

Original Paper

Perceptions of English Language Learners—Teacher Beliefs,
Professional Development and Student Outcomes: A Literature
Review

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Abstract

Across America, linguistically disadvantaged youth are struggling through English language arts courses without proper support in scaffolding and/or differentiated instruction. Teachers' beliefs affect their classroom instruction, classroom management, and classroom culture. Thus, the need for research is of utmost importance as students are being pushed through the educational system without the support or respect that they deserve. This literature review examines the connection between teachers' attitudes and perceptions of English Language Learners (ELLs) and how these thought forms affect classroom instruction. We narrowed our focus to identify studies and analyze teachers' perceptions while servicing ELL students, specifically Latino/a English language learners. We discerned data and various levels of teacher-student engagement based on studies centered around various levels of teacher experience, all in relation to ELLs. Further, we analyzed how professional development altered educators' attitudes and perceptions of English language learners. The articles reviewed gave insight into teacher perceptions and how most educators felt inadequately prepared to teach those whose first language was not English. By studying teachers' viewpoints—through qualitative and quantitative analyses—we confirmed a need for professional development that will improve not only how content is learned for an English language learner, but the relationships those students encounter as well.

Keywords

academic language, English Language Learner (ELL), long-term English learner, teacher attitudes, teacher perceptions, teacher beliefs, professional development

1. Introduction

As English teachers in Texas, the first two authors daily see the need for more educators to be better prepared for the growing English Language Learner (ELL) population. Educators need to be well suited for the ELL trends in education that are constantly accelerating. There has been an increase of enrolled ELLs not only in border states, but across the United States as a whole. Of the articles reviewed, several authors open their research by highlighting the growing ELL population. For instance, two different research teams wrote,

- “In the United States, rising numbers of students are currently classified as English language learners” (Mellom et al., 2018, p. 98).
- “It is well known that English language learners (ELLs) are a significantly growing population in U.S. schools in all regions of the country (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017)” (Andrei et al., 2018, p. 1).

Further, some teachers have not had the most recent trainings available to those who teach ELLs, particularly in secondary education. One study investigated how districts in the southern states of the U.S. were ill-equipped to educate ELLs based on inexperience with both Latin American culture and working with ELLs. Mellom et al. (2018) report, “In many parts of the United States, such as the American South, this situation is further complicated by the fact that Latino ELLs are typically enrolled in schools that do not have experience serving either Latino students or ELLs” (p. 98). This literature review explores many options; as wide as teacher beliefs and professional development and seeing how different states and schools address the rise of ELLs in their educational system. Likewise, we considered a broader global search to determine if research on teachers of English language learners might provide additional information to inform this study. We sought to gather data to bridge the gap to help teachers better serve a growing English language learner student population.

In overview of our articles, we determine a select sample of key definitions, to establish a shared knowledge base for our readers, of the traditional education jargon associated with the English language arts curriculum in service to ELLs (see Table 1). In addition to consideration of jargon, we focused on words that centered around the definitions that were imperative to our study and conducive to comprehending the demographic of students. Further, Galvan and Galvan (2017) report, “A table of definitions can be helpful if there are diverse definitions of a given variable” (p. 89). Further supporting that by defining our terms and providing further explanation on how these words correlate with our research, we can make deeper, more meaningful connections. Thus, our readers will find clarity and coherence and the review will be strengthened in its “methodology integrity” (APA, 2020, p. 108).

Table 1. Key Terms in Relation to ELLs, Teacher Beliefs, and Professional Development

Term	Definition
Academic Language	Lachance et al. (2018) study many participant responses to get to the meaning of academic language. There appears to be what they called, “a unified common understanding and comprehensive definition of academic language and was not noted...Emphasis on academic vocabulary needed for academic language and conceptual understanding in core content areas was a recurring theme” (p. 8).
Culturally Responsive Teaching	Carley Rizzuto (2017) reports “Culturally responsive teaching facilitates and supports the academic achievement of all students. It requires teachers to create a learning environment where all students are welcomed and provided the best opportunities to learn regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds” (p. 185).
English Language Learner (ELL)	<p>Andrei et al. (2018) report ELLs “are a significantly growing population in U.S. schools in all regions of the country (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017)” (p. 1).</p> <p>Carley Rizzuto (2017) states, “Researchers have only recently begun to explore how practicing teachers’ perceptions of English language learners (ELLs) impact the literacy instruction ELL students receive (Au, 2011; Garcia, 2015; McWayne, Hahs-Vaughan, Wright, & Cheung, 2012)” (p. 1).</p> <p>Mellom et al. (2018) share, “Students who are simultaneously learning how to communicate in English and the academic content expected of them in each subsequent grade level of the US school system (Garcia, Arias, Harris-Murri, & Serna, 2010)” (p. 1).</p>
Identity	McCrocklin and Link (2016) state “a range of social personae, including social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities one may attempt to claim or assign in the course of social life” (p. 112).
L2 Learner	Further, Kibler and Valdés (2016) describe students as L2 learners “[when] an individual whose task of acquisition/development is seen as not yet finished” (p. 102).
Long-term English Learner	Kibler and Valdés (2016) describe students as “long-term English learners [which are] students who have not successfully passed language examinations used to measure English proficiency in American schools” (p. 97).
Opportunities to Learn	König et al. (2017) provide this data-driven analysis as “part of their teacher preparation program, thus providing detailed insight into how they shape the

(OTL)	knowledge of preservice teachers at the end of their training (Blömeke et al., 2014; Kömig & Blömeke, 2012; Schmidt, Cogan, & Houang, 2011)” (pp. 109-110).
Proficiency Levels	Abobaker (2017) includes levels of knowledge in language acquisition and describes them as “beginner and advanced levels” (p. 832).
Teacher Attitudes	Carley Rizzuto (2017) shares, “Researchers have also established that teachers across U.S. public schools have largely developed negative theories about mainstream ELL students’ ability to learn (Cummins, 2001; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Garcia, 2015)” (p. 183).
	Mellom et al. (2018) make this thought-provoking connection, “A control teacher said, ‘I try to really stress for them [ELLs] to only speak English when everyone around them cannot understand.’ This statement seems to imply that home language use is rude and exclusionary unless all students can understand what is being said. This goes back to the concept that any use of language other than English would be morally unacceptable and does not take into consideration the exclusion the students might feel when surrounded by native English speakers and forced to speak a language which they have not yet fully acquired” (p. 103).
Teacher Professional Development	Hansen-Thomas et al. (2014) report, “Teachers must develop knowledge in multicultural education, second-language acquisition and ESL strategies, among other areas. Another layer of complexity to the education of ELLs and, as a consequence, to the full preparation of their teachers is the mandate to measure the academic and social language achievement of ELLs through standards (the English Language Proficiency Standards) (Texas Administrative Code 2007)” (p. 310).

