?

APPENDIX H: GANTT CHART



APPENDIX I: PRETEST OF READING COMPREHENSION

Informational Grade-Level Text CommonLit Reading Selection: *For teens, A good mood depends on good sleep*, Meenakshi Prabhune, (2017).

Text-Dependent Questions from CommonLit:

1. Which statement best expresses the central idea of the story? (4 multiple choices)
2. Which quotation best provides a reason why teenagers struggle to get enough sleep? (4 multiple choices)
3. How does paragraph 13 contribute to the development of ideas in the text? (4 multiple choices)
4. What is the author's main purpose in the text? (4 multiple choices)
5. What is the relationship between teenagers' internal clocks and school schedules? Use evidence from the text in your answer. (short answer)

APPENDIX J: PRETEST WRITING PROMPT

The new school cell phone policy allows students to have cell phones at school, but they can't use them, or even have them out, during instructional or teaching times. If a student is caught with their cell phone out during teaching, then the teacher can take (confiscate) the cell phone and the parent has to come to pick up the phone. Cell phones can be used during lunch, before school, after school, or during class change.

Argue for or against this policy. If you are against this cell phone policy, describe a new policy that you would propose.

Write an introduction, describing the current policy. Write a second paragraph describing your support or disagreement with the policy and provide at least three reasons why you support or disagree with the policy. Write a conclusion, summarizing your arguments.

APPENDIX K: WIDA WRITING RUBRIC GRADES 1-12

WIDA Writing Rubric GRADES 1-12

Level	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	Language Forms	Vocabulary Usage
6 Reaching	Text is fully comprehensible and appropriate to purpose, situation, and audience; comparable to the writing of English proficient students meeting college- and career-readiness standards; and includes: - extended connected text (single or multiple paragraphs) that is organized and shows tight cohesion in the precise expression of ideas - clear evidence of consistency in conveying an appropriate perspective, register, and genre	- a full range of sentence patterns and grammatical structures matched to content area topics - consistent use of appropriate conventions to convey meaning, including for effect	- consistent usage of just the right word or expression in just the right context related to content area topics - facility with precise vocabulary usage in general, specific, or technical language
5 Bridging	Text is comprehensible and related to purpose; generally comparable to the writing of English proficient peers; and includes: - extended connected text (single or multiple paragraphs) that is organized and shows a cohesive and coherent expression of ideas - clear evidence of conveying an appropriate perspective, register, and genre	- a broad range of sentence patterns and grammatical structures matched to the content area topic - nearly consistent use of appropriate conventions to convey meaning, including for effect	- usage of technical and abstract content-area words and expressions as appropriate - usage of words and expressions with precise meaning related to content area topics as appropriate - vocabulary usage that fulfills the writing purpose
4 Expanding	Text is generally comprehensible at all times; approaches comparability to the writing of English proficient peers; and includes: - connected text (sentences or paragraphs) that shows an organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion - some evidence of conveying an appropriate perspective, register, and genre	- a range of sentence patterns and grammatical structures characteristic of the content area - generally consistent use of appropriate conventions to convey meaning	- usage of specific and some technical content-area words and expressions as appropriate - usage of words and expressions with multiple meanings or common collocations and idioms across content areas as appropriate - vocabulary usage that generally fulfills the writing purpose



WIDATM

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Last revised 3/1/2020

WIDA Writing Rubric GRADES 1-12

Level	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	Language Forms	Vocabulary Usage
3 Developing	Original text is generally comprehensible (though comprehensibility may from time to time be compromised in more complex original text) and includes: - text that shows developing organization in the expression of an expanded idea or multiple related ideas - evidence of a developing sense of perspective, register, and genre		
2 Emerging	Some original text and text adapted from model or source text is generally comprehensible (though comprehensibility may often be compromised in attempts at more complex original text) and includes: - text that shows emerging expression of an idea or ideas and may demonstrate some attempt at organization - some amount of text that may be copied or adapted		
1 Entering	Text that is copied or adapted from model or source text is generally comprehensible (though comprehensibility may be significantly compromised in original text) and includes: - language that represents an idea or ideas - varying amounts of text that may be copied - adapted text that may contain some original language		