1.1 Authors’ Positionality

Our experience as high school teachers serving ELLs, has provided the vantage from which we see the need for a better structured professional learning environment to help develop our learners to the best of their English language capabilities; thus, we determined to exclude any articles in relation to ELLs that were not conducive to this targeted population of students. Professional development offered in our district, specifically trainings centered around ELLs, is growing tremendously but is comparatively lacking when geared towards secondary education. During a recent school year, the district posted available trainings called *Bella Noche*, but these trainings were limited to elementary teachers only. However, secondary teachers recently have been able to participate in these trainings. Learning a language is not just limited to primary school but, rather, should be continued into secondary school.

2. Methods and Analysis

2.1 Explanation of Methodology and Focus of Analysis

We see the use of tables to further construct knowledge of the topic in a way that is considered valid in research. Data tables are encouraged by Galvan and Galvan (2017) to “deal with complex matters that might be difficult for your readers to follow in the text” (p. 92). We consider our topic complex because our articles show the rise of ELLs across the United States. With this increase comes frustration with educators not knowing how to properly serve their students. One study examined how teachers’ attitudes towards ELLs altered their instruction in the classroom. Carley Rizzuto (2017) explained how, “Unfortunately, many mainstream teachers hold deficit views toward the ELLs in their classrooms (Garcia, 2015). In addition, researchers have also established that teachers across U.S. public schools have largely developed negative theories about mainstream ELL students’ ability to learn (Cummins, 2001; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Garcia, 2015)” (p. 183). We considered the many ways this information could be searched and used those keywords to build the foundation of our research (see Table 2). We initiated research using WorldCat, as encouraged by Galvan and Galvan (2017), because “Most scholars that [they] consulted prefer to use WorldCat because they consider the search results to be more trustworthy and comprehensive” (p. 20). We used Boolean operators such as “AND,” “OR,” and “NOT” to narrow our focus and attempted to eliminate all excess content that we did not consider conducive to our study. When beginning our initial research, we tried to limit our sources to strictly focus on ELLs in secondary education but were unable to locate enough sources, so studies are included from K-12 grade levels. Furthermore, we analyzed the studies with a table of research methods (see Table 3) with a column that summarizes the results of each study reviewed.

Table 2. Audit Trail

Database	Dates Reviewed	Search Terms	Sources Located	Relevant Sources
WorldCat Search 1	January 2016-January 2020	“ELLs” AND “teaching reading” AND “teaching writing” AND “teacher trainings”	16	2
WorldCat Search 2	January 2016-January 2020	“student achievement” AND “teacher attitude” AND “ELLs” AND “Spanish-speaking” AND “secondary” AND “teaching English”	2	0

WorldCat	January	“educational disparities” AND	18	2
Search 3	2016-January 2020	“ELLs” AND “high school”		
WorldCat	January	“English language arts” AND	95	7
Search 4	2016-January 2020	“classroom culture” OR “disparities” AND “ELLs” AND “high school”		
WorldCat	January	“English language arts” AND	88	5
Search 5	2016-January 2020	“classroom culture” OR “classroom environment” AND “ELLs” AND “student achievement”		
WorldCat	December	“teacher professional development” AND	12	2
Search 6	2014-January 2020	“English as a second language” AND “secondary”		
WorldCat	December	“teacher professional development” AND	6	2
Search 7	2014-January 2020	“English as a second language” AND “secondary” AND “testing”		
WorldCat	December	“teacher professional development” AND	22	2
Search 8	2014-January 2020	“English as a second language” AND “secondary” AND “testing” AND “perceptions”		
WorldCat	December	“teacher professional development” AND	19	4
Search 9	2014-January 2020	“English as a second language” AND “secondary” AND “testing” AND “perceptions” AND “achievements”		
WorldCat	December	“English as a second language” AND	50	3
Search 10	2014-January 2020	“secondary” AND “testing” AND “perceptions” AND “professional development” AND		

		“teachers” AND “students”		
WorldCat Search 11	December 2014-January 2020	“English as a second language” AND “secondary” AND “testing” AND “perceptions” AND “professional development” AND “teachers” AND “students” AND “administrators”	44	2

Table 3. Methodology in Studies

Authors and Publication Year	Participants	Detailed Methodology	Findings
Abobaker (2017)	“80 English language learner (ELL) participants (43 females, 37 males; age range, 18-30) were recruited for this quasi-experimental study. They came from three language backgrounds: Arabic, Chinese, and Portuguese. These learners were divided into two equal groups of 40 according to their different proficiency levels (beginner learner [BL] and advanced learner [AL])” (p. 837).	“The data were collected during one academic year, through which each group was introduced to four conditions: no scaffold (video and audio in English without text), KWC (video, audio, and only content words in English), FC (video, audio, and English full-text that mirrored only the spoken words), and FT (audio and a sheet with full transcription in English)” (p. 838).	Overall, it appears as if “beginner learners scored highest on the [full caption] FC condition listening comprehension test, whereas advanced learners’ highest scores were on KWC [Keyword Captions]. These findings seem to indicate that FC and KWC might be the best options for learners at the beginner level and advanced level, respectively” (p. 839).
Andrei et al. (2018)	The main participants are Ashley, “a veteran middle school ELA teacher [and] two of Ashley’s	Independent study with qualitative data collection, centered around, “The ELL Writer: Moving Beyond the Basics in the Secondary Classroom”	It was discovered in Ashley’s reflections that, “several aspects of teaching and learning related to the two newcomer ELLs: the

	ELLs...were also included in this study” (p. 5).	(Ortmeier-Hooper, 2013)” (p. 6). Ashley, also “[chose] three chapters that would fit her needs and interest from Writing Sense: Integrated Reading and Writing Lessons for English language learners (Kendall & Khuon, 2006)” (p. 6). Ashley collected three students’ assignments to be reviewed for this study.	activities she planned, students’ progress, and a teacher self-assessment” (p. 7). Further, unsurprisingly, “the findings revolve around the idea that Ashley, as a content-teacher, was responsible for the teaching and learning of the ELLs she had in her classroom” (p. 7).
Carley Rizzuto (2017)	“10 female participants, 9 early-childhood ELL educators, 1 Spanish teacher” (p. 188). Further, of the participants that were educators, “teaching experience ranged from 3 to 30 years” (p. 188). Additionally, “participants taught in grades ranging from pre-kindergarten through second grade” (p. 188).	Gaining understanding of perceptions of the study participants educating ELLs. “A transformative parallel mixed-method design with both qualitative and quantitative data sources” (p. 186). It is worth mentioning that these participants did not receive any form of ELL professional development (p. 188). This study is nonexperimental, were studied teachers’ perceptions, and there was no attempt to alter those perceptions or support for ELL students. “A psychometrically validated (Cronbach’s alpha = .87) quantitative survey instrument was utilized to measure mainstream early childhood teachers’ perceptions about diversity, as well as to determine the effect size of the teachers’ perceptions toward ELL pupils in their classrooms” (p. 187). “Several prompts were negatively worded in order to avoid creating a response set (the tendency for participants to answer the same regardless of the	Of the qualitative data collected, “most teachers, [7 of the participants], held negative perceptions regarding ELL students, specifically concerning the use of their native language in their classrooms, and lacked an understanding of second language acquisition” (p. 190). Further, the quantitative data, showed that, “for research question one...indicated that most of the participants were open to diversity within their classrooms” (p. 194).

		prompt), and the participant responses for these were reverse coded” (p. 188).	
Hansen-Thomas et al. (2014)	The survey was open to teachers and staff of all levels who interacted with ESL students. The inclusion criteria to participate in this survey were that they all: were working in the targeted rural and small school districts; had a good command of the English language; and had close interaction with ELLs.	A survey questionnaire was prepared and was sent to faculty and staff of 13 school districts across North Texas. The researchers sent emails containing the survey web link to ESL and/or Federal Programs Coordinators of the 13 school districts. These coordinators were asked to share the web link with their personnel.	“Teachers who had two or more college courses perceived themselves as being more effective in working with ELLs than those who had less training” (p. 319). “Having two or more college courses can play an important role in the preparedness of rural teachers in their work with ELLs” (p. 319). “Formal training and graduate degrees improve teachers’ competence in educating ELLs” (p. 319). “Byrnes and Kiger (1997) concluded that a graduate degree can improve the thinking of teachers concerning social, political and educational issues that are associated with language diversity” (p. 319).
König et al. (2017)	Sampled preservice teachers at the end of their first phase (master’s studies at university) and second phase (last year of internship). The sample consists of future teachers attending a teacher education program that would qualify them as lower secondary teachers only.	Data were collected in the PKE project, an empirical research study conducted in Germany in 2015 in order to investigate future secondary school EFL (English foreign language) teachers’ opportunities to learn during initial teacher education in relation to their professional knowledge. For this, preservice, EFL teachers at different preparation stages were sampled.	“Evidence is provided for EFL teacher preparation that specific program characteristics are relevant for the preservice teachers’ acquisition of knowledge” (p. 121). “It is difficult to generalize findings to teacher education systems in other countries” (p. 122).
Lachance et	An initial survey was sent	“[They] conducted a qualitative,	From authentic participant

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- al. (2018) out to ESL K-12 teachers, and “of the 180, 103 completed the survey, yielding a nearly 60% participation rate” (p. 7). More explicitly, “the focus group was comprised of nine participants from the district’s core central office ESL team of coordinating teachers and program administrators. Specifically, these nine participants included four with an emphasis on the elementary grades, four with an emphasis on the secondary grades, and one K-12 team member” (p. 7).
- interpretive case study (Erickson, 1986; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014) to gain clarity on ESL teachers’ perspectives regarding the importance of access and students’ active learning of academic language in one North Carolina district” (p. 5). Additionally, “the study aimed to explore teachers’ demonstrations of facilitating academic language development in the classroom” (p. 6).
- responses, “[there were] three overarching themes (Saldaña, 2016; Corbin & Strauss, 1998 [sic]): (a) academic language defined, (b) the importance of academic language, and (c) educators’ roles” (p. 8). Furthermore, there were larger themes that, “also revealed subthematic information regarding academic vocabulary, academic success, and accessibility to academic language in the context of school” (p. 8).
- Mellom et al. (2018) “147 3rd and 5th grade classroom teachers in three cohorts in treatment and control groups. They were dispersed among 47 high-poverty elementary schools within 15 rural, suburban and urban districts in the New South, in North Georgia” (p. 100).
- “To evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development and the impacts of the implementation of the pedagogy on teacher attitudes and practice, the study used ethnographic data from a variety of sources. It combined the use of: general questionnaires (Baer & Weller, 2006) at the beginning and end of the study; bi-weekly log data (Rees, 2006), gathered from treatment and control teachers regarding their impressions about English language learners, the pedagogy, and their practice...” (p. 101). The participants were split into two groups, “Control” and
- It was discovered that teachers in the treatment group had extremely low opinions of Log Questions 2 & 8. Further, “these representative examples from larger dataset of 147 teachers show how often, in the minds of society and teachers, lack of English, or continued home language use is tangled with an idea of ‘wrongness’ or even, in extreme cases, with moral turpitude” (p. 102). Contrastingly, “none of the control teachers in [our] sample had overtly negative responses
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		<p>“Treatment” groups (p. 102) Within each group are different levels of educators, the control groups are predominantly teachers that are ESL certified and have experience teaching ELLs, and the participants under treatment are newly certified or noncertified ESL teachers with EL students. Further, the treatment participant group undergo a new form of instruction called, “Instructional Conversation pedagogy” (p. 100). Further, “the predominance of U.S. teachers who are White, monolingual and female (US Census Bureau, 2013) [and] 28% of the total number of school-age children speak a language other than English at home” (p. 100) and, thus, with the participant groups derived from the <i>New South</i>, pointedly <i>North Georgia</i>, it is easy to presume that these participants are predominantly White females.</p>	to this question” (p. 102).
Salli & Osam (2017)	<p>“The research was carried out at the English Language and Teaching Department of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), Northern Cyprus with 15 preservice teachers enrolled in a 4th year teaching practice course as part of a practicum program in the English Language Teaching Department at EMU. Eleven</p>	<p>Data came from a broader qualitative study examining identity formation of preservice teachers during practicum. Data included all blog artifacts and semi-structured interviews conducted by the course instructor. The interviews aimed to scaffold the findings gathered from the blog artifacts and gain insight into participants’ teaching practice—<i>experiences, memories, and their developing professional selves.</i></p>	<p>“Findings revealed that preservice teachers were more concerned with their personal qualities (e.g., being cheerful, approachable, dealing with students’ problems) and relations with their students (e.g., praising students, having good communication and establishing rapport) than with instructional strategies or professional dispositions” (p.</p>