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Last revised 3/1/2020

**APPENDIX L: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL OF READING COMPREHENSION
AND ACADEMIC LANGUAGE SUPPORTS**

	Emerging	Developing	Effective	Highly effective
Reading comprehension instruction	Teaches reading strategy without modeling; builds comprehension through questioning	Teaches reading strategy with inconsistent modeling; no differentiation for MLs; builds comprehension through questioning	Models reading strategy using shared text; I do; We do (guided practice); You do (Independent application); spirals as needed; includes a variety of supports, e.g., visuals/graphic organizers; builds background knowledge, connecting to what students already know; builds comprehension through probing questions	Models reading strategy using shared text; I do, including think-aloud; We do (guided practice); You do (Independent application); spirals as needed; creates student agency by not providing comprehension “answers” but having students step through application of strategy; strategic use of read-aloud; includes a wide variety of supports such as visuals, realia, graphic organizers & TPR; builds background knowledge, connecting to what students already know; builds comprehension through a wide variety of probing questions

	Emerging	Developing	Effective	Highly effective
Explicit vocabulary instruction	Difficulty with selection of salient key vocabulary; front-loads by referring students to glossary and footnoted words in text	Some difficulty with selection of salient key vocabulary; front-loads through explicit instruction of words bolded in text (Tier 3); may use time consuming vocabulary instruction at times, such as Frayer Model; may teach on the run rather than direct explicit instruction	Salient selection of key vocabulary (no more than 5-6 words/lesson); front-loads through explicit instruction of Tier 3 words; includes some Tier 2 words; some oral production opportunities. Teaches on the run in lieu of or in addition to front-loading through direct instruction; assesses with exit tickets, fist to five, etc.	Salient selection of key vocabulary (no more than 5-6 words/lesson); front-loads through explicit vocabulary instruction (balance of Tier 1, 2, and 3 as needed per language proficiency) with repeated opportunities for oral interaction; connections to cognates if applicable; includes accountability for later use in writing; teaches on the run in addition to front-loading through direct instruction; distinguishes which words are taught better on the run vs. direct instruction; formatively assessed by various methods, e.g., exit tickets, fist to five

	Emerging	Developing	Effective	Highly effective
Student-to-student interaction (oracy)	No student oral interaction evident	Infrequent turn and talk with a partner; no or few norms present	Structured opportunities for oral interaction: norms are present; accountability included, e.g., 2-3 sentence response; accompanying formative assessment may not be present to ensure accountability	Structured & accountable oral interaction; includes linguistic supports, e.g., word banks; sentence frames; norms established; includes formative assessment
Linguistic scaffolding strategies	No linguistic scaffolds evident	Use of a few linguistic scaffolds, e.g., cognates and visuals; Google Translate	Uses a variety of linguistic scaffolds, e.g., leveraging cognates; word banks; sentence frames; some tech. options included, e.g., Flipgrid; Google Image; Google Translate; Google Slides; partner with a peer for support	Uses a wide variety of linguistic scaffolds, e.g., word banks; sentence frames; paragraph frames; paragraph and essay templates; tech. support tools as needed e.g., Flipgrid; Google Image; Google Translate; Google Slides; purposeful partnering with a more proficient peer; cognates leveraged

APPENDIX M: EXC-ELL OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL (EOP) WISECARD™

Walk-through of Instructional Strategies with ExC-ELL (EOP WISEcard™)