female and four male preservice teachers, whose age ranged from 21 to 23, agreed to take part in the study. Twelve participants were from Turkey, two of them were from Northern Cyprus, and one was from Russia. None of the participants had prior blogging experiences” (p. 486).

490). “Receiving feedback and watching peers’ video-recorded lessons helped preservice teachers mitigate feared teacher-selves pertaining to instructional strategies by identifying strategies to deal with such problems when they arise” (p. 492).

“Feedback preservice teachers receive from their course instructor and peers helps them diminish feared teacher-selves and construct expected teacher-selves” (p. 495).

Sardegna et al.(2017)

“The participants consisted of 704 EFL students (aged 14–17 years) in urban cities in South Korea. Originally, 754 students participated, but 50 were excluded from the analysis because some (n = 3) submitted incomplete responses and others (n = 47) chose multiple responses for some items. Approximately 49% (n = 347) of the participants were females and 51% (n = 357) were males. They were either in their third year (n = 297) in a private middle school (equivalent to ninth grade in the United States) or in their second year (n =

Two instruments: the SPI inventory to assess reported use of pronunciation strategies and the LAP inventory to assess self-efficacy and learner attitudes toward pronunciation learning.

“Adult ESL learners who received instruction focusing on pronunciation learning strategies improved their pronunciation skills significantly during the 4-month course and maintained significant progress over time” (p. 89).

“Combination of strategies and other variables, such as learners’ practice engagement, progress during the course, and sense of self-efficacy, affected their long-term improvement” (p. 89).

407) in a public high school
(equivalent to 11th grade in
the United States)” (pp.
92-93).

2.1.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

By providing this information—participants, detailed methodology, and findings—we structured this information for comparative analysis. Galvan and Galvan (2017) stated that “because different research methods can result in differences in the outcomes of studies, it is helpful to build a table that summarizes the methods employed” (p. 89). By providing the different methodologies and their results, it showed how one methodology in relation to professional development and ELLs can shift or change between multiple studies. For instance, some of the articles reviewed used quantitative analysis while others used qualitative analysis. For example, Carley Rizzuto (2017) explained, “Quantitative data [and] qualitative data were collected” (p. 182). Meanwhile, Lachance et al. (2018) reported, “This qualitative interpretive study showcases views and perceptions of K-12 teachers of English as a second language (ESL) in a North Carolina school district regarding the importance of academic language to ensure equal educational opportunities for English learners” (p. 1). Comparatively, a mix of articles used both qualitative and quantitative data for a mixed-methodology study. See Table 3 for a comparison of qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

3. Findings

3.1 Introduction to Findings

Unfortunately, there is a high population of teachers ill-equipped to address the rising population of English language learners. For instance, “A recent survey that looked at teachers’ perspectives toward inclusion of ELLs in regular classes found that lack of time and professional inadequacy were two important notions that affected them in their work” (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2014, p. 311). This unpreparedness stems from multi-faceted areas: first, teachers are not ESL certified and this causes overcrowding for the teachers that are certified and thus finding ESL certified teachers is difficult; second, teachers that are certified are not being properly trained across all grade levels; and lastly, teacher perceptions and beliefs of ELLs’ capabilities to learn diminish classroom instruction. What can be considered as rigorous, meaningful, relevant texts are liquidated and cheapened by the fear of ELLs not being able to grasp the content. For example, Mellom et al. (2018) report:

Teacher beliefs have been shown to have an effect on their expectations, both of their students and of themselves. As Macnab and Payne (2003) have stated, “the beliefs and attitudes of teachers—cultural, ideological and personal—are significant determinants of the way they view their role as educators (p. 55)”

and continues this explanation of cheapened content by stating, Specifically with reference to ELLs, research has demonstrated that when teachers hold negative attitudes towards ELLs, this deeply affects the way teachers choose to behave toward their students (Harper & De Jong, 2009; Richardson, 1996). (p. 99)

It is unfortunate, but in the reality of education, these strategies hold true in regards to classroom instruction as teachers think about their lessons, and then their students, so teachers alter their instruction to justify their ignorance and lack of training. Non-certified or ELL-experienced teachers think, *they cannot handle something like this*, so those educators modify the instruction to water-down the content. Comparatively, an ELL-experienced teacher may think, *if I provide scaffolding and supports, they will be able to complete this assignment*.

4. Discussions

4.1 Introduction of Strengths, Weaknesses, and Gaps

While it was difficult to navigate through such a passionate topic, the research found provided great insight into the literature, studies, and experiments centered around this nationwide dilemma (see Table 4). After dissecting the literature, we have found strengths within the research that provides validity to English language learners and their educators that goes against non-ESL teacher beliefs. Contrastingly, Mellom et al. (2018) reported that several of their treatment participants, non-ESL certified teachers, portrayed various levels of ignorance and/or a complete disregard for their students' native language:

A number of participants responded with comments criticizing the students' use of languages other than English in class or even at home. For example, one respondent says, "most of the ELL students in my classroom come from homes where their parents were born in the U.S. They still do not speak English in their homes (mostly)." It is interesting that for this respondent it is almost more damning that the students' parents were born in the U.S. and yet speak a language other than English at home, implying that they have even less justification for not using English exclusively. (p. 102)

It is teacher beliefs and perceptions like these that are suffocating generations of learners with mass potential and morality within the educational system. Such statements as these, and others like it, are condemning students before they ever enter the classroom. Inexperienced teachers and/or inflexible educators that do not allow cross-language discussions in class—translating from Spanish to English—are limiting their ELLs potential and snuffing out their light and progression within the community and educational system. Comparatively, there are ESL-certified teachers that *do* use translation within the classroom and both the students and teacher grow exponentially because of the flexibility in using diverse language within the curriculum. For instance, Mellom et al. (2018) report:

Three separate treatment teachers indicated their ELL students use their home language to understand (or help other students understand) class content and reduce

frustration. They indicated, “They may use it if they have difficulty expressing an idea or vocabulary”; “they will use it to help another student understand something in class”; and “It occurs sometimes when they get frustrated looking for the English word to fit what they are trying to say.” These teachers allow their students to use their home language during classroom instruction in order to understand academic content and express themselves accurately and or to assist other students. (p. 104)

Further, in some research studies, we found that while there were some gaps in professional development training and how the professional development was used to improve teacher-student relations and classroom instruction, many studies in the Mellom et al. (2018) study showed growth (see Table 7). While there may have been teacher logs and surveys and the like, the authors did not explicitly label how the professional development was implemented within the districts or participant’ classrooms. Hansen-Thomas et al. (2014) state that “Only 20 US states require some kind of training for teachers of ELLs, but the parameters of this training are not clearly spelled out” (p. 310). Additionally, there were gaps in the research in consideration to locations across the U.S., classroom sizes, and across grade levels.

4.1.1 Teachers’ Perceptions and Impact on Instruction and Classroom Environment

One consistent determining factor of how well a classroom functions is based on the teacher’s perception of her students and their capabilities and her comfortability in working with that population for the academic year. While some teachers tend to work with the same populations and grade levels, depending on the district and influx of students, teaching assignments can change yearly. Thus, with a rise in English language learners, and varied but minimal certified teachers, it is apparent to see how some non-certified teachers feel overwhelmed by large class sizes of ELLs. However, it is not the size of ELLs that disturb these teacher-mentalities, but rather, their perceptions of ELL capabilities. Along with these—often negative—thought forms, teachers pair such ideas as language, learning capabilities and student comprehension and lump them together based on whether a student knows and understands English. Such strategies and social engineering diminish, weaken, and dilute curriculum, instruction, and classroom environments.

In school settings, where students are often pushed already, an ELL student is further ostracized and segregated by teacher mentalities. In the school building, teachers are the judge and jury, and with such authority, they can create high functioning, excelling classrooms or disintegrate learning environments within the first five minutes of the start of the period. Such perceptions and thoughts like: *Can they even speak English, Do they understand me* or, worse, *They can’t do this assignment/activity* further implicates students before they walk into the classroom. Then, there are educators that have no background knowledge or lack cultural awareness in consideration of Latin American culture. So, when ill-experienced teachers are trying to teach ELLs, they tend to have limited, and even negatively stereotypical thoughts about their student population and capabilities. Authors Mellom et al. (2018) brought to light some ugly yet thought provoking awareness into just how teacher perceptions affect their

opinions of students (see Table 5). Further, Mellom et al. (2018) provide examples of both positive and negative uses of Native Languages and how utilizing students' native tongues can more likely amplify learning compared to suppressing and ostracizing native tongues which, research shows, negates teacher efforts in curriculum and instruction (see Table 6). When looking at the tables, notice the spectrum of emotions that may pool to the surface. Compare the connotations and emotions of the deficit and liberation models. If we were students in these courses, which teacher would we rather have? To which Table would we rather belong?

Table 4. Methodologies Strengths and Weaknesses

Authors & Publication Year	Strengths	Weaknesses or Gaps
Abobaker (2017)	Discipline and good managerial experience were demonstrated when considering how to collect the data. There were “80 ELL participants [ranging between] 18-30 [most likely for maturity, consistency in attendance, and for accuracy of dedication in learning the English Language and practicing their proficiency skills] with three [different] language backgrounds” (p. 837). Further, the testing methods used seemed accurate to educational standards as the videos included for demonstration and data collection were of appropriate length and was scaffolded in various forms to support each ELL. Through this, the data showed tremendous growth for L2 Beginning ELs, when supported through “FC—full caption of video content” (p. 837).	In this study, one point of weakness was that “the locations where data were collected lacked computer labs. A future investigation is needed to explore the effect of viewing these conditions though individual computers with headsets where learners can play the texts and answer comprehension tests at their own pace” (p. 839). This causes gaps in research because it limited the time accessible to the participants trying to complete the comprehension tests. Further, another gap within the research is that the only level proficiencies tested were beginner and advanced.
Andrei et al. (2018)	One strength was that the focus of the study was on “one specific teacher and two ELL students” (p. 7). Through this specificity comes limited data in the sense that there’s only three participants really involved. The positive in this experience is that through “Ashely’s reflections” (p. 7) and veteran	One minor gap within the research, that seemed to be further supported in the most unbiased way, was that the contributing authors to this study were friends with the participant, Ashley. It is explained further here, “We realize now both of these authors might have influenced the data analysis and interpretation. However, [they] conducted