Teacher: _____	Grade: _____	Subject: _____	Date: _____	Observer: _____
Materials: _____ Class size: _____ # OF ELS _____ # OF SPED/ELS _____			Teacher Posts and Explains: Content Objective/Standard: _____ Language Objective: _____ Essential Question: _____ Theme/Topic: _____ Tiered Vocab Chart: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ All 3 ☐ Partial: ☐ T1 ☐ T2 ☐ T3 Connectors/Sentence Starters Chart(s) ☐ Connectors ☐ Starters ☐ None	
Class Set-up			VOCABULARY & ORACY 1 = Emerging 2 = Developing 3 = Effective 4 = Highly Effective 1-4 ✓	
			Tier 1 _____ Tier 2 _____ _____	
			Tier 3 _____ Comment: _____	
			V1 <u>Teacher</u> asks students to repeat the word.	
			V2 <u>Teacher</u> states the word in context from the text.	
			V3 <u>Teacher</u> provides the dictionary/glossary definition.	
			V4 <u>Teacher</u> provides a student-friendly definition.	
			V5 <u>Teacher</u> highlights features: polysemous, cognate, tense, prefixes, etc. V6 Engages 100% of the students in using the word verbally with their partner. <u>Students</u> engage in Teacher provided sentence starter or frame for 60 seconds. (Must contain target vocab.) at least 5 times ea.	
V7 <u>Teacher</u> informs when students will see and use it.				
Comments:				

APPENDIX N: EXC-ELL OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL (EOP) WISECARD™ FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER

Walk-through of Instructional Strategies with ExC-ELL (EOP WISEcard™)

Teacher: ELA Teacher	Grade: 6th	Subject: ELA	Date: 3-1-23	Observer: Simpson																																				
Materials: <u>The Middle Ages: Medieval Castles from ReadWorks; ExC-ELL bookmarks</u> Class size: <u>26</u> # OF ELS <u>7 LTELs</u> # OF SPED/ELS _____			Teacher Posts and Explains: <u>We are learning about text structure; in this case, it is descriptive text. We will partner read and then summarize before we write.</u> Content Objective/Standard: _____ Language Objective: <u>None stated</u> Essential Question: <u>What was life like for a medieval castle community?</u> Theme/Topic: <u>Summarizing Descriptive Informational Text</u> Tiered Vocab Chart: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ All 3 ☐ Partial: ☐ T1 ☐ T2 ☐ T3 Connectors/Sentence Starters Chart(s) ☐ Connectors ☐ Starters ☐ None																																					
Class Set-up Students are seated at tables in groups of 4 or 5 The ELD teacher delivered the vocabulary and oracy component; the ELA teacher delivered the reading instruction.			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">VOCABULARY & ORACY</th> <th>1-4</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">1 = Emerging 2 = Developing 3 = Effective 4 = Highly Effective</th> <th>✓</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1 _____</td> <td>Tier 2 <u>wealthy, noble, defend, community, structure</u></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> The ELD Teacher taught the vocabulary, therefore the ELA T. is not evaluated on the vocabulary component. Tier 3 <u>feudalism</u> Comment: _____ </td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V1 Teacher asks students to repeat the word.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V2 Teacher states the word in context from the text.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V3 Teacher provides the dictionary/glossary definition.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V4 Teacher provides a student-friendly definition.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V5 Teacher highlights features: polysemous, cognate, tense, prefixes, etc.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V6 Engages 100% of the students in using the word verbally with their partner. Students engage in Teacher provided sentence starter or frame for 60 seconds. (Must contain target vocab.) at least 5 times ea.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V7 Teacher informs when students will see and use it.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> Comments: The ELA T. reviewed the key vocabulary. The ELA T. assessed whole group understanding of vocabulary, prompting with requests for definitions and asking Ss to use the word in a sentence </td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		VOCABULARY & ORACY		1-4	1 = Emerging 2 = Developing 3 = Effective 4 = Highly Effective		✓	Tier 1 _____	Tier 2 <u>wealthy, noble, defend, community, structure</u>		The ELD Teacher taught the vocabulary, therefore the ELA T. is not evaluated on the vocabulary component. Tier 3 <u>feudalism</u> Comment: _____			V1 Teacher asks students to repeat the word.			V2 Teacher states the word in context from the text.			V3 Teacher provides the dictionary/glossary definition.			V4 Teacher provides a student-friendly definition.			V5 Teacher highlights features: polysemous, cognate, tense, prefixes, etc.			V6 Engages 100% of the students in using the word verbally with their partner. Students engage in Teacher provided sentence starter or frame for 60 seconds. (Must contain target vocab.) at least 5 times ea.			V7 Teacher informs when students will see and use it.			Comments: The ELA T. reviewed the key vocabulary. The ELA T. assessed whole group understanding of vocabulary, prompting with requests for definitions and asking Ss to use the word in a sentence		
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Walk-through of Instructional Strategies with ExC-ELL (EOP WISEcard™)