	<p>teaching experience, it is evident that any teacher, even a veteran teacher (when they are known for being stuck in their own ways) is capable of learning and adapting to how to teach with the best strategies that can work for their ELLs. Ashley proves that when given time for reflection, having small class sizes of ELLs, and intermingling ELLs with their non-Hispanic counterparts, comprehensive instruction can still occur. This study can be used as groundwork into educating other veteran educators that becoming ESL certified is not the end of their teaching careers, but a new beginning in a rewarding, challenging form of teaching.</p>	<p>participant check-in and collected three sets of participant data to increase reliability (Rossman & Rallis, 2012)” (p. 7). Comparatively, had they added one or two other teachers with an ELL population of 2-3 students, various forms of reflections, points of view, and reliability would have increased throughout the data collection. Further, to combat unreliability, the authors recommend for future studies to “look at teachers’ writings as well as classroom observations to triangulate the data” (p. 16).</p>
<p>Carley Rizzuto (2017)</p>	<p>When pulling from qualitative and quantitative data, it shows strength, planning, and intentional outcomes when researching whether teacher perceptions affect their teaching. For instance, “a transformative parallel mixed-method design with both qualitative and quantitative data sources” (p. 186). An example states, “questionnaires and interviews are often used together in mixed method studies investigating educational practices (Anfara et al., 2002)” (p. 186). Thorough tools were used to collect data, “The process began with open coding utilizing inductive analysis which involved inventorying transcripts, classroom observations, and classroom artifacts to define key words and phrases that appear in the data” (p. 189).</p>	<p>One gap appears, similarly in another article, where data collection is not a cross-culture of elementary, middle, and secondary schools. If this were the case, data collected could determine which level needs the most integrative support and compare/contrast in support of what is working in the school or grade level and transferring those skills into other schools and grade levels. Further, through focusing on single “research questions” (p. 195) independently, it limits the outcome of perception, application, and the aftermath change in how to operate after the research has been conducted. If this study were picked up for another round, would the researchers know where to begin? Would it be successful in tracking and then implementing change in teacher perception? How? Just bringing awareness from the study is not enough, what happens once the study has been conducted? Who is held accountable?</p>
<p>Hansen-Tho mas et al.</p>	<p>“A survey questionnaire was prepared and was sent to faculty and staff of 13 school</p>	<p>One weakness in the study is the portrayal of the participant survey because select questions could</p>

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- (2014) districts across north Texas” (p. 313). Further, most school districts responded and of those that did, “The inclusion criteria to participate in this survey were that they all: were working in the targeted rural and small school districts; had a good command of the English language; and had close interaction with ELLs” (p. 313). Moreover, the data collected on participants of the survey was incredibly thorough, “From 1987 teachers in the 13 school districts (Texas Education Agency 2012), 159 responded; this represented 8% of the total teacher population of the districts” (p. 314). Thus, “The teachers who responded included 137 females and 22 males as reported by the survey. In terms of their ethnicity, there were a total of 139 white teachers, 8 Latino/as, 7 African Americans, 2 Native Americans and 2 identified as ‘other’” (pp. 314-315). Furthermore, the participant list provides a plethora of teacher experience, “most of the participants had a wealth of teaching experience. Fifty-eight percent had been teaching for 11 years and more, but...nearly one-half of the teachers were certified to teach ESL (only 3% were certified bilingual (Spanish/English)” (p. 315). be skipped. For instance, “Participants were allowed to not answer a question and move to the next question during the survey. All of the participants who started the survey completed it, although some did not respond to all questions” (p. 313). Without a proper log of response questions and accurate data of answers, it can be difficult to decipher in complete transparency. Another negative trait in the study is recognized in the participant list and the lack of diversity between teacher experience and teaching experience in ELL student populations. For example, “The majority of the teachers had been teaching for 11 years or more, but had fewer years working with ELLs. More than one-half of the participants held a degree or endorsement in ESL, with only 3.4% holding a degree or endorsement in bilingual education” (p. 315). Further, such discrepancies of imbalance between experienced ESL-certified teachers and comfortability is shared here, “With regard to teachers’ needs, 25% indicated lacking knowledge in literacy strategies for ELLs. Many reported difficulties understanding ESL assessments, with 28% indicating being ‘not at all competent’. One-quarter of the teachers believed they lacked the ability to understand and interpret ESL-related research; and one-third lacked knowledge in historical, theoretical and policy foundations of ESL” (p. 315).
- König et al. (2017) “An empirical research study conducted in Germany in 2015 in order to investigate future secondary school EFL teachers’ opportunities to learn during initial teacher education in relation to their professional knowledge” (p. 113). In this study, the participant list consisted of two separate While this article provided great insight into working with preservice teachers, the study itself lacks the full focus for the topic of this literature review—Latin American English Language Learners and the limitations associated and placed on them within education. Contrastingly, though, this article does provide knowledge on how
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groups—those still in collegiate studies and those practicing under internships. Additionally, this empirical research takes into consideration some levels that other listed studies do not pursue—the predestined educators. It appears as if these understudies have yet delved into the classroom, and as such, are being pre-exposed to the struggling of literacy education and are being trained in such a way that they will be more prepared to instruct, uplift, empower, and guide EFL learners more so than their counterparts. For instance, “We sampled preservice teachers at the end of their first phase (master’s studies at university) and second phase (last year of internship). The sample consists of future teachers attending a teacher education program that would qualify them as lower secondary teachers only (Haupt-/Real-/Gesamtschule) and as lower and upper secondary teachers (Gymnasium/Gesamtschule)” (p. 113). Thus, such trainings and implementation of research for the participant list can support these new educators in their career field as strong literacy and language leaders.

Lachance et al. (2019)

The critical strength in this review is the focus on teacher understanding and utilization of academic language. This study portrays a different perspective of teaching ELLs in not that whether ELLs can be taught, but that they’re taught with the highest form of support and content. Additionally, this study collects data on North Carolina’s school districts and the training and implementation of academic language for their ELL

preemptively preparing preservice teachers to work with language learners can best prepare them for the classroom and can quite possibly redirect, diminish, or eradicate any beliefs before entering the classroom. However, the targeted goal for this study does not strike teacher beliefs, but rather, “insights into the question of whether content and teaching practice predict test scores in general” (p. 118). Therefore, there are key points in this study worth mentioning even though the target student population does not reflect the purpose of this literature review. Comparatively, should researchers decide to imitate this study with a focus on teacher beliefs and center student population on Latin American students, it could make for an intriguing and telling study of perceptions, beliefs, and the impact on classroom culture, curriculum and instruction, and student outcomes.

Under recommendations for future research, the authors addressed that the study should be repeated and should cross into other states so that there are more diverse understandings of academic language and to see if the definition alters from state-to-state. This is a current research gap and could be studied again as a trifold with two other states with various levels of differences in serving student populations (p. 13). Further, should this study be considered for future research and

	<p>population. Furthermore, “the participants’ district had a formalized 3-year plan to amplify teachers’ competencies related to academic language development, with an intentionally designed series of professional development for the districts K-12 ESL teachers, nearly 200 in total” (p. 6).</p>	<p>publishing, data collected between elementary and secondary schools ought to be compared to one another in search of different professional development opportunities and teacher beliefs and how that affects the classroom and student achievement (p. 13).</p>
<p>Mellom et al. (2018)</p>	<p>This two-part study shows educational interaction between teachers and ELL students regarding teacher beliefs and the effect those beliefs have within the classroom. Of the many strengths within this study, one example is that the study is for two years and the participants are broken into a treatment group and a control group. Further, “throughout the study years, the log questions were uploaded into Survey Monkey every two weeks and individual password links were sent to each teacher” (p. 101). This shows responsibility in the study and reliability that the information entered will remain confidential so that participants will remain honest. Moreover, the study “aims to examine the evolution of treatment teacher attitudes over time with the intervention and compare them to the control teachers’ attitudes by coding key themes and indicators” (p. 101).</p>	<p>As far as weaknesses in this study, there are a few. First, this study was initiated in the <i>New South</i> and includes participants from districts in North Georgia (p. 99). A reason for concern is that in rural North Georgia, the population residing there is predominantly White. The study does not clearly list the areas and school districts used, but it can be determined (and is stated in the research) that due to limited interaction with diverse populations—these teachers already have a bias in regard to teaching and educating ELs (p. 99). Further, an additional gap and weakness in this study is that participants labeled “treatment and control teachers were all randomized from a pool of volunteers who theoretically had the same range of expertise and backgrounds, the researchers recognize that there would be some control teachers who would have relatively more positive attitudes toward English language learners due to their having strong backgrounds in TESOL or experience with culturally responsive pedagogies, and there would be some treatment teachers with little experience with ELLs or culturally responsive pedagogies who would require more training and coaching to shift their attitudes and practice” (p. 101).</p>
<p>Salli&Osam (2017)</p>	<p>The participant list consisted of fifteen preservice teachers, “enrolled in a 4th year teaching practice course [and] received 42</p>	<p>“In this traditional format, the course instructor and the participants have limited time to share and learn from each other. To overcome this problem</p>

contact hours and taught a minimum of four lessons to secondary school students, two of which were observed and assessed by the course instructor” (p. S486). Within the required reflections, blogs, and posed questions, “Data was analysed qualitatively following the stages recommended by Markus and Nurius (1986) and Saldaña (2015). Transcripts were read several times independently by the each of the authors for consistency in the initial step of coding. Expressions that pertained to ‘selves’ were coded according to the Teacher Possible Selves Measure and Coding Manual (Hamman, personal communication February 9, 2015)” (p. S488). Further, researchers worked to eradicate bias, “Coding was carried out and standardized by multiple coders to minimize potential weaknesses such as personal bias or subjectivity in data analysis” (p. S488). Additionally, this research provides powerful and meaning insight into preservice teacher-experience, “Expected selves were clustered into three broad categories: interpersonal relationships, instructional strategies, and professional dispositions. Feared teacher-selves articulated by the preservice teachers were also clustered into three categories: classroom management, instructional strategies and unprofessional dispositions” (p. S488). With such return on data, future measurements can be implemented to liquidate teacher anxieties and self-reluctance or apprehensiveness to educating diverse populations, contents, cultures, and backgrounds.

and extend in-class time for reflection and interaction, the course instructor (i.e., the first author) added the use of blogs as another means of communication to “promote a reflective, collaborative and dialogic environment for academic and professional developments’ of the learners” (Tang 2009, p. 89)” (p. S487). While incorporating blogging to alleviate the lack of practice collaborating and developing their communication skills as teachers between planning and creation of curriculum and instruction, one must take into account that “[n]one of the participants had prior blogging experiences” (p. S486). Therefore, consumers must take into consideration the adjustment period for these participants along with consideration that the study is a reflection of a course and each blog was likely from an assignment of the course and lacks alignment with the study in its entirety and lacks connection to this literature review.