READING COMPREHENSION: 1 = Emerging 2 = Developing 3 = Effective 4 = Highly Effective		1-4 ✓	WRITING: 1 = Emerging 2 = Developing 3 = Effective 4 = Highly Effective		1-4 ✓
R1 Briefly builds content and vocabulary background for students from different cultural and educational experiences.		3	Narrative or expository writing: ☐ argumentative ☐ descriptive ☐ sequence ☐ comparative ☐ contrastive ☐ other		
R2 Explains the text type, text features, and standard/objective for close reading.		4	W1 Explains type of text-dependent writing expected and models.		
R3 Models using think alouds to teach comprehension strategies specific to that text before students read.		4	W2 Explains and displays rubrics/criteria for assessment and self-assessment.		
R4 Requires students to practice the specific comprehension strategy just modeled.		4	W3 Prewriting strategies in pairs or teams.		
R5 Requires partner reading with summaries as they use key vocabulary (Tiers 2 and 3), and monitors and records individual skills applied.		3	W4 Requires use of content specific terms, phrases, signal words and connectors.		
R6 Models sentence starters/phrasal clusters to be used for peer and class discussions.		3	W5 Writing skills taught		
R7 Engages students in academic discussions using text-dependent questions that require evidence from text. Asks students to formulate Bloom's-type questions.		NA	W6 Revision strategies (peer revision, prove it, Cut-n-Grow, etc.)		
R8 Uses cooperative learning activities (i.e., Numbered heads Together) for students to elaborate and learn more.		NA	W7 Editing strategies (ratiocination, etc.)		
R9 Conducts small group direct instruction to differentiate instruction when necessary.		4	W8 Research strategies for term papers.		
R10 Debriefs content, vocabulary, and comprehension strategy and encourages self-assessment and team-assessments.		NA	W9 Includes peer and teacher conferences with students.		
R11 After peer reading, encourages independent reading in and out of the classroom using same strategies.		NA	W10 Addresses different stages of ELL writing development and uses scaled rubrics.		
R12 Provides tools that meet a wide range of student needs to help access rigorous text.		3	CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT 1 = Emerging 2 = Developing 3 = Effective 4 = Highly Effective Instruction Student Application		
R13 Uses performance assessment or the ExC-ELL protocol to track reading progressions		4			
Comments:					
Excellent direct instruction re. summarizing: "When you do a summary, what is the difference between a retell and a summary? They wanted a beginning, middle, and end, and you told us lots of details in a retell. Do you have that much detail in a summary? You are looking for the main ideas...the big things. Each paragraph can have one as well. We are looking for you to give one statement about what it is about."					
			1.1 Paces instruction; maintains student interest, discipline and engagement.		
			1.2 Structures lesson to promote time on task.		
			1.3 Establishes task behavior expectations.		3
			Follow Up / Next Steps:		

APPENDIX O: EXC-ELL OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL (EOP) WISECARD™ FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

Walk-through of Instructional Strategies with ExC-ELL (EOP WISEcard™)