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- Sardegna et al. (2017) “Originally, 754 students participated, but 50 were excluded from the analysis because some (n = 3) submitted incomplete responses and others (n = 47) chose multiple responses for some items” (pp. 92-93). Such eliminations in the participant list exudes constructive and concise decisions within the research. It is worth mentioning that, “Both schools typify Korea’s low and middle socioeconomic neighborhoods and standardized curriculum as well as Korean students’ lack of exposure to native English speakers and pronunciation instruction” (p. 93). It is imperative to know this information since this research determines the honest efforts, or lack-there-of within the participant list. “The questionnaire items focused participants’ attention on specific strategies in three sections: (a) strategies for improving sounds, (b) strategies for improving polysyllabic words, and (c) strategies for improving phrases. Each section contained statements eliciting prediction, production, and perception strategies (a taxonomy proposed by Sardegna, 2009a). Second, the questionnaire items were reviewed by four Korean teachers of English (with 1 to 7 years of teaching experience) for translation accuracy and readability for adolescent Korean EFL learners and then pilot tested with five adult Korean ESL learners (aged 28–30 years). Minor revisions were made to the inventory items in both the English and Korean versions based on these participants’ feedback” (p. 94).
- “This study was conducted with Korean EFL learners in urban settings. Results might vary according to the setting and linguistic and cultural background of the learners. Second, our data were based on retrospective self-reports. Although a self-report measure is a common methodology in behavioral science, we cannot exclude the possibility that participants could have been inclined to give socially desirable answers, label strategies incorrectly, or fail to recall their behavior accurately (Veenman, 2011). We attempted to minimize this limitation by writing items that contained little content that could be construed as being socially desirable or undesirable (Holtgraves, 2004) and providing examples in the questionnaire to elicit the correct strategy. To decrease the likelihood of memory reconstruction problems, future studies might consider eliciting strategy use concurrent to a task (Veenman, 2011) or supplement the self-report questionnaires with other data-collection measures, such as observations and interviews. Third, because this study was cross-sectional, it offered a snapshot of student experience. Longitudinal studies may provide insight regarding the complex and dynamic interplay of learner variables and fluctuations in students’ attitudes, strategy use, and self-efficacy” (pp. 106-107).
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Table 5. Teacher Perceptions: Deficit Model

Author(s) and Publication Year	Prohibiting Native Language(s)	Neglecting Native Language(s)
Mellom et al. (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Spanish [is] spoken in all the homes, parents have low literacy, [and] violence/drugs/crime [are] prevalent in community.” (p. 102). • “One treatment teacher even connected lack of English with heathenism: ‘very little English is spoken in the home. Most of the students do not go to church’” (p. 102). • “One control teacher explained, ‘They use English at school and home language at home unless told otherwise.’ These teachers seem to use their power as authority figures to control their ELL student’s home language use and exclude it from the classroom” (p. 102). • “I try to really stress for them to only speak English when everyone around them cannot understand.’ This statement seems to imply that home language use is rude and exclusionary unless all students can understand what is being said. This goes back to the concept that any use of language other than English would be morally unacceptable and does not take into consideration the exclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Many teachers simply stated that their ELL students did not use their home language in the classroom or at school in general” (p. 103). • “Two different control teachers said, ‘I have had very few students use their home language at school with adults or students’ and ‘This does not happen with my students,’ implying that it would be bad if it did and she is proud that it does not” (p. 103). • “A treatment teacher also stated, ‘It really doesn’t exist. Occasionally they will use it during recess to speak to each other.’ These teachers are not explicitly prohibiting their ELL students from using their home language in the classroom. However, there is also a lack of acknowledgement that the students have a linguistic asset that they could integrate into the curriculum. These teachers do not attempt in any way to use their student’s home language to facilitate learning” (p. 103).

the students might feel when surrounded by native English speakers and forced to speak a language which they have not yet fully acquired”(p. 102).

Table 6. Teacher Perceptions: Liberating Model

Author(s) and Publication Year	Valuing Native Language(s)	Implementing Native Language(s)
Mellom et al. (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Several teachers identified home language with student engagement and school success stating, for example, ‘the students truly seem to love to discuss what it was like in their home countries,’ and, ‘the cultural background of the students are in the forefront of how they communicate and adapt to change in their environments. Specifically, in the school environment.” (p. 103). • “Others indicated that they have created classroom environments that value and promote home-language literacy. One control teacher notes, ‘Our bi-lingual classroom library consists of books that provide a view of our ethnic diversity. Many of the bilingual books are primarily Spanish, African (various languages from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “One treatment teacher (of the larger sample of 147) indicated that she uses her ELL student’s home language in the classroom in order to promote higher order thinking. She explained, ‘We value other languages at our school, and I often ask ELL students to translate words or phrases into their language for our class to see how they compare or contrast’” (p. 104). • “She encourages all students to use critical thinking skills to compare and contrast two languages. This teacher integrates her ELL student’s home language into the curriculum in a way that both supports the ELL children’s own linguistic and cognitive development and encourages higher order thinking for all students in the classroom” (p. 104).

different regions in Africa) and Hindu.’ This teacher sees not only that several different languages and cultures are represented at her school, but also notes that the books only offer a *view* of the diversity. This insight is important because it implies that she understands that cultures are complex and multifaceted” (p. 103).

- “A control teacher explained, ‘If they don’t know a word in English they will ask another student the translated word. We often ask them how to say things in Spanish so they feel respected and an important part of our class.’ This teacher indicates that use of home language in the classroom implicitly conveys the message that ELL students are a valuable part of the classroom community and that their language and their ability to use it are valued assets” (p. 104).

5. Conclusion

Throughout our study, we uncovered a need for professional development that will improve not only how content is learned for an English language learner, but the relationships those students encounter as well. From teacher beliefs and perceptions to results-centered instruction, it is uncommon for an ELL to overcome language barriers put in place by societal norms. Educators need continuous development—professionally, culturally, linguistically, and instructionally. As trends in education change, so do the students, and with these changes comes a need for improvement and growth. To further

assist the students, it is suggested that not only do districts provide more ELL-related professional development, but also make more resources available throughout all grade levels. As Sardegna, Lee, and Kusey (2017) found, the “complex and dynamic interplay of learner variables and fluctuations in students’ attitudes, strategy use, and self-efficacy” (pp. 106-107) stress the need for longitudinal studies. Teaching English should be about making a language as accessible as possible and working to erase the incorrect stereotypes that others place on non-English speakers. After all, education is about creating opportunities and ensuring success for all students.

CRedit Author Statement

Stephanie Wright: Conceptualization, Methodology, Analysis, Original Draft Preparation, Reviewing, Editing, Meeting with Mentor Co-Author, Publication Edits, and Fulfilling Submission and Reviewer Feedback Requests.

Fernanda Vargas: Investigation, Methodology, Original Draft Preparation.

Tonya Huber: Development and Publication Mentor, Validation, Reviewing and Editing.

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