Teacher: ELD T.	Grade: 6th	Subject: ELA	Date: 3-22-23	Observer: Simpson																																		
Materials: CommonLit passage: The Plastic Problem Class size: 26 # OF ELS 7 # OF SPED/ELS _____			Teacher Posts and Explains: We are learning about text structure, text evidence Content Objective/Standard: _____ Language Objective: None stated Essential Question: Do you think we should use plastic grocery bags? Theme/Topic: _____ Tiered Vocab Chart: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ All 3 ☐ Partial: ☐ T1 ☐ T2 ☐ T3 Connectors/Sentence Starters Chart(s) ☐ Connectors ☐ Starters ☐ None																																			
Class Set-up Included S-friendly definition & made connection to their life; e.g. A lot of you wear holes in pants so there is something missing. Who is missing a fragment of your pants? The class is set up with tables for groups of 4 or 5. Some are high-top tables; some are not. NOTE: The ELD teacher is only rated with the vocabulary and oracy component; the vocabulary instruction is her responsibility as a co-teacher in the ELA classroom.			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">VOCABULARY & ORACY</th> <th>1-4</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">1 = Emerging 2 = Developing 3 = Effective 4 = Highly Effective</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1 _____</td> <td>Tier 2 _____</td> <td rowspan="3">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Tier 3 _____ Comment: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V1 Teacher asks students to repeat the word. 3X</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V2 Teacher states the word in context from the text.</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V3 Teacher provides the dictionary/glossary definition.</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V4 Teacher provides a student-friendly definition.</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V5 Teacher highlights features: polysemous, cognate, tense, prefixes, etc.</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V6 Engages 100% of the students in using the word verbally with their partner. Students engage in Teacher provided sentence starter or frame for 60 seconds. (Must contain target vocab.) at least 5 times</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">V7 Teacher informs when students will see and use it.</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Comments: Made excellent relevant connections to students' own lives with each word, and incorporated a student-friendly definition while making the connections.</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		VOCABULARY & ORACY		1-4	1 = Emerging 2 = Developing 3 = Effective 4 = Highly Effective			Tier 1 _____	Tier 2 _____	4	Tier 3 _____ Comment: _____		V1 Teacher asks students to repeat the word. 3X		V2 Teacher states the word in context from the text.		3	V3 Teacher provides the dictionary/glossary definition.		4	V4 Teacher provides a student-friendly definition.		4	V5 Teacher highlights features: polysemous, cognate, tense, prefixes, etc.		4	V6 Engages 100% of the students in using the word verbally with their partner. Students engage in Teacher provided sentence starter or frame for 60 seconds. (Must contain target vocab.) at least 5 times		3	V7 Teacher informs when students will see and use it.		1	Comments: Made excellent relevant connections to students' own lives with each word, and incorporated a student-friendly definition while making the connections.		
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APPENDIX P: POSTTEST OF READING COMPREHENSION

Informational Grade-Level Text CommonLit Reading Selection: *Meet the Coyote Next Door*, Andy Boyles (2017).

Text-Dependent Questions from CommonLit:

1. Part A: Which idea best expresses the central idea of the text? (4 multiple choices)
2. Part B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A? (4 multiple choices)
3. Which statement best describes how coyotes are introduced in the text? (4 multiple choices)
4. What is the author's main purpose in the text? (4 multiple choices)
5. How have humans benefited from scientists' study of coyotes? Use evidence from the text in your response. (short answer)

APPENDIX Q: POSTTEST WRITING PROMPT

Our school system has just purchased a student monitoring software, called Go Guardian. It monitors all students' online activity. It provides filtering or blocking of content that is not appropriate for children or teens.

Teachers are able to monitor, at a glance, the online sites that students visit. For example, if the class is doing research on Central American ancient life and the pyramids, the teacher can see all the sites students are visiting to gather information. Go Guardian is a tool for managing their classrooms so students can do online research without teachers worrying about bad sites they might visit, even if by mistake.

Go Guardian also alerts teachers and school leaders if student online activity (sites visited or text messages sent) shows a risk of suicide, self-harm (like cutting) or possible harm to other students. Go Guardian protects student safety by monitoring for these key or important words that signal (show) danger to self or others.

Argue for or against this student monitoring software. If you are against this monitoring software, propose a different way of protecting students online.

Write an introduction, describing the monitoring software. Write a second paragraph describing your support or disagreement with using the monitoring software and provide at least 3 reasons why you support or disagree with using the monitoring software. For example, if you disagree, you may think that use of the software is against your privacy. Propose a different way of protecting students online if you are against Go Guardian. Write a conclusion, summarizing your argument.

